



RECREATION, RECOGNITION AND REWARDS

The first luncheon for women interested in Aberdeen-Angus cattle took place Dec. 3, 1952, at the Palmer House in Chicago, Ill., during the International Livestock Exposition. Designed as a social occasion and as an opportunity to explore the possibility of forming a women's organization that would support the Angus breed and the American Angus Association, organizers planned for an attendance of 85. Instead, 218 women from 35 states, Washington, D.C., and Canada attended the luncheon, ready to discuss plans for a national auxiliary.

Mrs. William Volkmann, Selma, Calif., a member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Pacific Coast Aberdeen-Angus Association, was chairman of the event. She and Frank Richards, secretary of the Association, had planned and organized the luncheon. Those who joined the new organization before the Association's Annual Meeting in 1953

**For more than 50 years
the Angus Auxiliary
has promoted the breed
by sharing fun and funds.**

by Linda Robbins

The American Angus Association turns 125 this fall. Recognition of the milestone will occur at various Angus events during the year. As part of the celebration, the Angus Journal will feature glimpses of the past throughout the year.



became charter members. A total of 430 women from 43 states and Canada became charter members of the National Women's Auxiliary of the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association.

According to the "Ladies" page from the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal* in January 1953, special guests at the luncheon were "Miss Faye Mugge, Cleghorn, Iowa, who exhibited the grand champion junior steer at the 1952 International; and Miss Minnie Lou Ottinger, Hydro, Okla., the first woman ever to win top honors in collegiate judging at the International." (Another first for Minnie Lou would come later, when she would serve as the first female president of the American Angus Association in 2004-2005.)

For entertainment during the luncheon, there was a style show courtesy of the Santa Fe System Lines, with door prizes supplied

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“by major packing companies and leading Chicago firms.”

Mrs. Volkmann served as the first president of the organization, with Mrs. Forrest Lemons of Illinois, first vice president; Mrs. Arthur Mallory of Iowa, second vice president; and Mrs. E.H. Heckett of Pennsylvania, secretary-treasurer. A representative from each state was named to the board of directors.

In 1955, Mrs. Lemons called for a national meeting to take place at the All-American Angus Breeders' Futurity in Lexington, Ky. At the Annual Meeting in November 1956, the name of the organization was changed by vote to the “American Angus Auxiliary.”

The January 1954 edition of the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal* notes that the program from the second annual meeting included a fashion show courtesy of Carson-Pirie-Scott of Chicago that featured “36 different dresses and ensembles for a variety of occasions and climates.” In addition to the fashion show, the director of the Women's Travel Department of the Union Pacific Railroad gave a presentation with helpful hints on what and how to pack garments for travel. The assistant director of home economics for the National Livestock and Meat Board also demonstrated methods of meat cooking.

“Because the first meeting included an afternoon at the theater, a strictly social event, I think some people did not take

the organization seriously at first,” says Anne Patton Schubert, whose mother and grandmother were among the charter members. “Many of those ladies, including my mother, were full participating partners in the businesses they owned with their husbands. They were breeders in their own right.”

As for the afternoon at the theater, “They just knew how to do things right back then,” she says, laughing.

In addition to re-electing the original officers at their second annual meeting, the membership approved a set of bylaws. Throughout the years, the Auxiliary has updated its bylaws to reflect the wishes of the membership.

“We have been progressive in recognizing that as an organization we must accommodate the changes that time and circumstances demand of us,” says Linda Brost, former president and current budget committee chair. “We do not want to miss an opportunity for growth.”

Brost notes the Auxiliary continues to support the American Angus Association and the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) as the organization's original purpose statement suggests.

In 1953 the first Silver Award for the highest-placing girl at the International Livestock Show in Chicago was presented to Joyce Kemp of Iowa. She was awarded a silver bowl. From the contest's inception, winners received a bowl or tray.

“It is not until 1960 that we find mention of a silver pitcher. We think that was the first Silver Pitcher Award given,” Brost says. “By 1962 we are fairly certain the Silver Award became the Silver Pitcher Award.” With the closing of the International Show in Chicago, the Silver Pitcher Award was presented at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in 1975 and 1976.

In 1977, the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) took place just before the All-American Futurity in Louisville, Ky., so the Silver Pitcher Award was presented to Sonya Boggs of New York at the NJAS. So began the tradition of presenting the award at the junior show. The Silver Pitcher Award is based on the highest accumulated points in showing placings.

In 1993, the women of the Auxiliary, wanting to recognize the achievements of young men as well as young women, voted to expand the award, and for the first time presented the award to a young man. Ty Krebs of Nebraska received the Silver Pitcher Award that year, along with Beth Patton of Indiana.

