

KeizerCommunity

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Keizer girl has the world on a leash

Sarah Stong shines in largest dog show yet

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

Sarah Stong and the words “Best Junior Handler” are rapidly becoming inseparable. Stong, a McNary High School freshman, recently returned from St. Louis, Mo., where she, and her Australian shepherd, Bentley, won the title at her largest dog show competition yet, the United States Australian Shepherd Association Nationals.

“We compete almost every weekend, but this was the farthest we’ve ever gone for a show,” Sarah said.

She won the best junior handler title in the showmanship portion of the contest, but the duo also competed in obedience and rally competitions.

“We scored a 95 out of 100 in the rally, but obedience didn’t go as planned,” Sarah said.

While the obedience competition focused primarily on how well Bentley listened to commands, the rally tests a variety of skills ranging from obedience to how well the dogs travel in specific patterns, i.e. shapes or any letter of the alphabet. The showmanship competition was judged based on Bentley’s

physical traits and Sarah’s highly-specific knowledge of the breed.

“There weren’t a lot of juniors at the competition, but the ones who were there were really good,” Sarah said.

Sarah was bitten by the dog show bug while attending similar shows at the Marion County Fair when she was 9 years old. She and her mother, Sharon, started conversations about what it would take to get started. The next year, she entered her border collie in the show.

“He didn’t like it too much, but I started working with a trainer in my 4-H Club and looking for an Australian shepherd at the shelters,” Sarah said.

She eventually adopted one, Mac. While he was more suited to being a show dog, he didn’t have the necessary attitude.

“Once he gets in the ring, it’s like everything goes in one ear and out the other, after doing it perfectly at home. Bentley is the complete opposite, he’s all business when we get to a show,” Sarah said.

While Mac allowed Sarah to work through some of her own learning curves, things



Sarah Stong and her show dog, Bentley, atop the winners' podium at the United States Australian Shepherd Association Nationals held in late April in Gray Summit, Mo.

changed for the better when she took ownership of Bentley two years ago. Bentley has more of the conformation judges look for in the breed whereas Mac “is too short

and has funny-looking legs.”

In 2015, Sarah racked up enough best junior handler awards to qualify for the Eukanuba Nationals, but school commitments kept her from going. This year, she already has two to her name. The tally resets annually. Bentley has also become a champion of his breed.

In addition to weekly training sessions with a professional handler, Sarah spends time each day working

on the skills she and Bentley are called upon to perform at shows. She has her sights set on becoming a professional handler herself, which will allow her to show her own dogs as well as others – and accept payment for doing so.

Thus far, she said, the biggest lesson has been patience.

“They’re not going to learn something the first time, you have to work on it over and over. I also had to learn to trust them because it’s a

totally different atmosphere once they are in the ring,” Sarah said.

Sharon said she’s seen other changes in Sarah, too.

“She has a lot more confidence. She speaks openly with the judges now, and that’s not something she did when she was younger. She also is a lot better about her own responsibilities. Taking care of the dogs and their grooming is a big part of them doing well in the shows,” Sharon said.



He visited with friends, swam with his grandsons, spent time at the beach.

“What Dan and I needed from Willamette Valley Hospice might be very different from my neighbor. They come in, figure out what you need as a family and then walk the journey with you.”

Lynda, Dan's wife

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Bike-A-Thon Saturday

Truth Tabernacle Church is holding its 18th Annual 30 kilometer Bike-A-Thon on Saturday, June 4, at 10 a.m.

The route goes through the City of Keizer. This is to help raise money for the Christian School, Truth Tabernacle Christian Academy, and for Community Enrichment.

The route begins at the church, 3795 Pleasant View Drive N.E.

Helping hands sought at K-9 facility June 4

The Salem Police Foundation (SPF) is looking for volunteers to help improve and rebuild portions of the K-9 training facility in Keizer.

Work will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, June 4, at 5915 Windsor Island Rd N. – across from the golf course and turn left at the fork past the gates for parking.

Police dogs will be interacting with volunteers as they paint and work on small construction projects at the facility.

SPF is currently raising \$3,000 to add lighting to the course for evening training. For more information on the Salem Police Foundation, visit salempolicefoundation.org.

WMS celebrates 50 years June 6

Whiteaker Middle School is celebrating its 50th anniversary and the entire community is invited.

The gathering will take place on Monday from 4 to 5 p.m. at the school.

Former staff members and students will have opportunities for group photos and to share their memories for Whiteaker’s time capsule. Memorabilia will also be on display.

RSVP at the event’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/events/1003410946375522/.

Former Whiteaker staff are asked to arrive at 3 p.m. and RSVP at www.facebook.com/events/973483599431690/.

For more information, call the school office at 503-399-3224.

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WorshipDirectory

These Salem-Keizer houses of worship invite you to visit.
Call to list your church in our Worship Directory: (503) 390-1051

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP
8:30 am • 10 am • 11:30 am • 6 pm

PEOPLESCHURCH
4500 LANCASTER DR NE | SALEM
503.304.4000 • www.peopleschurch.com

SAINT EDWARD Catholic Church
393-5323
5303 River Rd. N., Keizer
Father Gary L. Zerr, Pastor
Saturday Vigil Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.
Sundays: 8:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
La Misa en Español: 12:30 p.m.

John Knox Presbyterian Church
452 Cummings Lane North • 393-0404

Rev. Dr. John Neal, Pastor
Worship - 10:30 a.m.
Education Hour - 9:15 a.m.
Nursery Care Available
www.keizerjkpres.org

Faith Lutheran Church
4505 River Rd N • 393-4507

Sunday Schedule:
9:00 a.m. Children’s Church
9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study
9:30 a.m. Children’s Activities
10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion

Pastor Virginia Eggert

dayspring fellowship

Celebration Services
Saturday Evening 6:00 pm
Sunday Morning 9:00 am and 10:45 am

Children’s Programs, Student and Adult Ministries
1755 Lockhaven Dr. NE Keizer
503-390-3900
www.dayspringfellowship.com

Keizer Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
6945 Wheatland Rd. NE 393-6843

3 and 4 year Old Pre-School
Worship and Children’s Church • 10:00 a.m.
Office Hours 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Mon. - Fri.

Jason Lee UMC
820 Jefferson St. NE
Salem OR 97301

Dr. Jon F. Langenwaller, Pastor
The church with the purple doors
503-364-2844
Worship at 9:30 am • Child Care Available

Countryside Christian Church
countrysidechristianchurch.org
Corner of Lockhaven and McLeod, KEIZER • (503) 540-1989

9:00 am & 10:30 am
Sunday Worship
Classes for all ages