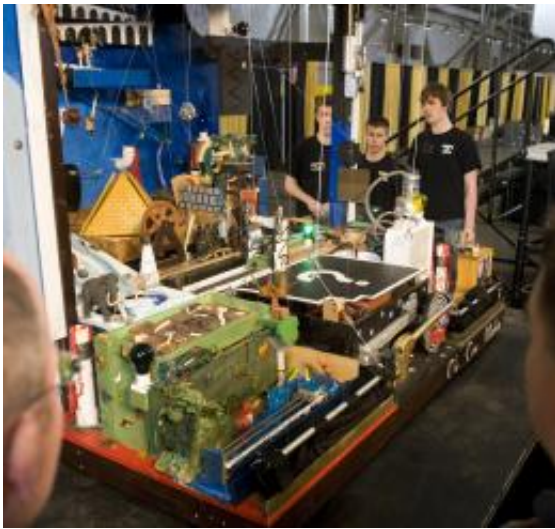


Rube Goldberg machine shatters Guinness world record, destroys planet

May 30 2011, By Jim Schenke and Joan Myers



Purdue Society of Professional Engineers team members watch anxiously as their world record-breaking machine competes at the 2011 Rube Goldberg Machine Contest. The machine accomplished the simple task of watering a flower after humorously tracing the often-disastrous history of the world from Big Bang to the Apocalypse. Credit: Purdue University photo/Mark Simons

Purdue University students shattered the Guinness World Record for the largest Rube Goldberg machine ever with a 244-step juggernaut that destroys the planet several times over before restoring hope by watering and growing a flower.

The Purdue Society of Professional Engineers' "Time Machine" traces

world history from the Big Bang to an Apocalypse triggered by the Four Horsemen: Bob Barker, Dirty Harry, Darth Vader, and Woody the "Toy Story" cowboy. Along the way, the world is humorously destroyed by a meteor, an ice age, the Great Flood, world war and alien invasion.

"If Bruce Willis, Will Smith and Charlton Heston joined forces to build a Rube Goldberg machine, this is what it might look like," quipped Zach Umperovitch, captain of a team that has won three national championships and set two world records in the past seven years. "Of course, those guys wouldn't be as crazy as we are to invest 3,500 hours to accomplish a task a toddler can do in mere seconds."

Rube Goldberg's granddaughter Jennifer George praised the Purdue machine while attending the 2011 Rube Goldberg Machine Contest. George recently inherited the responsibility to keep alive the wry, whimsical spirit of her Pulitzer Prize-winning grandfather. His whacky cartoon machines designed to accomplish everyday tasks in convoluted but ingenious ways remain seared in pop culture lexicon.

"The Purdue contraption spoke to his humor the most," said George. "You have a smile on your face from the moment you walk in here."

Purdue's machine documents monumental human endeavors such as erecting the pyramids and flying to the moon and more frustrating modern "accomplishments" such as the LP record and Microsoft Windows.

The machine is a YouTube hit and included in an episode of "Modern Marvels."

More information: web.ics.purdue.edu/~pe/

Provided by Purdue University

Citation: Rube Goldberg machine shatters Guinness world record, destroys planet (2011, May 30) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-05-rube-goldberg-machine-shatters-guinness.html>

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