Fundraising

Prior to the formation of a national auxiliary, state or regional auxiliaries promoted Angus cattle by various means, including prizes and scholarships at 4-H shows and at state or regional livestock shows. Since organizations need to raise funds to survive and to award prizes and scholarships, the national organization has used many of the same types of fundraisers as the state or regional auxiliaries. They also seek support from breeders and organizations within the industry.

Auxiliary fundraising follows two paths. The first is the funding of the Auxiliary Scholarship Fund and the second is increasing the monies available in the Auxiliary General Fund. The scholarship fund has been increased mainly through the scholarship heifer program. The first scholarship heifer was donated by P.L. Benshoof of Treasure Acres Farm, Blairsburg, Iowa, in 1958. She was purchased by Royce Zink, Appleton City, Mo., for \$3,000. In 2005, the scholarship heifer donated by Lemmon Cattle Ent., Woodbury, Ga., and auctioned at the Angus Reception at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) made \$50,000 for the fund.

A variety of fundraisers for the general fund have been used, including the



► In 1958, the first scholarship heifer to be sold at the Futurity was donated by Treasure Acres Farm, P.L. Benshoof, Blairsburg, IA.

auctioning of needlework, ceramics, baskets and crystal. In 1960, the book *Baby Black* was printed. Written by Julie McDonald and illustrated by Merrie Zaring Holbert, the proceeds were intended to cover the cost of communications and operations for the Auxiliary. In 1960, the "Little Joe" coloring book was introduced to also assist with Auxiliary general fund finances.

An early fundraiser for the general fund was a quilt raffle. The quilt was made by Mrs. James Miller and Mrs. Hamilton James and made \$163 for the general fund. Two calendar fundraisers, in 1992 and 1993, gave farms and ranches the opportunity to purchase advertising blocks that were visible throughout the calendar year. Ranches could advertise sale dates or upcoming events on individual days for a lesser amount.

In addition to donating a ceramic "herd" of 20 cattle as a fundraiser for the Auxiliary's 50th anniversary celebration, Rachel Breck of Connecticut donated an original crewel needlework scene of Angus cattle. It sold for \$6,000 to Bob Laflin of Olsburg, Kan.

Breck, who died in 2007 at age 98, owned and operated Hedgerows Farm in West Cornwall, Conn. She became a member of the American Angus Association in the early 1950s, served as president of the Connecticut Angus Association and the New England Angus Association, and was a delegate to the Association Annual Meeting for nearly 25 years. In 1980, she was the first woman to seek a position on the American Angus Association Board of Directors. She was named one of the Distinguished Women of the Auxiliary in 1989.

Other fundraisers have included live and silent auctions.

"I think live auctions began in 2001," Brost says. "The Finance Committee started the awards fund so we could draw interest income each year to pay for our many awards. This step allowed us to use money in the general fund for other purposes. As the awards fund grew, the Finance Committee desired to have all live auction money designated as scholarship money and allow the silent auction income to be designated as awards fund money."

"Sandra [McCurry] and I started the silent auction around the year 2000," Brost says. "It debuted at the NAILE in conjunction with the Association's and Auxiliary's annual meetings."

Angus royalty

In 1967 the American Angus Association asked the Auxiliary for help in selecting



►Above: Rachel Breck displays the original crewel picture she created in 2001 in honor of the 50th anniversary of the American Angus Auxiliary.

►Below: In 1968, Sharon (Harrold) Sommers, Akron, Ind., was crowned National Angus Queen.



a National Angus Queen. At the Annual Meeting in November of that year, the membership voted to package the scholarship winner and the National Angus Queen, making Sharon (Harrold) Sommers of Indiana the first queen.

The Auxiliary membership voted to change the name as a salute to the names Angus Association and Angus Auxiliary, and in 1973 Kathy Votaw of Nebraska became the first young woman to be known as Miss American Angus.

In 1980, the selection of Miss American Angus was a contest for the first time among the scholarship winners who had indicated they would like to be Miss American Angus.

"This change was instituted because the Auxiliary realized that some first-place scholarship winners might have other obligations and would prefer not to reign as Miss American Angus," Brost says. "In addition, there are also some scholarship winners who prefer not to compete for the title for a variety of reasons."

Miss American Angus is required to attend the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in January, the Western National Angus Futurity (WNAF) in April, the Atlantic National Angus Show in May, the Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show in June, the NJAS in July, the NAILE in November and a Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Building Blocks Seminar. Other events that Miss American Angus attends include the All-American Angus Breeders' Futurity, the American Royal in October and the National FFA Convention.

