

## Western States Angus Association

# A Classic

by Barbara LaBarbara

Like Humphrey Bogart's "Casablanca" and John Wayne's "Tall In The Saddle," the Pacific Coast Aberdeen Angus Association (PCAA) has become a classic.

Bogart became "Bogy," Wayne became "The Duke," and PCAA became the Western States Angus Association (WSAA).

PCAA set a firm foundation for WSAA to build on. There have been good times and bad, but build they have.

The PCAA was founded in May 1943 in Maderia, Calif., with the purpose of promoting Angus cattle. It included Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Recently Alaska, Hawaii and Western Montana joined the group.

Otto Battles, Ed Biaginni, William Beaton, Charles Ryan, Harold Hoots, Paul Hapberfeld, Jim Clark and Joe Smith were among the original members. Willie Smith, who later married William Volkmann Jr., served as the first secretary.

The treasurer's report in 1951 showed income of more than \$16,000 which came from dues, commissions from managing sales and receipts from their newsletter. Expenses included a \$5,400 annual salary for the secretary.

Bill Volkmann was president and L.L. Rafferty was publisher/editor of the PCAA newsletter. Harrison Cutler was their first paid secretary.

At that time the by-laws stated that there would be two directors from each state and an additional director for each 50 members. Membership dues were \$5. Breeders with a purebred herd of more than 25 head paid dues of \$20.

At a meeting in 1952 the minutes read, "From its inception in 1943, membership of the PCAA has grown from 40 breeders gathered at the first

meeting to 399 active breeders and other interested parties. From one sale, which was held the first year, to eight established sales at present. From a volunteer secretary to a full-time paid secretary."

Bill Roche moved to California in 1954 as the American Angus Association field representative to the Western States. He served in that capacity for more than 31 years.

In 1956 PCAA's income was down to \$6,500 and there was no revenue from commissions. In 1957 Frank Gwerder became president of a struggling organization. By 1958 the PCAA no longer had a paid secretary and Flora Beaton served as a volunteer secretary.

At a meeting in 1959 directors Gwerder, Hoots, Hapberfeld, Nettles, Wayne Phillips, Marden Wilbur, Bob Caldwell, Bill Ewing, and John Primasing wrote a job description for a paid association secretary. They hired Kenny Gross. One of his responsibilities was to manage and edit the association's publication.

**It was at that meeting** the PCAA publication was renamed *Western State Angus News*, "The official publication of PCAA." With Catherine Ryan serving as assistant editor, the first issue was published in June, 1959.

"It was a challenge," says Gross. "We didn't have enough money to publish the first issue, but we did. We printed 600 copies. I sent it to Angus breeders on the PCAA mailing list and in my travels gave them to commercial ranchers to promote the use of Angus bulls."

In early 1960 Volkmann, Guttridge, Gwerder, Hoots, Hapberfeld, Smith, Art Hamilton, and Frank Werner were

among the directors who implemented the association's name change to Western States Angus Association. The magazine then became "The official publication of WSAA."

Today the publication is known as *Angus, The Magazine*. It is published monthly and currently has a circulation of 3,500. Even though Jim Danekas, publisher/editor, is not paid by WSAA, he handles their membership. WSAA receives a percent of magazine profits which is one of their sources of income.

Gross recalls having wonderful directors that worked hard for the association. They weren't just owners of cattle, they were owners of the Association.

"People spent a lot of time and money going to the meetings," says Bob Neumeyer, the third paid secretary. "Gage Irving was president when I was secretary. Wellard Catlin served on the board for years. He never missed a meeting."

During those years WSAA was hired as sale manager for private as well as association sponsored sales. Commissions from the sales kept it viable.

Gross started the Bonanza Bull Sale in 1959. The 8th Angus Bonanza was held in Sacramento. More than 300 bulls were sold with an average of \$636. In 1967 a record high selling bull consigned by Wellard and Herald Catlin sold for \$9,100 to Jimmy Stewart and Julie Andrews. The reserve champion consigned by Volkmann sold for \$5,000. After that the sale moved to Roseville and then to Reno.

