

Each year the WSU Kitsap Extension Office employees spend countless hours in the Extension Tent. And, volunteers work literally thousands of hours making our Kitsap Fair “Something to Crow About.” I thought you’d like to have a peek into the lives of some of the volunteers and at some of the folks who compete and win ribbons.

Lyneen Jesse created two scarecrows made entirely of recycled materials. One was a pink fairy resplendent in a pink lace dress festooned with artificial flowers. The bows on her fairy shoes were tied with ribbon. Lyneen’s second scarecrow had parts made from: an empty laundry detergent bottle, plastic pop containers, an orange juice jug (the handle became the scarecrow’s nose), two cottage cheese containers, eyes made from pop can bottoms curled to make eyelashes with artificial flowers for eyes. Lyneen even used recycled plastic twine to sew together a scarecrow raincoat made of bubble wrap. Maybe bubble wrap raincoats will become fashionable in the future. Lyneen said, “Just think, people who rarely have time to garden could festoon their gardens with decorative scarecrows.”

Every year the horticulture educational displays put together by WSU Master Gardeners are outstanding. This year every display received the coveted large ribbon awards. These Master Gardener volunteers spent months growing and creating the displays. Sally and Wayne Tysver and Carol McCarthy created a display on the plants of Lewis and Clark. Sally and Wayne covered the plants from Lewis and Clark’s perspective and Carol covered the Native American perspective. Julia Pickering showed fair visitors how to grow many varieties of roses. The display provided information on rose culture and diseases. Kit Tate put together the graphics. Roses resided in huge containers so fair goers could see the roses up close and personal. Jenny Lund showed how to grow and harvest garlic. Barb Vidal put together an extremely colorful pepper display. Anji Ogden showed visitors the charming garden and education available at Anna Smith Park on Tracyton Boulevard. In addition Anji received the Horticulture Excellence Award.

Sophia Peterson has been entering sewn items, fruits, vegetables and flowers in the fair for more than 40 years. Sometimes she didn’t compete and served as a judge. She loves volunteering in sewing and for the Grange at the Fischer Scone Trailer. This year she won a ribbon for her collection of ribbons. The larger ribbons we see at the fair are earned by tallying up points for the smaller ribbons. Sophia had 51 ribbons in her collection and this year makes 52. She said “I’m thinking of making a pillow out of the small ones.”

Floriculture is in the Pavilion. The Cross Sound Garden Clubs make this area a hit of the fair every year. Visitors see rows of flowers, houseplants and floral designs. My friend Aggie Allpress asked me to remind readers about Floriculture in the Pavilion and I promised I would. I always learn something from the volunteers on duty here. Both Floriculture and Open Class Horticulture have categories for youth and adults. Each competitor follows the same rules. The kids can learn how to compete at an early age and

some become lifelong contestants in floriculture and horticulture at the fair. The Floriculture area features educational displays too and fairgoers can learn about Dahlia, Fuchsia and Rose Societies. Volunteers will also explain the intricacies of floral design.

Long Lake Garden Club member Geretta Jensen told me the miniatures category has height and width restrictions. She showed me all the displays and entries and told me lovely stories about some of the contestants she's met. Evan Brown, three years old, entered a geranium. He was excited about taking it to the fair, but when he learned he had to leave it there for seven days he became very concerned. His mom explained it was like going to spend the night at a friend's house. Evan decided that was all right. One year a little girl didn't like her first place blue ribbon. She wanted pink instead because it's her favorite color.

I always wondered where all those green bottles come from. The volunteers provide them to the contestants and every year the volunteers clean and store the bottles (which takes hours and hours) until next year.

I learn so much every year at the fair. I am always inspired and entertained by all the wonderful work everyone puts into the fair. Geretta summed it up, "It's a labor of love and a gift back to our Kitsap community."