

Calling All Writers

National junior Angus members submit 23 essays in the debut of the creative writing contest.

by Courtney Wimmer

From the benefits of beef to the rewards of ranching, juniors covered a wide range of topics in the 2002 creative writing contest. The debut of the contest inspired 23 young writers to submit essays. While enhancing important writing skills, the creative writing contest allows members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) to compete in an event prior to the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

Angie Denton, Angus Productions Inc. (API) director of Web marketing; Shelia Stannard, American Angus Association assistant director of communications and public relations; and Jeff Rhode, ADM Alliance Nutrition sales agent, scored the entries based on grammar, spelling, organization and content. Winners were selected in three age divisions — junior, intermediate and senior — and the top three winners in each division were awarded cash prizes.

Select a topic

NJAA members were instructed to write a creative story or feature story that covered a current beef industry issue. Courtney Hill-Dukehart, Sykesville, Md., had no trouble deciding on a topic for her essay.

“Since I was directed to write a creative story that covers a current beef industry issue, I immediately thought of marketing,” says Hill-Dukehart, who won the senior division. “I know that marketing is one of the biggest issues that I face with my small herd. I have read a lot of articles in the [Angus] Journal and other publications concerning marketing techniques in an effort to gain

new ideas on how to promote my cattle.”

Hill-Dukehart says she enjoyed the contest because of the broad topic. “It allowed me to select the subject I wanted to pursue, and it gave me the opportunity to express my personal opinion as well as to quote leading beef industry spokespersons,” she says. “The subject wasn’t too restrictive, and it allowed the writer to be creative rather than just gathering information and presenting a list of facts.”

She says she learned to research multiple sources and gather information in order to write the essay and express an educated opinion. “I felt that my own personal view needed to be substantiated by research gleaned from a large source of information,” Hill-Dukehart says.

Express an opinion

The creative writing contest provided an opportunity for Callie Smith, Lebanon, Tenn., to express her opinion about the \$20 NJAA annual dues.

“I heard a lot of people complaining about having to pay \$20 a year. I thought that was cheap, and I wanted to give my opinion,” she says.

In her essay, which won the junior division, Smith states, “No other organization or club that I have ever been involved in has given me the type of lifelong friendships that I have made through the NJAA. The new \$20

annual fee has made 6¢ a day a great bargain.”

Smith says writing her essay allowed other people to read her opinions and pass on the information. “I think it’s really good for you to write about things you are concerned about or have opinions on,” she says. “I really like writing. This was the first year of the contest, and I

wanted to see what other people thought of my writing.”

Be creative

Audrey Taylor, Lavaca, Ark., put a bovine twist on the classic fairy tale, *Cinderella*. Her essay was a

fictional tale about three cloned heifers — Clonederella, Clonecilla and Clonastasia. “I really didn’t know that anyone would catch on that it was *Cinderella*,” says Taylor, who placed second in the junior division. “My sisters didn’t.”

She used the three heifers to describe different breeds of recipient mothers and the effect they have on their offspring. Clonederella’s recipient mother was an Angus cow, which helped her grow strong and develop a good attitude.

Taylor had some writing experience prior to entering this contest. She wrote an expository essay about taking photographs. Her source was professional photographer Fred Stivers.

“Fred Stivers comes and takes pictures of my grandpa’s cows at our ranch, and he is a good friend of mine,” she says. “He’s really fun.”

The creative writing contest is

something Taylor wants other juniors to participate in. “I want a lot of kids to enter because I think it’s a really good program and a contest that kids can do,” she says.

Participate

Not wanting to miss out on a new contest, Garrett Lampe, Scott City, Kan., modified a speech he wrote and turned it into an informative essay. His essay, which placed third in the intermediate division, explains the different programs available through the American Angus Association.

“It was something I was interested in, and more people needed to know about everything that is offered by the American Angus Association and how it works to help you,” Lampe says. “The research on it was pretty fun. I found out a lot about the different programs I didn’t know.”

He says he competes in most of the other contests offered at the NJAS, and he submitted the essay to take advantage of an event held before the show.

Hill-Dukehart says she would recommend this contest to any juniors who have an interest in writing.

“Not everyone has the same interests, and that is what makes the variety of contests offered by the National Junior Angus Association so appealing,” she says. “The mixture of public speaking, poster, photography, graphic design, team sales and Cook-Off contests appeals to a diversity of interests.”



Editor’s Note: Watch upcoming issues of the Angus Journal for publication of the winning essays.

