

Bee...from Page 1A

spelled the word without hesitation.

"I was excited to get to the finals," Tommy said. "I wasn't even expecting to get out of the third round. Yes, I was nervous. I almost misspelled my practice word (today)."

"When I walked up to the microphone, I heard the word and I'm like, 'okay, I know how to spell this word. I put it through my head a few times and when I started spelling the word, I knew exactly the moment I spelled it wrong. The second letter came out wrong."

The crowd of fellow students and parents applauded Emi and Tommy once the Bee was decided. The crowd felt as much anguish as Tommy over the misspelling of "goliath."



The thirty-six participants in the 2015 Union County Spelling Bee. Emi Leonard, far right, won the Bee. Photo/Charles Duncan

They were equally enamored with Emi's spelling ability. You see, Emi is the first sixth grader to ever win the

Union County Spelling Bee. And yes, she was nervous. "It was a bit challenging," Emi said. "There was a lot

of people here, and the eighth graders and seventh graders are always better because they're in higher grades." Going to the district bee

has placed increased pressure on Emi. "It's going to be pretty cool, but I'm going to have to study a lot," Emi said. "I put a

lot of effort into winning the countywide bee. I asked my classmates to help me study. And this morning, I forced my brother to help me study."

Tommy had been spelling words in his head, practicing for the countywide bee. He's going to keep up the practice as he prepares to be the Union County alternate at the district bee.

"Being the runner-up, it's really nerve-racking to know that I might have to do this again," Tommy said. "But it makes me feel like I need to keep working on spelling."

With Emi and Tommy preparing for the district bee, the chances of a district champion from Union County are dramatically increasing. Best of luck!

Director...from Page 1A

This will be the second time the board has offered the job to a potential candidate since beginning the search following former Director Donna Howell's retirement announcement, and this time, the board and its candidate were able to see eye to eye.

"He had some questions about leave time and date of hire and things like that that we all discussed at the meeting yesterday," said Interim Director Susie Brendle of the meeting. "After discussion, I brought it back and emailed Mr. Stone back with the board's decision about how many vacation days, sick days and things like that."

"He did accept the board's decision, and we are getting the paperwork ready at the moment to send to him all of the human resources paperwork that he'll need, because he will need to submit paperwork to the state in order to get certified in the state of Georgia, and that will determine his salary," said Brendle.

The board and those at each library are excited about finally being able to name a permanent director.

"I'm very relieved to have this process over with," said Brendle, who is the



Susie Brendle has served as interim director of the MRLS since Donna Howell's retirement in December. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

branch manager of Union County Public Library. "It's been a long process as far as all of the interviews and navigating through all of the resumes, interviewing people, being turned down. We went through this process in October, were turned down. We had other candidates that we were interested in, put out feelers with them, they turned us down."

"So, it's a lot of disappointment along the way of being turned down and having to start over and start over and start over. I'm very relieved that finally, hopefully, this process is over so we can get back to what we're here to do - run libraries and keep the

public happy with their books and materials."

Brendle referred to her time as interim director as an eye-opening experience.

"It's not a 40-hour a week job," said Brendle. "It's a time consuming position, and when you're a branch manager here, running a branch library on top of doing that, it's a lot of long hours. Somewhere down the road, I might want to do that, but I am extremely happy and content where I'm at."

Over the years, Brendle has become very much attached to her current library, as she played a crucial role in the look and feel of Union County Public Library during its major renovation in 2011.

"Everything in here I had a hand on helping to decide, so I'm very content here, and I'd like to stay content," said Brendle. "I'd like to actually be able to sleep at night and not be up half the night doing the two different jobs."

Had plans gone according to schedule, a new director would have started at the MRLS Jan. 1, and Brendle would have only needed to serve as interim director for the month of December.

But thanks to Brendle's hard work, as well as the work

put in by all of the other employees of the MRLS, Stone can look forward to a smooth transition into the director's chair.

"I'm hoping that I did a

decent job, and that I did Don-nacredit," said Brendle. "She's helped behind the scenes getting me stuff that I needed to keep everything going. Even though she is retired, she still

has a vast knowledge that I've turned to quite a bit. But, I am relieved to be able to get back to the job I've been doing for the last 17 years."

Burglary...from Page 1A

Kowaliuk was indeed trying to burglarize the store."

While interviewing Kowaliuk, he requested the presence of an attorney, Sgt. Osborn said.

"He declined to speak to us without an attorney present," Sgt. Osborn said.

Sgt. Osborn said that Kowaliuk's arrival in Union County coincides with a series of burglaries in the area.

"We believe there is a connection," Sgt. Osborn said. "Mr. Kowaliuk is a person of interest in other crimes in the area."

Those cases remain under investigation, Sgt. Osborn said.

Meanwhile, Kowaliuk remains in custody in the Union County Jail, Sgt. Osborn said.

"He's got a probation hold in addition to the burglary charge," Sgt. Osborn said.



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