



2016 Scripps National Spelling Bee Declares Co-Champions

May 27, 2016

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md., May 27, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Jairam Hathwar (JAY-rahm HATH-wahr), a 13-year-old speller from Painted Post, New York, and Nihar Janga (nee-HAHR jenga), an 11-year-old speller from Austin, Texas, are co-champions of the 2016 Scripps National Spelling Bee, presented by Kindle.



It was a marathon finish for these two outstanding competitors. In the 39th round, Hathwar correctly spelled "Feldenkrais," a medical term used for a system of aided body movements intended to increase bodily awareness and ease tension. Janga immediately followed by spelling "gesellschaft," which means a rationally developed mechanistic type of social relationship characterized by impersonally contracted associations between persons. With these correct spellings, the Scripps National Spelling Bee declared co-champions for the third year in a row.

The final two words were the crowning achievement of an impressive performance. Hathwar and Janga tackled every difficult word and lasted through all 39 rounds, including 24 rounds of head-to-head competition. The Scripps National Spelling Bee introduced a new format this year for the final three competitors. Once the competition reached the final three spellers in Round 16, the rules for this year changed from the previous year's 25-word pre-determined list to a maximum of 25 rounds in which each speller received a word in each round.

This was Hathwar's second time and Janga's first time participating in the National Finals. Hathwar's brother Sriram Hathwar was a co-champion in 2014.

Rich Boehne, chairman, president and CEO of The E.W. Scripps Company, declared Hathwar and Janga co-champions and awarded them engraved championship trophies moments before ESPN signed off from its national broadcast of the 89th Scripps National Spelling Bee.

"Hathwar and Janga both proved their depth of knowledge of root words and word origins to master round after round of some of the most challenging words in the English language," said Boehne. "The entire week was a showcase of very talented students who have dedicated so much time and effort to this skill. Scripps commends their performance, and every year we take great pride in our stewardship of the nation's largest and longest-running educational program."

Hathwar represents Corning Rotary Club in Corning, New York, in this year's competition. He is a 7th-grade student at The Alternative School for Math and Science. Janga represents Houston Public Media in Houston, Texas, in this year's competition. He is a 5th-grade student at River Ridge Elementary School.

Hathwar also competed in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in 2015, tying for 22nd place. This was Janga's first year at the Scripps National Spelling Bee. He is also among the youngest competitors to ever win the champion title.

The competition began Tuesday with 285 spellers who advanced to the Scripps National Spelling Bee after beating the odds to reach this level. They are among the top 0.000026 percent of more than 11 million students who initially participated in spelling bees held in classrooms, schools and locally sponsored events around the country.

Bee Week took place in the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland. Round-by-round results are available at spellingbee.com.

The champions each receive:

From Scripps: a \$40,000 cash prize and the Scripps National Spelling Bee engraved trophy

From Kindle: \$2,500 for books and Kindle eBooks on Amazon.com, 100 Kindle e-readers for the champion's school and the opportunity to appear in a Kindle print advertisement

From Merriam-Webster: a \$2,500 U.S. savings bond and a complete reference library

From Encyclopedia Britannica: \$400 of reference works, including a 1768 Encyclopaedia Britannica Replica Set Deluxe Edition and a three-year membership to Britannica Online Premium

As the Scripps National Spelling Bee co-champions, Hathwar and Janga will begin a whirlwind victory tour early Friday, with numerous national networks and publications, entertainment programs and digital media platforms including "Good Morning America," "Today Show," "Wall Street Journal," "Live with Kelly," "CNN" and "Jimmy Kimmel Live." For the first time ever, the co-champions of the Scripps National Spelling Bee also will travel to Wall Street to ring the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange on Wednesday, June 1.

Snehaa Ganesh Kumar (SNAY-HAH gan-esh koo-mar) of Folsom, California, representing *The Sacramento Bee*, placed third in the competition. The Scripps National Spelling Bee substantially increased the cash prizes for all top finishers this year. The prize for placing behind the co-champions increased from \$7,500 last year to \$20,000 for 2016.

As the presenting sponsor of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, Kindle provided a Kindle Paperwhite with custom Scripps National Spelling Bee cover for all spellers competing in the National Finals.

Kindle's relationship with the Scripps National Spelling Bee continues in 2017. Both internationally recognized brands share in the belief that reading is critically important to a child's lifelong achievement.

Kindle offers technology that will be used by the Scripps National Spelling Bee in building its word lists for school-level study materials. Vocabulary Builder compiles an easy-to-access list from words readers explore through the dictionary option. Readers can use these lists to quiz themselves with flashcards and instantly see words in context until they have mastered them. With Word Wise, short and simple definitions automatically appear above difficult words to help readers take on more challenging books. These enhancements provide for an improved reading experience that leads to greater comprehension, a stronger vocabulary and a better, uninterrupted reading experience for young readers.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all of their lives. Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](http://www.escripps.com) (NYSE: SSP) serves audiences and businesses through a growing portfolio of television, radio and digital media brands. Scripps is one of the nation's largest independent TV station owners, with 33 television stations in 24 markets and a reach of nearly one in five U.S. households. It also owns 34 radio stations in eight markets. Scripps also runs an expanding collection of local and national digital journalism and information businesses, including satire and humor video and web brand [Cracked](http://www.cracked.com), podcast industry leader [Midroll Media](http://www.midrollmedia.com) and over-the-top video news service [Newsy](http://www.newsy.com). Scripps also produces television shows including "[THE LIST](http://www.thelist.com)" and "[The Now](http://www.thenow.com)" and runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

About Amazon:

Amazon.com opened on the World Wide Web in July 1995. The company is guided by four principles: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfillment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, and Alexa are some of the products and services pioneered by Amazon. For more information, visit www.amazon.com/about.



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