

Science

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do well in something like this."

A strong base of knowledge and familiarity with the scientific method are two keys to success. "Right now, we're trying to determine the identity of an unknown powder," said David Fine, of Lake-Lehman, who was paired with fellow senior Tom Brislin in the "Can't Judge a Powder by Its Color" competition. "We started by forming a hypothesis based on our initial observations and now we're doing tests to measure the powder's solubility, its conductivity, its acidity and some other properties that will help us identify it."

Lake-Lehman science teachers provide students with equipment needed to conduct experiments and other useful tools in preparation for the tournament, but there is a limited amount of direct instruction. "The science teachers help a lot by allowing the students to have access to lab equipment or lending them rock collections, but we don't really teach with the science olympiad in mind," said Lipski. "That's one thing that's very funny about this. Other schools have science olympiad clubs and their kids stay after school to practice starting in October; we do things a little differently but we have had good results."

Sarah Davis said the team was confident entering the competition. "I think we're really well prepared," she said. "I just came from 'Chemistry Lab' where we had to identify different acids and bases, predict reactions and write equations. Most of the stuff we worked with here was familiar because we had done experiments with those substances in class."

The talented high school students who participate in the science olympiad are excused from a day of typical instruction but they insist missing class is not their lone motivation. "Well, there's that, too," said Nick Leonard, a junior member of the Lehman team. "But seriously, it's nice to be able to apply a lot of what you're learning in school and to see that the stuff you're studying is important. Plus, I'm having a really good time."

Dallas Middle School students, who were attending their first ever science olympiad, were equally enthusiastic about the experience. "We have never done this before so we don't know how we'll do in the competition part of it, but it's really fun so far," said Joe Bednash, an eighth grade student who teamed up with Mike Swartwood to design a car for the "Battery Buggy" event. "We made this car at school



Meredith Nagy, left, a sophomore at Dallas High School, works with Jillian Be, a junior, to identify an unknown powder.

"Many of them have discovered they know more than they ever thought they knew."

Christie Potera
Dallas Middle School teacher

over the past couple of weeks, using a flashlight and some parts from a model kit we bought. It has to be able to run and stop on its own without any outside interference."

Each member of the Dallas Middle School team selected two events in which they were interested in competing and

their teachers chose a third event. "We tried to give the students some freedom in selecting events and that worked out in about 50 percent of the choices," said Dan Flynn, who served as moderator for the group, along with fellow teacher Christie Potera. "Basically, we're looking at this year's olympiad as a learning experience; the kids were really excited about the competition, but as teachers we're more focused on using this program as a basis for developing the gifted curriculum."

Potera, who volunteered to act as a judge for the "Science Crime Buster" event, said the science olympiad is a fun way to



Joe Bednash, left, and Mike Swartwood, Dallas Middle School, converted an old flashlight into a battery powered vehicle for the olympiad's "Battery Buggy" competition.

test a student's knowledge. "I think it's a wonderful opportunity for the students," she said. "Many of them have discovered they know more than they ever thought they knew."

"I'm so impressed, not just with our students, but with all of the kids who competed."

Jean Lipski
Lake-Lehman gifted teacher

Lake-Lehman team:

Liz Blinder, Nick Leonard, Tom Brislin, Matt Loftus, Cliff Culver, Drew Salko, Sarah Davis, Natalie Shiskowski, David Fine, Andrea Steele, Josh Gregg, Jen Sutton, Luke Casper, David Walters, Dave Kowalek.

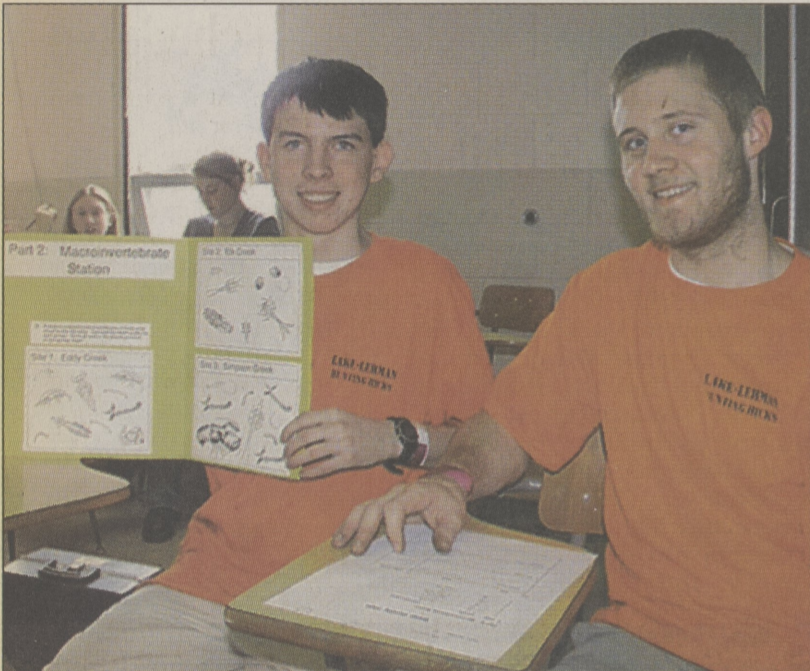
DMS Team:

Meredith Lacey, Lenore Kaplan, Selina Marmo, Dan Thimot, Whitney Adams, Sara Getz, Matt Fritz, Samantha O'Brien, Eric Baltimore, Chris Beamonte, Adam Snyder, Jay Kovalchek, Michelle Lukish, Mike Swartwood, Diana Glicini, Joe Bednarsh.

