

Practice Pays

Lots of hard work and practice pay off for Colorado junior at 2010 NJAS.

by **Mathew Elliott**

When this year's National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest winner was announced, she raced over, grabbed the American Angus Auxiliary president and twirled her around several times in excitement.

Maybe a little unconventional, but words could not explain the excitement Britney Creamer felt as she ran over to her mother, Auxiliary President Kathi Creamer, and gave her a giant hug after being named this year's showmanship winner.

"It really was icing on the cake having Mom present that award to me," Britney says. "I still cannot put the words together to explain how excited I was when they announced my name."

Two weeks after the show, Kathi still gets goosebumps when talking about giving the Silver Revere Bowl, given each year by the Auxiliary to the top five showmen, to her daughter.

► **Right:** Britney Creamer twirled her mother — Auxiliary President Kathi Creamer who was presenting the award — around after being named the 2010 National Junior Angus Showmanship champion.

"It was the thrill of a lifetime to be able to present the award to Britney," Kathi says. "I know it's been a goal of Britney's since she first grabbed a halter and started working with cattle."

Following family tradition

And that's been a while.

"I started showing when I was 5," Britney says. "I was showing in open shows and state fairs against adults because I loved it so much. I just couldn't wait to get my hands on a calf and into the ring."

"I guess I've never been a very good



spectator," she jokes. "Even at 5, I didn't like sitting on the sidelines; I wanted to show."

Showing cattle has become a Creamer family tradition. Britney says her grandfather received his first Angus heifer from his parents when he was 16 and has been working on building the family's Lazy JB Angus herd ever since. Both her father, Jeff, and mother

Juniors compete for showmanship honors

Fifty-six contestants from 30 states competed for the coveted Dean Hurlbut Award during the 44th National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest at the 2010 National

Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo. Given in honor of Dean Hurlbut, founder of the contest, the award is presented annually to the champion showman.

Angus juniors are allowed one chance to compete for the national showmanship title during their National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) career. They must first



► Fifteen finalists competed in Saturday's final round of the 2010 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. Pictured are (from left) Cara Ayres, Stevensville, Mont., judge; **Jennifer Newcomb**, Batesville, Miss.; **Erika Boehmer**, Charlotte, Mich., fifth; **Pam Vanek**, Silesia, Mont.; **Mandy Richardson**, Louisa, Va.; **Jessica Schmidt**, Othello, Wash.; **Austin Trueblood**, Sardinia, Ohio, second; **Krystin Bachman**, Lancaster, Ohio; **Britney Creamer**, Montrose, Colo., first; **Courtenay DeHoff**, Tonganoxie, Kan., third; **Kassandra Pfeiffer**, Orlando, Okla.; **Chase Cunningham**, Lebanon, Ind.; **Madison Henderson**, Drakesville, Iowa, fourth; **Nikki Bugg**, Burgin, Ky.; **Katie Gazda**, Athens, Ga.; **Hannah Barton**, Dutton, Ala.; Jeana Sankey, Council Grove, Kan., judge; and Ty Krebs, Gordon, Neb., judge.

were active in the showing; and her brother, Brandon, was a National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) officer before she was.

Britney quickly credits her family for all the help they have given her and for the time that they've spent working and on the road with the show calves.

"We practice with all of the calves that we show," Britney says. "It takes all of us, as we have some 'mock shows' in our barn. Someone will be the judge, and everyone else grabs a calf, and we show. This not only lets me practice on my showmanship skills, but it also prepares my cattle for the showing."

Kathi has long been a part of the mock shows and agrees that has been a big help in Britney's becoming a better showman.

"Since she started showing, Britney has always been very concerned about what makes her animal look the best," Kathi says. "As a family, we work on this. Britney will take her calf and set it up, while Jeff, Brandon and I will offer a critique and feedback. Britney will then hand the halter to someone else and take a step back and look at what we were talking about."

The 'Rush' to the championship

The National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest is unique in that contestants get only one chance in their junior career to compete

in it. Each contestant must first qualify on the state level before advancing to the competition hosted annually at the NJAS.

This year 56 contestants competed in four preliminary classes. Each contestant was given a random number and assigned a random heifer, chosen out of the bred-and-owned and owned heifer shows.

Three judges watch the skill, handling and response of the animal to the contestant, use of equipment, general appearance of the contestant, showing courtesy and sportsmanship, and ability to follow instructions during the contest. A mock judge walks the ring so the contestants have one judge to focus on and listen to for instructions.

From the four preliminary classes, 15 contestants are chosen to compete in the finals. Those 15 contestants then compete in the finals on Saturday morning for the title of top showman.

Getting into the showmanship finals wasn't exactly easy for Britney. She had already exhibited three bulls and a steer before the preliminary round of the showmanship competition began. Already a little tired, she had to regroup before the preliminaries.

"Anyone that exhibits cattle knows that it's tough work to show 1,700-pound bulls,



► Britney Creamer (right), Montrose, Colo., claimed first-place showmanship honors, winning the prestigious Dean Hurlbut Award, in the 2010 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. American Angus Auxiliary President Kathi Creamer presented the silver Revere bowl in honor of Dean Hurlbut. The top five winners also received a monetary award from the Ham James Memorial Fund.

and Britney had really high hopes for one of those bulls that didn't quite work out," Kathi says. "We were back getting ready before

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qualify on the state level. Preliminary rounds at the NJAS determine 15 finalists, who compete again for top five honors.

Britney Creamer, Montrose, Colo., was named top showman this year, accepting the silver Revere bowl from her mother, Kathi, who serves as president of the American Angus Auxiliary, award sponsor.

