



# Unforgettable

*Four retiring junior board members reflect, plan for future.*



by **Sara Gugelmeyer**

For four junior board members, the 2009 Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) was bittersweet. They knew that come Friday night they would have to give up their places as directors of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) and pass on the responsibility and honor to the next four chosen ones. But first, NJHA President Roger Morgan, Burwell, Neb.; Vice President Roxane Gebhart, Claremore, Okla.; Treasurer Sara Stream, Chariton, Iowa; and Reporter Jessica Slone, W. Manchester, Ohio, took a moment to reflect on what led them to where they are now, the unforgettable memories made in the last four years and what lies in the future.

## Roger Morgan

Roger Morgan grew up showing cattle, and before he was old enough to lead his own into the ring, he could be found helping with his older brother's and sister's animals. "I was so excited when my mom and dad said I was finally old enough to take my own calf in the ring," Roger reminisces.

He also remembers deciding at a very young age that he wanted to



run for the NJHA board of directors. When asked about his favorite junior board memories he says, "There are so many of them, from fun times at Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel (PRIDE) in College Station, Texas, to a very cold show in Reno, Nev."

It's almost easier for Roger to answer what he hasn't learned from being a junior board member than what he has. "I learned how to stand in a showing all day and then be dressed for the awards ceremony 30 minutes after the last class, or flying half-way across the country to a leadership conference in sweltering heat. It taught me patience, responsibility, enthusiasm and leadership.

But most of all it taught me that there is nothing you can't do if you are passionate about something."

Roger plans to take those skills he's gained as a NJHA director and honed this year as president to graduate school at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, where he is studying cow-calf management. "I would like to find a career in the beef industry and return to the ranch in the distant future," Roger says.

He would like to thank his friends and family for their support and give "a huge thank you to all of the parents and advisors who dedicate their time so these young people can attend events at all levels."

To other junior members, Roger offers these words, "Stay involved, go out and participate in the contests, chase the scholarships and show your cattle. You will find it is more than worth your time. The time you'll spend, friends you'll make, and fun you'll have are an experience you will never forget."

## Roxane Gebhart

Showing Herefords was "a given" for Roxane Gebhart, she says. Her family has been in the



Hereford business since the turn of the 20th century, and she started showing when she was 7 years old. "I always looked up to my big sister, who is seven years older than me," Roxane says. "I wanted to show calves just like her."

It wasn't her sister, though, who ultimately encouraged her to run for the junior board; it was fellow Oklahoma juniors Catie Sims and Kara Eschbach. Catie and Kara were already directors and talked Roxane into trying it after she competed in the national queen contest in 2006.

Roxane says her favorite junior board memories were made while attending PRIDE Convention in College Station, Texas. "That was my first PRIDE as a board member, and it was a blast with long van rides and goofing off at restaurants," Roxane says.

Besides plenty of fun, Roxane says, being an NJHA director has taught her how to plan large events and the importance of networking.

For now, Roxane plans to complete her bachelor's degree in animal science with a business emphasis from Oklahoma State University. She says after graduating she wants to attend law school and eventually use her law degree in the agriculture industry. "My future definitely involves Hereford cattle," Roxane says. "I plan to keep developing my herd to become better genetically and phenotypically."

Roxane says she encourages junior members to get involved in NJHA as much as possible. "The association can provide so many opportunities to the youth through developing professional and personal skills by being involved at the state or national level."

First and foremost, Roxane says she would like to thank her parents for their support. "Thank God we don't get to pick our parents because I could never have picked two more outstanding individuals." She continues, "I also thank my sister for her never-ending patience and love as well as being a great role model. I would like to thank my fiancé, Mark, for all of his love, never-ending support and laughs. He is definitely my better half.

"I would like to thank Amy Cowan, Chris Stephens and the American

Hereford Association (AHA) staff for their professionalism, efficiency and belief in the junior program. My thanks also goes to the advisors for the NJHA board as they have provided wise advice and guidance.

“Lastly, my thanks goes to my state association. My state is filled with breed leaders, great kids and good competition and I am lucky to be a part of the Oklahoma association.”

### **Sarah Stream**

Sarah Stream didn't start out showing Herefords; in fact, her family's operation was strictly Angus.



