



Four Local Teens Take Four Top Championships at State 4-H Dog Show

By Heidi Dahms Foster

This year's Arizona State 4-H Dog Show on February 8 in Tucson has left four local young ladies wondering what they can do to top their achievements at the competition.

The four teens, representing the Lonesome Valley Wranglers 4-H Club of Dewey, worked hard all year, and won the highest award in each competition! Patricia Disert, 11, of Prescott, won the Obedience Championship; Addie Kennedy, 17, of Dewey, earned the Showmanship Championship; Lilia Johnson, 18, of Dewey, won the Agility Championship and Ellyn Peterson, 13, also of Dewey, scored a near perfect 99 of 100 to take the Rally Obedience Championship.

Disert didn't realize she had won the Obedience Championship until she noticed a miscalculation on her scoresheet. After contacting the show committee, the error was corrected and the club had its perfect four for four. Along with their ribbons, the girls won award chairs to remember their accomplishments.

The State show was Johnson's first and last, as she will age out of competition this year. She'll have this special memory to take with her.

In 2019, for the first time, Kennedy and Peterson took on the competition at the State show. The two would compete with



Arizona 4-H State Dog Show 2020, from left, Addie Kennedy and Fetti, Ellyn Peterson and Holly Mae, 4-H leader Jeri Holton, Lilia Johnson and Belle, and Patricia Disert and Morgan. Courtesy Lonesome Valley Wranglers 4-H.

much more seasoned competitors, but they both had the attitude that even if they didn't win, they could learn from their experiences. Kennedy came home from that show with the Obedience Championship, and Peterson won first place in her agility class. The two scored in the top four places of the four competitions.

With 18-year trainers and leaders Jeri Holton and Molly Wisecarver guiding them, the four teens excelled indeed on this year's return trip. Holton said she emphasizes that her 4-H students focus on doing the best they can, rather than winning. "If they do that, I'm proud," she said. But she still encourages them to excel.

Kennedy and Peterson credit Holton with teaching them all of the finer points of competition. They said they are not as nervous in real trials because they are so well prepared. Peterson's

mom, Angela, said Holton teaches the teens competition etiquette and what to look for in the trial ring. That experience paid off for Ellyn Peterson during a windy Rally trial this year. Competitors are able to walk the ring without their dogs before the trial. While Peterson was competing with her dog, one of the signs blew over. She remembered it from her walk-through and got a compliment from the judge.

Along with working with Holton and Wisecarver, Kennedy and Johnson both continue to work for former Lonesome Valley 4-H Wranglers member Megan Sims Kennedy at PSR Stockdogs in Dewey. The two care for a diverse group of dogs, and are exposed to training in all the venues in which they compete. They gain all the knowledge they can from Megan and her mom Dawna Sims – basic care, nutrition, "reading"

the dogs, dog behavior, training, and basic needs of each dog.

The girls are now preparing for the annual Yavapai County Expo at the Prescott Rodeo grounds from April 22-25, 2020. They'll be ready with their dogs, but also with the amazing number of other projects they're involved in. The sky's obviously the limit on what they will accomplish with the guidance of Holton and Wisecarver.

Angela Peterson is still amazed at the teens' achievements at the State Show.

"You had at least 100 participants from around the state (at the State 4-H show), and only four from Yavapai County, said Angela Peterson. "That reinforces to me that we have awesome leaders. I love that the dogs that don't have to have purebred, and 4-H gives the kids something to be passionate about, something that highlights lots of different skills. They are always learning things and always trying to be better."

Young people who would like to be involved in 4-H dog sports can contact Jeri Holton at 928-632-7557 or email farbenholt@bullerinetworks.net; Angela Teskey Peterson at 928-925-7472 or email angelateskey@aol.com; Molly Wisecarver at 928-499-9263 or visit Lonesome Valley 4-H Wranglers on Facebook.