



**SIMMONS-ROCKWELL**  
At a Location Near You!



[www.simmons-rockwell.com](http://www.simmons-rockwell.com)  
(607) 776-8100



FORD CHEVROLET BUICK PONTIAC GMC DODGE

Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [News Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#)

Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Class](#)

ithacajournal.com

SEARCH  
ITHACA

All Recent News Events Jobs More »



SPONSORED  
BY:

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [OPINION](#) [FORUMS](#) [COMMUNITIES](#) [BUSINESS](#) [LIFE](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [OBITUARIES](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [WEATHER](#) [CUSTOMER SERVICE](#)



Comment, blog & share photos  
[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#)

POWERED BY YOU AND **The Ithaca Journal**

## Students putting wraps on 2 environment-related projects

BY TOPHER SANDERS • JOURNAL STAFF • MAY 22, 2008

[Post a Comment](#)   [Recommend](#)   [Print this page](#)   [E-mail this article](#)

SHARE THIS ARTICLE:   [Del.icio.us](#)   [Facebook](#)   [Digg](#)   [Reddit](#)   [Newsvine](#)   [What's this?](#)

ITHACA — Two projects nearing completion at DeWitt Middle School are showing off the school's technology muscles.

ADVERTISEMENT

Classes of David Buchner, technology teacher at DeWitt, are putting the finishing touches on a scaregull and vegetable oil-powered go-kart.

The two projects are independent of each other and are being worked on by different students. The scaregull project is something that Buchner said fell into his lap.

"The scientist for the seabird restoration project in Maine called and asked if I would be interested in having my students partner with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology," he said.

The task was to build a scaregull meant to scare seagulls away from Egg Rock Island, which sits about eight miles off the coast of Maine. The seagulls at Egg Rock are preying on baby terns — a white seabird in the gull family — at a dangerous rate, Buchner said.

"There's some very good science that backs up what we're trying to do," he said. "It's designed to scare away the predatory gulls that are making lunch and dinner out of these little baby terns."

Buchner's students were excited to work on the project, which was started in January.



From left, Yuyoung Lee, Isaac Wagner, Erin Fetsko and Max Yavitt lower the Robo-Ranger One back into its mechanically loaded box with the assistance of eighth-grade technology teacher David Buchner, bottom, at the end of class Wednesday afternoon at DeWitt Middle School. Buchner's class is building the autonomous solar-powered robot as part of Project Puffin, a seabird restoration program that reintroduces Atlantic

Puffins to their former Maine nesting islands. Robo-Ranger One will be planted eight miles off the coast of Maine on Egg Rock Island to scare predatory gulls away from the nesting areas of endangered puffins and terns. (ERIC STEWART / Journal Staff)

### RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB

[Science / Technology](#)

[Robots](#)

[Alternative Energy](#)

[Science](#)

[Electrical Engineering](#)

Browse the latest news headlines  
from  
**theithacajournal.com**  
on your cell phone



- Breaking News
- Top Stories
- Weather
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Local News
- Business
- and more...

Enter the url below into your cell phone browser to view the site.

<http://m.theithacajournal.com>

"It comes out of the box and scares predatory gulls away from puffins and terns that are endangered on eastern Egg Rock Island," said Yuyoung Lee, 13, an eighth-grader at DeWitt who worked on the scaregull. "A lot of engineering was put into this — mechanical engineering, electrical engineering."

Lee said working on the project was fun and that she learned a great deal. The students had to find a motor that could generate enough torque to lift the mannequin out of the box.

"The motor, it's amazing how strong it is because it has to lift the mannequin up from its feet," Lee said.

Buchner said he expects the scaregull to be completed and on its way to Egg Rock Island

by mid-June.

Another project Buchner's students are working on is a go-kart powered by vegetable oil. The project has taken more than two years to complete, and between 40 and 50 students have worked on the go-kart in that time.

"We pretty much rebuilt the frame and we repainted it," said project participant Dustin Gibian, 13, an eighth-grader. "Right now we're attaching the engine and doing the wiring."

Working on the go-kart has been one of his more interesting school assignments, Gibian said.

"We're going to be driving it in the Ithaca Festival Parade, so that's cool," he said. "It's really interesting and fun."

Students working on the go-kart took welding and auto-body classes at the Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga Board of Cooperative Educational Services.

"This project was designed to take advantage of vocational classes," Buchner said.

"I actually got into welding because of this," Gibian said.

What will exactly happen to the go-kart when it's done is up in the air, Buchner said.

"It was more of a demonstration project to show that alternative fuels are possible and realistic," Buchner said.

[cbsanders@ithacajournal.com](mailto:cbsanders@ithacajournal.com)

## in your voice

[READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY](#)

Powered by Topix.net

ADVERTISEMENT

**KENT BROWN**  
1-866-428-0094  
[www.kbtoyota.com](http://www.kbtoyota.com)  
[www.kbscion.com](http://www.kbscion.com)

ADVERTISEMENT



**Blogs • Reader Shots  
Headlines • Events**  
[getbuzzed.com](http://getbuzzed.com)

## more news headlines

Students putting wraps on 2 environment-related projects

Ithaca Town Board interviews final candidate

Pizza Hut serves up free slices (2)

Legislature to retain control of tourism funding (3)

Nash-Crosby, Earle to play in '08-09 at State Theatre

## latest headlines

Spokeswoman: Sen. Kennedy hospitalized with seizure (5)

Cayuga Nature Center holds open house today and Sunday

Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival announces lineup (1)

Namgyal Venerable Monks on The Ithaca Commons today

Mental illness rally in Ithaca's DeWitt Park today

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

Submit



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Forums](#) | [Communities](#) | [Business](#) | [Life](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Weather](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2008 The Ithaca Journal

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2007.