State Parks hiring summer lifeguards

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is looking for candidates to fill numerous summer lifeguard positions at state parks. Lifeguards are needed from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, and must have lifeguarding, first-aid and cardiopulmonary-resuscitation (CPR) certificates before beginning in May.

State park lifeguards start at \$6.14 an hour. Those staying through Labor Day are awarded bonuses. For more information on lifeguard positions at DCNR's Bureau of State Parks, contact any state park; call 1-888-PA-PARKS; visit DCNR's web site through the Pennsylvania homepage at www.state.pa.us; or visit DCNR directly at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

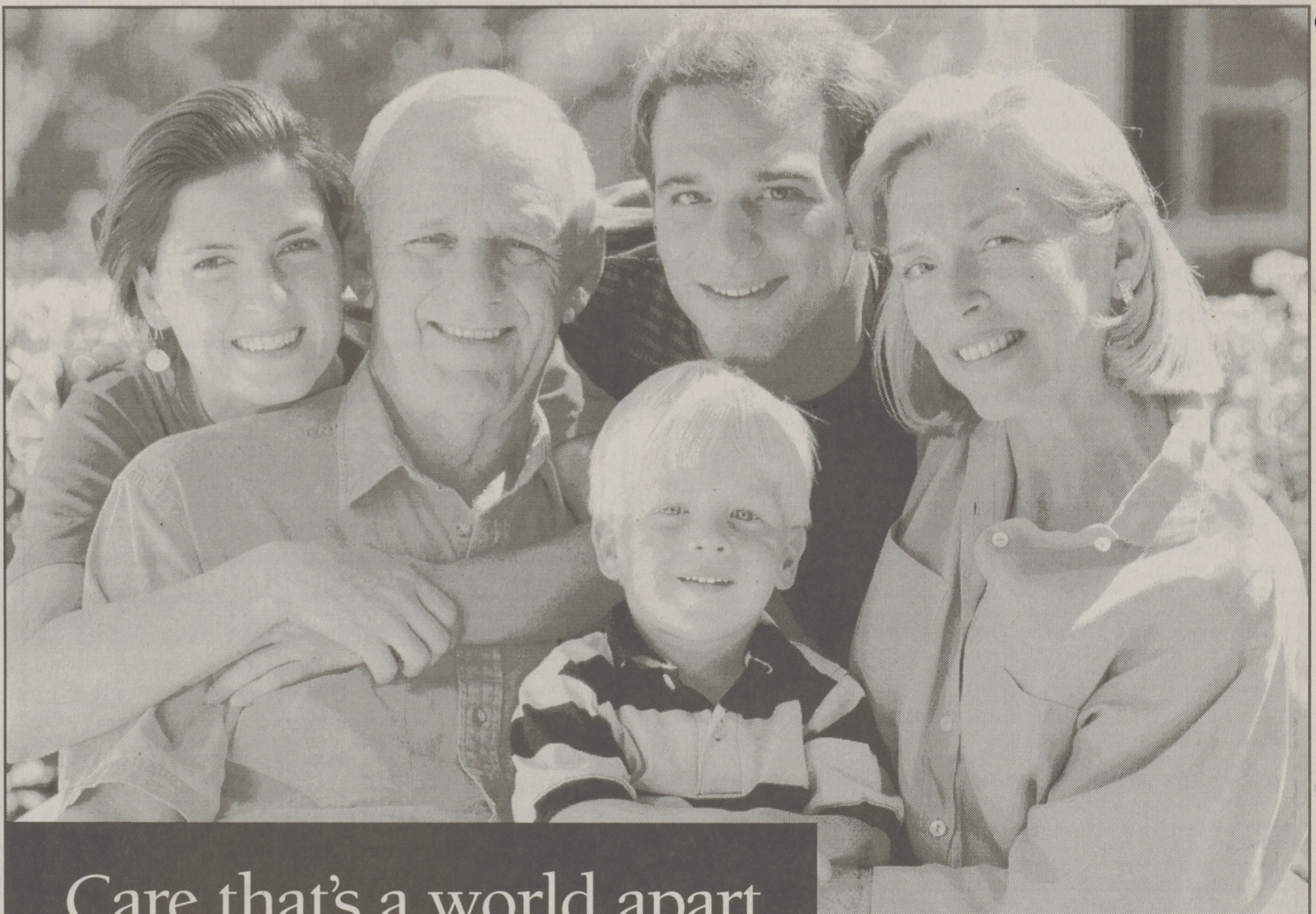


POST PHOTOS/KASIA McDONOUGH

Nick Leonard, left, and David Kowalek, Lake-Lehman, found the water quality portion of the science olympiad a real challenge.



Jake Kovalchik and Lenore Kaplan discover firsthand what it's like to be a forensic detective. The Dallas Middle School students conducted tests on evidence collected from a crime scene in order to identify a suspect.



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