With the support of the Nugget in Reno, Gross held several feeder steer sales in the parking lot of the casino. Angus breeders consigned more than 2,000 steers each year and buyers came from all over the country.

They had sales in Sacramento, Klamath Falls and Portland, Ore.; Elko and Reno, Nev.; Twin



# WSAA





*Western States Angus Association leaders are seated (l to r): Judy McCalmant, Layton, Utah; Dan Byrd, Red Bluff, Calif.; Carol Thompson, Potlatch, Idaho; and Rick Blanchard, Mendota, Calif. Standing (l to r): Ken Coleman, Turner, Ore.; Darrell Callison, Blackfoot, Idaho; Gary Kendall, Potlatch, Idaho; Earle "Buzz" Foote, Tacoma, Wash.; Mark Nelson, Wilton, Calif.; Elsie Covey, Snohomish, Wash.; Dennis Boehlke, Nampa, Idaho; E.G. Foote, Melba, Idaho; Ron Jones, Madera, Calif.; and Bob Buchanan, Klamath Falls, Ore. (Photo by American Angus Association.)*

Falls, Idaho; and several consignment sales at the Cow Palace. Neumeyer managed 15 sales a year for WSAA.

Tim Pierce, an Angus breeder from Gehring, Neb., was their first out-of-region consignor.

**Gross** was WSAA's first paid executive secretary, followed by Lyle Hoyt, Bob Neumeyer, Ralph Clark, Jim Danekas, Dick Beck and Murry Fritz. Fritz, the last paid secretary, left the association in 1986.

Gross traveled an average of 80,000 miles a year for the association and deserves credit for making WSAA a strong organization.

"The hardest thing was getting enough money to promote the breed and for me to run around the country," he recalls. "I made \$600 a month. I feel like I really accomplished something."

Neumeyer went without a salary the first six months he was secretary cause the WSAA was in financial trouble. However, within a few months it was solidly back on its feet.

Roche says Danekas did a good job as secretary and, financially, WSAA was in the best shape it had ever been in when he left.

After Danekas left in 1979, the association managed few sales and revenue became scarce. By 1986, there was a

huge debt which it recently paid. The discovery of the debt was the toughest time WSAA ever faced.

That year, because they no longer had a paid secretary, WSAA hired Bill Roche and Jerry Wagner to manage the Western National Angus Futurity (WNAF).

The first WNAF was held in California at the Napa County Fairgrounds in 1954. Over the years it moved many times -the Cow Palace in San Francisco, Oregon State Fair, Paso Robles, Santa Rosa, Sacramento and Las Vegas. At present the Futurity is held in Reno.

Today a financially strong WSAA continues to sponsor the Futurity. For the past two years, Gary Kendall and Eddie Mesple have served as WNAF managers.

Many people remember the shows and sales with sentiment. There were dinners and dances at the Cow Palace and the Portland International. At Santa Rosa and the California State Fair there were pot luck lunches, but most importantly there has always been a lot of comradery.

In addition to WNAF, the Association sponsors an All Breed Satellite Sale held in Spokane, Wash., and pays for a membership directory to be published in *Angus, The Magazine*. They co-sponsor the Western Regional Junior Show in

Reno and give a trophy at the Cow Palace Junior Show.

The officers and board of directors hold their annual meeting at the WNAF and have another board meeting in the fall at a major show. For the first time in the history of WSAA there are three women holding office: president, Judy McCalmant; second vice president, Elizabeth "Bizz" Elmhirst; and secretary, Carol Thompson. A fourth woman, Elsie Covey is serving as a director.

Currently there are 700 members. The dues range from \$15 for associate members and commercial cattlemen to \$50 for a registered breeder. The first life membership, which is \$500, went to Bernard and Marion Hamblen of Washington.

**Today the elements** that keep WSAA a viable and active organization are friendships and a common interest in promoting Angus cattle.

The future of WSAA is promising. Members paid their debt and someday hope to hire a full-time secretary. For now the strength of the organization lies in its officers and directors, who deserve credit for keeping WSAA strong.

As with *Bogy* and *The Duke*, Western States Angus Association's legacy lives on and just gets better.