



Importance of Involvement



Shellie served as NHW treasurer for four years.

Former junior leaders tell why they are involved in the National Hereford Women.

by **Bridget Beran**

The National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) provides a plethora of opportunities for its members. However, that membership, unfortunately, runs out once members turn 21. While their junior years may be over, their passion for the Hereford breed is far from done. Many women who were youth leaders return to serve the Hereford breed as members and leaders of the National Hereford Women (NHW).

Fifth-generation Hereford breeder Shellie Collins, Chattanooga, Okla., dedicated her junior years to serving the breed. Shellie served as the 1999 National Polled Hereford Queen and as a director of the NJHA. Serving as president of the NJHA board in its second year of existence taught Shellie about compromise, patience and leadership.

This experience became invaluable when she served on the National Organization of Poll-ettes (NOP) board of directors as it began its merger with the American Hereford Women (AHW).

"I had a Poll-ette at the time call me and ask me to be a part of the women's merger as well," explains Shellie. "I felt up to the task and was adamant that the merger should take place, so I signed up. I am proud to see where the NHW has come and hope other Hereford women see the importance of the women's organization."

On the other side of the merger was fellow NHW board member, Becky Spindle, Moriarty, N.M. After several years of serving her state junior organization

in various leadership positions, Becky ran for the American Junior Hereford Association Board, serving from 1993-96 just as the merger was beginning. Because of their previous time working together, Shellie recruited Becky to fill a position on the NHW board, an opportunity that was very important to Becky.

"I received a lot of opportunities from the women's association during my junior years so I felt that it was now my turn to give back to the next generation of Hereford leaders," Becky says.

Fostering the future

Giving back to an association that gave her so much was the same reason Maddee Moore, Pendleton, Ore., decided to join the NHW board. With Hereford roots dating back more than 120 years, Maddee joined the NJHA in junior high and remained involved throughout her high school and college years.

"It shaped my life in every way possible," Maddee says. "From decisions about my career to what my priorities still are, it's everything. I can't imagine where my life would be right now if



Shellie and her family are actively involved in the cattle business.

I hadn't had the opportunity to really become involved with the Hereford breed. I put my hand in just about anything I could reach as a junior member and now as a NHW member my goal is to make those experiences even better and continue those activities."

The NHW strives to provide juniors with opportunities to advance their skills beyond the showing. Each year at the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), juniors compete in 24 contests, several of which NHW members help to put on. From speeches to posters, the NHW encourages juniors to develop lifetime skills. Maddee urges juniors to jump at every opportunity to grow their skills.

"These are opportunities that we work to set up for people and provide for our juniors and we want them to take full advantage of them. Individuals can grow so much in the participation of these contests and that's why we do them," Maddee says.

The queen program also falls under the guidance of the NHW. This is close to the hearts of Shellie, Maddee — who served



Becky and Maddee discuss NHW business during their annual meeting in Kansas City, Mo., last November.

as Oregon Hereford Queen for several years — and Becky — whose daughter Jordan currently serves as the New Mexico Hereford Queen. Training young women to be gracious and well-spoken ambassadors for the Hereford breed and guiding them as they compete for the title of National Hereford Queen is an important job of the NHW. It focuses on providing as many opportunities for NJHA members as possible.

"There are so many opportunities for juniors to find what fits their liking and go for it," Shellie says. "I am the kind of person who does not like to leave a door unopened. Don't be afraid to open them up and see what's on the other side, you never know where this life will take you."

One of the biggest gifts the NHW gives junior members is scholarships. Each year, the NHW, along with the Hereford Youth Foundation of

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Maddee and Becky currently serve on the NHW board.

America (HYFA), gives \$25,000 in scholarships to deserving youth. These scholarships reward juniors for their involvement in the NJHA, FFA and 4-H, as well as their skills and involvement in their community and school.

“Everything we do is designed to benefit the juniors. We spend a lot of time fundraising and trying to plan new things at the JNHE,” Becky says. “I hope juniors will become involved in as many experiences as they can so they have a well-rounded experience as a junior — not just the leadership, not just the showing, but to develop skills in all arenas that are provided for them.”

Hereford family

While all of these women were raised in the Hereford industry, it was their experience as a junior and adult with the Hereford family that made them stay. Even though Shellie entered the “steer world” after marrying her husband, she knows there’s no better barn than the Hereford barn. She says that she never fears letting her daughters, Cierra and Claire, roam while at a Hereford event, knowing that her Hereford friends will watch after them.



Becky's daughter Jordan currently serves as the New Mexico Hereford Queen.



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“The passion that I have for the Hereford breed and its people runs very deep within me,” Shellie says. “Like so many others I take all facets of our breed’s successes and failures a little personally. I know that the work ethic and drive that I maintain today was engrained in me by my Hereford ancestors and my parents growing up. As a whole, Hereford people are hardworking, honest, and kind people who do not want to do others harm. Hereford people as a whole look out for one another.”

Becky agrees, saying that her junior experience gave her friends all across the country and that experience is something she wants for her own daughters, Jordan and Abby. Raised in the business, the Spindle family has had a string of Herefords at the New Mexico State Fair since before the girls were born. Now, Becky encourages her girls to be involved in all aspects of the business, from attending American Hereford Association and NHW annual meetings at the American Royal to participating in contests at the JNHE.

“My junior experience taught me to be friendly and confident in myself,” Becky says. “It helped me not be afraid to try new things.”

For Maddee, her junior years were not all that long ago. Finishing up her junior career in 2009, Maddee was encouraged to join the NHW board by Becky.

“I was getting ready to move back to the Northwest so it was a good time to transition and it also gave me an opportunity to get back to being involved with the Hereford community,” Maddee says. “We are at such a crucial time with continued growth and seeing expanding numbers in the Hereford youth. That, coupled with still being relatively fresh off of my time as a junior and I can also participate as a professional at the NHW level. This opportunity blends all of my experiences together.”

While she doesn’t have children of her own, Maddee has happily taken young Hereford showmen from the Northwest under her wing to help lead them to success. She says she always tries to give them advice and guidance to help them make the most out of their NJHA experience.

Joining the NHW provided these great junior leaders with the opportunity to continue their service to their breed. Shellie explains that she knows countless NHW members who have made an impact not just on a national level but also within their states.

“It’s really important to us to keep progressing and as the Hereford breed grows we strive to keep finding new ways for kids to be involved,” Maddee says.

Maddee adds that the NHW provides a networking opportunity for the women of the Hereford breed, giving NHW members their own areas to contribute and to be involved at a hands-on level for the future of the breed.

“It’s important to be involved with the NHW to help provide the same opportunities we were given as kids and to pass the tradition of promoting Hereford breed,” Becky says. “Being a part of the NHW allows us to protect and pass on what was provided for us as junior members.” **HW**