The American Angus Association contributes \$5,500 yearly to travel expenses for Miss American Angus. The queen will typically fill the rest of her calendar with appearances at sales, state shows/events, LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Angus Development) conference, agricultural events, radio/TV appearances, and perhaps some CAB work/restaurant appearances or appearances at schools.

"Remember, this is a full-time college freshman who is juggling college life with travel requirements and appearances," says Mary McCurry, Miss American Angus Committee co-chair. "Each Miss American Angus has taken this in a different direction, and each reign has its own character. Each is very articulate and presents a very professional image to the viewing public." The committee obtains sponsorships and judges for the contest each year and conducts the contest.

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Two years ago a luncheon with the judges, contestants and Miss American Angus committee was added to the contest.

"It's a great way for everyone to get acquainted and comfortable before the contest starts," McCurry says.

"Also for the last three years, Diane Johnson has graciously conducted professional etiquette seminars for the contestants and their guests — so key in job interviewing and other pursuits in the professional world."

McCurry says the committee has been working to provide additional venues for Miss American Angus to interact with school-age children in order to promote agriculture and the Angus breed. Ideally, this would be in conjunction with shows she already attends in order to maximize travel expenses and time away from college.

McCurry says she and her daughter, Emily, have co-chaired the committee and contest for five years, and are very impressed

with the caliber of the contestants and those chosen to be Miss American Angus.

"The role of Miss American Angus has evolved over the years, but her strength is still in her ability to be a reliable role model for Angus juniors, as well as an educated, articulate representative of the Angus breed and its affiliations," McCurry adds.

Scholarships

The Auxiliary Scholarship Program had a modest beginning. Mrs. Arthur Mallory of Iowa was elected president of the Auxiliary at the annual meeting in Chicago in 1955. She initiated an event called the President's Breakfast for the following morning with the Scholarship Fund beginning at the breakfast with \$100. Dorothy Wall chaired the committee that was formed to take charge of the fund. Other members of the committee were Mrs. Willie Volkmann, Mrs. J.C. Holbert, Mrs. R.C. Banscombe and Mrs. Lester Leachman.

The committee decided that the first scholarship amount awarded would be \$300. At the Auxiliary's Annual Meeting in 1956, the first scholarship was presented to Kathleen (Moore) Perry of Missouri. The scholarship trust fund was established in 1969.

At the November 2001 annual meeting, the Auxiliary members voted to make the Advisory on Trust Committee a standing committee. As the scholarship fund increased, the Auxiliary expanded the number of scholarships awarded. Before 1969, scholarships were given only to girls, because, Brost says, the Auxiliary only had so much money in the fund. In 1969, Dan Eversole of Ohio was the first boy to receive a scholarship.

For many years the scholarship applications were judged and awarded at the All-American Angus Futurity. In 1995, the Auxiliary decided to award the scholarships at the NJAS as the event expanded and the

Cooking up good times, good food and beef industry knowledge

The first American Angus Auxiliary cook-off took place in 1983 in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Des Moines, Iowa. It is conducted under the direction of the Beef Education Committee of the Auxiliary. The first contest was called the Great Ground Round Cook-Off, with nine junior teams and four adult teams providing food and entertainment in the 106° F heat. Anne Patton Schubert and Ardyce O'Neill dreamed up the event.

"Whenever I remember that day in 1983, I marvel. Neither Anne nor I had ever participated in a cook-off, let alone had ever been to one," O'Neill says. "No one who competed had ever been in one before. After the cook-off started, I just sat down and watched with a sense of wonderment. *It was actually happening!* It even went very smoothly."

The contest started as an opportunity to educate and entertain.



►The first Cook-Off took place in 1983 in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show in Des Moines, Iowa.

The Education Committee had been involved in a long-term nationwide contest where state auxiliaries entered their yearlong activities, with a traveling leather banner trophy being awarded. In 1979, 1980 and 1981, the committee had a promotional booth at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS). It was successful, but it only involved the Auxiliary members who helped staff it, and it was just one short-term project.

"We were looking for something that would appeal specifically to juniors and help them become knowledgeable about and comfortable talking about and promoting beef in public," O'Neill says. The teams present skits on beef education that tie in with the theme of their entries.

"The skits were suggested as a fun way to aid the contestants in presenting their recipes," she adds. "Each year we are amazed with the originality and creativity of the skits."

