

Dogs have blue-ribbon day



Post-Crescent photo by Kirk Wagner

AMY HANNEMANN and her two dogs, Taylor and Abby, meet with Pat Mahoney on Saturday during the pet show at Communityfest in Neenah's Riverside Park. Every dog in the show went home with a blue ribbon.

Neenah's Communityfest Pet Show just for fun

By Susan Squires
Post-Crescent staff writer

NEENAH — Every dog had its day Saturday at Riverside Park.

Some attended the annual Communityfest Pet Show in formal attire. Some performed spectacular tricks. Some did nothing but drool and wiggle, but all left with blue ribbons. Westminster it's not.

"This is just for fun," master of ceremonies Pat Mahoney, a veterinarian, said.

Had there been an evening gown competition, finalists might have included Abby, a year-old rat terrier, who came wearing a red, white and blue tutu. There's more to Abby, however, than a buff physique and a sweet face. "She sits, she lies down, sits pretty and backs up," owner Amy Hannemann, of Neenah, said proudly.

Abby's brother Taylor, a Jack Russell terrier mix,

wowed the audience by dropping dead after Hannemann "shot" him with her index finger. He has not, though, quite mastered the trick.

"He's wagging his tail," Mahoney pointed out.

Rival "Indy" — short for Independent — leapt through a hoop, not once, but over and over and higher and higher until owner Isabella Abderholden, of Oshkosh, convinced the retriever mix to stop.

"A lot of encouragement" went into teaching Indy to jump through the hoop, Abderholden said. "And a lot of treats."

The prize for congeniality, if there were one, could have gone to Waylon, a 4-year-old whippet. Waylon stood quietly while a toddler pounded him vigorously on the head. Or to Fritz, a 5-year-old papillon.

"His talent is being a great lover," owner Sharon Miller, of Combined Locks, said. "He

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Photos: Neenah's
Communityfest in
Riverside Park.

lives to sit in your lap." As evidence, he snuggled up without invitation to a woman who approached Miller to chat.

Just making it to the park Saturday was an accomplishment for Mark, a cross between an American bulldog and a basset hound. His 60-pound bulldog torso is perched on stubby basset hound legs.

He was found wandering in downtown Oshkosh. He spent six months at the Oshkosh Area Humane Society's shelter before the Hraban family of Neenah adopted him. His only trick is "sit," but he does that enthusiastically.

"Considering he spent six months living in a cage with a concrete floor, he's doing pretty well," owner

Andrea Hraban said.

Friday and Saturday's celebrations at Riverside Park in Neenah and Jefferson Park in Menasha marked Communityfest's 28th year.

Mahoney has been the pet show's ringmaster for at least 20 years and maybe longer. It started as a children's event, but one year a grown man begged Mahoney to let him enter his singing dog.

Mahoney gave in. For about 12 minutes, the dog sat mute in the center of the ring while the owner howled encouragement. The crowd enjoyed the performance so much Mahoney decided to dispense with rules.

"It's really just to celebrate the joy our pets bring so many of us," he said.

No animals were harmed in the production of the Communityfest Pet Show.

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