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## Top Teens 2011

Bethesda Magazine's 2011 Extraordinary Teen Awards.

BY ANDREA LEITCH

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### The Engineer

Ben Lewis

Senior, Thomas Wootton High School

What sets him apart: Ben Lewis spends weekday afternoons building a 6-foot wingspan aircraft at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Bethesda. The 18-year-old also is one of 30 young adults employed at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and is captain of his school's Rubik's Cube team, which placed second in a five-state regional competition last fall. On average, Ben solves the puzzle in 30 seconds.

The Potomac teen has always been into building. At 13, he started Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County's Junior Volunteer Corps and was named a "Builder of Tomorrow" by the Lego Corporation for his work on a "Lego Blitz Build" benefiting Habitat for Humanity. "My initial interest in Habitat for Humanity came from the

opportunity to combine engineering and building with helping the community," he says. "Since there was no youth program, I wanted to create an event specifically for kids."

Other accomplishments: National Merit finalist; 4.4 weighted GPA; member of the Potomac Curling Club.

What others say: "Ben has been working on building a functional model of the NC-4 flying boat



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—the first aircraft to cross the Atlantic Ocean,” says Eric Silberg, an aerospace engineer and Ben’s mentor at the Naval Surface Warfare Center. “This year, the Navy is celebrating the centennial anniversary of naval aviation. Our project is part of this celebration and an opportunity for outreach. Ben has contributed greatly to these efforts. To my knowledge, this type of project has not been done previously by interns.”

What his future holds: Ben plans to major in mechanical engineering at Rice University in Houston.

“I love building things and seeing how things work,” he says. “I’ve always been taking things apart and putting them back together.”

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