Sarah and her sister, Lisa, traveled around Iowa showing club calves of many different breeds for several years. That is until 2001 when Sarah fell in love with a polled Hereford heifer, bought her and showed her to success all year. “When her first calf was a really good 8E daughter, I knew that I would build my Hereford herd around her, but I didn't realize to what extent I would become a Hereford breeder,” Sarah says.

In 2004 Sarah showed at her first JNHE and was a voting delegate. She says she took the opportunity to get to know a lot of other juniors and had such a great time that on the way home, Sarah told her mother she wanted to run for the junior board.

Memories were made in the next three years — from accidentally picking up hitch hikers to running out of gas on the way home from PRIDE, there are many times Sarah will never forget. “The time spent with my fellow board members have been the most memorable and the most fun times I've had yet. The juniors that I have served with on the board will be close friends I will never forget and don't plan on losing touch with. We have laughed so hard we've cried so many times I can't even remember.”

More than fun times, though, Sarah says her junior board experience has taught her valuable life lessons. “I definitely feel that I have gained very valuable experiences that will help me at any job someday. I have also been able

to meet people from all over the country that are in the same business I am, and I know the networking I've done will continue to help me in the future.”

Her future includes not straying too far from the family operation. She plans to work in the insurance sector in her hometown. “I just love raising show cattle and selling them to kids so that they can have the same experiences that I have had. I realized that I enjoy watching a calf that I raised win for someone else even more than when I am on the halter. I hope that I can continue to watch them win over and over again.”

Sarah encourages NJHA members to take advantage of all that the association has to offer, something she wishes she would have done more of. “There are so many scholarships, contests, and potential friends waiting just around the corner, and all you have to do is get involved. Don't forget to thank your parents for giving you the opportunities that they have allowed you, and always be looking ahead to what else you can do.”

Speaking of thanks, she would like to thank all of her advisors, mentors and peers who have changed her life for the better. “I want to thank my parents and my heavenly Father for everything I have and everything I've been able to do along the way. Some of the wisest people I know are the Bucholz, the Hermans, the Kottkamps, the McClintocks, Chris, Amy, the Boatmans, and all of the friends I've made along the way. I can't thank you all enough.”

### **Jessica Slone**

When Jessica Slone was only 8 years old, her grandfather gave her a Hereford heifer. “I went to my very first Ohio premier show that year and would continue to go for another 11 years, making friends and memories along the way,” she says.

Jessica remembers deciding to run for the junior board at her first junior national. “I watched as the organization went through tremendous change as the merger happened,”



Jessica says. “I remember very clearly Bill Doig, a junior board member from Indiana, coming to meet with our state delegation. I recall how important my opinion was to him. I realized that I wanted some kid to feel that way because of me someday, to really feel a part of such a great organization.”

In that same spirit, Jessica says her favorite junior board memories are working with the youth at the national shows. “It is great to watch new exhibitors so proud of their animals or veterans knowing their heifer will strive for the banner at the end of the day. It is during these times that I am reminded why I love this breed so much, because of the people.”

Jessica will continue to help youth through her career, starting this fall as an agricultural education teacher at Marlinton High School in Alliance, Ohio. Also, Jessica will soon be marrying fellow Hereford breeder Collin Helsing and says the two are looking forward to raising little whitefaces in their pasture in the future.

In the meantime, she would like to say thanks to her dad, her brother and Collin for their support, “without you I wouldn't be the person I am today.” She adds, “Thank you grandpa Slone; though you're not here now, I know that you watch me every time I walk in a showring. To every Hereford breeder and enthusiast in Ohio and across the nation, thank you, especially the Farnos, Pickleseimers, Helsingers, Shelley and Kyndall; you may not know the influence you have on my life but it is definitely there.”

Jessica would also like to give one last piece of advice to the junior members. She says, “Stay true to yourself and where you came from. Be proud of what you have — it doesn't matter if you have two heifers or two hundred; do your best and always walk out thinking of what you can do better with a smile on your face. Always say thank you to those who got you to the show, through the show and home from the show. They will always love you and care for you; let them know that you feel the same, win or lose.” **HW**