

Top riders win coveted 'Dad' Potter

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Three Wallowa County girls achieved a milestone in horsemanship at the Wallowa County Fair last week.

Sarah Aschenbrenner, 16, of Enterprise, Lauren Makin, 16, of Lostine, and Taylor Grote, 16, of Joseph, were each awarded an E.L. "Dad" Potter 3-Step award for horsemanship. The last Wallowa County winner of the 3-Step was Cody Arbogast in 2012. The last Wallowa County winner of the coveted 10-step E.L. "Dad" Potter Pin was way back in 1980 when Carolyn Brennan won it.

The Dad Potter awards are given only when a perfectly groomed and attired 4-H rider performs extremely precise movements on a horse he/she has trained for at least six months. The horse must also be perfectly groomed and tacked up. Riders cannot receive awards for one portion of the requirements, but must be perfect in all three areas.

The trial is a test of finished horsemanship for horse and rider. The movements required of the horse (stops and turns and gaits) are to be performed so precisely that the horse may not deviate from the exact position required by the judge by so much as half a hoof-measure.

Winning the Potter is a goal that requires persistence and dedication.

Sarah Aschenbrenner, for instance, has competed 14 times in four years in her journey to the top. Her horse came to her "green" (barely started) and she has brought him through many trials.



Courtesy Photo/Madison Falk Photography

Left to right: The winners of the coveted E.L. "Dad" Potter 3-Step Award for Horsemanship at the 2015 Wallowa County Fair, Sarah Aschenbrenner, 16, Nez Perce Riders 4-H Club, Lauren Makin, 16, Spur of the Moment 4-H Club, and Taylor Grote, 16, Nez Perce Riders 4-H Club. The young women have set their sights on the even more difficult 10-Step performance in addition to trying out for the 2016 Chief Joseph Days Court.

Last year, Sarah passed the precision but didn't get the win because the judge determined her hair was not perfectly neat.

"It has been quite a journey," said Aschenbrenner. "It's a bittersweet moment when you don't win because you know you're good enough to compete. It gives me more determination."

Lauren Makin started with a well-trained horse but still had to spend plenty of time developing their partnership. "As soon as it's warm enough that your nose hairs don't freeze, we're out riding," Makin said. The work paid off. Her 14-year-old Quarter Horse, Rusty, helped her to win her award in two years with four

tries at the Potter.

"The win — oh my gosh, it was amazing," she said.

Taylor Grote said it took "five or six tries" on her 23-year-old Paint mare. The mare was well broke when Taylor got her, but had no experience with that kind of precision, Grote said.

"We had to practice a lot," she said. "It's frustrating when you know you didn't get it, but you also think you get it right and then the judge tells you it was wrong. I went in there (this year) and was expecting to just do my best and not get it. (The win) was amazing. When I won it didn't feel like it was real."

The three girls can still try for the Dad Potter Pin, awarded to riders to compete in the 10-Step. Their next chance for that is at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union in June 2016.

They will probably try for that, they say.

"I have aspiration to do the 10-Step," Aschenbrenner said. "When I won the 3-Step it was a sigh of relief. I felt really, really good because the people who congratulated me knew how hard it was. I can tell whoever asks that I have trained my own horse to do the Dad Potter."

But the three girls have another aspiration in common: all are trying out for the Chief Joseph Days Court.

Lauren Makin, who is on the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Court this year, credits the Potter for her new ambitions. "I've really got my confidence up with winning that Dad Potter," she said.

E.L. "Dad" Potter was an early pioneer in Oregon agricultural education. In 1908, he became an instructor in Animal Husbandry at OSU. He was deeply involved in the development of the Oregon 4-H Horse program and established the E.L. "Dad" Potter Award for horsemanship in 1956.

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Dance class offered Aug. 12

ENTERPRISE — Introduction to Movement Dance Class, for people of all ages and abilities (no experience necessary), will be offered Wednesday, Aug. 12, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Odd Fellows Studio, located above the Soroptimist Thrift Store in Enterprise. Cost of the class is \$10.

For more information, contact Esther Petrocine at 503-706-5154.

County's self-employed report many challenges

If you want to live in a rural community, you may have to make your own job. That's a well-known reality of rural life and sole-owner businesses in Wallowa County continue to be an important part of the economic picture for the county. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2013, a total of 3,405 individual-run businesses generated \$1,247,280 in Baker, Union, and Wallowa counties.

With that significant number in mind, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) Outreach Specialist Kristy Athens recently investigated the issues individual-run businesses face. In a non-scientific survey of self-employed business people in the region, Athens asked five questions of respondents: what they loved about being self-employed, what their top obstacle was, how they overcame those obstacles, what their current challenges were, and how regional government could help.

She interviewed 35 sole-owners of businesses. Of the 35, 28 were from Wallowa County, two from Union County, and five from Baker County.

According to Athens' report, most of the respondents have been in business 10 or more

years. Six people made \$30,000 or less in sales in 2014; 20 percent made \$30,000 to \$50,000; 27 percent made \$50,000 to \$100,000; and a full 33 percent made more than \$100,000. Nearly half reported that their 2014 sales were higher than the previous year.

Respondents were in lodging, manufacturing, agriculture (18 percent); arts and culture, recreation, food service, and professional services (14 percent); retail (42 percent); and other (26 percent). The "other" category included yard care, golf, storage units, and service industry.

When asked what they love about being self-employed, most people cited the autonomy of "being my own boss," including both creative and scheduling control. Most listed their top obstacle to launching a business to be access to capital and locating and/or upgrading a building or other space. Other issues concerned confidence, accounting skills, finding employees, marketing and local support, and regulations.

Respondents overcame those obstacles by educating themselves with classes and workshops; utilizing local business development opportunities

including the Small Business Development Center; finding a funding source (including family and friends, or friends with influence at local banks); advertising; and relocating to another town. Many said it took thrift, hard work, and persistence.

They listed current challenges of finding competent and reliable employees, remote location, weathering the financial ups and downs of seasonal tourism, and competing with corporate stores and Internet commerce. One person noted that "the hiring of a (sub-contractor) is difficult in this community when my business requires confidentiality."

When asked how regional government can help small businesses thrive, people pointed out that state and federal employment regulations and the tax code favor large corporations, not "mom and pop" operations. One asked for local government to "stop submitting RFPs that focus on best price, and start considering quality work (that) will cut costs in the long run." Respondents also asked for help with continuing education and business coaching, promotion both within and outside the region, and grants and financing. Others want local government to "get out of the way" altogether.

NEOEDD will offer its popular six-week business foundations workshop in October and November in Enterprise. The free class is scheduled Thursdays, Oct. 1, through Nov. 12, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Fishtrap, 400 Grant Street in Enterprise. Class size is limited and registration is required.

To register, call NEOEDD by Sept. 25 at 541-426-3598 or email kristyathens@neoedd.org.

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Thank You

With Great Gratitude, the family of Nicole (Duncan) Winn would like to thank all who came together in the recent loss of our beloved daughter, wife and mother. Thank you is not adequate to describe how humbled we are by the love and compassion with which we have been showered by you. To those from Pendleton who gave her the burial she desired, we are awed. It was perfect for her. To those in Joseph who put forth effort to help us through this time, with phone calls, food, clean up, set up, you know what you did and we are thankful. For those who have come from near and far, called us, emailed, hugged us and cried and laughed with us, thank you. To those who will prepare food for Wup and the boys and to those who will continue to keep us in their thoughts and deeds, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Bill and Dianna Duncan, Beverly Winn, Wup, Kyler and Gaven Winn and the extended family Nicole loved