



EXPRESS-TIMES PHOTO | JIM MIDDLEKAUFF

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Roth said.
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for letting their children take part in programs not offered at conventional public schools. CIT has students from five school districts, which Roth said gives the students more opportunities.
"Thank you for trusting us with your sons and daughters," he said to parents.
Students received individual awards based on achievement in each of 19 programs.
Fuzzy pink tiaras set the students in the Health Related Technology program apart from the other students, but a school-wide camaraderie prevailed.
Vice Principal Walter Bonstein applauded the graduating class for staying focused even in the midst of a two-year construction project.
"It's been a trying couple of years but still education took place," Bonstein said.

Gerould believes the shooting was not a random occurrence, and it was possible that all parties involved knew each

Math whiz meeting President Bush today

BEN KRAFT PLACED 2ND in Mathcounts National Competition. He attends Moravian Academy.

BY GINA VASELLI
The Express-Times

Ben Kraft was 6 when he learned how to do factorials. He taught himself multiplication and division when he was in kindergarten.
"I'm just one of those crazy people who find it fun to do math," Ben said.
Ben, 14, placed second last month at the Mathcounts National Competition in Fort Worth, Texas. Besides a \$6,000 scholarship, it earned him and other top finishers the chance to meet with President Bush today.

But Ben is more concerned with the other math contest he's competing in, the American Regions Math League. The league is designed for high school students, but Ben, an eighth-grader, joined the team last year. The competition is scheduled to run this weekend at Penn State University.
Ben's mother, Margot Hillman, thinks it's the problem-solving aspect of math that keeps him interested.
"If you think of it as puzzles, it makes a lot more sense," Hillman said.

But he doesn't know why he likes it.
"It's a lot of fun. All these contests are just a lot of fun," Ben said. "I'm sure I wouldn't like it if it was really hard though."
Ben takes ninth-grade math classes at Moravian Academy's Upper School. He is also taking a summer class on linear algebra at Lafayette College.



Kraft

Ben has been a year ahead in math since sixth grade.
"That was when we realized he wasn't being challenged," Hillman said.
Around that same time, Ben started doing Mathcounts.
Mathcounts coach and Moravian Academy eighth-grade math teacher Alison Overdorf said Ben was a great resource for the team and in the class.
Overdorf taught Ben when he was in seventh grade and said he's "phenomenal."
"It's great to have someone in class who loves your subject

as much as you do," Overdorf said.
Overdorf said Ben's love of the subject is evident, especially when he's on stage during the competitions.
"He was smiling, and he was just so happy to be there," Overdorf said.
Hillman said Ben has a lot of experience solving problems; he has been solving them since he was 2.
Hillman said that when they gathered the family together on Sundays, Ben would ask his family to tell stories. But the stories were actually just simple word problems, and the goal was to have Ben figure out the answer.
Hillman said both she and her husband, Steve Kraft, who works in The Express-Times' information technology department, are good at math. But, "Ben is starting to get ahead," she said.
"Sometimes it's kind of like, 'Oh my God, you're in eighth-grade,'" Hillman said.
But she said she is glad for all the doors that math competitions have opened for her son — such as a chance to meet the commander in chief.
"How many people get to meet the president in their whole life?" she said.

Police Briefs

Fire that destroyed home called arson

MIDDLE SMITHFIELD TWP. | State police said a house fire on Alpine Drive was arson. Police said the home was a total loss, and no one was home at the time. Police said they have several leads.

Police ask anyone with

Rendell goes on trade mission

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARRISBURG | Gov. Ed Rendell visited Madrid, Spain, on Thursday, the first stop in a European trip aimed at promoting Pennsylvania trade.
The governor also plans to visit the United Kingdom before returning to Pennsylvania on Tuesday, his office said.

The Democrat's first international trade mission includes meetings through Sat-

urday in Madrid, a stop in Bilbao, Spain, and then a visit to London, where he will meet with the American ambassador and British business representatives.

Pennsylvania Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty is with Rendell in Spain then will meet with officials from North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany to discuss renewable energy.