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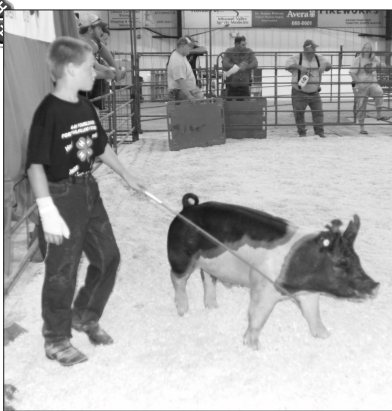


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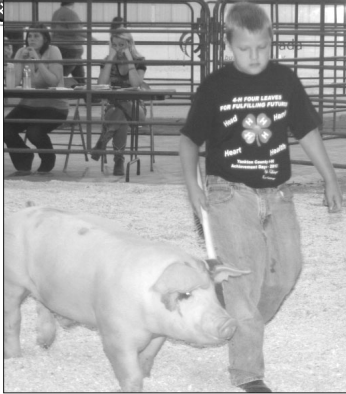


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State Sen. Jean Hunhoff shows her entry in the beef division of Saturday's Celebrity Round Robin at the Yankton County 4-H Achievement Days. Todd Dvoracek, principal at the Yankton Middle School, emerged as Grand Champion.

EMILY NIEBRUGGE/P&D

Celebrities 'Show' Appreciation For 4-H Youth And Agriculture

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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As Yankton school principals, Todd Dvoracek and Wayne Kindle are used to corralling and herding students through the hallways.

But last Saturday night, the two educators took their shot at using those same skills for showing livestock. They were among six local "personalities" competing in the round robin competition at Yankton County 4-H Achievement Days.

Dvoracek and Kindle, the respective Yankton Middle School and Yankton High School principal, emerged to claim top honors. Dvoracek won the championship while Kindle was the reserve champion, or runner-up.

After Saturday's activities, Dvoracek stood drenched in perspiration. He admitted it wasn't the first time he had sweated it out while competing in the show ring.

"I showed livestock when I was a 4-Her in Bon Homme County, and I was always sweating. It's just that kind of environment," he said, flashing a wide grin.

The other celebrities competing in the round robin included Allen Sinclair, Yankton County Commissioner; Matt Tereshinski, First Dakota National Bank; State Sen. Jean Hunhoff (R-Yankton) and State Rep. Bernie Hunhoff (D-Yankton). They were chosen winners by three 4-H junior leaders who judged each celebrity on his or her handling of a cow and pig in the ring.

Dvoracek expressed admiration for the 4-Hers who competed in the ring, then provided the livestock and judging for the celebrity round robin.

"These kids really have a work ethic. And the kids who met with us just before the show did a great job of explaining what they expected from us," he said.

"The livestock they gave us (for showing) looked well trained. It takes a lot of hours for these entries to get where they need to be."

While growing up, Kindle lived for three years on a farm south of Winner. In addition, his wife's parents operate a cattle operation north of Winner.

"But I had never shown (livestock) before," Kindle said. "This (celebrity round robin) has been a great experience. It's been really fun."

Kindle said he appreciated seeing students in a different environment outside school and showing a wide variety of hands-on talents.

"We work with the kids during the school year, and during the summer. It's great to see them in 4-H," he said. "It's a lot of fun, and it's an important part of our community. The ag industry is an anchor for our region, and Achievement Days is part of it. To



Yankton High School Principal Wayne Kindle (right) is congratulated by State Rep. Bernie Hunhoff for being declared Reserve Champion title during the Celebrity Round Robin competition Saturday.

be part of it is a great opportunity for me."

The final outcome was decided by tie-breaker questions such as the current market price for fat cattle and the gestation period for a cow and pig.

Then came the final question: How many steers are born each year in the United States? The trick question drew laughs from the farm audience, as the judges later explained that steers are made, not born.

Kindle gave the correct response of zero, lifting him into reserve championship honors.

The celebrity round robin drew not only good sports but also a good audience, said Lauren Fosheim, the Yankton County 4-H/youth development director.

"This is the first year that we've had a celebrity round robin during Achievement Days. We've had a 4-H round robin on Saturday night, but this year we invited people from the community to participate," she said.

"This is an awesome (audience) turnout by the community. We had a lot more people showing up for this (celebrity event) than we did for the regular 4-H round robin show."

In last Saturday's battle of man (and woman) versus beast, the critters sometimes showed a streak of stubbornness — as seen when Bernie Hunhoff's pig literally laid down on the job. At one point, some pigs were eating the flower decorations from planters gracing the giant 4-H backdrop.

But in the end, the celebrities showed they could hold their own in the ring.

Sinclair found the event brought back a flood of memories.

"This was a lot of fun. Fifty years ago, a long time ago, I showed calves. I was judged on it, and I haven't forgotten how," he said.

Things are much different now, Sinclair said.

"I attended Wood High School in Mellette County, and we had no facility for the animals back then," he said. "We brought our livestock into town, showed them and then took them home."

Sinclair also pointed out a major difference in the livestock then and now.

"Back then, we had livestock that kicked the judge, so they weren't as docile as the livestock we had tonight," he said. "Back then, we also had to keep (our entries) on a short leash so they didn't take off."

Sinclair added it was important for the Yankton County commissioners to continue funding the county's 4-H/youth development position and to form a partnership with Clay and Bon Homme counties for a 4-H advisor under the state's Extension restructuring plan.

"For our county, it's an opportunity to keep providing our support," he said. "The people have said it's the right thing to do."

While other celebrities brought some experience into Saturday's round robin, Tereshinski needed a bit of a crash course. He grew up in Yankton and hadn't shown livestock like his country brethren.

"But Adam Goeken and Eric DeWaard at the bank provided me with some guidance," he said. "I

even checked with YouTube, which was helpful in actually showing you what to do."

While new to livestock showmanship, Tereshinski said he enjoyed his time in the ring.

"I'm glad to get involved with this," he said. "The young (4-H) leaders were great at giving us instructions before we went out there (into the ring). It's been fun and exciting — a real learning experience."

Jean Hunhoff grew up on a farm near Tabor, but she hadn't shown livestock. Still, she displayed the ability to get livestock moving, much as she might negotiate with and cajole her fellow legislators.

In fact, when her cow refused to budge during Saturday's show, Hunhoff used some soothing words to win over her balking bovine.

"I talked to my livestock," she said of the diplomatic approach.

The lone female entrant, Jean Hunhoff stood toe to toe with her male competitors during Saturday's round robin.

"I loved participating in this," she said. "I appreciated the opportunity."

Bernie Hunhoff saw a similarity in his roles as livestock showman and state lawmaker.

"In a lot of ways, it's like serving in Pierre (during the Legislature). You get stepped on and kicked around," he said with a laugh.

While the round robin provided entertainment, Bernie Hunhoff saw other important values.

"This is one of our great traditions here in Yankton County, seeing the 4-Hers in competition. The kids are all living the ag way of life. It's great to see the kids working these projects," he said. "I grew up north of Yankton, participating in 4-H. You came with your family, and now people are coming with their kids and even grandkids."

4-H provides a strong environment for young people that serves them well for life, Bernie Hunhoff said.

"(The Legislature) did a study of prisoners for the state corrections system. And none of the prisoners were ever part of a 4-H program. I think that shows a strong picture for 4-H and helping keep kids out of difficulties," he said.

"I think 4-H and Achievement Days give a sense of community and a sense of place. There are other organizations that also give that sense of place. It makes for strong communities, and the kids gain an appreciation for the world around them."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf



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