

The Eagle

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weather



High: 22°F
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SPHS graduate wins surveyors' math competition

By Jeremiah Tucker, Sauk Prairie Eagle

Krystal Carlson won't spend the \$500 she won beating 222 participants in a state-wide math competition on anything frivolous.

"I'm going to use it for books and tuition," she said, befitting a studious young woman. "It's an academic contest prize so the money should go toward academics."

Carlson, now a freshman at UW-Superior, took the Trig-Star math competition last year when she was a senior at Sauk Prairie High School, and was awarded the first-place prize Jan. 22. She was a guest of honor at the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors, which puts on the competition, conference in Green Bay.

Sauk Prairie High School math teacher Mary Walz won the Trig-Star's Teacher of the Year award.

Walz is the teacher who got Carlson interested in taking the Trig-Star test, although she didn't need much encouragement.

"I've always excelled in math and I thought it would be a fun thing to do," Carlson said.

The Trig-Star test consists of four problems. The first three are shapes and the student must calculate their angles and dimensions and the fourth is a complex word problem.

Walz said she liked the test because it puts the math in the context of a real-world application like land surveying.

Scores are partially weighted according to how quickly the test is completed.

In her sophomore year, Carlson came in first in Sauk Prairie High School, but didn't top state.

Her junior year she studied abroad. By the time she took the Trig-Star test again her senior year, she was looking forward to it.

"A lot of my friends like math, so it was like a get together with my friends," Carlson said. "It's like 'who's the best?'"

She said she wasn't sure she'd win.

"I was confident that I did it right, but a couple of my friends turned their tests in before me and they're really, really smart kids," Carlson said. "I thought, 'Ah man, I can't beat that.' It sounds bad, but luckily for me, they made a few mistakes."

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