**Regionals**

by Audrey Roberson

Age 10

As we pulled into the fairgrounds, I embraced the sights. To the left of me I saw a wide gravel parking lot with one row full of trucks. On the other side was a field full of desert shrubs. I refocused myself and started to put on my shoes.

“We’re here! Yaaay!” my little sister Charlotte yelled.

Everybody did something to show that they were excited too. Mrs. Stephanie skillfully parked us in the gravel parking lot. We all grabbed something and headed towards our spot in the back of the barns. We unpacked and Mr.s Stephanie made us burgers for dinner. The wind howled that night. I woke up to the sound of rustling, but it was just everybody waking up. When we got the barns, I went straight to my llama

McClure.

“Hi buddy!” I said kindly to him. He just looked at me with wide eyes then put his head in the hay bag.

“Some of the adults are showing. I think it would be a good idea if we went and watched them” Mrs. Joy recommended.

When we got there, we met a girl named Kennedy. She showed us that there were two Great Horned Owls in the rafters. I looked up and saw brown feathers and claws gripping the rafter.

“Don’t look up with your mouth open!” teased a lady sitting next to us.

I quickly shut my mouth. Charlotte looked up and drew circles directly below the owls. “Nobody go in this” Charlotte declared, pointing toward a circle drawn in the dirt.

“Great idea. I think we should go put the packs on because it is almost time for you guys to show” Mrs Joy stated.

“Jr. Walk through!” somebody called us from the arena.

The judge walked us through the course. We had obstacles resembling things you would find on a hike. I repeated the course in my head while I ran. I untied my llama and rushed to the arena. As I watched it seemed to go by so quickly. When I entered the arena full of obstacles, my heart raced. I remembered to keep a J shaped lead line and walk at an even pace. My first obstacle was step overs.

“Step” I said calmly and slowly.

THUNK. I flinched as the bar fell over, but I kept walking. The second obstacle was a weave. I walked carefully, checking to see if I had left enough room for my llama to fit through the poles with his pack. McClure stood still for the bell in pack and followed me almost perfectly through the duck under. McClure jumped off the bridge midway, and the

deadfall and divided walk weren’t the best. My last obstacle was a tie up. I knew McClure wouldn’t misbehave on this and I was right. Mrs. Stephanie met me at the gate.

“Great job!” she beamed.

We led my llama to his pen and took the pack off. I wandered to Mrs. Joy so I could sit with her.

“You were great!” Mrs. Joy was excited that I had done well.

“Yeah,” I said even though I didn’t think so.

“Jr. Walk through!” the judge called. “Alright this is PR class. You all know that PR means public relations, right?” the judge asked.

“Now go get your llamas!” the judge said excitedly.

When it was my turn, I opened the gate remembering to keep my hand on it. I walked over to the change of pace thinking it was going to be great, but I dragged McClure, trying to make sure that he didn’t run away. I was hopeful about the next obstacle since we’d practiced putting his front feet in a tire for months. When I walked up to it, he put his feet in immediately. Our last obstacle was backing through tables.

“You were awesome! Great job on the backing” complimented Mrs. Joy.

We put McClure away and returned to watch others show. It wasn’t long until they called us to the ring again. When I entered, I went over the ladder steps listening for the tick of my llama’s feet. We walked over the teeter totter and when I stepped over the middle, it tipped, and McClure walked confidently down the other side. I went to the ramps and McClure jumped off midway, so I pushed him back on. The next obstacles

went well as McClure backed and cleared jumps. He wasn’t as good as he usually is for the trailer load. I stared at the ground as I walked out.

“Awesome! Now we can have dinner!” Mrs. Stephanie said excitedly.

After putting my llama away, I found the dining area and filled up my plate. Then filled up my stomach.

“Hey, go get your clipboards for youth judge” Mrs. Joy told me.

We gathered to go through all the rules. Our first class to judge was a performance class. One was easy because she missed an obstacle. The others were not as easy to judge. Next was showmanship. I paid attention to the person not the animal which was hard. The hardest was halter because all the llamas were cute. When we were finished, we left for the RV. I didn’t notice the wind that night.

The following morning was showmanship and halter. When I entered the ring, I lifted my arm so McClure would raise his head. I smiled like I had the best llama in the world. We walked in circles then lined up, switching sides as the judge walked around me. When I got called up to talk to the judge, I answered her questions confidently. Later,

everybody gathered to collect their show cards and ribbons.

“Alright. Let’s go pack up,” Mrs. Joy said.

We loaded the RV and dumped our poop collections in the trash. After we were arranged in the RV we began the long trip home. We listened to music all the way.