

# PM senior is a 'renaissance person'

BY JOAN KERN  
Correspondent

## TEEN OF THE WEEK

Helen Hutchens learned to add and subtract before she learned to read.

So it follows that math and science are the Penn Manor High School senior's strength.

But Hutchens also loves literature, languages and music.

"I love learning," she said. "I don't think that I would love school and everything else I do so much if I didn't love what I can learn with each moment. I'm sort of a renaissance person."

And she wants to study at a renaissance school.

A hundred scenarios of her future play out in her head.

Just one of them is receiving an undergraduate degree, perhaps with a double major in engineering and a foreign language, from Swarthmore College and a doctorate in engineering from Cornell University.

From there, life would include a challenging career and world trav-

els. Last summer, she toured the United Kingdom and Europe with the Girl Scouts. In 2007, she went to Australia with People to People Student Ambassadors.

But most important, Hutchens wants to make a difference in people's lives.

Her goal is "being able to change the world in a small way, not have a wasted life, being happy, without regrets, or only a few regrets."

At Penn Manor, she has made a difference as a mentor to girls at

Central Manor Elementary School through the Lancaster YWCA's Big Sisters program. Hutchens, 17, is the daughter of David Hutchens and Beth Katz, of Washington Boro, and sister of Mark, 15. Her parents are computer science professors at Millersville University.

The National Honor Society student has a grade-point average over 4.0, is a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist and ranks in the top 10th of her class.

"I think I'm in the running for salutatorian," she said.

An honors student, she completed two Advanced Placement courses her junior year and is scheduled in four more this school year. She also completed two courses through MU's dual enrollment program.

Besides five years of German, the fascinated-with-learning teen studied Arabic and Chinese online. She would like to continue with Arabic.

Hutchens' life is so busy with competitions that on Nov. 13 she will miss performing in the county marching band championship and a Quiz Bowl tournament because she will be among 250 contestants from across the country competing in Math Prize for Girls at New York University.

Last year, her team won first place in the Colonial Math Bowl at George Washington University; she and classmate Ben Clark won second place at MU's Brossman Science Lectureship Competition.

At Penn Manor, she has competed in Math Counts, Quiz Bowl and Math Team.

Hutchens also competes musically as a member of the school's marching band, serv-



Richard Hertzler / Staff

**Helen Hutchens**

ing as leader of the pit section her junior and senior years.

The band, with competitions almost every weekend in the fall, won first place at Hempfield High School and Catholic High last month.

She tells a story about seeing someone playing a steel drum on "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" on television and deciding that's what she wanted to play.

"My parents took me to the music store and were very happy when the salesman managed to convince me that real people learn to play drums on a drum pad. So I got a drum pad."

Later she switched to mallet instruments. She has performed in band since fourth grade and in marching band and jazz band throughout high school.

"I just love to play," she said. "There's something very relaxing about it. You can't do

anything else. You just really have to be working. It's just a nice change of pace."

She also is an honorary member of the marching band's dads truck crew — the only student who knows "100 percent" how to load the truck.

This renaissance teen also loves the outdoors and has been a Girl Scout since kindergarten.

A member of Troop 1104, she went skiing with the troop in the spring and camping, sailing and whitewater rafting in the summer.

Hutchens also scratches her outdoors itch during her annual monthlong summer visit with her maternal grandmother — "she's wonderful; I love her" — who lives on a horse ranch in the mountains of Colorado.

"My favorite thing to do is ride bareback," she said.

← YWCA SISTERS PROGRAM