TechTatva'19—Cosmic Con

Invasion

Shashank Rajan & Royston Fernandes | **Staff Writers**

Perhaps in part due to the Area 51 raid, Invasion had a great turn-out. Despite starting off two hours late, the three day event managed to fetch five teams. The first round comprised of an hour long written test on Astronomy that would thrill the average space fanatic, but lightly taunt those otherwise. *"Definitely not your everyday GK Quiz"*, mentioned one team and added that they hoped to pass the first round.

In the second round, the contestants had to create a species that would have to inhabit a planet as given by the event heads. Each planet was modeled differently and played host to a different set of conditions pertaining to gravity, solar distance, water availability and more. Given such an

environment, participants had to create an ideal species while taking into consideration biological factors such as respiration, locomotion, sustenance and body structure. In their attempts to create the perfect being, a plethora of eccentric creatures emerged from the participating teams. *"We're thinking about a creature with a lot of hair that can be set on fire. We're still trying to figure the rest out"*, said Laxmana, a second-year participant at the event. Teams were judged on the compatibility of their species with the given planetary conditions, the results of which paved way for the third and final round.

Round three saw the final two teams standing head to head in a battle for supremacy. One team played the role of an attacker that would make an attempt to terraform their opponent's planet, while the other team had to defend against it while speculating the creature's characteristics as a means of doing so. Finally, a victor prevailed after a long and arduous fight between the two finalists, with one species ravaging the planet of its weaker opponent.

Constellation Hunt

Xavier Thomas | **Staff Writer**

Constellation Hunt put each participant's spatial reasoning to the test in a cross-campus treasure hunt. Starting off in a classroom with a brief on rules and instructions, participants were given their first clue which led them to different locations. With each team equipped with a map of the institute, contestants were tasked with deciphering cryptic riddles that led to different parts of the campus. Upon reaching a destination, which would then be marked on the map, participants would be given their next clue. Teams stuck on a clue were given a lifeline in the form of an extra clue that would have to be collected from the starting point. Upon reaching a final destination after a number of intermediate ones, contestants had to trace out their points on the map to

form a constellation, the name of which had to be correctly identified and reported back to the organisers.

With locations all over campus, the hunt brought to light numerous lesser-known places to the first-year participants, while putting the odds in favour of the senior contestants. While participation fell short of expectations, the event made for a joyous escapade across town for those who made it.

Wow Factor

Snigdha Deshmukh | **Staff Writer**

Inspired by a famed signal of potential extraterrestrial origin, Wow Factor put each participant's cipher coding skills to the test. The first round consisted of a written test on general aptitude and an encrypted question which had to be decoded and answered. In the second round, contestants frantically tried to figure out codes using a cipher guide provided to them. With complex codes pertaining to astronomy and just seven minutes to crack them, teams resorted to intense discussions and put forth an impressive amount of joint effort to reach the final round.

ANUSHK WADHWA

Contestants really had to put on their thinking caps for the third round. Teams were made to decipher questions encrypted by other groups and answer them within an hour and, likewise, had to rack their brains while concocting challenging codes for their opponents. Despite being perplexed by its difficult nature, participants completed the round in the nick of time. *"It was electrifying. There was a lot of math involved that made it complex yet fun"*, said one participant. With a fair amount of participation that saw contestants from all four years of college, no dearth in enthusiasm was seen at the event. Overall, participants remarked that Wow Factor gave them a pretty good glimpse into the fascinating world of cryptography.

Houston in the blind

Staff Writer | **Sarath Yelishetty**

Houston in the blind got contestants stepping into their space boots as they wandered their mind's cosmos to find creative,

feasible and viable solutions to survive a space mishap.

This event consisted of two rounds—a qualifying round and a final round. Named after the Gravity-famous quote 'Houston in the blind', the first round had participants choose from a list of items—ones they would prefer to have in space. Ranging from a washcloth with nutritious stains to LED lights that cure insomnia, the first round tested more than just the scientific knowledge of the contestants. *"The round was designed to test logic and creativity, along with a basic knowledge of space"*, mentioned Anish Patnaik, an event head.

In the second round, the contesting groups were given fantastic scenarios and little time to come up with a neat solution that would soon fall under the scrutiny of the judges and opposing contestants. This proved to be no easy task while in a room full of space buffs and aficionados. Nevertheless, the solutions of the participants were fun and absorbing. A concoction of quick thinking and presence of mind

along with a more than basic knowledge of space is all one needed to excel in this round.

"It was incredibly fun and there were so many ways to be creative with our choices. I'd love to come back next Techtatva", said second-year student, Sharan Aditya, who was delighted to have participated in the event. As a whole, a mixture of enthusiastic participants and energetic organisers made the event highly enjoyable and successful.

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