

# Hot Off the Press

Four NJAA members hone their journalism skills at NJAS.

compiled by **Kasey Brown**, senior associate editor

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Media Crew members get a chance to hone their communications skills via various platforms at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). By application, NJAA members have the opportunity to write one or two articles for the *Angus Agenda* that is published daily at the NJAS, contribute to the NJAA Facebook page, practice their photography skills and shadow Angus Media professionals.

This year, four Media Crew members contributed to the *Angus Agenda*. They submitted story ideas in their application, and Angus staff chose or assigned the strongest ideas to pursue. Here are this year's Media Crew articles.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MISSY COZZITORTO

## Both Sides of the Mic

With a record number of entries for the 2016 NJAS, it's important to remember to thank the good men and women who devote their lives to the livestock industry, and come with the knowledge to be able to sort cattle at a national level. Many judges we see at the NJAS grew up within the Angus industry and also showed as youth. Which side of the microphone is ideal, the showman's or the judge's?

John McCurry, from McCurry Angus Ranch of Burrton, Kan., is the fourth generation to raise and show Angus cattle in his family. He sorted showmen at the 2015 NJAS in Tulsa, Okla., and found himself in the ring in 1993 and 1996-2006.

His life has been devoted to the breed, and he's never competed with anything else. Though he has judged multiple other breed junior nationals, nothing quite stacks up to where your roots grow.

John played to the side of the showman and says, "I prefer showing and would go back in a heartbeat. It was the highlight of my life and like Christmas every day with your best friends!"

Of course, he also has a passion for judging and is overly pleased with

the number of entries for the 2016 show. He has two daughters who will be hitting the showing in no time.

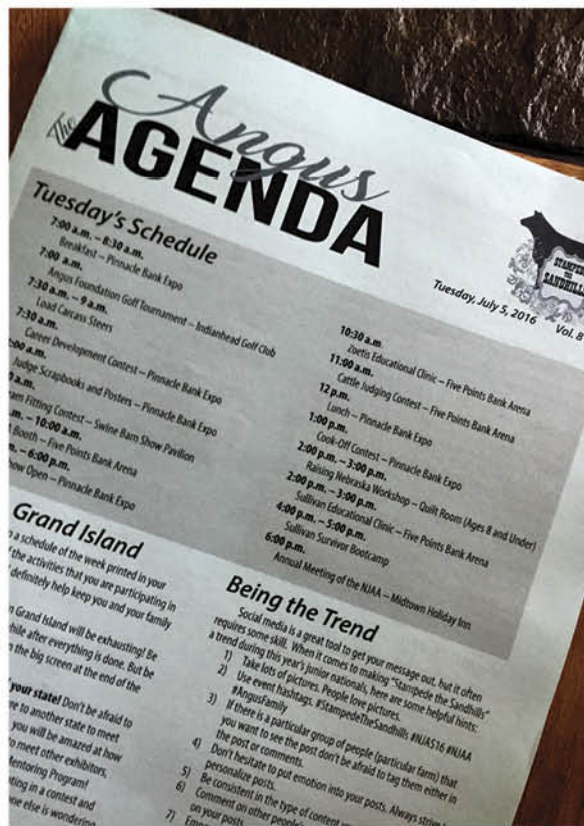
Jim Pipkin, another fourth-generation Angus cattleman from Clearwater Farms near Springfield, Mo., finds his fondest

memories of Angus on the other side of the mic as a judge. He sorted bred-and-owned cattle at the NJAS in 1999 and 2015.

Though he showed cattle himself from 1971-1983, he has a special tie to the breed now because his daughter is serving as this year's Miss American Angus.

His goal when judging is to always find something positive about every animal he sees, and to interact with the kids. Nothing quite compares to the Angus breed and people in his eyes, he says. When asked about the record number of entries this year, he shares fondly, "This is a sign of how the NJAS helps kids in the right direction of life. It teaches leadership and social skills you can't learn anywhere else."

Many men and women officials come together every year to properly sort cattle and kids. These men are just two examples. Without their knowledge and dedication to the breed, it wouldn't all be possible. Which side of the mic would you prefer?



# What Makes You Angus?

In an association more than 25,000 members strong, there's bound to be a diverse set of answers to the question, "What makes you Angus?" To see how this question, and a few others, would be answered, I set out to interview a group of people from different areas of the beef industry.

