

The scent of crisping turkey skin penetrates my nose as I peck away at my keyboard. *Ctrl-Z* rests on the floor beside me with the bright orange VEX USB cable protruding from it. The constant buzz of my cellphone against the wooden workbench reminds me that I have the day off and should really be heading to the park soon for that baseball game. But I cannot abandon the robot; I have been working all day to get the arm to gyrate just perfectly into the descoring position. An hour passes and I have managed to automate nearly everything.

Upon my return, a familiar tone is emitted from my computer. While I was away, two of my Python scripts finished their calculations, a small animation had finished rendering, and 15 more people had downloaded my cheesy game. The turkey is almost ready so I hop in the shower before my extended family arrives. I contemplate the question that was first posed to the nation over half a century ago. "What are you thankful for?" I think back to eighth grade when my only ambition was to go to Harvard school of Law and become a successful lawyer. Now I want to be a computer programmer. In fact, I already am one. This inflection comes from the influence of robotics on my life. In particular, I credit it to *Big Bertha*, long hours, RobotC, and *Round Up*. That will do. This year, and every year, I am thankful for VEX robotics.