

Intelligencer Journal

Genetics Is Absorbing Topic for Ephrata Senior

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By Wendy S. Caldwell

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There are benefits to being accelerated through a school career, including graduation at the age of 15. But for Ephrata High School senior Eric Sherman, there is one drawback.

"The only problem is I can't drive," Sherman explained. "So I end up riding my bike most places."

Sherman skipped the first and fourth grades, and since elementary school he has been placed in higher-level classes. When asked where he gets his intelligence and academic drive, Sherman answers in the one way he is best versed: genetics.

"They haven't found any intelligence genes yet. I'm sure it's a multi-gene complex; it's not one mutation," Sherman explained.

"There are probably 10 or 20 genes responsible for intelligence. At least that's my hypothesis."

With plans to someday work in the fields of genetics, genomics or bioinformatics, Sherman is in the process of applying to a list of small to medium liberal arts schools on the East Coast. He hopes to earn a doctorate.

Sherman is a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society. He ranks among the top five students in Ephrata High School's Class of 2009.

He is a three-time Superior Award winner at the Ephrata High School Science Fair and was awarded the Senior High Reserve champion honors at this past spring's Lancaster County Science and Engineering Fair. During his freshman and sophomore years, he won Senior High Grand Champion honors at the county level, and he competed at the International Science and Engineering Fair.

Sherman has also had the honor of presenting his research at **The American Society of Human Genetics** conferences in 2006, 2007 and this year.

"Geneticists from all over the world looked at my research, and I have had my work published in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*," Sherman said.

Sherman is a volunteer at the Clinic for Special Children in Strasburg in the genetics' research lab. He first learned about the clinic when he was looking for equipment to use for his science fair projects.

"The clinic focuses on inherited genetic disorders in the Old Order Amish and Mennonites," Sherman explained. "I've been working with them for over a year now."

This past summer, Sherman traveled to Carnegie Mellon University for the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Sciences.

"We talked science the entire time, which was great," Sherman recalled.

Sherman's coursework includes classes in advanced placement statistics, honors scientific research and Spanish V. This fall, he enrolled in an online psychology course through Millersville University.

Musically talented, Sherman played the trombone in the high school's concert band, jazz band, marching band and orchestra in his freshman and sophomore years. He is also co-editor-in-chief of the high school yearbook, *The Cloisterette*.

To relax, the teenager enjoys skiing with his high school ski club, which takes frequent trips to Blue Mountain in Berks County. He also travels with his parents to ski resorts in New England and in the western United States.

In his free time, Sherman builds and flies remote-control airplanes.

He is the son of Donald and Donna Sherman and lives with his parents in Ephrata.