## Mike Molitor

*Molitor Angus Ranch — Zenda, Kan.*

### How do you contribute to the Angus industry?

I was a past president of the American Angus Association, and continue to support the junior directory by advising, and through the Auxiliary.

### What advice do you have for young Angus producers?

Be honest, be sincere, and breed cattle the way you like them and market to people that like a similar type of cattle. Carve out your own niche in the industry by doing things your way, not everyone else's way.

### What makes you Angus?

Everything. I grew up AIing (artificially inseminating), and bought my first cow and have loved it ever since. Don't forget that we all started with one cow and grew from there. It has been rewarding. In 2014 I was awarded the CAB (Certified Angus Beef LLC) Commitment to Excellence Award. I did things right and got recognized for it. Angus has been good to me, and I don't regret one bit of it.

## Shawn Tiffany

*Owner, Tiffany Cattle Co. Inc. — Herrington, Kan.*

### How do you contribute to the Angus industry?

We are a commercial feedlot; our reputation is highly regarded for feeding the best cattle. A high percentage of the cattle we feed are black-hided.

### What advice do you have for young Angus producers?

Get your carcass data. Find a way to get that information back from either the feedlot or by retaining ownership of the animal. This is an industry where information is vital! Getting that information is feedback as to which dams are producing calves with the traits needed to make a quality end product.

### What makes you Angus?

We strive for quality. By feeding out mostly black-hided animals, it helps us to get to that level of quality.

## Mercedes Danekas-Lohse

*Editor, Angus Icon — Wilton, Calif.*

### How do you contribute to the Angus industry?

Along with raising cattle at Pheasant Trek, we do sales management and advertising along the West Coast at JDA Inc.

### Do you have advice for young Angus breeders?

Take advantage of opportunities offered to you. There are show opportunities, but there are also leadership and scholarship opportunities out there.

### What makes you Angus?

Four generations of Angus involvement — it's a family tradition.

### What advice did you receive as a junior Angus member that influenced you?

James Fisher, who was a past junior activities director, said to be yourself, follow your dreams, and utilize what the industry has to offer you.

By the end of the interview process, it was clear just how diverse the Angus industry can be, and that each of us are able to contribute in our own way. What makes each of us "Angus" is personal and unique. It helps define who we are in this industry. As junior Angus members, most of us are still figuring out who we want to be in this industry. To help you with the process let me ask, "What makes you Angus?"

## What to Expect at the NJAS

The summer highlight for many young Angus enthusiasts is the National Junior Angus Show, a weeklong event that brings juniors from across the nation together. The opportunities are profound at the NJAS, providing participants with a variety of contests along with exhibiting their cattle at the highest level. Juniors attend the NJAS each year, many for the first time, all to make memories and friendships that last a lifetime.

Helena St. Clair, 19, is a junior from Berryville, Va., and has attended two National Junior Angus Shows. She said the largest challenge she faces in preparation for the NJAS is determining if she packed enough feed and other essentials.

"Before any National Junior Angus Show, I sit down and really calculate what all I need," said Helena.

A typical day for her at the NJAS usually begins at 5 a.m., depending on how many calves they have to bring in and how warm it is that morning. The juniors from Virginia work together to bring their calves in, mix feed, wash and blow them out around the

same time. A group of Virginia members clean tie-outs while others prepare for contests that day.

"Virginia, on one night, will have a state dinner for all the juniors and parents to gather in fellowship and have fun," Helena mentioned. While she enjoys strengthening bonds with those within her own state, she is gaining life lessons by developing connections with those who are not from Virginia. By attending the NJAS and the leadership conferences hosted by the NJAA, Helena has connected with junior members and industry professionals from across the country.

Twenty-year-old Michaela Clowser is a junior from Milford, Neb. This year she will be attending her 12th NJAS, and it will be in her home state.

Michaela's advice to junior members attending the NJAS is to simply get involved. Juniors have opportunities to try a new contest, join the mentoring program, browse the state displays and start meeting new people. She has been a mentor many

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times and feels that it is a fun and rewarding experience that is beneficial to both the mentor and mentee.

"The mentee meets all new people for the first time and starts really learning about the NJAA and who is involved in it, and the mentor has to take responsibility and make their mentee feel welcome," Michaela replied. She encourages all new members to take part in this activity because it truly shows that the NJAA is a large, friendly family and people are always willing to help those who are new.

Michaela's most memorable NJAS was in 2013 in Kansas City, Mo. She participated in many contests, had a lot of fun and she

won her class with her favorite show heifer, Gloria. Michaela has participated in a variety of contests with her favorite being the Team Sales contest.

