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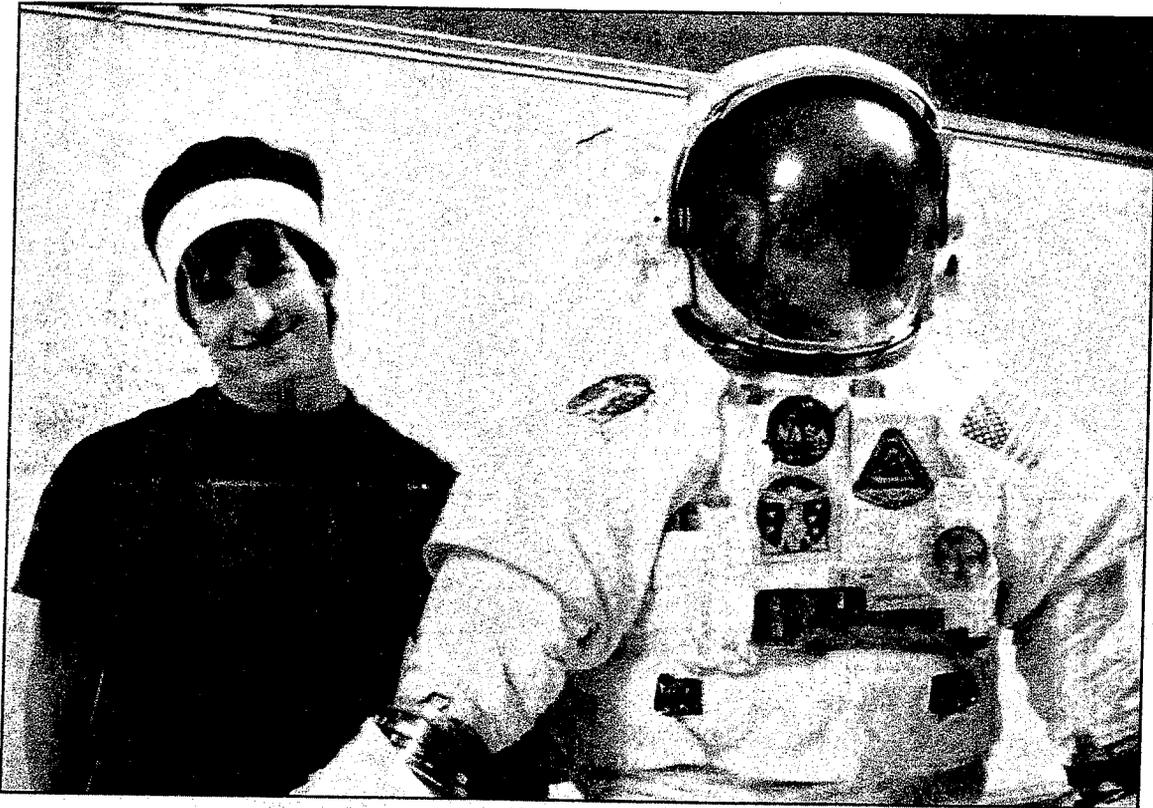
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Medina Valley junior Emmett Peters, a ambitious young man with dreams of the stars, was recently accepted into NASA's High School Aerospace Scholars summer internship program. A full story on this opportunity is on page 2. (Courtesy photo)

Medina Valley student's dreams land him in NASA program

James LaCombe
Staff Writer

Could the first footprints on Mars be from a Medina Valley Panther?

"My dream would be to be the first person to walk on Mars," Medina Valley junior Emmett Peters said.

On the scale of lofty goals, Peters' dream rates near the top, to say the least. However, this standout teenager from La Coste has his eyes fixed squarely on the prize, and he is already off to a blazing start on the path to achieving his immense aspiration.

Peters, who hopes to have

a career as an astronaut, was recently selected as one of only 354 high school juniors from across the state to participate in NASA's High School Aerospace Scholars summer internship program.

"I think I was more excited than he was," Mary Peters, Peters' mother, said. "He's a pretty laid-back kid. He's absolutely a math wiz, and he kind of just takes the world as it comes, but he was extremely pleased."

To get into this program, students were required to complete 10 thorough web-based assignments. The high-

est ranked students will now travel to the Johnson Space Center in Houston to participate in the one-week summer internship where they will work with NASA engineers to create a mission to Mars final presentation.

"Every two weeks, we had to submit an essay, a graphic and a math problem about a certain topic that they assigned each week," Peters said about the process of earning the internship. "Sometimes it would be about Mars. Sometimes it would be about the space shuttle. Sometimes it would

be about the international space station.

"We were graded by a teacher somewhere in Texas who had knowledge on the information we were giving," Peters said. "Then we were ranked, and I was high up in [the rankings], so I was selected."

Peters also received letters of recommendation from State Representative Tracy King and Medina Valley math department chair Lori Weinheimer. Mrs. Peters sang the praises of Weinheimer, and the role she has played in helping her son along the

road to his dream.

"I can't tell you how amazing she is," Mrs. Peters said. "I wish there were more like her."

Not long after Weinheimer first encountered Peters last school year when he was a student in her advanced pre-calculus class, she knew she had a far-above average student on her hands. This school year, he was a student in her college-level statistics class.

"I first taught Emmett last year, so I knew last year Emmett was bright," Weinheimer said. "He's a very bright young man."

In addition to this latest internship, Peters has also spent the past three summers

participating and excelling in the University of Texas at San Antonio's Pre-freshman Engineering Program, also known as PREP. PREP is designed to encourage high school and junior high students to begin preparing for career paths in science and engineering.

Peters said he hopes to attend Texas A&M University and major in aerospace engineering after he graduates from Medina Valley.

He cited the school's respected engineering program and a co-op program that the school offers with NASA as reasons he made Texas A&M his top choice.