

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) has more than 11,000 members who look up to its Board of Directors, some of whom hope to wear a green jacket someday. For the six members going off the Board this year, setting good examples by being role models has been a lifelong endeavor.

“They are a very personable group, and they have taken a genuine interest in the junior members and making friendships with them,” says Shelia Stannard, NJAA Board advisor and assistant director of activities and junior activities for the American Angus Association.

Junior Board members closing a chapter in their lives this year are Jennifer Beck, currently of Red Lodge, Mont., chairman; Jamie King, Tiffin, Ohio, vice chairman; Amy Wolfrey, Frederick, Md., leadership director; Jamie Hower, Bethlehem, Pa., membership director; Cortney Collins, Tanner, W.Va., communications director; and Trever Kuipers, Onarga, Ill., Foundation director.

### Looking up to role models

Most of these junior Board members looked up to past NJAA Board members when they were juniors. They cite their own reasons, but most recall the junior Board always taking time for them.

Beck recalls looking up to Bryan Bouldin and Lori Franklin for their great attitudes.

“They were always friendly, always smiling and working at the same time,” Beck says. “They were focused on their work, plus focused on working with the people and having interaction with them, which to me is one of the hardest things to do while on the Board, since you are running in a million different directions.”

Numerous past Board members stick out in Wolfrey’s mind; however, there is one in particular — William Donnell. Wolfrey says that at her first junior Angus show her younger brother was upset, and Donnell took him under his wing. He introduced her brother to other juniors and made sure he was having a good time all weekend.

“The Board always had a positive impact, and I wanted to be like them someday,” Wolfrey says.

The juniors in the green jackets were always encouraging to King, and

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PHOTOS BY SHELIA STANNARD

► 2004 retiring board members include (back row, from left) Jamie Hower, Bethlehem, Pa.; Trever Kuipers, Onarga, Ill.; Jamie King, Tiffin, Ohio; (front row, from left) Cortney Collins, Tanner, W.Va.; Jennifer Beck, currently of Red Lodge, Mont.; and Amy Wolfrey, Frederick, Md.

# Setting an Example

Outgoing officers take their roles seriously as leaders of the National Junior Angus Association.

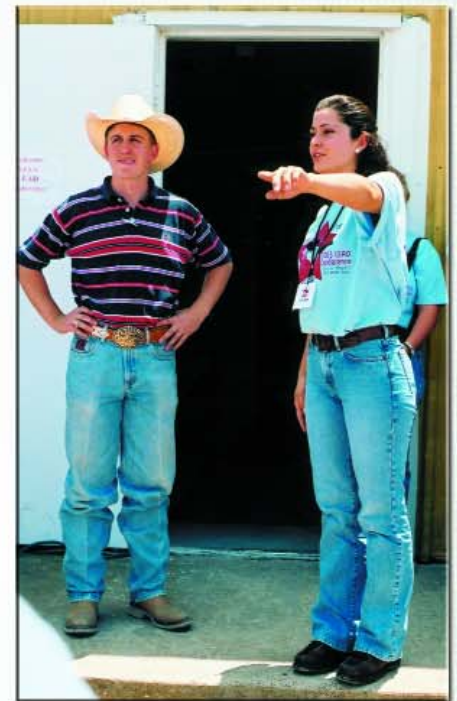
by *Shelby Axtell*



► Collins (seated) assists junior members with questions during the 2004 NJAA. One of the main goals of this year’s officer team was to interact more with juniors.



► King (left) helps regional manager Don Laughlin unload supplies for the 2003 NJAA in Louisville, Ky.



► Beck (right) gives tour instructions at the 2003 LEAD Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. She was the 2003-2004 NJAA chairman and helped in planning the conference. Angus juniors who attend LEAD learn about the Angus industry while building lasting friendships.





PHOTO BY BROOKE BYRD

►Hower (upper left) and Kuipers (middle) help conduct a breakout session at the 2004 LEAD Conference. Junior Board members perform skits and are responsible for putting industry and leadership-focused workshops together for junior members.

►Hower (left) takes a minute to visit with Julie Feeser, Maryland junior advisor. It's important that the junior Board keep good contact with the juniors and also with advisors and state associations. Each director is assigned a certain number of states to contact during the year.



PHOTO BY SHELBY AXTELL

she looked up to them as the leaders of the NJAA.

It was also the influence of past Board members that motivated Kuipers to run for the Board. "In 2000 I was at the NJAS in Des Moines and really got to know the current Board," he says. "Seeing their passion made me want to take a more active leadership role in the NJAA."

### Being role models

The realization that there are more than 11,000 juniors watching you, plus their families, can add up to a little pressure and intimidation. However, no pressure was evident among the 2003-2004 officer team. They have been setting an example their whole lives.

"A true role model leads by example at all times, and I have tried to do that my entire life," Kuipers says.

"It's an amazing thing to think there are

kids looking at me like I had once looked at previous junior Board members," Wolfrey says. "It is a lot of responsibility to live up to these kids' expectations."

The future of the NJAA lies in their hands, and there are expectations to live up to from the juniors and their families. "Decisions we are making now will affect members for years to come," Collins points out.

