

Rheem School Student Advanced to State Geo Bee Finals

Submitted by Charlotte Gruebele



Rheem Elementary School fifth grader Mason Gruebele Photo provided

For the first time in Donald Rheem Elementary School history, the school's Geography Bee Champ advanced to the National Geographic Bee State Finals. Mason Gruebele, a 10-year-old fifth grader, traveled to Fresno State University April 4, to compete with 97 other

fourth through eighth graders for the title of State Champion. Nearly 600 schools in California participated in school Bees this year. Each school's Geo Bee champ then took a test to qualify for the state championship. This year, 101 students were invited to participate in the State Final, and 98 were there to compete.

Mason's love for geography started in first grade when he began drawing his own maps of the United States. Now he is passionate about drawing maps of the world, and learning about the cultures, languages and histories of other countries. He collects maps and reads atlases for enjoyment. In addition to his love of geography, he enjoys Boy Scouts and playing classical music on the piano. He was also Rheem School's Bee champ last year as a fourth grader, the only student to win the title two years in a row.

Although Mason missed one question in the preliminaries and did not get to advance to the tie breaker round in Fresno, it was such a great experience that he is eager for a chance to earn a spot at the National Geographic Bee State Final next year.

Beach Music in Lafayette

By Cathy Dausman



Matt Kolb (left) and Ben Miller listen to a song they recorded as the duo Eventide. Photo Cathy Dausman

The Lafayette studio is a compact affair with a phone booth-sized sound room holding only a Shure mic. Add a keyboard and beat pad, an acoustic and electric guitar and two musicians, and it becomes production headquarters for the duo, not a band, who call themselves Eventide. Matt Kolb and Ben Miller are Eventide; they're aiming for a laid back guitar sound filled with riffs, light percussion and what Miller calls fast-spoken "flow" vocals.

There's a gentle jazzy, soft rap feel to the Eventide sound, one that Kolb and Miller describe as a blend of alternative rock and hip-hop.

The students - Kolb attends Diablo Valley College; Miller is an Acalanes High School senior - aim to make "beach" music, hence the sunset-evoking name. They began working together last year after Miller taught himself to play guitar, and approached Kolb to jam. "It'd be a waste not to share [their music]," Kolb reasoned, so they recorded and produced it. Miller writes the guitar line music first, then fills in lyrics; Kolb lays down the beat work and handles production.

Kolb describes himself as classically trained, having started piano lessons in second grade. He played piano and percussion in wind groups and jazz ensembles through Stanley Middle School, regularly attending Lafayette Summer Music Jazz

Workshops, and Acalanes High School. "Music has been a huge influence my whole life," Kolb said, adding he'd like to make a career of music production.

The self-taught Miller has yet to take a music theory class, but that didn't stop him from singing lead vocals. The duo listens to Boston-based Aer, Jack Johnson and Foo Fighters for inspiration, and would love to open for a favorite band in a small Berkeley venue, but right now their focus is the upcoming release of a five song EP recording. They're pleased to have accumulated 50,000 plays on the web-based audio distribution platform, SoundCloud.

"Eventide's production and music skills are really good," said Lafayette singer/songwriter Laura Zucker after listening to their music online. "They are able to emulate several musical styles, and I like the contrast of traditional rap style music with non-traditional style lyrics," Zucker added.

Miller wants to attend the University of California at Santa Barbara, close enough to drive to Kolb at USC or UCLA, where he "can be Matt's weekend roommate" and continue to make music together.

Listen to Eventide via SoundCloud at <https://soundcloud.com/eventide-music-1>, find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TheEventideMusic> or follow the duo on Twitter: @eventide_music.

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