"I think it's really fun and utilizes real-world skills, such as being knowledgeable in marketing, management, and it forces you to think on your feet and be creative," she said.

Michaela said the skills she has gained through this great association are immeasurable.

"I've gained important communication and leadership skills while learning about the Angus breed and the industry, all while making lifelong friends," she said.

"The NJAA does a great job of recognizing those that leave an impact and the achievements of the junior members while encouraging them to grow within the association," added Helena.

The NJAS is the pinnacle event of the summer for these two juniors. Helena enjoys meeting new people and participating in the different contests. Michaela works to strengthen her time-management skills to balance participating in the show, contests and making new friends. Enjoy your week at the show and make memories!

# The Journey Toward Being an NJAA Board Member

**L**ao Tzu, an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer once said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." With every dream or goal comes an uphill climb where the challenges are really opportunities in disguise. For many juniors involved in the NJAA, that dream is to be elected to a position on the National Junior Angus Board of Directors (NJAB).

Jena Lee Wagner of Billings, Mont., former member of the NJAB, is one of these individuals. She identified her dream early in her junior Angus experiences as a result of watching her junior leaders work the ring and organize contests as NJAB directors. She embraced the opportunities available to her to begin that journey toward one day wearing the green jacket.

Wagner stated, "I stood outside of that showing at my first junior nationals and watched those green jackets help and interact with the juniors. Right then and there, I told

my mom I wanted one of those green jackets. Of course, she laughed and said, 'If you work really hard, maybe one day you will.'"

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During this two-year term, the junior board members organize and host leadership conferences, Angus cattle shows and various events to serve the junior membership from coast to coast. They provide junior members the tools needed toward becoming well-rounded leaders while assisting the American Angus Association in promotion of the Angus breed.

"I wasn't someone that everyone knew, nor did I have cattle that were winning divisions let alone classes at junior nationals, but I was very determined to make my dream of wearing the green jacket a reality," Wagner said.

Being elected to the junior board is not something that will happen overnight; for Wagner, it was a seven-year process. She started her journey toward the NJAB by

attending the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference every year, as well as the Raising the Bar conferences, as her schedule allowed.

Wagner said, "Those NJAA-sponsored events helped me make friends from all over the country. They also provided me with the leadership skills to take back to my state junior association."

She believes that her heavy involvement in her state association on the officer slate and the state fundraisers to host cattle shows encouraged her entire home state of Montana to rally around her the year she ran for the NJAB.

To anyone interested in running for the board, Wagner advised, "Treat your preparation like you would a show heifer; you have to start the work at home."

For junior members, being elected to the NJAB is a journey of many steps. The first step for members is choosing to see themselves in a green jacket a few years down the road. The next steps are to embrace every opportunity to learn and to grow toward making that vision a reality.

"The journey to getting on the junior board is about enjoying the lessons you learn and the people you meet along the way," said Wagner. Now, juniors, are you ready to take that first step?

# After the Green Coat

by *Aliesha Dethlefs, Nebraska*

**M**any juniors want to become a member of the NJAB. From a young age, those involved in the NJAA are led by those wearing a green jacket. These 12 individuals lead and mentor the members of the NJAA. Once the two-year term is complete, what happens after the NJAA directors hang up their green jackets?

Danielle (Foster) Matter represented the state of Michigan on the NJAB from 2009 to 2011. Being a member of the board enhanced Danielle's love of Angus cattle and her Angus family, because she saw firsthand the bright future of the beef community.

"Many of the juniors just amaze me with their passion, drive and knowledge," said Danielle. While on the board, Danielle learned even more about the Angus industry and beef community as a whole. It also taught her many life skills that benefited her while in the job market. These skills included how to prioritize, how to effectively participate and run meetings, strong presentation skills, and how to balance many different tasks.

Danielle's job search led her to Certified Angus Beef LLC in Wooster, Ohio, where she is the senior education and events manager. She plans meetings and events for the brand for various audiences to tell the story both of the brand and of the beef community. "It's a pretty incredible job at a pretty incredible company," said Danielle.

One of Danielle's favorite memories is when she retired from the junior board.

"Standing in front of my peers and expressing my thanks to all of the people who made it possible for me to experience the two years on the junior board was a pretty incredible moment," she said.

Jake Tiedeman represented the state of Nebraska on the NJAB from 2004 to 2006.

