



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Birds of a feather

It's a natural tendency to gravitate toward people who have the same interests and the same passions in life as we do. Whether it's around a sport, a hobby or a vocation, we find ways to enhance our exploration of these interests by bouncing ideas off others who have the same interests. To formalize these networks, we form associations or clubs. To give them focus, we elect officers. To give them longevity, we formalize their purpose and create a structure to ensure they last longer than we do.

A common purpose

Whether associations are formed on the local, district, state or national level, they are formed with purpose. Originally, that purpose may be purely social — to connect and build friendships with others who share interests. Many local Angus associations were formed for just that reason, and it may continue to be the association's primary purpose today.

When people get together, they often share problems and, in doing so, find solutions and support.

Thinking back to many of the local associations my folks belonged to when I was young, it didn't take long for those associations to realize the value of marketing their cattle together. Shows and sales displaying more cattle and showcasing a number of herds attracted more potential buyers, and broadened the association's circle of friends.

It's only natural that the state border would be a logical boundary for an Angus association, taking on the role of serving the Angus community within its borders and

maybe a little beyond. In this issue themed "Association Services," we showcase some of those state associations and the services they offer members in the article "State Support," which begins on page 98.

We also benchmark the services of your American Angus Association and its entities. With a larger membership and more formal structure, the national organization is charged by its members with an array of purposes. First and foremost is the breed registry and performance database, but marketing, education and social opportunities are also sought by members.

Which brings me to my point with this whole conversation — associations are created by members to serve the needs of the members. Without member participation, they lose direction and cease to flourish. I'm sure you can think of people in your local associations who provide the energy that gives the association life. It's often easy to say these people will get it done and you have chores to do at home, but that signals the beginning of the end.

To be strong, associations need member

participation. Many association meetings and activities occur during the winter months. I encourage you to take time to participate at every level you can — local to national. Your participation will help ensure that the association stays true to your needs and will help energize those who serve as the leaders.

An empty chair

On Nov. 8, we lost a dear friend and co-worker when Web Services Creative Director Tim Blumer, 49, died suddenly doing one of the things he loved — playing bass with his band.

Tim came to the *Angus Journal* 10 years ago to apply his creativity to our Web Services Department. It didn't take long to figure out what a rock he was, providing steady support to his family, his department and those of us around him.

An example of the person Tim was, he had a poster of the "Declaration of Contribution" (*givemore.com*) hanging in his office. Among its creeds:

- "I will make good things happen for other people, for those here now and those who come after us;"
- "When my situation is not the best I will do my best with what I have;" and
- "I will be obligated to this world and the people in it."

Always ready with a smile, he was never prouder than when talking about his children and their interests. His son Andy recently joined the *Angus Journal* creative team, and the duo made a formidable pair.

Poetically, the band was playing *Time for Me to Fly* by REO Speedwagon when Tim suffered a heart attack. We'll miss his creativity, his talent, his gentleness, his smile. Though the office won't be the same without him, we can take comfort knowing that he flew into the arms of his Lord and Savior.

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