Rounding out the top five finishers were Austin Trueblood, Sardinia, Ohio, second; Courtenay DeHoff, Tonganoxie, Kan., third; Madison Henderson, Drakesville, Iowa, fourth; and Erika Boehmer, Charlotte, Mich., fifth.

First- through fifth-place showmen received a silver Revere bowl sponsored by the American Angus Auxiliary and a cash award presented by the Angus Foundation, funded in part by the Hamilton James Memorial Fund.

Other showmanship finalists in the top 15 included Krystin Bachman, Lancaster, Ohio; Hannah Barton, Dutton, Ala.; Nikki Bugg, Burgin, Ky.; Chase Cunningham, Lebanon, Ind.; Katie Gazda, Athens, Ga.; Jennifer Newcomb, Batesville, Miss.; Kassandra Pfeiffer, Orlando, Okla.; Mandy Richardson, Louisa, Va.; Jessica Schmidt, Othello, Wash.; and Pam Vanek, Silesia, Mont.

Each finalist received a set of Andis®

clippers, donated by Andis, and a cash award from the American Angus Association.

Showmanship contestants earning honorable mention included Tyler Wood, Holly Pond, Ala.; Caitlin Haley, Quitman, Ark.; Clay Williams, Bishop, Ga.; Trevor Whiteside, Queenstown, Md.; Audrianna

Drechsel, Boonville, Mo.; Cody Smith, West Plains, Mo.; Taylor Geppert, Kimball, S.D.; and Shannon Schmidt, Othello, Wash.

Judges for the 2010 contest were Cara Ayres, Stevensville, Mont.; Ty Krebs, Gordon, Neb.; and Jeana Sankey, Council Grove, Kan.

by Molly Witzel



► Receiving honorable mention at the 2010 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest are (from left) Audrianna Drechsel, Boonville, Mo.; Taylor Geppert, Kimball, S.D.; Caitlin Haley, Quitman, Ark.; Trevor Whiteside, Queenstown, Md.; Tyler Wood, Holly Pond, Ala.; Clay Williams, Bishop, Ga.; Milo Lewis, Walstonburg, N.C.; Shannon Schmidt, Othello, Wash.; and Cody Smith, West Plains, Mo.

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the showmanship contest, and we talked about how hard she had worked to get to this point. Then we each took a deep breath, and she really focused on her goal. Then her determination got her through it.”

That determination helped Britney advance past the preliminary round and into the finals. A little fresher on Saturday, she exhibited the heifer they gave her to the best of her ability and waited.

After the exhibitors were released from the ring and led their heifers out, they returned to line back up in the ring. Nervously leaning on showsticks, the contestants anxiously listened to the judges' comments. The judges commented on the incredible level of showmanship they had seen and offered some tips for the juniors watching ringside.

Starting with five and working down to champion, Britney stood and listened for her name to be called. And it was — finally — as the National Junior Angus Showmanship Champion.

“Winning the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest has been a goal of mine since I’ve started showing,” Britney says. “It’s a dream come true. Winning this is a huge sense of accomplishment for me.”

A little confidence

Britney advises young showmen to be confident.

“Some kids lack confidence in the showing,” she says. “Be confident. Once during showmanship a judge asked me who my greatest competition was. I thought for a minute and answered, ‘myself. If I am not confident in my showmanship ability, why should anyone — especially a judge — think I should win?’”

It takes a lot of drive and determination to be a champion showman. “It’s something I take a lot of pride in,” she says. “The showing is like ‘home’ to me,” Britney says. “When I am in there, all of my worries go away, and I’m focused on making my animal look the best it can.”

While confidence is important, Jeff and Kathi are able to see some other qualities that make Britney a champion in the showing from the other side of the fence.

“I think something that sets Britney apart as a showman is her ability to see the entire showing,” Kathi says. “She can see the low spots or places to try to avoid, while watching the judge and seeing what they want, all while not overdoing it. I compare it to a dance, the way she works with the cattle.”

All-around NJAS experience

The first NJAS the Creamer family attended was in 1998 in Tulsa, Okla. They have been active in national junior shows ever since. Britney has participated in the many NJAS competitions besides the showing. One of her favorites is the photography contest. In 2009 she placed second overall with her picture “Golden Guardian,” featuring their Golden Retriever and Angus cattle in the background.

She has also competed in the NJAA graphic design, poster, creative writing, speech and Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off competitions.

Britney’s “Rush to the Rockies” was a long time in the making. As the NJAS Co-Chairperson for Colorado, she started long ago to help plan this year’s show in her home state of Colorado.

This was Britney’s 12th and final NJAS, as well as her last year of showing eligibility in the NJAA, but she hopes to stay active showing in open shows with her family’s cattle.

“I hope to help my family get our cattle to the top,” she says. “Cattle were my first love, and I want to continue to work with and be a part of the cattle industry.”

While Britney’s NJAA show career may be wrapping up this year, she’s not quite done being active in the NJAA. Her peers voted her as the 2010-2011 NJAA Board Chairperson.

“I am very excited to be the chairperson,” Britney says. “I hope to get other juniors to



► Judges for the 2010 contest were Cara Ayres (center), Stevensville, Mont.; Ty Krebs, Gordon, Neb.; and Jeana Sankey (left), Council Grove, Kan.

have the same wonderful experiences that I have been able to share with my friends and fellow board members.”

Britney is currently a student at Oklahoma State University (OSU) pursuing a double major in agricultural economics international marketing and Spanish. At OSU she is involved in Block and Bridle, Collegiate Cattlewomen and Aggie-X. She is also a member of the Colorado Cattlemen’s Association and Americorps volunteer program.



► Britney has been exhibiting cattle since the age of 5. Winning the National Junior Angus Showmanship contest, she says, is a dream come true.