Originally, there were just two divisions, juniors and adults. Teams won prizes based on showmanship and recipe. For showmanship, teams were judged on dish presentation and the creativity of a skit and costumes. Recipe judging was based on the taste of the food and ease of preparation. Though the contest now has three junior age divisions and the adult division, teams are still judged on recipe and showmanship. Junior age divisions are junior, ages 9-13; intermediate, ages 14-17; and senior, ages 18-21.

The first contest had just three judges, Nancy Bohlen from Michigan, John Ponticello from Missouri and Harold Minderman from Iowa. Now there are 12 judges; three for each of the four divisions.

"The judges bring a large supply of humor with them and really enjoy this event," O'Neill says.

For the next three years (1985-1987), the event was known as the Big Angus Beef Cook-Off. The first year for the All-American Beef Cook-Off was 1988, which was also the first year the fresh meat cuts were provided to contestants by Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB).

"Thanks to *Certified Angus Beef* distributors throughout the country, participants have received their choice of CAB cuts for the

awards night became a major event. In addition, Brost says, the Auxiliary wanted the scholarship winners to receive recognition from their peers.

“We thought that the additional exposure would encourage junior participation in the Auxiliary scholarship programs, as well,” Brost says. “In order to have the winners announced at NJAS, it was necessary to judge the scholarships in a different way. It was decided to mail the applications to the judges and to hold a conference call for the final decision.”

The scholarship application has 19 sections in which applicants include detailed information that chronicles their achievements in ag-related activities, at school, at home on the farm or ranch, and in their communities. A 300-word Angus story, reference letters and other documentation completes the application, which is due in May. Applicants must be NJAA members and graduating high school



►The first scholarship was presented to Kathleen Moore of Missouri Nov. 28, 1956.

seniors nominated by their state or regional associations.

In 2008, 25 Angus juniors from 21 different states applied for the Auxiliary scholarships. Winners received a total of \$12,000 in scholarships from the Auxiliary. First-place applicants received \$1,400; second-place, \$1,250; third place, \$1,200; fourth place, \$1,100; and fifth place, \$1,050.

Showmanship

One of the highlights of the NJAS is the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. The Auxiliary has been associated with this contest since its inception in 1967. At the first contest, the Auxiliary presented the first-place showman with a silver bowl. During the first two years of the contest, a bowl was presented to only the winner of the contest. In 1969 the Auxiliary presented silver bowls to the top five showmen, a practice that continues today. In 2000 the Auxiliary

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contest, contributing to the expansion of the categories and award levels,” Patton Schubert says. Starting in 1989, the contest was supported by CAB and has been known as the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef* Cook-Off since then.

“Whatever the experience, the sincere interest in talking about *Certified Angus Beef* is a common denominator. Not only does the information presented increase, the creative approach to presenting it becomes more and more entertaining each year,” Patton Schubert adds.

Two special cook-off awards

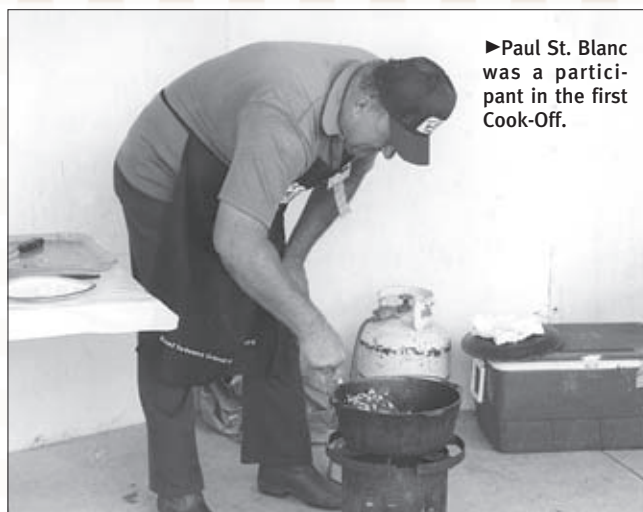
Paul St. Blanc was a participant in the first Cook-Off. “I so well remember that we had to talk him into entering the first Cook-Off in 1983 with the black kettle he always cooked with,” O’Neill says. “He said he didn’t know anything about showmanship, and I told him to just be himself. He won both recipe and showmanship awards in the adult division.” He competed in many cook-offs after that and was there to help any junior member in need, O’Neill says.

When he died shortly after the NJAS in 1999, the family established the Black Kettle Award to be given to the overall winner in his memory. It was awarded for the first time in 2000. To select an overall winner, each team of judges presents their division’s overall winner using verbal and video presentations so all judges have information on all four teams. The 12 judges then vote on the best entry.

