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Samuel Bressler, 12, a seventh-grader from Fullerton, is congratulated by his dad, Mike, after winning the state Geographic Bee. A total of 97 students competed for the state championship at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento.

RENEE C. BYER, THE SACRAMENTO BEE

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Fullerton seventh-grader wins state Geography Bee

Samuel Bressler, 12, will advance to the nationals in May.

By **SCOTT MARTINDALE**

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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SACRAMENTO – Seventh-grader Samuel Bressler of Ladera Vista Junior High School in Fullerton was crowned champion of the state Geography Bee today following an elimination-style competition against 96 of the state's geography whizzes.

Bressler wins an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the national finals in May, plus \$100 and an atlas. The grueling, four-hour competition at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento ended about 1 p.m.

"We had to go to a tie-breaker competition several times," said state Geography Bee coordinator Stephen Cunha, a geography professor at Humboldt State University. "It was a really good competition. You need a world of knowledge to win a science competition or a spelling bee, but in this event, you need to know the world – culture, immigration, language, religion."

The competition was open to fourth- through eighth-graders from across California. A written qualifying test was required at the local level, and only the top 100 statewide were eligible to compete in the California bee.

Bressler's winning question was, "The largest city in Siberia, with approximately 1.4 million people, is located on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Name this city." He correctly identified Novosibirsk.

Geography Bee runner-up P.F. Maxwell Bork, an eighth-grader from Pasadena, got that question wrong.


Both, however, got the prior tie-breaking question wrong: "Pula, a port city on the Adriatic Sea, is an industrial center and resort area in which country." The correct answer is Croatia.

Bressler will join state champions from across the country at the national bee May 19-20, where he'll have the chance to win a \$25,000 college scholarship and a trip to the Galápagos Islands.


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