

[Evolutions](#)

Category : [September 1997](#)

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THE QUEEN BEE: is 13-year-old vegetarian Rebecca Sealton of New York who, besides setting an on-stage winner's jump record, correctly spelled the word euonym (a good name for a person, place or thing) to become the first home-schooled U.S. National Spelling Bee winner. It wasn't easy--after the 14th round Rebecca was left with runner-up Prem Murthy Trivedi of New Jersey, out of 245 entrants. Laboring through the words sufflamine, deliquesce, bourgade, anglophilia and coterie, she finally ousted Prem after eight rounds when he missed cortile. Remarkably, Prem and four others of the final nine contestants were Indian-American students: Sudheer Potru, Hirsh Sandesara, Shivani R. Kadakia and Nivedita Gunturi. Rebecca's victory brought to the fore a growing trend toward home schooling. Because of some American schools' poor quality--not to mention outright dangers--many parents have pondered home schooling for their children, but feared they'd not advance as well as their peers. Rebecca doesn't recommend home schooling for everyone, but told Hinduism Today it helped her succeed. "I had more flexibility, academically and to pursue my own interests, for example spelling. You can go at your own pace and level. In practically every subject I'm grades ahead of my peers. My mother stays home full-time and my dad also helps. I think more people should consider home schooling who are dissatisfied with the public school environment." As to being a vegetarian, Rebecca said, "It's not absolutely required in our Jewish faith, but I want to be, for ethical reasons. I don't like to think about animals getting killed." For more Bee statistics and photos, visit their web site at www.spellingbee.com/