



Staff Photo: Jonathan Phillips

Lanier Middle School sixth-grader Asad Ladhani is kissed on the cheek by his father Adil after winning the Gwinnett County Spelling Bee for the second year in a row Saturday. Eighty students from elementary and middle schools across the county participated in the written portion of the event and 12 semifinalists were chosen to participate in the oral competition. Ladhani was named the winner after spelling dicotyledon correctly.

Can't bee beat

Lanier Middle sixth-grader defends spelling bee title

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LAWRENCEVILLE — For the second consecutive year, Asad Ladhani cultivated success at the Gwinnett County Spelling Bee.

After runner-up Ryan Bhowmik misspelled "grivation," Ladhani correctly spelled that and "dicotyledon," which is a plant with two seed leaves, to become the 2009 champion of the county competition on Saturday.

Ladhani's winning word last year? "Poinsettia," a tropical shrub with yellow flowers and petal-like red leaves.

"I feel great," the Lanier Middle School sixth-grader said after winning the com-

petition. "I was kind of nervous but kind of confident because I had experience of what a spelling bee is like."

Ladhani said he was "pretty confident" he would win after Bhowmik, a fifth-grader at Camp Creek Elementary School, incorrectly spelled his 23rd word of the oral competition. Ladhani knew "grivation" but "dicotyledon" gave him a moment's pause. He looked relieved when caller Leslie Sniff gave a second pronunciation of the word.

Bhowmik, who won \$75 in the Gwinnett Daily Post-sponsored bee, tackled words including "megatonnage," "desultoriness" and "synoptophore" before he was eliminated.



Lanier Middle School sixth-grader Asad Ladhani smiles after winning the Gwinnett County Spelling Bee for the second year in a row Saturday.

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"I thought I probably wouldn't win because he (Ladhani) is a really good speller and I saw him win last year," Bhowmik said.

Both Bhowmik and Ladhani, who won a \$200 prize, said they plan to continue studying to prepare for the district spelling bee Feb. 28 at Collins Hill High School.

The 12 students who participated in the oral bee will also compete in the district competition. The fourth- through eighth-graders qualified for the oral bee by earning the highest number of points during the written bee Saturday morning. Students from 59 elementary schools and 19 middle schools participated in the written portion of the competition after winning their school spelling bee.

Naveed Khan, an eighth-grader at Sweetwater Middle School, was eliminated in the eighth round on "artogravure." The five-time county bee participant was last year's runner-up. He and the rest of the oral bee competitors each won a \$25 prize.

In the third round, Khan had stepped up to the microphone to spell "ululate" when the competition stopped briefly because a protester for Erin Gardner, an eighth-grader at Shiloh Middle School, challenged her elimination on "thoracic."

SPELLINGBEECOMPETITORS

The twelve Gwinnett County Public Schools students who participated Saturday in the oral portion of the Gwinnett County Spelling Bee will also compete in the district competition Feb. 28 at Collins Hill High School. The students are listed below, along with their final words in Saturday's oral bee.

- Asad Ladhani, sixth grade, Lanier Middle, won on "dicotyledon"
- Ryan Bhowmik, fifth grade, Camp Creek Elementary, eliminated on "grivation"
- Lucy Chuang, fourth grade, Chattahoochee Elementary, eliminated on "nucleophilic"
- Angela Mo, seventh grade, Creekland Middle, eliminated on "antennule"
- HanFei Wang, eighth grade, Duluth Middle, eliminated on "sacristy"
- Hammad Khalid, eighth grade, Hull Middle, eliminated on "geophagous"
- Shefali Jain, seventh grade, Pinckneyville Middle, eliminated on "approbatory"
- Jackson Goode, seventh grade, Osborne Middle, eliminated on "querimonious"
- Matthew Louis, eighth grade, Richards Middle, eliminated on "rejuvenescent"
- Erin Gardner, eighth grade, Shiloh Middle, eliminated on "nachtmusik"
- John Garrett, eighth grade, Snellville Middle, eliminated on "epiphany"
- Naveed Khan, eighth grade, Sweetwater Middle, eliminated on "artogravure"

For a list of Gwinnett County Public Schools students who participated in Saturday's written bee, visit www.gwinnettdaily.com.

After reviewing the tape, the judges decided to readmit Gardner into the competition because her pronunciation of the word was not clear and she did not ask for a definition.

Meanwhile, Khan used the time to think about the word he had been asked to spell.

"At first, I thought I didn't know the word," he said. "But I thought about it ... and when my turn came up again, I

spelled it."

Lucy Chuang, a fourth-grader at Chattahoochee Elementary, was the last contestant eliminated before the competition between Bhowmik and Ladhani began. She misspelled "nucleophilic."

"I'm glad I can compete in the next one (the district competition) also," Chuang said. "I like spelling a lot. It's fun to practice because I read a lot."