

*The following text is a presentation made
to the Board of Directors and staff of the American Angus Assn.
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Why an ANGUS JOURNAL?

by Mike Sweet
General Manager

Over 230 years ago the first magazine was published in the United States. The date was Feb. 13, 1741, when Andrew Bradford of Philadelphia printed the AMERICAN MAGAZINE. It also had a subtitle and became known as "A Monthly Review of the Political State of the British Colonies." Rest assured that the American Magazine was, at the very least, a monthly review of the political state of the colonies and to a large extent a catalyst in the Revolution.

I am certain we are all aware of the history of the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence and all the now-famous personalities who surfaced during the struggle for independence.

One question rings loud in my ears. How did Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Daniel Webster and others know where the meeting was going to be held? How did they know what the meeting was about? Whatsmore, what motivated these men to the point of committing treason, a crime punishable by death?

I am inclined to believe that their excitement was the result of someone taking the time and going to the expense of documenting a series of political events, publishing them in periodical form and distributing the periodical to a cross-section of the population. Communication is what we are talking about here, isn't it? Communication which motivates people to do something.

Best Editorial

When these men of history finally made up their minds as to what they were going to do, they wrote down on paper their collective reasoning and sent it to the king of England. It was by no means anonymous, either; that letter carried 56 signatures, a by-line, so to speak. It is probably the best editorial I have ever read.

Now those fellows could have just as easily flipped coins and sent the "odd man out" on a trip to England to personally tell the king what they had in mind. But they had tried that before with literally no success.

Mr. Franklin spent a considerable amount of time and money squiring the European powers. He tried in vain to negotiate freedom of choice for the American colonists. His efforts and approach as this country's first ambassador was more in the area of public relations and non-written communication.

I think we can imagine what he might have said to the king when times were really getting tough. He really had no leverage nor threat of military might. So what could he say? All he could plea for was common decency. Maybe he said, "Mr. king, things aren't going too good over in the colonies. We are working awfully hard to get along and take care of ourselves. This we can manage, but we are having a hard time figuring out what we are paying all those taxes for. You are making us buy shiploads of tea, and we don't like tea, we like coffee."

Emotional Plea

"The army sleeps in our homes and eats our food, so the overhead there shouldn't be too great for you. All in all, we think we are getting ripped off." This action would have been purely an emotional plea.

Maybe Ben said this to the king, and it was obviously not effective. But we all know what was effective. Note the difference in approach: "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands that have connected them with another. . ." And on it goes. Remember, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal. . ." Now right about there I'll bet the king really started paying attention.

But the finality of their effort was beautifully phrased when they wrote in conclusion:

"And for the support of the declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

These men were highly motivated and determined to secure their objective and willing to risk everything

dear to them and their families, regardless of the cost.

Had to Communicate

In order to get their point across, they had to write it down on paper and sign it. They had to communicate via the written word. There was no misunderstanding their intent, reasons, purpose or goals.

And it all began when this country's first magazine motivated purposeful men to act to solve heinous crimes against the people. Their vehicle to communicate with authority was a written declaration that further motivated a reaction, resulting in the first major conflict of this country. It wasn't cheap. Personal bias was set aside and a nation was born from the effort.

The history of written communication is intriguing—and probably enough said. This is not intended to be a lesson in history. However, we must mention one publication that originated near the beginning of human existence on earth. Only one issue was printed and for modern times was rather negative in its approach. Nevertheless, it was a perpetually powerful yet physically short-lived piece of literature. It was the Ten Commandments. Irony did have its way with this great work. We all know the story of how Moses was returning from the great mountain top bookstore, flew into a fit of rage at seeing his followers breaking all 10 of the commandments simultaneously, threw the sacred stone pages on the ground and broke them.

Learned a Lot

Thanks to Moses, we have learned a lot about producing magazines since then. At least today they don't break when you throw them, yet they won't withstand the elements as well as the former.

One point is crucial here, though. Moses was charged with educating the world on a 10-point program, and someone thought the program to be important enough to write it down for distribution and posterity.

Imagine where this country would be today if all the great ideas produced by the great minds had not initially been written down somewhere.

There would never have been a cotton gin if Eli Whitney had not taken the time to write down the design of his invention for someone else to steal and perfect.

More positively, though, is that if Jonas Salk had not written down his formula for polio vaccine, we might all be sitting here in wheel chairs this evening.

But let's get even more basic for a moment. What effect will you have as the leadership of the Angus industry if you cannot communicate? Let's assume that, as of this moment, the freedom to communicate is banned. We are allowed to talk freely but cannot distribute our ideas beyond this room by any method other than verbal. Progress would be seriously retarded, wouldn't it?

No One Knows for Sure

Programs would no longer go into effect immediately. Business would slow to a crawl. The membership will be at the mercy of hearsay and rumor. Your April production sale is on which day? How many head are you selling? Where is your ranch? I am not going to go because no one knows for sure.

