

On the Ho

Jeanette Stevenson, Hobson, Mont., has taken advantage of many opportunities in her lifetime. Today she is still...

Story and photos by **Abra Ungeheuer**

Cattle sales and the wives who encouraged their husbands to attend them forged the underpinnings of auxiliary chapters all across America. These gatherings eventually led to the formation of the American Angus Auxiliary, according to Jeanette Stevenson, Hobson, Mont. Stevenson recalls being one of the women who prompted her husband to go to sales so she could accompany him and exchange ideas with other women.

"I really do think that is something that made Angus grow so in Montana. We have good memories from the sales and the friends we made," she says. "We've been an Angus family all along."

Stevenson's husband, Jamie, who has passed away, was very active as an Angus breeder and served as president of the Montana Angus Association. They attended the same high school and got married in 1936. They bought their first Angus in 1945.

The mother of five boys, she was a homemaker who put in a full day of work at the ranch. Stevenson spent just as much time as a homemaker as anyone else with a full-time job would, especially during a time when ranch life wasn't easy.

Her son, Keith, is the current manager of Stevenson Angus. "I was supposed to be a silent partner, but I couldn't keep my mouth shut, so I decided to let him have it (the ranch)," she says.

► **Right: Auxiliary members from all generations gathered to kick off the 50th anniversary of the Auxiliary in November. Pictured are (from left) Bette Votaw, Wellfleet, Neb.; Nellie Meinders, New Sharon, Iowa; Anne Patton Schubert, Taylorsville, Ky.; Jeanette Stevenson, Hobson, Mont.; and June Hagenbuch, Lawrence, Kan.**

They still have sales on their ranch in conjunction with Basin Angus, also of Hobson. The two ranches hold joint sales as Stevenson-Basin Angus to promote semen and embryos, but the individual ranches run their own cow herds.

"We make our living off cattle. We don't have anything but cattle."

Auxiliary involvement

Stevenson served the American Angus Auxiliary as president in 1978-79 with fellow officers Gyra Wagner of Kansas and Nan Adams (now Nan Adams Howell) of Texas. Howell describes Stevenson as a very positive

person, who was always energetic during her service in the Auxiliary.

When describing one philosophy their officer team had, Stevenson states, "We believed they shouldn't have all the ladies' meetings at the same time the shows were going on because a lot of the women liked to go to the shows; and Gyra always worked at the shows because they showed cattle."

The Auxiliary's schedule at Angus events avoided overlapping the shows for quite awhile. But, as the times changed and more events were added to the Angus schedule, the Auxiliary meetings were once again scheduled at the same time as showing events.

When reflecting on the most significant change she has seen within the Auxiliary, Stevenson recalls how the Auxiliary breakfast at the 2001 North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) had so many men in attendance. She believes this is one area where the Auxiliary has made progress. "I don't think the men appreciated the Auxiliary for a few years."

"I think the Auxiliary does a better job now in many ways," Stevenson says. "But sometimes I don't know whether they're as close as we were as a group."

Stevenson says she wonders if the group has lost something by being as prosperous as it has been.

"When times are too good people think they can make it on their own," Stevenson says. "When things are bad, they know they have to work together. And I think that times aren't too good now and they'll work together."

Although Stevenson's involvement in the Auxiliary is now limited, she does make

Leading Ladies



an effort to attend the Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky., each fall.

A voice beyond the community

Besides her work in the Auxiliary, Stevenson has served on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging for the state of Montana. She was on the Council for about eight years. When she was recently asked to run for another term she turned them down. "They couldn't understand why I did this, but I told them, 'By the time my next term would be up, I would be 90!'" So, they accepted her declination of the offer.

Currently Stevenson is writing a history book for the Hobson community. She continues to serve in her church and has been active with the senior citizens in her hometown. She's a past president of the state senior citizens' organization and also past state president of the Federated Women's Clubs.

Stevenson and her husband also helped charter the Hobson FFA chapter. "We have been very active in the chapter," she says. "I'm a lifetime member of the National FFA Alumni Association."

Among the young people who have excelled as a result of the FFA chapter are her descendants. One of her grandsons, Mike, went on to become a National FFA officer in 1991-92. Many of her grandchildren have been state FFA officers. In addition to Mike's success with the FFA, two grandsons were elected to the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors. Doug Stevenson served from 1984-1986, while cousin Bob Stevenson served from 1995-1997.

She was a 4-H leader for 20 years. "I know a little about kids' work." In addition, she oversaw the *Montana Angus News* for 20 years.

Stevenson continues to make a difference in the lives of others, especially her grandchildren. She keeps up with every one of them.

It's all about people

All of these experiences have allowed Stevenson to meet many interesting people

in her lifetime. One person she notes in particular is Anne Patton Schubert, Taylorsville, Ky., who met Stevenson through the Auxiliary.

Schubert served as president of the American Angus Auxiliary in 1982-83, just a few years after Stevenson served as president. Schubert says that Stevenson has been a mentor to her in the Auxiliary, and a close friend since they first met. After all these years they have managed to stay in touch on a regular basis.

Schubert is impressed with Stevenson's enthusiasm and desire to "do it all." She recalls one particular example of this ambition.

"In 1998 she came to Louisville for the show, and we had a little bit of time after the heifer show Monday. I knew she wanted to go to the banquet that evening and I said, 'Well, we've got about two hours in between here. We live 30 miles away. Would you like to go back to the room and rest, or would you like to go see the farm?'"

"Well, let's go to the farm," was Stevenson's reply.

Schubert says Stevenson could have put her feet up and rested, but she preferred to go see the cattle and things at the ranch. That's just what they did.

"There is not a time, I don't think, that she doesn't have every minute filled with something she wants to do," says Schubert, admiring the drive and the love for so many people that Stevenson possesses. She describes her as an encourager of others.

"Jeanette's certainly one of those you look to in terms of dedication and long-term commitment to the Angus breed and to Angus people," Schubert says. "The Angus friendship is so strong with Jeanette. She's a delightful lady."

Stevenson agrees that a benefit to remaining active in events of the American Angus Auxiliary and the American Angus Association is getting to know so many more people.

"And that's really what it's all about — it's the friends you make."



► Jeanette Stevenson, Hobson, Mont., voices her opinion during the American Angus Auxiliary Annual Meeting in November.