Beck admits it is a little intimidating with everyone watching, but it is much more exciting, because she has the ability to keep these kids excited about the NJAA and to help them have positive experiences.

"Working the ring with the kids has been really enjoyable for me," Beck says. "I remember when I was little and the ringmen helping and smiling at me always made it a good experience. Now I can make these kids' experiences pleasant by having a smile on my face."

### Behind the green jackets

With all the expectations and job duties that come with being a Board member comes a lot of preparation and support. Most have had numerous leadership positions at the local and state level, as well as attending Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conferences and the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

While these events and roles have been a great asset to the Board members, the real driving forces behind them are the support from their friends, family and mentors.

"My mom and dad pushed me to do things and do them right," Collins says. "They also taught me to be independent, and I think independence is very important to have in order to be a good leader."

Hower attributes her success and accomplishment of becoming a Board member to her family and friends as well.

"My mom and dad have always been behind me 100%," Hower says. "They can always help me see a reasonable solution to issues I'm facing."

Support from their state junior associations is also a great encouragement.

"I really had a strong backing from Ohio Angus enthusiasts, since we hadn't had a Board member from Ohio in quite a while," King says. "I was motivated to show the younger Ohio junior members that it could be done."

Kuipers attributes his success to his home state, too.

"The Illinois Angus Association and the Illinois junior association have driven me to be the person I am today," Kuipers says. "These are the people whom I have grown up with, and I know I can count on (them) at any time."

### Becoming a team

After two years of serving the NJAA with 11 other Board members, the NJAA Board members say they have learned a lot about themselves and each other. Teamwork is key in accomplishing goals and being a successful Board.

"As a team member the first thing you learn is when you put 12 people together who have been strong leaders their entire lives, sometimes you have to be a follower," King says.

Communication has also played a huge role in this Board's success. Collins says that without the good contact the Board has had, they would not have been able to accomplish as much as they did.

"I think this group has really excelled at





► Wolfrey (left) and Jennifer Orurso assist with check-in at the 2004 NJAS in Kansas City, Mo. Wolfrey was the 2003-2004 leadership director and Orurso is the 2004-2005 NJAA chairman. Assisting with check-in is one way Board members are able to interact and visit with juniors.



PHOTOS BY SHELBY AXTELL

► Kuipers (left) and King help keep the contests running smoothly during the 2004 NJAS. Junior Board members help conduct all contests at the NJAS, including extemporaneous speaking, quiz bowl, Cook-Off and prepared speaking.

getting their work done and communicating with one another,” Stannard says.

Kuipers and King agree that in order to truly understand the meaning of *team*, each member must identify their strengths and weaknesses to be able to come together as one and be successful.

### Making the connection

One of the goals for the Board was to really increase relations with junior members by making it a point to interact with the juniors as much as possible at events.

“I feel that our Board, as a whole, has been able to improve the connection between the membership and the Board members,” Hower says. “We really tried to send letters and make phone calls to advisors and state association officers for industry and association updates.”

Stannard says one of the main goals of the group and greatest asset was to not lose focus of the junior members since they were who the Board was serving.

“This group has really tried to get out and meet all the kids they can,” Stannard says. “They have also encouraged the kids to get involved and stay involved and have really taken the initiative to get the quieter and newer members to become more active and involved through encouragement and personal communications.”

“Being a junior Board member is not about making ourselves look good; it’s about laying down a foundation of success for the future of the NJAA for the junior members to come,” Wolfrey says.



► At the 2004 NJAS, Fox 4 interviewed Beck for its morning show about the NJAS events and what it takes for junior exhibitors to get ready for their competitions.

### Looking back

Reflecting back on two years of hard work and countless hours, the retiring Board members all can’t help but smile.

“I feel I have helped to energize and re-energize junior members and nonmembers of the future opportunities that NJAA can provide,” Beck says. “This is a huge accomplishment for me because these juniors are the future of this program.”

“I have had a blast the past two years,” King says. “I’ve really enjoyed meeting and getting to know the juniors in the Association. Another highlight is all the people I have been honored to serve with on the Board.”

“It has been an incredible learning experience,” Wolfrey says. “It has definitely shown me that I’m capable of much more than I thought.”

“The ‘Angus Experience’ is original,

exciting and the best 21 years of your life,” Hower says. “Being an Angus junior created confidence, knowledge of the beef industry and maturity I would not have been able to obtain in any other program.”

“I’ve had a really good time,” Collins says. “I’ve been able to see a lot of country and see a lot of farms, and meet a lot of people.”

“If I had to sum up my Board experience in one word, I think it would be ‘rewarding,’” Kuipers says.

“They say if you put all of your heart into something, it can repay you tenfold. That is certainly true with the NJAA. Although there have been several long, hard days and short nights, the friendships and experiences are worth every drop of sweat.”

“It has been fun seeing these six go from directors to officers,” Stannard concludes. “I know whatever they end up doing they will be involved in the industry and be good spokespersons for the Angus breed.”

The retiring six encourage all junior members to get involved and take advantage of every opportunity the NJAA has to offer.

“The NJAA is not just a group of kids who show cattle. As a member of this organization you are part of an elite group of future leaders,” Kuipers says. “Be willing to take a risk and participate in contests and leadership activities. You might just be surprised what is in store for you.”

