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Volumes of Science Seen

Fair draws students from 43 schools

April 07, 2003

By **Tasha Flournoy**
Contributing writer

Matthew Peneston had a crowd of judges huddled around him Sunday as he spoke about environmental and climatic changes for what today are fossils in places such as East Antarctica.

The judges at the Greater Syracuse Scholastic Science Fair weren't the only ones interested in Peneston, a junior from John C. Birdleough High School in Phoenix. Cindy and Ken Anthony also watched as Peneston dazzled the judges.

"He has got to be the most impressive," said Cindy Anthony, whose son Kyle, a fifth-grader, also participated in the competition. "He blows me away. Obviously, he's very good at presenting himself."

Peneston later won a \$20,000 scholarship to attend Syracuse University if he chooses to attend there.

Students from 43 schools in Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego counties competed in the fair, at the Oncenter's convention center. Students in grades five through 12 competed for honors and awards in both junior and senior levels at the fair, organized by the Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology.

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Two students - 10th-grader Scott Buchanan, from Cortland Christian Academy, and 12th-grader Laura Wayne, from Skaneateles Senior High School - will go on to compete in the International Science and Engineering Fair in Cleveland, Ohio, next month.



Student science projects included finding potential arsenic in playgrounds and creating solar power in New York. One student even asked the question, do robots think?

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Meghan Barrett, who won a senior-level award from the Army, used her experience in sports to tackle the issue of sudden death in young athletes from blows to the chest. She created a specially fitted chest protector and wore it to one of her field hockey games.

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"People ask me if I'm going to patent it," said Barrett, a ninth-grader at Liverpool High School. "But I don't know."

Cornelius Murphy, president of the State University College of Environmental Science & Forestry, spoke at the all-day event. He encouraged students to be proud of being "geeks" because they will be the ones running the country in the future.

"We need you, the young people, to engineer the things that society will need in the future," Murphy said. "You're building yourselves and preparing for an excellent future."

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