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Photo Available Upon Request

## **KNITTER NAMED CALIFORNIA GEOGRAPHIC BEE SEMIFINALIST BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY THREE YEARS IN A ROW**

### **Moves Another Step Closer to \$25,000 Scholarship**

**Daly City, CA, March 19, 2008** – The National Geographic Society has named Oliver Knitter, an eighth-grade student at The Hilldale School, as one of the semifinalists eligible to compete in the 2008 California Geographic Bee, sponsored by Plum Creek. Bees were held in schools with fourth- through eighth-grade students throughout the state to determine each school's Geographic Bee winner. School-level winners then took a qualifying test, which they submitted to the National Geographic Society. In each of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, and the U.S. territories, the National Geographic Society invited the students with the top 100 scores to compete at the state level.

The 2008 California Geographic Bee will be held at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento on Friday, April 4, 2008.

The state winner will receive \$100, a globe, and a trip to Washington D.C., where he/she will represent California in the national finals at the National Geographic Society headquarters, May 20-21, 2008. The national winner will receive a \$25,000 scholarship.

Oliver Knitter has won the Hilldale School Geographic Bee three years in a row, and he has qualified for the California Geographic Bee all three years. According to Professor Stephen Cunha, Department of Geography at Humboldt State University and State Bee Coordinator, qualifying for the California State Bee is no easy feat, and qualifying three years in a row is remarkable. He states, "This bee is intensely competitive. There's no margin of error in a state of 100,000 kids. If there are 40 questions on the state qualifying exam, you can't miss more than 2 or 3." For example, if a student scores a 97 percent, he may qualify for the California state bee, while the student who scores a 96 percent may not qualify. Students do not learn their scores and are only notified if they are one of the top 100 student scores in the state, thereby qualifying them for the bee. Former top 10 finalists at the state competition one year have not qualified for the state competition the next. Professor Cunha states that California has the hardest state final to make because of California's large population. "California is the biggest state with the most bee kids."

**-more-**

## **Knitter Named – 2**

Knitter will travel to Sacramento with his mother, father, and the school’s principal. Principal Sasha Clayton states, “We are very proud of Oliver. He has recently been accepted to several top high schools, and this is just one more feather in his hat. He is an exemplary student and deserves this recognition. Furthermore, it will be a lot of fun to see him compete!”

### **How would you fare as a Bee contestant? At the school-level Bee this year, students had to answer such questions as:**

Known for its production of alpaca wool, Arequipa is a major commercial and tourist center in what country just south of Ecuador? (Answer: Peru)

A Mediterranean climate occurs in only one state in the United States. Name this coastal state. (Answer: California)

Name the major river that flows through Turkey and Syria before joining the Tigris River in Iraq. (Answer: Euphrates River)

The region of Alsace-Lorraine has changed hands four times since 1870 between France and what other country, which occupied the area during most of World War II? (Answer: Germany)

For more information about the California State Bee, please contact Professor Stephen Cunha, Department of Geography, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA and State Bee Coordinator at [sc10@humboldt.edu](mailto:sc10@humboldt.edu) or 707-826-4975. You may also wish to contact Bethanne Patrick at National Geographic’s Communications Office [bpatrick@ngs.org](mailto:bpatrick@ngs.org) or 202-775-6190. Or check out the National Geographic Bee website at [www.nationalgeographic.com/geographicbee/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geographicbee/).

Hilldale is a co-educational, academically accelerated pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade private school nestled against the San Bruno Mountain open space in Daly City. At Hilldale School we are...“Rising to the Challenge.” For more information, please visit **[hilldaleschool.org](http://hilldaleschool.org)**.

*The Hilldale School*

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