"I can say, without hesitation, the junior Angus association was a springboard to my success," said Jake.

The NJAA provided him with skills, networks, scholarships and opportunities to attend college and develop the career of his choice. He waited an extra year to run for the board, which allowed him to plan ahead,

communicate with his professors and get acclimated to school life.

Jake's family never pushed him to stay in the family business, and they often encouraged him to broaden his horizons, look at other career paths and keep his options open. He has always had a passion for Angus cattle and Angus people.

"Serving on the junior board, exhibiting and competing at the National Junior Angus Show and marketing our cattle across the country laid the foundation of experience and relationships that allowed a seamless transition into the family Angus operation," said Jake. Today, Jake operates and

manages Baldrige-Tiedeman Angus in North Platte, Neb., with his wife, Lindsay, and parents Bob and Becky.

For those considering a possible future campaign for the junior board, Jake's advice is to jump in with both feet and embrace the opportunity. He said, "Running for the board pushes you out of your comfort zone, allows you to communicate and network with peers from coast to coast and tests your drive, tenacity and foresight. Elected or not, the network of friends paired with these improved skills will serve you every day in your career."

Past NJAB Directors and NJAA alumni alike find their career paths complement their passions for the Angus breed.

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## Journey to a Green Jacket

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— *Aliesha Dethlefs, Kansas, Media Crew*

### Jena Lee Wagner

- Billings, Montana
- National Junior Angus Board of Directors 2012-2014
- Graduated with a degree in mass communications at Montana State — Billings in 2015
- Recently joined PayneWest Insurance as a marketing specialist



National Junior Angus  
The path to a green jacket is covered in hard work and determination to lead the next generation of Angus leaders

# The Importance of Being a Well-rounded Cattleman

**R**icky Williams, a retired American football running back who played 12 seasons in the National Football League, once said, “There’s more to life than success, and if you can try to be more well-rounded, you’ll be able to enjoy your success more.” Whether you are on the football field or in the hay field, the same mentality applies. Being a well-rounded individual with strong character, a variety of skills and talents, and a solid work ethic allows one to enjoy success while separating oneself from the rest.

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— **Katelyn Corsentino**

The NJAA provides its juniors with an environment to grow and develop into strong, capable and determined human beings by way of the variety of opportunities it offers. A current member of the NJAB, Katelyn Corsentino, from Denham Springs, La., said, “The National Junior Angus Association is an organization unlike any other. The primary focus is to build well-rounded individuals by embracing their leadership potential both in and outside of the showring.”

In addition to the cattle-showing experience, the NJAA offers junior members opportunities to take advantage of numerous internships, more than 15 contests at the NJAS, multiple scholarships and national leadership conferences throughout the year.

Also, the NJAB, together with the American Angus Association staff, set

an example of strong, capable and determined human beings for the junior membership.

“By being involved in leadership conferences, contests and showing itself, the NJAA is equipping its juniors with the experiences necessary to embrace all that is to come beyond the National Junior Angus Association,” said Corsentino.

As members of the NJAA, juniors have the

opportunity to maximize what makes them unique as individuals and challenges them to reach beyond their comfort zones. These opportunities are ones that most young people only dream of experiencing, and, for many juniors, establish the foundation for their futures. The NJAA is more than just showing cattle; it’s an organization that allows young people to reach their full, well-rounded potential.

## Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference

**E**very year the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) hosts a Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) conference where more than 800 youth from 45 states interact and participate in activities to enhance leadership and personal development.

These juniors hear from multiple motivational speakers, attend mini-sessions and tours, and can compete in different events.

Debbie Bearden, the Farm Bureau Association county coordinator in Allen County, Kan., has attended this conference for several years and even had her son compete in the discussion meet. Her favorite events of the conference are the speakers and the discussion meet.

“I like to see young people stretching and growing, and I think the YF&R conference is a wonderful platform for that to take place,” she says.

The AFBF works hard to find people who will inspire the young attendees, including members of government or Miss America.

I attended the conference in 2016 and plan to again in years to come. I participated in

the discussion meet, where we address problems facing the agriculture industry today and pitch our thoughts and ideas on how to solve them. It was an amazing experience to get to network with people my own age and talk about our future endeavors in the industry.

Of course, I focused my tours and workshops on the cattle industry to work with others with similar interests to overcome issues, and to simply broaden my knowledge.

Debbie concludes, “It’s a great place to get new ideas. ... It’s a changing industry with lots we can learn that we can take back home to our own operations.”

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