Pat Grote was president of the Auxiliary in 2002. To honor her after her death, the Pat Grote Fund was established to provide paid registrations to the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference for the first-place overall winning team in the intermediate division of the Cook-Off.

For this year’s 25th anniversary of the Cook-Off, the contest featured only fresh meat categories: roasts, steaks and other beef. A total of 40 teams with more than 200 “chefs” competed in the 2008 Cook-Off.

“It was so fun this year, just so fun, with the re-enactment of the



►Paul St. Blanc was a participant in the first Cook-Off.

campfire cooking from the first Cook-Off,” says Patton Schubert. She and O’Neill can both tell the story about the contest being on a dirt floor in the cattle barns one year or the story of the year that a junior team from California, whose recipe called for pinto beans, explained to a judge who bit down on a hard bean that their moms didn’t tell them they had to cook the beans first.

“We have had many multigenerational families compete in the Cook-Off,” O’Neill says. “The best story I have heard so far is about Paul St. Blanc. He won a wooden block set of knives at the first Cook-Off in 1983. This summer, his grandson was married, and he was given that set of knives at the request of his grandfather, who had saved them to pass them on.

“It is an awesome and overwhelming feeling to realize that the Cook-Off has a 25-year, and counting, history,” O’Neill concludes.

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decided to honor Dean Hurlbut, the first director of the showmanship contest and former Association junior activities director, by naming the silver bowl given to the first-place showmanship contestant after him.

Each contestant first qualifies for the competition within his or her respective state. At the NJAS, contestants show animals chosen by random selection, with their performance evaluated by a panel of top showmen. They are judged on skill, ability to follow instructions, use of equipment, courtesy, sportsmanship and general appearance. After four preliminary rounds, 15 finalists are chosen, with each receiving clippers provided by Andis®. The 15 finalists then compete in a final round for the top five placings.

The showmanship contest, which first took place in conjunction with the All-American Breeders' Futurity, was not held in conjunction with the NJAS until 1974. Junior members may compete only once during their years of eligibility, so most wait until their last years as a junior member.

Other awards

Starting in 1960, the Auxiliary decided to honor those women who have given outstanding service to the organization by naming them Distinguished Women. One or more women can be honored with a Certificate of Recognition for their contributions to further the work of the Auxiliary. The first two Distinguished Women were Mrs. E.H. (Greta) Heckett, the first secretary-treasurer of the Auxiliary; and Mrs. Maris (Jean) Brandrup (later Mrs. Frank Bradway), who organized the Auxiliary page in the *Angus Journal* and contributed much to the publicity the Auxiliary received and helped with the Ways & Means Committee to aid the growth of Auxiliary finances.

The Auxiliary wanted to emphasize the importance of the educational contests at the NJAS, so to promote and support them the Auxiliary sponsors the Janet Castle Crystal Award, honoring the president of the Auxiliary in 1962-1963. The award is made possible by a generous donation from

her family. There is no application for the contest. When juniors enter public speaking, graphic design, the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off, poster, photography, extemporaneous speaking or team sales contests they are eligible to receive the Crystal Award, first presented to the boy and girl with the most accumulated points in 1999.

Into the future

In 1998, the Auxiliary launched a web site, www.angusauxiliary.com, to provide information on the organization's activities, awards and scholarships. The site, updated and redesigned in 2007, has forms for the Certificate of Achievement and Auxiliary scholarships available as well as information on the history of the Auxiliary, its focus, officers and committees, past award winners and the Angus Sale Barn and Gifts of Good Taste.

In the Auxiliary's 50th anniversary booklet, past presidents shared favorite memories of their year as president and their involvement in the Auxiliary since then. Patton Schubert is still co-chair of the Cook-Off, which started in the year of her presidency, is still an Angus breeder, and is still an ardent supporter of the Auxiliary. She ends her contribution to the booklet by saying the Auxiliary has provided her with "so many wonderful memories. It gives me such pleasure to look at the photo of the first Auxiliary luncheon and see my mother and grandmother in that photograph."

Current president Nancy (Diuble) Thelen says that she has been a member of the Auxiliary since 1970 and has served on many different committees through the years to give back to the breed and to be involved with other members from across the country to support youth and the industry.

"Nothing compares, though, to my years on the officer team," Thelen says. "The opportunity to work with a committed group of officers, committee chairs and American Angus Association staff, and to get to know each other has been a wonderful experience. We all have the same goals and bring our unique enthusiasm, talents and skills to the group and our activities."

"It has been an honor to serve as president, and, as in any organization, it is the people who make a difference," she adds. "It is truly an amazing group who are involved with the American Angus Auxiliary."



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