

'Science Brothers' put on show to pique students' interest

[RANDAL YAKEY / News Herald Writer](#)

2012-03-26 18:46:48



PANAMA CITY — Dressed like a couple of quirky mad scientists, the Science Brothers may look goofy, but they are a couple of really smart guys.

Bill Porter and Dan Flisek are the “Science Brothers,” a nonprofit outreach program aimed at getting elementary and middle school students interested in STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) activities.

Flisek, 25, a physicist by training, and Porter, 26, an electrical engineer, play off their different fields and argue over whose science is “cooler.”

The result is a fun and wacky trip exploring different premises in science — light, sound and energy — with examples and demonstrations from the realms of chemistry, physics and electricity.

“It is fun and it is taxing,” Porter said.

The Science Brothers work at the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division (NSWC PCD), besides working on STEM activities. Grants from the National Defense Education Program have helped the program, based out of the NSWC PCD.

'We love it'

The pair has an amusing act, but their backgrounds offer no hint at their zany side.

Flisek graduated from Virginia Tech in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in physics, with minors in math and computer science. He is currently working as a civilian physicist/chemical engineer for the Navy.

Porter is a graduate of Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in engineering and also is working at the Navy base, but as a contract engineer.

And you might say they take their work home with them. On their bookshelves at their homes, they say you'll find physics textbooks. And, after work, Porter said, “I go home and build robots.”

“Yep,” chimed in Flisek.

These two fellows are just two guys having fun.

“We love it,” Flisek said.

Porter also maintains a website.

“I document all my home projects on a personal website for others to learn from, and the website sees about 15,000 visitors a month,” Porter wrote in an email. “I also mentor a robotics club at Mosley High School and repair and build interactive exhibits for the Science and Discovery Center of Northwest Florida.”

Their show

The Science Brothers, who premiered the show in March 2011, said it is a combination of the "Doctor Science" show featuring a main character, Dr. Science, and his sidekick, Mr. Gallagher, as well as the very popular "Bill Nye the Science Guy." They contemplated "Science Guys" as a possible name but thought it could be confused with "Bill Nye the Science Guy" and result in some legal ramifications.

The program is free for schools. All Bay County Schools are encouraged to schedule a show, and schools in nearby counties also can ask about the possibility of scheduling a performance, although they are booked up for the spring season.

Southport Elementary School Principal Dianne Miller said the Science Brothers presentation was an invaluable resource for any school.

"For the scientists and engineers to come to us from the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division, well it is a tremendous community resource," Miller said in a Navy press.

Fifth-grade student Hailey Peters talked about how her own science projects were similar to the Science Brothers' demonstrations.

"Like their barking dog experiment; I also have a science project where I mix baking soda, vinegar and water to make a sandwich baggie explode," Peters said. "But watching the Science Brothers' show makes me like science even more."

© Copyright 2012 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)