



Next Generation

► Postcard from an NJAA director and state spotlights

Embrace each day and influence your destiny

While recently listening to the radio, the song "These Days" by Rascal Flatts came on. I had not heard it in awhile, and one line in particular stuck in my mind as I thought about writing my final postcard as a National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board member. The lyrics "Life throws you curves,



Renee Thelen

but you learn to swerve" hit me hard as I thought about things.

This has been an important lesson I have learned throughout my life, the past couple years in particular. I am the kind of person who

likes to plan ahead and have control over all the things that affect my life, but that's not always possible. As I near graduation from college this fall, there are many questions I cannot answer about what my future may hold. Some people will spend much of their life harping on this fact and trying to change it; they really should be embracing each day of their life, enjoying what they know and being optimistic about what's to come.

While I'm not perfect at doing this, this thought has changed my outlook on life. You only live once and should make the most of it. I still think about where I will work and live once I graduate, but I don't let it overwhelm my life. Instead, I go to classes and look at job opportunities, knowing that everything will fall into place and stressing about it isn't going to change anything.

I am making the most out of my time in college, taking useful classes, making lasting friendships, participating in organizations,

watching and going to sporting events, spending time with my family, and being around my animals (of course). I believe that life is constantly testing each one of us to see how strong we really are, and even though it sometimes seems unfair and really hard, we will eventually be rewarded for it all.

Anyone who knows me very well knows that I have two loves in life: sports and cattle. Being an avid basketball fan, I always follow March Madness very closely. After my team was beat by the eventual "Cinderella" in the first round, I followed George Mason University very closely for the rest of the tournament.

In their route to the final four, Coach Jim Larranaga used many tactics to motivate his team. One that I particularly enjoyed was when he recited the words of famed orator William Jennings Bryan to his team, telling his players, "Destiny is not a matter of chance; it's a matter of choice." His players apparently bought into this idea, as they continued to play hard and challenge tournament history while making their own and building a lasting legacy.

Every choice you make impacts your destiny. You may not have control over it, but influencing it though your actions could lead to great things, just as it did for a Patriot League basketball team that most people had little or no expectations for.

June is one of my favorite months: Summer is here, baseball is in full swing, the Stanley Cup and National Basketball Association (NBA) finals are going on, and the show season kicks into full swing. I don't know of a better time of year to really enjoy life and live each day to its fullest.

Make the most out of your time as a

junior member; it goes by very quickly. Take advantage of all the opportunities the NJAA has to offer. Being involved in this association is one thing that I will never forget, and I know it will benefit me throughout my life regardless of what I do and where I live.

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► **Western Regional Junior Angus Show,** April 22, Reno, Nev.



► **Sarah Butler, Bliss, Idaho,** receives the Western States Angus Auxiliary Scholarship. Pictured are (from left) Elsie Covey, presenting the award; Butler; and Carla Malson, presenting the award.



► **Nicole Jorgensen (left), Culver, Ore.,** is crowned the 2006 Western States Angus Queen. Also pictured is Heather Foster, Snohomish, Wash., the 2005 Western States Angus Queen.

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▣ NEXT GENERATION

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Know that life will not always go your way, and there are things you will have no control over; but embrace both the good and bad. I challenge each of you to live each day of your life to its fullest and create your own destiny through the choices you make!

— **Renee Thelen, Michigan**

National Beef Ambassadors visit nation's capital

Four of the beef industry's top youth leaders recently received a rare opportunity to view the inner workings of the federal government and its effect on the beef industry. National Beef Ambassadors Amanda Nolz of South Dakota, Peter Scharpe of Minnesota, Josh McCubbins of

Kentucky and Angelle Johnson of Louisiana were able to participate in the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) 2006 Spring Conference on Capitol Hill March 27-31. Scharpe is a member of the NJAA.

Each of the beef ambassadors spent a day accompanying their state cattlemen's delegation as they called on their state's members of Congress. They also made visits to several federal regulatory agencies. Participants were addressed by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and other officials with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Each of the ambassadors had the opportunity to speak with Secretary Johanns and learn about critical issues such as animal identification (ID), international

trade and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) surveillance.

The conference gave the ambassadors an up-close perspective on future opportunities they may have to advance the beef industry. Scharpe said, "I hope to attend this conference another time. I really feel it makes a great deal of difference for the beef industry."

Angus juniors win scholarships

Every year Accelerated Genetics awards scholarships to youth both just entering and already enrolled in college in the agricultural field.

Four \$500 scholarships are awarded to youth just graduating from high school and beginning college. The 2006 recipients include NJAA member Christina Egner of Shelby, Ohio. Egner plans to attend Ohio State University and major in animal science with a double minor in agricultural education and agribusiness.

Two \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to students currently enrolled in agricultural programs at college. The 2006 recipients include NJAA member Rebecca Tokach of Saint Anthony, N.D. Tokach is attending Kansas State University and is a freshman majoring in animal science.

South Dakota news

Matt Tollefson, Clark, S.D., was elected president of the South Dakota state chapter of the National FFA Organization.

▣ Minnesota Angus Ass'n Annual Banquet, March 22, Rochester



► **Kari Stai** (right), New London, receives the Outstanding Leadership Award from Rebecca Scharpe.



► **Lindsay Waugh** (right) receives the Minnesota Angus Ass'n Scholarship from Judy Nelson, scholarship chairperson.

► **Right:** Junior officers and directors for the Minnesota Junior Angus Ass'n include (seated, from left) **Kari Stai**, New London, president; **Lindsay Waugh**, Goodhue, vice president; (back row, from left) **Kayla Nelson**, Mabel; **Peter Scharpe**, Arlington, treasurer; **Chelsey Drysdale**, Wabasha, secretary; and **Samantha Weber**, Pipestone. Not pictured is **Alison Johnston**, Houston.



► **Right:** Selected as Miss Minnesota Angus for 2006 are (seated, from left) **Alisha Nord**, Wolverton, and **Lindsay Waugh**, Goodhue. Also pictured are (back row, from left) **Audra Nord**, Wolverton, Miss Minnesota Angus 2005; **Kayla Nelson**, Mabel; **Samantha Weber**, Pipestone; and **Kari Stai**, New London, Miss Minnesota Angus 2005.



► **Alissa Stai** (left) receives her Bronze Award, and **Kari Stai** receives her Bronze and Silver awards.



► **Kara Walser** (left), Minnesota Lake, receives the Show Steer of the Year Jacket Award. **Alisha Nord**, Wolverton, receives the Show Heifer of the Year Jacket Award.