

Teens propose change in law to make cycling safer

By SHELLY GUERRA

The Post staff writer

Five seventh graders at Center and Albion middle schools hope to pedal their way to the top at the "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology" (FIRST) Lego League robotic competition Saturday in Cleveland – and solve a city bike safety issue in the process.

Eli Homan, Chad Mroczka, James Reese, Andy Rygalski and Zach Zoloty, who call themselves the Bionic Barracudas, surveyed 250 fellow middle school students on their bicycle riding habits. They say what they learned from their original 26-question survey was surprising – and downright dangerous.

"We asked kids questions about how they rode their bikes and what kind of safety precautions they took," Andy said. "We found out that kids don't know the rules of the road, they don't follow the rules of the road and they ride unsafely."

For example, the group's survey revealed more than half of kids know safety hand signals, but only a small number actually use them. More than half of children sur-

Strongsville was graded by the Ohio Bicycle Federation, they received an F-minus for bicycle safety," Zach said. "We believe Strongsville's ordinance conflicts with Ohio law because all cyclists have the same rights as other vehicles to use the road and they should be considered a vehicle."

The teens say riding exclusively on sidewalks is unsafe because driveways are like many intersections on a road. Kids don't think to slow down and stop and drivers are not expecting fast-moving traffic on sidewalks.

"We aren't saying people should never ride on the sidewalk, but the street is safer than the sidewalk, sometimes," Andy said. "On Pearl Road, the sidewalk is safer. But



Photo by SHELLY GUERRA

The Bionic Barracudas, made up of Zach Zoloty, Andy Rygal-