

Compiled by Megan Silveira,
assistant editor

POSTCARD FROM A JUNIOR



Jack Dameron

Finding the balance

“Life is like a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” — Albert Einstein

Throughout our lives, an array of challenges and various obstacles will be faced. It is up to us to prioritize what is most significant and of most value as we continue forward.

The Angus and livestock industries are no exception to this. As someone who has seen this industry evolve and adapt to our ever-changing world, I've experienced just a few of these balancing obstacles myself.

As a junior member, one specific instance I've dealt with was prioritizing my show stock, along with my education and extracurriculars. I struggled with juggling my time spent in the barn vs. playing sports. Over time I was able to find my own balance and realize what worked best for me.

In our industry we have similar issues. One of extreme importance is finding the balance of sustainability within our operations, deciding between what traits are more

valuable in our stock or what breeding decisions need to be made for the longevity of our herds. Having the ability to maximize the production of our stock while remaining financially secure is key to creating a lasting, successful business. Similarly, we can see these issues exist within the beef retail industry as well.

For example, finding the balance between what consumer expectations should be addressed first or what standards of quality of beef should be most prioritized. Focusing on what standards are most important to you and finding the balance of those within our own operations and goals is what I have found to be most beneficial to working through these issues.

In accordance with this, there is also the need to respectfully acknowledge everyone's standards when finding our balance. Even

outside our own cattle industry, we are caught up with critiquing and over-comparing our standards and own balance. It is beneficial to share our interests for the development of our industry and expansion of knowledge by respectfully allowing others to find their own balance, while in turn bringing more interest to agriculture and the prosperity of our breed.

As innovations in industry technology continue to grow and affect how we operate as an agricultural entity, it has become vital to be open to new experiences and new pathways to success. By pushing ourselves outside our comfort zones, while also using the prior knowledge given to us, we can balance the ever-changing boundaries of our breed while continuing to be leaders of this great industry.

— Jack Dameron

Bronze and Silver Awards

Emily Brooks, Prophetstown, Ill.; Zayda Hofing, Coatesville, Ind.; Jordan Oliver, Buncombe, Ill.; and Tucker Stagemeyer, Page, Neb., have earned the National Junior Angus Association's (NJAA) Bronze and Silver awards, according to Caitlyn Brandt, events and education director of the American Angus Association® in Saint Joseph, Mo.

Cody Ostertag, Kenyon, Minn.; and Hannah Vanhoy, Catawba, N.C., have earned the NJAA's Silver award; and Emma Armstrong, Unionville, Tenn.; Mataya Kraft, Fort Collins, Colo.; Tyler Kraft, Fort Collins, Colo.; and Anna Parr, Mason City, Ill., have earned the NJAA's Bronze award.

The Bronze and Silver awards are the first two levels of the NJAA Recognition Program that began

in 1972. Junior Angus breeders must apply for the awards, then meet point requirements in many areas of participation before receiving the honors. Applicants are evaluated in areas of junior Angus association activities and leadership, participation in showmanship, contests and shows, using performance testing to improve their herd, and their progress in producing

and merchandising Angus cattle.

Prophetstown, Ill., native, **Emily Brooks** is the 20-year-old daughter of Jeff and Shelley Brooks. The University of Illinois student is studying agricultural economics. She is a member of both the NJAA and the Illinois Junior Angus Association, where she has served as both treasurer and royalty.

Brooks has participated in shows at the regional and national level. At the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), she participated in the creative writing and team sales contests and the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Cook-off. In addition to serving as a voting delegate, she has attended the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference and the State Training and Angus Retreat (STAR) conference.

She has also consigned cattle in the Stertzbach Cattle Company sale and the Dameron Angus Focus on the Future sale.

Zayda Hofing, Coatesville, Ind., is the 12-year-old daughter of Josh and Deanna Hofing. She attends Cascade Middle School and balances her classwork with time serving her state Angus association as royalty.

Her show career includes events at the state, regional and national level. Hofing as competed in the livestock judging and poster contests and the CAB Cook-off at the NJAS. She also participating in the mentoring program.

Hofing has submitted weight data to the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) and con-signed cattle to the Bloom Angus Dispersal Sale and the Southern Indiana Angus Association Sale.

Jordan Oliver is studying agriculture at Lake Land College. The 20-year-old is originally from

Buncombe, Ill., and is the daughter of Michele Oliver. She has also served the Indiana Junior Angus Association as secretary and royalty.

In addition to being a past attendee of the LEAD conference, Oliver has shown at the local, state, regional and national levels. The Angus junior has submitted weight data to the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®).

O'Neill High School student, **Tucker Stagemeyer**, is 18 years old. Brent and Carla Stagemeyer's son is a member of the Nebraska Junior Angus Association, where he has served as director and vice president.

Stagemeyer has participated in state and national shows. Team sales, livestock judging, quiz bowl, photography, public speaking and extemporaneous public speaking contests have all been a part of Stagemeyer's experiences at NJAS.

The Page, Neb., native has served as a national junior voting delegate, participated in the mentoring program and consigned cattle to the Major League Sale.

From Kenyon, Minn., **Cody Ostertag** is the 15-year-old son of Ben and Dana Ostertag. He currently attends Kenyon-Wanamingo School and is a member of the Minnesota Junior Angus Association.

At the NJAS, Ostertag has participated in the quiz bowl, creative writing and graphic design contests, as well as the mentoring program.

Former director and secretary of the North Carolina Junior Angus Association, **Hannah Vanhoy** is the 17-year-old daughter of Nathan Vanhoy. She attends Bandys High School.

Vanhoy has shown at all levels in the cattle industry. At the NJAS, She has previously been a part of the career development contest and the Cook-off. The junior has also

attended the LEAD conference.

Unionville, Tenn., resident, **Emma Armstrong**, is 17 years old. She is the daughter of Matthew and Brandi Armstrong and a student at Community High School. Along with being an active member of the NJAA, Armstrong has served the Tennessee Junior Angus Association as royalty.

Armstrong has participated in the mentoring program at the NJAS, along with exhibiting at various state and national events. She has also attended the Raising the Bar conference.

Fourteen-year-old **Mataya Kraft** is from Fort Collins, Colo. She is the daughter of Cheri Kraft and currently attends Heritage Christian Academy. She is a member of the NJAA and the Colorado Junior Angus Association.

She has participated in shows at the local, regional and national level.

Tyler Kraft is Mataya's brother and is active in the Angus association both at the national junior level and the state. He is 18-years-old and attends Heritage Christian Academy.

Tyler has shown at the local, state and national level, including the NJAS, where he has taken part in the livestock judging contest.

He has also submitted weight data to the AHIR.

Thirteen-year-old **Anna Parr** is from Mason City, Ill. She is the daughter of Kirsten Parr and currently attends Illini Central Middle School. An active member of the NJAA, she is serving the state of Illinois as royalty.

Parr has shown at the local, state and national level, including the NJAS, where she participated in the photography, livestock judging, graphic design and quiz bowl contests. The junior has also been a part of the mentoring program. 