

# And the Honors Go To ...

## Science Bowl Volunteers Feibush and McGeachen



From left are Science Bowl honorees Eliot Feibush and Tom McGeachen with their plaques.

On a wintry Saturday morning every year, they trade snoozing in and lingering over coffee for simple addition and time-keeping, reading and ruling on complex questions, and welcoming teams.

These are the Lab's Science Bowl volunteers, numbering at least three dozen annually. They include PPPL employees, families, and friends, Princeton University staff and students, and others from local institutions who serve as scorekeepers, timekeepers, judges, moderators, and other helpers.

This year, the Lab recognized two extraordinary volunteers for their Science Bowl efforts—PPPL scientist Eliot Feibush and PPPL engineer Thomas McGeachen. The two received “Outstanding Volunteer” Awards for their continuing efforts during the February 23 opening of the U.S. DOE Regional Science Bowl hosted by PPPL. Feibush was noted for developing a clock program for Science Bowl that is computer portable and allows for better viewing, and McGeachen for his many years of service dedicated to the event.

Feibush remembers watching the College Bowl on TV with his father in the late '60s.

“Later, in high school, I moderated a Quiz Bowl between a student team and a faculty team. Naturally I was intrigued by the Science Bowl at PPPL. I've volunteered as a judge during the past four years,” he says.

He saw the clock running on some very old Apple computers that were maintained just for the event. “That's when I decided we would benefit from a technology upgrade. The weekend after the 2006 Science Bowl, I wrote a new clock program in Java so it would run on any contemporary laptop,” Feibush says. “Then my two Science Education summer interns spent a week adding enhancements based on user feedback from the timekeepers. This year we connected the laptops to projectors so everyone had a better view of the clock.”

Feibush called the Science Bowl “very worthwhile.” “I am glad to help with it. I continue to be amazed by the students who answer the challenging questions so quickly,” he adds.

McGeachen began volunteering as a timekeeper in 1996. “I like the time-keeping chore. It's pretty structured. I've got it down. I use the program Eliot did and also use my wrist watch when time runs out and for the five-second toss-up questions,” McGeachen says.

Why does he consistently give up a Saturday morning every year? “It's good for me to encourage younger people to become interested in science and engineering,” he says. “And part of the draw is watching the competitions.”

This year—the sixteenth for PPPL to host the bowl—30 teams from 19 area schools participated, with High Tech High School winning first place. And 40 volunteers were here to help with the day. Hats off to all the volunteers! ●

## Calling All Science Bowl Volunteers

Science Bowl volunteers are needed for the New Jersey Middle School Competition of the National Science Bowl® on Saturday, April 12, at PPPL. If you are interested in serving as a judge, timekeeper, moderator, or scorekeeper, or could assist with the model hydrogen car race, please e-mail Chris Ritter at [critter@pppl.gov](mailto:critter@pppl.gov). No experience necessary.

### HOTLINE

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The HOTLINE is issued by the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, a research facility supported by the United States Department of Energy. It is primarily an internal publication. Correspondence and requests to reprint material should be directed to: EDITOR, PPPL HOTLINE, P.O. BOX 451, PRINCETON, NJ 08543; Interoffice correspondence should be addressed to MS-38, LSB Bldg., C-Site; fax 609-243-2751; telephone 609-243-2757; e-mail [pwieser@pppl.gov](mailto:pwieser@pppl.gov).