Thanks to your wisdom and recent action in insuring the Angus association membership of never having to ask these questions, we won't have these problems. But let's dream a little bit. . . .

Will Rogers said, "Peace is like prosperity.

There are mighty few nations that can stand it." I'll say that we are probably going to have to agree with him. The underlying reason for not standing prosperity and peace is the total lack of objective leadership.

If we look at the history of breed associations, we will find that if they do not have sound, knowledgeable, objective leadership, they will not withstand the pressures brought on by prosperity and the good life.

Struggle Brings Closeness

It is ironic that struggling to build and to grow brings people closer together for accomplishing a common cause or goal. But once the goal is accomplished and prosperity prevails, the membership becomes disoriented, confused and loses direction. The result is chaos.

Our challenge as a board is to keep the membership perpetually challenged with new goals and to maintain a sense of balance and direction. Our challenge as a staff is to assist the membership in achieving their goals and to be forever creative in designing and recommending new programs.

When we stop dreaming, we will be replaced as board members or as staff members. And we all know that we can be replaced. We shouldn't take this in fear but rather as reality.

Personally, if there were any questions in my own mind about the direction of the Angus association, they were resolved when I met the staff a few weeks ago and today after meeting the board members.

Time to Work

The doomsday prophets say the world is 5 billion years old, it is 2 minutes till midnight and the end is near. As the Angus association, we will do well to subscribe to the philosophy of Dr. Martel of the Hudson Institute in New York, who says, "True, the world may be 5 billion years old, but it likely has 10 billion more years to live. Therefore, it is not 2 minutes till midnight but 8 a.m., the sun has risen and it is time to go to work."

The American Angus Assn. has, as we are all aware, purchased the Angus "tablets of stone," so to speak. I promise you that I'll try not to drop them. But just exactly what are we going to do with our new magazine?

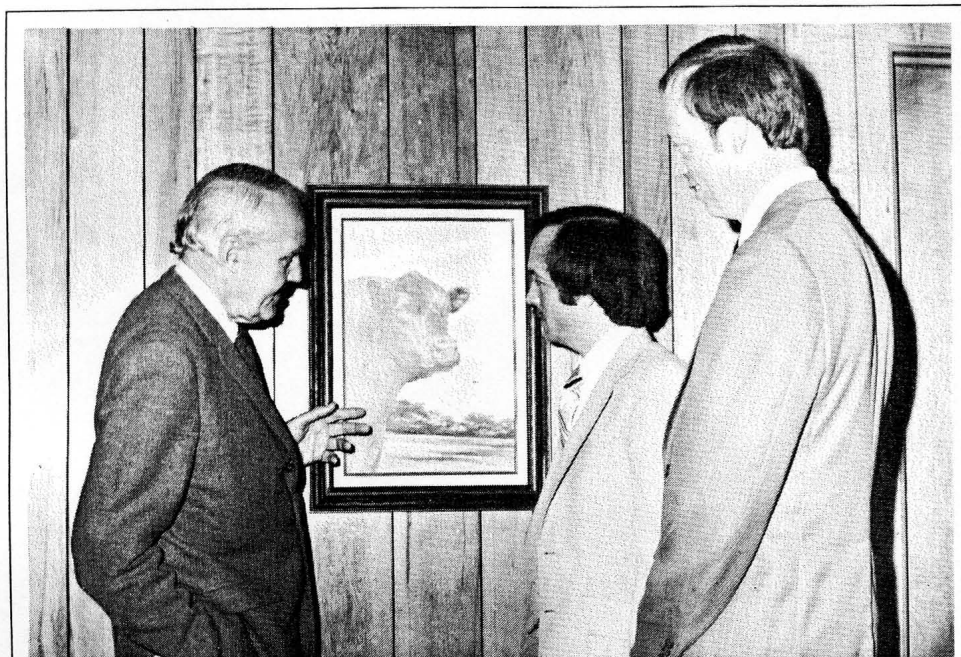
Like the recently graduated aggie journalism major who said, just a month ago I couldn't even spell editor and now I am one. Gentlemen, a few short weeks ago we weren't magazine publishers and now we are. And we have an awesome responsibility. What are we going to do with the Journal?

Journal's Purpose

What I see for the Journal is really nothing new in terms of the purpose a magazine is supposed to fill. Yet it is an entirely revolutionary idea in the livestock industry for a magazine to give the reader and the advertiser his money's worth. I think we should.

Just exactly what, in the mind of the man buying advertising space, means getting his money's worth?

