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September 9, 2016

*Clover Connection*

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Patience. It's something we all practice and some of us are better at it than others. I found myself practicing my patience Friday afternoon when I ended back up in the auto mechanics waiting room for the fourth time in less than 3 weeks. It all started with my air conditioning going out while driving right through the middle of Dallas during rush hour on a hot afternoon.

Next up was an oil change/brake check and alignment. Two weeks after that, it was a return trip for a malfunctioning AC (which I thought had been fixed thanks to a new compressor/clutch). A clean-up was also needed from my dipstick not being completely tucked back into its home after the oil change. Today, I was cruising through the middle of Tyler when my AC went out again. I wasn't too far from my mechanic so I pulled in and hoped they'd be able to finally pinpoint the cause.

I will admit, once I hit hour number two of waiting I was getting a little anxious. But, I did my best to remain calm and wait for the news. It certainly wouldn't do any good for me to be upset or irritated. I wanted the tech to take his time so he could figure out the cause of my AC's continued trouble.

Once everything got taken care of and I finally got home, I sat down and started to think about some of the biggest lessons that helped me learn about patience. It was no surprise that they were tied to some of my early experiences in 4-H. Raising and showing sheep took a lot of patience!

The hours spent out in the barn raising them from babies to weaning time and then even MORE hours spent trying to break them to lead. I wasn't just learning about raising sheep, I was learning responsibility, accountability and certainly patience.

Fast forward to another 4-H project – clothing and textiles. I started learning to sew when I was 8 years old. Well, I think it actually started when I was 2 and my brother sewed through my finger, but that is another story. I started with a simple skirt project. By the time I was 12 I tackled a fully lined party dress with a long zipper.

It's amazing that the relationship between me and my mom survived that exercise in patience, but it did! I'm not sure how many hours I spent on that dress, but it certainly taught me perseverance and seeing a project out from start to finish. While I don't sew clothing anymore, I'm pretty adept at sewing on a button and hemming pants, which is a pretty handy skill.

Whether it's livestock, sewing or any of the other projects 4-H has to offer they all teach more than just technical skills. 4-H helps youth with critical thinking. Through hands-on learning, kids build not only confidence, creativity and curiosity, but also life skills such as leadership and resiliency to help them thrive today and tomorrow.

Our clubs in Henderson County are just getting started up for the new 4-H year. If you'd like more information on how to get youth signed up as members or to help as an adult volunteer please give me a call at 903.675.6130 or drop me a line at my email below!

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