

IHS Bee-T-A Captures Adult Spelling Bee

By Tompkins Weekly Staff

More than 300 members of the community of all ages gathered for the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) Adult Spelling Bee on March 1 in the Ithaca High School Wellness Center Gym.

I.H.S. Bee-T-A, representing the Ithaca High School PTA, was victorious, spelling “idiosyncratic” after Highway to Spell from Cayuga Radio Group misspelled the word.

Following four preliminary rounds with seven teams in each, four finalist teams advanced to the championship round including We Spell Krazy Good and the Bunco Bees. In addition, the Caroline Be-ni-ks were recognized for having the Best Costumes and Most Spirit. The ICSD Librarians known as #icsdlibs raised the most funds for their team entry.

The 17th annual event featured 28 spelling teams of three adults each competing for the championship Fuzzy Bee trophy and raising \$26,000 for IPEI’s grants for teachers.

Chemung Canal Trust Company, the Blue Ribbon Champion Sponsor for the fifth year, was joined by Red Ribbon Finalist Sponsor Wells Fargo Advisors and two Gold Ribbon Sponsors, Cayuga Radio Group and Sciarabba Walker & Co. Their corporate support covers all event expenses so that team sponsorships directly support grants for teachers. West Hill Graphics and Calf Audio were also key event partners.

Run like an official spelling bee,

with rules, a pronouncer, host, timekeeper, and three judges, event income also includes team fundraising, a silent auction, event program advertisements, and a 50/50 raffle.

Geoff Dunn pronounced the words with assistance from Zoya Segelbacher while timekeeper Susan Piliero alerted spellers when their time had expired. Each round featured an honorary celebrity bee-keeper assisting her: Cornell’s Robin Davisson, Chemung Canal’s Mike Wayne, TC3’s Deb Mohlenhoff, and Wells Fargo’s Rob Ainslie. Judges included IPEI founder Ralph Jones, Paulette Manos and Deborah Lynn. This year’s Bee host was Jean McPheeters.

Teams are known by creative names such as Highway to Spell, Spell Sesquicentennial, Slightly Better than Autocorrect, Bean-keepers, I.H.S. Bee-TA, BJM Spell Casters, LACS Alternative Spellerz, and the Hilarious Spell-Loehrs.

Two teams were back after multiple championships: the Spellicans and Fine Arts “Word” Boosters, and last year’s winners, We Spell Krazy Good (WSKG), attempted a repeat victory. Some teams were comprised of community members who want to support local public education and enjoy spelling. Others are closely connected to the Ithaca City School District (ICSD): Ithaca Teachers Association, ICSD Administration, ICSD Board of Education, ICSD Librarians, Belle Sherman Elementary School PTA, Caroline

Elementary School PTA, North-east Elementary PTA, Ithaca High School PTA, Ithaca High School Math Department, Lehman Alternative Community School, Fine Arts Booster Group, and the Ithaca Council of PTAs.

Teams represented the event sponsors and team sponsors including CFCU, Wegmans, Carol Bushberg Real Estate, Audrey Edelman RealtyUSA, Ithaca College, Cornell University, Trane U.S, Inc, True Insurance, Harris Beach PLLC, CSP Management, Hunt Engineers, WSKG, UPS Store, Anchor Capital Management, Robert Maciel Associates, Tompkins Insurance Agencies, Avital’s Apiaries, and Wordsmyth.

Championship Round prizes and new awards for the teams with the best costumes, most team spirit, and highest fundraising were provided by DonorsChoose.org, Steve Ryan, Susan McCutcheon, and Makepeace Candles.

Refreshments were donated by Aladdin’s Natural Eatery, B & W Supply Company, Collegetown Bagels, Cornell Orchards, Ithaca Coffee Company, Mark’s Pizzeria, Ned’s Pizzeria, P&C Fresh, Subway, and Wings Over Ithaca. The silent auction featured 40 items provided by restaurants, museums, retail shops, salons and spas, educational organizations, and inns. In addition, the event program features advertisements from more generous businesses.

Events like the Spelling Bee depend on participation of many. The Bee Committee was chaired by IPEI board member Jennifer

Biloski and supported by IPEI Programs and Events Manager Julie Langenbacher. Nora Shang, Karen Yearwood, Ellen Reuben, Michelle Woods, David McMurry, Usha Raman, Marcie Wyant, Connie Patterson and Mary Grainger volunteered as committee members, and IPEI board members were involved with event preparation and production, too.

Student volunteers from DeWitt Junior Honor Society, and Ithaca High’s Code Red Robotics team assisted at the event. Meira Braun and Grace Blodgett were this year’s Bee Fairies escorting teams through all the rounds after words were misspelled.

WRED, Ithaca High School’s television production facility and course, offers Digital Media students the opportunity to produce shows in a real-world environment for the web and for cable. Thanks to Steve Cass, Michael Reiff and their students, the Bee was broadcast live stream and will be available for later viewing. Go to youtube, search for IHSWRED, locate the playlist and find IPEI Spelling Bee.

During the last school year IPEI awarded over \$75,000 in grants, benefiting teachers and students at all grade levels in the Ithaca City School District (ICSD). Grants are provided for innovative educational projects including many that promote collaboration between Ithaca schools and the community.

For more information, see www.ipei.org or contact 256-IPEI (4734) or ipei@ipei.org.



Your Hometown Grocery
Quality Products, Friendly Service
Everyday Low Prices
At Trumansburg Shur-Save



“Are you enjoying all the continuing days of winter? If you’re trying to find something you can do till the time comes when you can head outside, get inspired and cook some tasty meals at home. For ideas, stop by our store for some great tasting, quality meats and fresh, crisp veggies. Our in-store bakery has fresh baked goods to complete your meal. So come stop in today and shop our in-store flyer for friendly neighborly service and prices so low you’re always shur to save!” ~ JT Swartz



Open 7am to 10pm Everyday
Rt. 96, just south of Trumansburg
Locally Owned and Operated
607-387-3701



ITHACA BAKERY

★★★★

WHERE LOCAVORES,
omnivores,
VEGANS, VEGETARIANS
& DESSERTARIANS

FIND COMMON GROUND

www.ithacabakery.com

400 N. MEADOW STREET 607.273.7110
TRIPHAMMER MARKETPLACE 607.257.2255

**High Efficiency
Saves You Money**

Don't Waste the Fuel You Buy
Heating & Cooling Systems
Home & Business
Sales & Service



HOME COMFORT SYSTEMS
Innovation never felt so good.™

HSC Associates
Heating & Air Condition, Inc.
Locally Owned and Operated

273-2180
618 W. Buffalo St., Ithaca

Theresa Sornberger Massage Therapy



*Focusing on Relaxation and Therapeutic Massage using:
Swedish, Deep Tissue Therapy, Trigger Point Therapy,
Reflexology, Hydrotherapy, Prenatal, Elder.
Hot Stone and Medical Massage.*

*Gift Certificates Available, Referral Discounts
New York State Licensed Massage Therapist*

*Locations in Freeville and Newark Valley
By Appointment: 607-227-7337 or theresa070@yahoo.com*