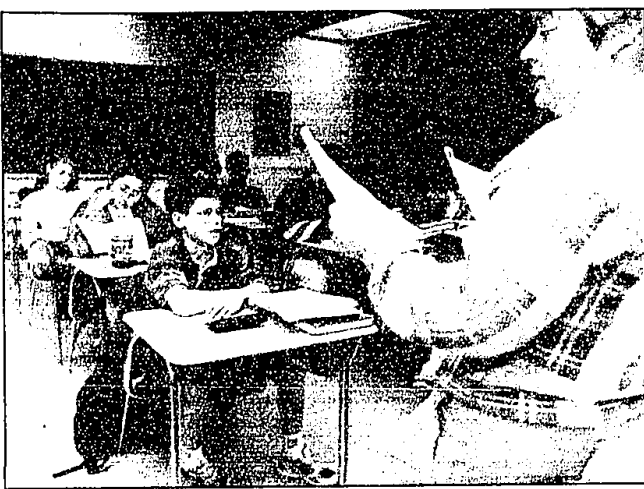


Star student:
Says
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math
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STAFF PHOTOS BY RHANON LEMIEUX



By the numbers: Oz Pearlman pays attention in a math class at O.E. Duncel Middle School in Farmington Hills.

Number one

12-year-old Oz is a whiz at math

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Oz knows math. Oz (pronounced Oh-z) Pearlman is 12, but is already in the eighth grade at O.E. Duncel Middle School and takes pre-calculus with seniors at Harrison High. His ACT math score of 31 was best in the state at the middle school level. Pearlman took the ACT as part of the 1995 Midwest Talent Search.

His math skills come in handy around the house. When his parents take him to Little Caesars, they have him figure out the bill before it's even rung up.

His numerical powers have been tapped in an attempt to

pick winning digits in the Michigan Lotto, according to his mother, Devora.

"No cigar," Oz said. Oz doesn't fit the image one associates with proficient math students.

A slide rule isn't nestled in his pocket; he doesn't carry a calculator in a holster on his belt. Instead of AA batteries, Pearlman runs on typical middle school precociousness.

He plays soccer, runs track and cross country and is enamored with a new card game called "Magic."

"If you're smart, it's kind of a stigma on you," Oz said. "People think you don't do anything but

academics."

Only recently did his proclivity in math come to the forefront. He was in the sixth grade in Neenah, Wis., where his family lived before moving to Farmington Hills late last year.

Oz was bored. School officials moved him into algebra. He conquered that like Jack Nicklaus at Putt-Putt golf. He tore through geometry like a chainsaw through cheesecake.

He moved up a grade. He attended the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth, participated in an accelerated learning program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and young students summer

program at Beloit College.

Those challenges only made Oz sharper.

He took the ACT in 1992-93. His math score improved 12 points when he took the ACT again two years later.

At Harrison High, Oz fits in with students who are often five years older. Some have kidded him about going to senior prom.

He's carrying a "solid A," said math teacher Sue Schultz.

"He almost acts like the others," Schultz said. "If the kids get into trouble, he's in trouble. He's not really a social outcast."

"He's very normal. He's just bright."

Anticipation is one of his strengths, Schultz said.

"As I'm teaching, he'll know what's coming up," she said. "He'll say, 'What about ?' and I'll say, 'I'll be there in a minute.'"

His talents are not just measured by numbers.

He received a \$500 grant and wrote a paper on second generation Holocaust survivors, a topic of particular interest since his grandmother was in Auschwitz.

Oz was born in Israel. He had

a twin brother who was stillborn.

At 13 months, Oz was already talking.

"He couldn't sit, but he could talk," his mother said.

He only took three months to learn English when the family moved to the United States. His father, Shmuel, is an engineer for Detroit Diesel. Oz's mother thinks he gets his mathematical talent from his father.

Math might be his forte, but it hasn't helped him in the kitchen.

"I did horrible in my cooking class," Oz said with a laugh.

Safe stuff:

Firefighter Dave Feichtner (left) helps youngsters learn to be safe at a recent gathering.



MIKE GLAZ

Hills fire department offers checklist for family safety

National Safe Kids week was marked in Farmington Hills last week with a visit to Borders bookstore by local firefighters.

They handed out information to kids ages 14 and under and let them pet the fire dog.

The family safety checklist included these tips:

■ Use a safety seat until your child outgrows it, then use a booster seat. After that, buckle up.

■ Wear bike helmets properly.

■ Teach children to stop at the curb or edge of the road, and to look left, right and left again before and while crossing the street.

■ Install four-sided, 5-foot high fencing with a self-closing and self-latching gate around your pool or spa. Be aware that drownings happen in bathtubs, buckets and toilet bowls.

■ Install smoke detectors in sleeping areas on every level of your home. Replace batteries yearly. Plan and practice two fire escape routes.

■ Keep hot foods and drinks away from kids. The water heater should be set no higher than 120 degrees. Test the water temperature before placing kids in the bathtub.

■ Keep your guns unloaded and locked up. Lock and store

bullets in a separate location.

■ Install stairway safety gates and window guards on windows that are not fire emergency exits. Ensure playgrounds have safe equipment and cushioned surfaces.

■ Buy child-resistant packaging, but remember this does not mean child-proof. Keep potentially poisonous substances and plants out of sight and reach of children.

■ Post police, fire, poison control center and medical services telephone numbers near phones. Store syrup of ipecac with first aid supplies.

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Motown sound to hit Mercy benefit

Martha Reeves will perform in a benefit concert for Mercy High School at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 21, in Mercy's Rosemary Clooney Auditorium, 11 Mile and Middlebelt roads, Farmington Hills.

A recent Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Reeves is best known for her classic Motown hit "Dancing in the Street." She will be joined in this concert by Judge Myron H. Wahl and his jazz

trio, and "Dr. Beans" Bowles, who will direct the New Grey-stone Jazz Orchestra.

Mercy's own singing and dancing ensemble, the Moreyaires, will join Reeves, "Beans," and the jazz orchestra to salute Mercy High School's 50th anniversary.

Anyne Makupson, WKBD-TV Channel 50 media personality, will be master of ceremonies for the concert with Wahl.

Proceeds from the concert will establish the Martha Reeves Scholarship Fund. Patron tickets are \$100 per couple/\$50 per person, including reserved seating/champagne afterward following the concert.

Reserved concert seating is \$20 per person, and general seating is \$10. Visa/MasterCard are accepted. For more information or ticket reservations, call 478-3270.