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Board Commentary

by Steve Andras

Passing the Torch

Over a month ago, the world was treated to an awe-inspiring Opening Ceremony at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China. The Olympic Torch passed through hundreds of countries, prior to arriving in Beijing, without being extinguished once. Time and again, individuals were entrusted with carrying this sacred emblem of the Olympics. Some ran with the torch, some walked, others carried it in on a wheelchair. This beloved flame represents the "endeavor for protection and struggle for victory." It also symbolizes the passing of Olympic traditions from one generation to the next. This symbol-laden torch relay, has worked its way into our vernacular so as to express the relinquishing of responsibility from one leader to the next.

I am pleased to pass the torch to our new association president, Kelli Brown, glowing and red-hot, as it was entrusted to me. Having accrued the fondest of memories while serving this breed, my tenure as President of the Red Angus Association of America has come to a close. As with the Olympic torch carriers, I would imagine, there is a certain anxiety that precedes your time in the limelight, a certain excitement of privilege while you're carrying the "torch," and lastly, a very real sense of accomplishment and peace that follows...once you've relinquished the "torch."

As with Olympic torch runners, once

I pass the torch, I am not turning right around to head home. Instead, I too, will watch and cheer the efforts of those who follow me. Our breed is that emblem of enthusiasm these days in the cattle business. We carry the genetic edge, the efficiency, and the premium finished product, that is necessary in any business to succeed. We no longer must continually recite our answer to the age-old question, "What in the world is Red Angus?" because people now know. Our progressive Association, staff, board and membership have been the proactive force that has enabled us to run among the very front of the pack. It has been an honor to serve the great people of the Red Angus breed and to promote our great breed.

In closing, an elderly bull customer recently commented that he enjoys a therapy that most don't understand...being with his cows. He said that many people his age play golf, play cards, or read. He finds the most enjoyment in spending time with his cows. This rings true of me as well. After working with the staff, executive committee and board on many important, and sometimes very difficult, decisions, I too am ready for some therapy. As for now, I'm going to load up Theresa and my grandkids on our Mule (ATV), and head out to the pasture for the very best of therapy.

It's been an honor to serve you.

-Steve