

Sarah Harp top woman at Florida shoot

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On the surface Sarah Harp looks and acts like your average college student. She studies Animal Science at The Ohio State University with plans to attend veterinary school, works at OSU in the University Lab Animal Resource Surgery Department, picks up extra college dollars working as a server at Texas Roadhouse.

There's another side of Sarah Harp that's less known, and doesn't show as she moves through her typical college day. Sarah is the current Ohio State and Midwest Regional Cowboy Action Shooting Champion as well as holding several past world championship titles.

Earlier this month Harp competed at the Florida State Championships of Cowboy Action Shooting in historic St. Augustine, Florida. The popular shoot, named the Siege at St. Augustine, attracted nearly 300 shooters from as far away as Canada.

Sarah, a.k.a. Sage Chick, represented Ohio and won first place in the women's category. She also placed third in over-all competition, bested only by two male competitors, Prestidigitator from Tennessee and Santa Fe River Stan from Florida.

Sarah also won the women's speed rifle, pistol and 1897 shotgun matches during the January 8 to 11 event.

During an interview at her parents Brown Township home last week, Sarah said she was a Cloverbud in the old Crusaders 4-H Club, went on to show beef cattle and sheep, was encouraged to shoot by her parents and a neighbor, started competitive shooting when she was eight years old. Today she competes as an adult in the 100,000-member Single Action Shooting Society.

"I like the people, its one big family where you know everybody when you go to competitions," Sarah said. "And I'm very competitive. I've always liked to compete. I used to compete a lot more than I do now because of college — local, state, regional, nationals and we went to worlds in Albuquerque every year."

Sarah said when shooters show up at SASS Cowboy Action competitions they don't just bring any old gun they have laying around the house. All SASS Cowboy Action firearms are pre-1900 replicas. She uses an 1897 replica Winchester 12-gauge shotgun, an 1873 Winchester .38 caliber lever action rifle, and two .38 caliber Ruger Vaquero Single Action Revolvers.

"These are not out-of-the-box firearms," Sarah said. "They're rebuilt, smoothed out, essentially race guns that work as fast as competitors can shoot. Mine were reworked by a New Hampshire gunsmith."

SASS competition is timed rapid fire. Competitors shoot in stages, loading pistol, rifle and shotgun at a loading table where they are given the order they will shoot their firearms in during that stage. An electronic timer logs the firearm going off and bullets hitting a steel target plate. Misses add time to a competitor's final score; lowest time wins each stage.

Sarah said she plans to continue competing in SASS Cowboy Action Shooting events, just not as active as she was in younger years when trips around the country were more common; trips to Michigan Illinois, Kentucky, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Missouri. She said only state and regional events

are on this year's schedule.

“Cowboy Action Shooting is just a hobby because it doesn't pay, but it has been a great family sport, and I've made friends from all over the world,” Sarah said. “There's pressure involved, and because I like to compete that's part of the fun of it for me.”

Sarah Harp graduated from Delaware Christian in 2012. Her family farms, they have three horses, Sarah said she considers herself an average country girl — who also just happens to have an Ohio Conceal Carry License and is the current Ohio and Midwest Regional Cowboy Action Shooting Champion.

For additional information about the Single Action Shooting Society and Cowboy Action Shooting go to < sassnet.com >.

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