

# Lorain County Spelling Bee champ



JEFF BARNES / CHRONICLE

Lorain County Spelling Bee regional champion Bridget Smith, a seventh grader at Durling Middle School in Lorain, hoists her trophy in victory Thursday at Avon Middle School. Next stop is Washington, D.C.

## Winner says she would have settled for 'participation trophy'

**Kevin Martin**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

AVON — Bridget Smith, a seventh grade student at Durling Middle School in Sheffield Township, is the 2023 Lorain County Spelling Bee champion, taking home the title Thursday evening at Avon Middle School.

Smith will represent Lorain County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., from May 30 to June 1.

She defeated 32 other spellers in the finals, securing the title by correctly spelling "wunderkind," putting her family's knowledge of German to use.

After 11 rounds of spelling, Smith

faced off against Lucy Carrion, an eighth grade student at Avon Middle School, correctly spelling "preponderance" and securing the championship with "wunderkind," defined as "a person who achieves great success when relatively young."

Commenting after the win, Smith held her trophy high and said she was excited but nervous about representing Durling and Lorain County in the nation's capital. She said she didn't expect to come out on top.

"No, I wanted a participation trophy," she said.

Taking the next steps, Smith joked she will have to make her dad, Paul,

help in her preparation process for Washington.

"Just very excited, she's been studying a lot. We're glad she did it," Paul Smith said.

Cheryl Grizzell, Bridget's mother, said she was delighted to see the last word was a German word since the family speaks some German at home.

"She was very secretive about (her preparation) and we quizzed her about it, but she likes to do things on her own," Grizzell said. "She's a self-studier and it was pretty hands-off and she just took care of it."

See **BEE**, A2

## BEE

From A1

The family looks forward to heading to Washington to support Bridget as she gets a shot at a national title.

"Yeah, it's unexpected though. We're gonna have a good time," Grizzell added.

The 39th annual Lorain County Spelling Bee was presented by the Educational Service Center of Lorain County and The Chronicle-Telegram.

Spelling Bee coordinator Debbie Hunt said prior to the start of the competition it began with 55 spellers in grades seven and eight, with the final 33 coming from the results of online testing.

All of the words used in the competition were provided by the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Contact Kevin Martin at (440) 329-7121 or [kmartin@chroniclet.com](mailto:kmartin@chroniclet.com). Follow him on Twitter @KevinMartinCT.