

Gardiner student sweeps Park County Spelling Bee for second time

By Samantha Hill

Enterprise Staff Writer

Thirty students from around Park County spelled their hearts out Wednesday at the Shane Lalani Center for the Arts ballroom, but seventh-grader Aidan Veress won the competition for the second year in a row.

Aidan, a Gardiner School student, won on the word "tortoni" — an Italian ice cream dessert made with eggs and heavy cream — without missing a beat.

Although he will go to the state competition later this spring as he did last year, when he won second place, he continued to remain humble.

"There are a lot of kids there that are really good," Aidan said.

He said his hardest word at the Wednesday's county bee was "zodiac" in the beginning of the competition because he had butterflies in his stomach, but he was soon able to get over them.

Second-place winner Graham Stacy, a sixth-grader, is also a Gardiner School student. Graham said he was happy to get second place because he still feels like a winner.

"I am still a winner because I don't have to

perform in front of all those people," he joked.

He also said Gardiner students were so good at this competition because "we have nothing better to do."

Siblings Finn and Remy Sexton from Shields Valley School competed against one another in the bee, both making it into the top 10 before Finn got fourth place.

Although there was a chance for the two to become competitive, Finn said they didn't try to challenge each other and cheered one another on.

Third-place winner Owen Johnson of Sleeping Giant Middle School was among the top four contestants who received gift cards to Elk River Books at the competition.

The competition went on for about 12 rounds starting at 1 p.m., pelting students with obscure or difficult words including "obsequious," "haversack," and "misanthrope."

Seventh-grade Gardiner student Aidan Veress breaks into a smile after winning the Park County Spelling Bee for his second consecutive year on Wednesday afternoon.

Enterprise photo by Hunter D'Antuono

