

Student hopes to place in geography challenge

by David Lea

Oakville Beaver Staff

What is the capital of Peru? What lake separates Wisconsin and Michigan? What Icelandic volcano erupted in April 2010?

For Oakville resident and St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School student Megan Jenkinson, 15, these are interesting pieces of trivia.

The Grade 10 student will face off against 49 other geography lovers from across the country in today's (Thursday's) 19th edition of the Great Canadian Geography Challenge.

The challenge, held annually by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, offers students born after Aug. 31, 1998, the opportunity to test their knowledge of Canadian and international geography as well as topography, climate and more in an educational competition.

The top three scorers receive, respectively, a \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 scholarship and a chance to represent Canada in the *National Geographic* World Championship in 2015.

"I'm pretty excited I made the Top 50," said Jenkinson. "I'm really happy with that."

Jenkinson said she has travelled extensively living in Calgary, England and visiting much of Europe.

Between that and a love of history and reading, particularly *National Geographic*, she has absorbed much about the world around her.

Last year, her body of knowledge became apparent when she aced a series of geography quizzes at school.

St. Mildred's Geography, World Issues and Civics Senior School teacher Brian Speck explored Jenkinson's knowledge further by holding a geography competition between her and

the rest of the class. When Jenkinson excelled, Speck recommended she participate in a school-level geography challenge, which she again aced.

In March, Jenkinson advanced to the Provincial/Territorial Geography Challenge in which she competed online against representatives from schools across Canada. The goal was to whittle the contestants to 50. Jenkinson was among them.

"One question that stumped me was what is the instrument used to measure wind speed. It's an anemometer," said Jenkinson, who did correctly answer a question about the location of Crowsnest Pass because her family would drive through it every year when they lived in Calgary.

When the time comes to take the national test, Jenkinson said she will be taken to a classroom and supervised as she takes the challenge online.

The St. Mildred's student said she has been preparing by reading.

"I like the volcanoes, the tectonic plates. That's always interested me. I'm not really sure why," she said. "I like connecting with different places. I like seeing maps and just knowing about different places. It's satisfying to have general facts about things."

While Jenkinson may consider a career in kinesiology or international relations, when she is not competing in national tests the 15-year-old said she enjoys reading, watching movies and playing soccer and hockey.

For more, visit www.geochallenge.ca.



St. Mildred's Lightbourn student Megan Jenkinson, 15, is going to a national geography contest final.

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