

## Glaslyn's Hannah Pilat Wins Spelling Championship

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Glaslyn School's Hannah Pilat became the Saskatoon StarPhoenix Regional Champion on Saturday when she won the Postmedia Canspell spelling bee for Northern Saskatchewan.

The grade seven student emerged from a pool of 40 contestants to claim the title and become the pride of her school and the toast of her town.

In order to qualify for the spelling bee Hannah had to win her school's spelling bee and then successfully pass a qualifying test. In order to accomplish this she began studying at home, an hour every day, for the six weeks prior to the contest.

"As soon as I mentioned the spelling bee she hit the books right away to prepare for it," said teacher Mladen Loncar. "She really had a positive approach to it, and she's a good, solid, respectful and hardworking student. She did it all herself –no coaching and no tutoring."

The forty students from grades 4 through 8 met at the University of Saskatchewan's Faculty of Education building, where, before an audience and a panel of judges, they went through some 32 rounds of competition before Hannah emerged the winner.

In each round each student was required to spell a word. The penalty for misspelling was elimination. All words for the early rounds came from a list that the students had been able to study from. When the list was exhausted the panel turned to the dictionary for words, which they needed to do when they reached the final eight students.

"By the time they got down to the last four contestants," said Hannah, "the words started to get kind of hard."

At the end it came down to a competition between Hannah and Martensville's Cydney Reddekopp. In order to determine the champion each girl was required to spell a word correctly. If one of the two missed, the person who had correctly spelled their word was given a championship word which they had to correctly spell in order to win the contest. A failure to spell the championship word then resulted in a new round for the two contestants. Several rounds went by during which both contestants misspelled their words.

"I think we were both quite tense and tired by that point," said Hannah. "My final word was spectacles, which was completely easy compared to the words that had gone before, and my championship word was parliament. I thought that was easy too."

As winner Hannah received a trophy, an e-reader and a cheque for \$5000.00. "Most of the money will go into a fund for college," Hannah said.

She'll also be flying to Toronto at the end of the month for the 2011 Postmedia Canspell National Spelling Bee Final, from March 23-27. The event will be broadcast on CBC across the country on Monday, April 4th at 8:00 p.m. ET (check local listings). The top three from this contest will share \$15,000.00 and go on to compete at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. in June.

And she's still studying. Hard.

