

February 28, 2010

Dear SFSAS Families,

I wanted to share some highlights of the past week with you.

Geography News: Today was our 2010 National Geographic 'Geo Bee' School Competition. The Centaurs, Badgers and Middle School classes all had their class Geo Bee contests yesterday and the top two winners from each grade moved up to the final school bee competition today. This is the official 2010 National Geographic Competition and our school used the same challenging question booklet as hundreds of other schools around the nation. Each class answered 7 rounds of questions yesterday including, US Geography, US Cities, Continents, Geography of Extremes, US Historical Geography, Cultural Geography and International Geography.

The 10 finalists were:

Centaur Class: Elliot Thornburg and Kai Taishoff

Badger Class: 5th grade: Merit Willey and Sina Kidane
 6th grade: Brass Burapa Coggins and Lauren Sarkissian
 7th Grade: Alicia Sandoval and Tristan Giannini
 8th Grade: Elliot Hield and Liam O'Brien

The competition was tough and the field was finally narrowed to 2 middle school students for the championship round, Tristan Giannini and Elliot Hield.

Some of the questions they answered correctly included:

- Wood Buffalo, which covers a vast area of forest and open plain, is the largest regional municipality by area in which North American country?
- Serra dos Carajas is an important area for mining in a country that is one of the world's leading producers of iron. Name this South American country.
- Which Mediterranean country, located at the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, is Europe's largest exporter of cotton?
- The Garden Ring, with its eight lanes of traffic, crosses Gorky Park in which European capital city?
- After the United States and France, which island country generates the most power from nuclear energy?

(Email me if you wish to guess the answers!)

Elliot Hield was the winner of the competition and will move onto the State Competition if he passes the qualifying test. (All of our past winners have qualified for state.) The winner of the state competition moves onto the National Geo Bee where you can win a \$25,000 college scholarship and a trip to the Galapagos Islands!

Congratulations to Elliot Hield (1st Place), Tristan Giannini (2nd Place) and Merit Willey (3rd Place). Congratulations to all of our students who have been dedicated, enthusiastic geography students!

Film News: Our Middle School students recently completed two short films using footage of Sudan from National Geographic photographer, Karin Muller. Our school was chosen to be a part of her organization, Take 2, which shares international footage with high school students and empowers them to make films. She told me that we were the only middle school chosen.

When we sent our videos to Karin, she wrote,

"Wow. I have to say my mouth fell open as I watched your two videos. They were fantastic. I don't say that lightly. Truly superb - timing, technical quality, message - everything. Among the best I've seen coming out of Take 2 since we started this organization. Please tell your students that they did a terrific job and I'm incredibly proud of them."

You can view these two short films, 'If' and 'Down The Drain,' the main page of her web site! Take a look: <http://take2videos.ning.com/>

In addition, last week, we received congratulations from the Kids First! National Film Festival that two of our student films, "The Switch" and "Sandstorm" were chosen for their 2010 First Quarter film festival. This film festival will take place at more than 150 different venues this quarter! The students involved in the making of these films include: Sarah Colvin, Ansley DeDomenico and a number of our alumni; Chance Willey, Kamon Tari, Amelia Moyer-Perez, Hannah Sachs, Diego Suarez, Corrina Leatherwood, Tashi Swierkosz and Mark Clifford.

Rayna Dineen