

Numb What?!

Today while preparing to watch the latest in what seems like daily thunderstorms, I was watching a taped broadcast of the National Spelling Bee. One of the funniest moments of any bee I have ever seen was in the 9th round. Sameer Mishra from West Lafayette, Indiana was given the word *numnah*. The 13 year-old eighth grader mispronounced the word and said "numnut." Not only did I start to laugh, the entire television audience cracked up and stopped the whole thing for 30 seconds. Upon reflection, the young man quickly recovered and a light bulb seemed to come on. *OH... Numnah!!!* And he proceeded to correctly spell the word and eventually become crowned National Spelling Bee Champion with the word *guerdon*. (*and if you would like the definition, language of origin, etc. I am not giving them to you> I would hate to spoil a good game of Balderdash*).

My own association with the Bee began in the 5th grade. I was runner-up to a 6th grade girl. We battled each other through (I believe 8 rounds) before I unfortunately misspelled *illegible*. I do remember my class giving me a surprise party a few days after the bee.

My six grade year, I did not fare as well. I incorrectly spelled *pajamas*. I knew as soon as I said "g" and not "j." In hindsight, if I had just slid that last sound to an "a" instead of "e".

I do not remember my seventh grade experience. However, I was finally victorious my 8th grade year and progressed to our county bee. I do not remember where I finished there, either.

In last year's competition, an eighth grader from my local junior high school made it to the National Bee where he made it just beyond the first written round. Pretty impressive considering our small community had previously never sent a

speller to Washington, DC to compete.

[watch?v=VjzrNWPu19E](#)