The first criteria is circulation. How many people can he expect to read his ad? Regardless of the size of his ad, which is another



Frank Murphy (left), American Angus Assn. artist for more than 25 years, is shown discussing his newest work with association Executive Vice President Dr. C.K. Allen (right) and ANGUS JOURNAL General Manager Mike Sweet. Chicagoan Murphy was at association headquarters in St. Joseph, Mo., in May to make arrangements for the Quarter Century of Angus History Art Show that will open the National Angus Outlook Conference July 1-3 in Ft. Collins, Colo. The new bull painting will be a feature of a show of Murphy paintings and drawings. Limited edition framing prints are being reproduced from the painting. The first five of 200 prints signed and numbered by the artist will be sold at auction during the conference, with all proceeds from their sale going to support passage of the Beefeferendum.

question altogether, the advertiser has to feel confident in knowing what exact portion of the potential market he can expect to reach for his product. This is the same question asked by manufacturers of automobiles, toothpaste, airplanes. And Angus producers will have to learn to ask this same question. It is only good business to do so.

Primary Concern

The ANGUS JOURNAL's concern is obviously the producer of Angus cattle. If we can assure the Angus producer that he is reaching a primary market of all cattlemen producing registered Angus, then we have not only satisfied the circulation criteria of a successful breed publication but have made Angus history. Because never before in the century of Angus development has there been a commercial communication media common to all Angus breeders.

The second criteria our magazine must meet is allowing massive circulation at an equitable cost per reader for the advertiser. The statistics show that circulation of the three Angus publications in existence ranges from 2,400 to 8,900. The cost per thousand readers ranges from a high of \$83 to the lowest of \$40.45.

Commercial Advertising

If we look at the figures for our competitors' publications, the circulation is 16,000 and 18,000, with a cost per thousand readers of \$33 and \$23.

It is interesting to note that there is little to no commercial advertising in any of these publications. If the ANGUS JOURNAL can achieve a paid circulation of 35,000-40,000 and profitably maintain a cost per thousand readers of \$20 or less, then it can literally dominate the beef industry. The possibility of soliciting commercial advertising becomes very positive. These revenues rather than subsidy from the association can carry on the business to be done.

Going hand in hand with massive circulation is editorial content. The best editorial ever written will have little value and be of no effect if it is not sent to and read by someone. If the authors of the Declaration of Independence had only distributed their work among themselves and then filed it away, we would have to take a break right now and have "a spot of tea."

I think we can realistically say that the future of the American Angus Assn. in maintaining and embracing our position of leadership and insuring the quality of life Angus producers expect depends directly on the circulation of the quality of the editorial content of its media for communicating with the world.

Small Breeder Can Compete

For the first time in the history of the American Angus Assn., the small breeder will have a better than fair chance to compete—one magazine reaching all breeders.

I see the new ANGUS JOURNAL as an

industry forum for discussing technological advances in all areas of beef production.

I see the ANGUS JOURNAL asking questions that must be answered. The Journal should ask President Carter why he buys a shipload of oil from a foreign country and then gives it a shipload of wheat?

I see the ANGUS JOURNAL being as informative to Hereford breeders as it is to Angus breeders.

I see the Angus association subtly communicating to the beef industry that it is leading the way for all breeds and thus insuring the position for Angus cattle that there is, after all, only one breed.

Sound Business Principles

The only way we are going to be successful is to publish the new ANGUS JOURNAL as magazine publishers using sound business principles. We are going to have to broach each question and issue objectively. Objectively means removing any personal consideration from a question and looking only at the facts. I know you will, because if you didn't have the ability to *perceive*, you would not be held in high esteem by the people electing you to the Board of Directors.

A few moments ago we mentioned "awesome responsibility." It is fact that this Journal will be a terribly heavy burden if we come out with a mediocre run-of-the-mill publication. Why? Your breed publication is a direct mirror image of your association. And the people electing you to this office expect to see an image of themselves and their organization in the same light as they see you and the cattle they have their lives invested in.

If you consider Angus cattle to be mediocre, then so be it.

Waiting for First Issue

I know that the purebred beef cattle producers of the United States of America are waiting to see the first issue of the association-owned ANGUS JOURNAL. Quite frankly, gentlemen, to have the desired impact it will have to be a Cadillac publication.

It will not be easy. On the surface it will not be cheap. But for sheer promotional value for the small breeder-member of the American Angus Assn., it will be the best advertising bargain, bar none. Think of it. The small breeder can talk to 40,000 Angus enthusiasts for as little as \$45. Quite a savings. He could only mail 300 first class letters for \$45.

The decision is ultimately yours. The publication is yours now. Do you want the image of mediocrity for this association? I don't think so or you would not have purchased the existing Journal. Furthermore, it will cost every cent of Keith Evans' \$300,000 advertising budget to counteract the detrimental effect of mediocrity in the ANGUS JOURNAL.

If we want the ultimate position of leadership in this industry, then we must first look and act like industry leaders. The first step we must take is to distribute our own self-portrait, in living color, to the world. 