

by Julie Mais
Editor



Led to lessons

It was early in the week back in 1997 as my family and I were bringing our show string in from tie outs. Junior nationals was in Oklahoma that year — the days were hot but the early mornings brought reprieve from the heat.

I was walking my light roan senior heifer calf, RB, a nickname my father not so lovingly gave her and one I'll leave up to your imagination. She wasn't mean, just strong willed.

We were making circles on the dewy grass with our cattle head to tail. RB, youthful as she was, felt so great she decided to trot. I, just 10 years old in my tennis shoes, oversized t-shirt and round colorful-rimmed glasses, couldn't keep up.

Tripping in the grass and falling to the ground I could hear my uncle holler "don't let go!" I held onto her black and teal rope halter and closed my eyes as I was pulled across the ground. The next thing I remember was laying in the grass and dirt raising my head to see RB kicking up her heels in freedom. She walked up to another in our group and was easily caught — her joyride was over.

As I dusted myself off a pain shot through my left wrist and it felt weak. Holding my arm and wiping my tears on my shirt sleeve, my uncle trots over and says, "why didn't you let go?"

Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, and sometimes you can't win for losing.

I went on to show her that week with my wrist wrapped as well as drugstore bandages and my mom's skills with vet wrap would allow. The next week's X-ray revealed a fracture.

I cannot remember how she stood in class — probably somewhere in the middle. But I will always remember that year in Oklahoma when I broke my wrist and my little brother got a few of his teeth knocked out — but that story is for another day.

Lessons learned

It was an honor to attend the 50th National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) and provide coverage of the event in this issue of the *Angus Journal*.

Though it was only my second NJAS to attend in 10 years, it felt familiar. Some of the most fond memories from my youth and toughest lessons were learned at events like this.

This issue is dedicated to the "Young Guns." We hope you enjoy reading how young cattlemen and women are taking what they learned in the Angus breed and are succeeding in their own unique way.

You'll also find more than 80 pages of NJAS show and contest results along with stories on outstanding National Junior Angus Association members.

In celebration of 50 years, we caught up with a few of those who attended the first National Junior Angus Heifer Show and learned how times have changed with the most important qualities of showing cattle staying true through the decades.

It's such a pleasure to tell the stories of the next generation and wait to see where those life lessons learned takes them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie".

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