

The Grate Groan-Up Had the Walls Groaning from all the Laughter

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The Grate Groan-Up Spelling Bee was held last Friday evening at the Okotoks Rotary Performing Arts Centre and it was a function like no other!

Five councils entered teams of three members each. They were:

The Bee G's from Turner Valley:



Barry Williamson, Gerald Pfeil and Sandra Rishaug.

Big Rockies from Okotoks:



Florence Christophers, Ed Sands and Matt Rockley.

Diamond Gem Stones from Black Diamond:

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Sharlene Brown, Judy Thomson and Sharon Hart.

Foothills Fillies from the MD of Foothills:



Barb Castell, Judy Gordon and Suzanne Oel.

Kool ADE Spellers from High River:



Emile Blokland, Don Moore and Al Brander.

Costumes were priceless and fitting to the team names, with the Diamond Gem Stones taking the prize for the best one.



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The rules were easy – 60 seconds were allowed for each team to spell the word, each team was allowed to purchase ‘mulligans’ to bail them out from a miss-spelled word.



Darrel Janz was the Master Pronouncer; the Judges were Doris Daley, Sandra Weibe and Jessica Patterson; the Time Keeper was Pat Fream and John Barlow was an amazing Master of Ceremonies.



John kept the bee buzzing with anecdotes and teasing, keeping everything light hearted and fun.

The Big Rockies prevailed and buzzed to the top with the Cool ADE Spellers taking the prize for most pledges.



There was an audience participation that included five words: three of which ten entries managed to answer correctly and two of which I can't even find on google no matter how I try to spell them! Sharon and Robin Thibodeau teamed up and won the audience participation prize.

Danielle Smith, the MLA for Highwood and the Leader of the Official Opposition Wildrose Party, is the Honourary Chair of the event and eloquently summed up her position:



“I am thrilled to be the Honourary Chair of the Grate Groan-up Spelling Bee, an event that represents my own passion for words and supports an organization that shares my commitment to lifelong learning as it reaches out and provides literacy and education programs for both young and old.”

To Bee or not to Bee: Our Purpose

Corporate spelling bees have been popular fundraising events in the United States, attracting large corporations to highly publicized evenings. The Grate Groan-up Spelling Bee, the first corporate bee in Canada, was launched in Kingston, Ontario in 1994 and was successfully received by corporations and the media.

Literacy for Life has adopted this event as its signature fundraiser with help from the Kingston Literacy Society. While the set-up is similar to a traditional spelling bee, the focus is on fun and fundraising.

If you would like to become involved in future Bees, please contact Sue Stegmeier at the Literacy for Life Foundation: 403-652-5090.

[YouTube Video](#)