



Getting the Scoop

The first-ever NJAA newspaper is produced by juniors for juniors.

by Mathew Elliott

Extra, extra read all about it! The first-ever National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) newspaper, *The Scoop*, is hot off the press and was mailed to all junior participants of the 2007 National Junior Angus Show. Many young people from across the country came together to produce a newspaper for all juniors, detailing the week's events from the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

Julie McMahon French, creator of the NJAA newspaper, had been talking with people about a junior publication for a while before putting it together. Then, at one of the Arkansas/Oklahoma planning meetings for the NJAS, the idea was laid out and was well-received.

Before long, French had received a few key donations, but after her May 15 application deadline, she was still a little nervous about filling the staff positions.

"I wanted 20 or so kids to start this," French says. "But after the deadline I was at about seven."

French then spoke to a few people who might be able to help her recruit, but they didn't need to work too hard.

"The applications slowly trickled in late," French says. "Then once a few of the kids found out that they could still apply after the deadline, I kept hearing from kids."

French heard from juniors all the way through the NJAS, accepting anyone who was

willing and wanting to help out. By the end of the week, she says, there were around 28 juniors and a few coaches working on *The Scoop*.

Opportunities for experience

Mandy Imgarten, Enid, Okla., found out about the opportunity to work and be a coach on the newspaper through her advisor at Oklahoma State University (OSU). "We got an e-mail through our department listserv, and my advisor really encouraged me to go for this," Imgarten says.

Imgarten applied and was named the project manager. As project manager, her job was to oversee everything that was happening at the newspaper during the week.

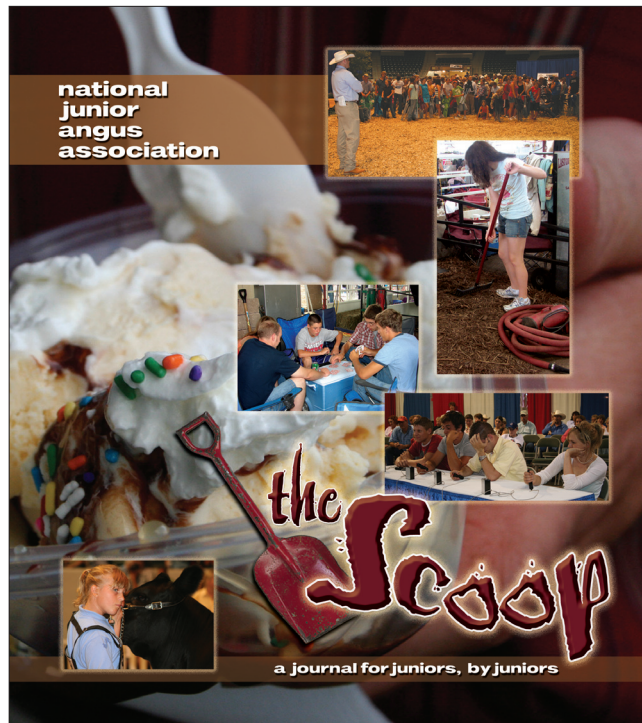
"I help when needed, with story ideas, editing, design, keeping things organized, trying to keep people on track and encouraging everyone," Imgarten says.

Currently a senior at OSU, Imgarten will be graduating soon and saw this as an excellent opportunity to gain some valuable

experience. She was also excited about all the new people she got to meet and the networking that goes on at the NJAS.

Imgarten says she encourages everyone to apply to work on *The Scoop* if given the opportunity in the future. "This is a great experience," she says. "If you don't have any experience and you're interested, look at this as a great way to get it."

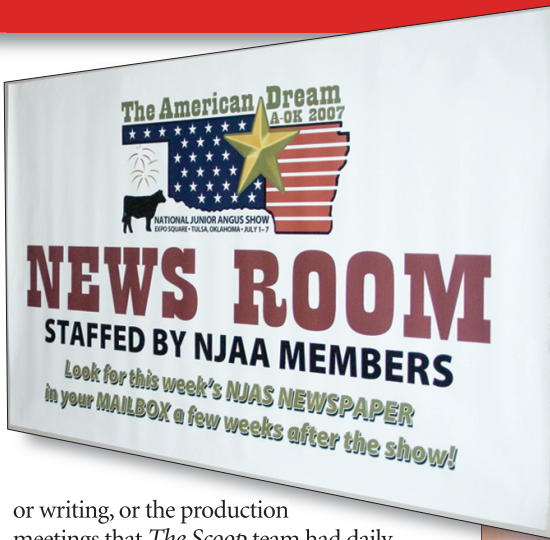
The team did have plenty of opportunities for gaining experience throughout the week, whether it was the hands-on photography



► Press badges, stenopads, and any other supplies needed for the production of a newspaper were provided.



► Before one of their meetings, staff members listen to one of the industry professionals who came to speak during the week.



► Mandy Imgarten (left), *The Scoop* project manager, looks over a story with a staff member.

or writing, or the production meetings that *The Scoop* team had daily.

With the NJAS being a very busy time for everyone, *The Scoop* staff had two daily meetings for everyone to come together and get organized. During these meetings there were brainstorming and story planning discussions, editors checked on how stories were coming along, and there was opportunity for guest speakers to talk to the group.

Guest speakers ranged from interns to editors. They spoke of their experiences and how they got to where they were. After a 10-minute session, the juniors were encouraged to ask questions of the industry professionals.

Rachael Vaassen, Ann Arbor, Mich., found out about the newspaper through her dad and applied early. She was assigned the art director position.

"My responsibilities there include designing the layout of the paper, deciding where articles go and how they will fit into

the space allotted for them," Vaassen says.

Early in the week, she admitted to being a little overwhelmed because none of the stories were in, and she knew that she'd be working hard toward the end of the week. But, she was excited about the new people she was meeting and some of the different design ideas that were being tossed around.

Ricka Boehmer, Williamston, Mich., found out about the opportunity and decided to join the team. She was named the project coach for photography and was assigned to help the juniors with their photography skills.

"I work with the kids on some basic photo help, look through and talk over the photos

they have taken, assign who is going to cover events, and then make sure those events are covered," Boehmer says.

Working with *The Scoop* was a great experience all around for Boehmer. She says she enjoys seeing juniors excited to work and even working out of their comfort zones.

"This gives the juniors an idea of the opportunities and careers that are out there," Boehmer says.

French hopes *The Scoop* will continue to grow and that it can be made useful for the many junior members who, for whatever reason, cannot make it to the NJAS. She also sees this as an opportunity to develop youth programs with juniors helping juniors and was thrilled to see the ways people jumped in and brought other people with them.

"These kids are smart and have questions," French says. "We put a few ideas out there, and they ran with them. We are communicating on their level, because young people can speak with young people."

In the future, French says, she sees *The Scoop* continuing to grow and is excited about the opportunities it can provide. It is a pre-college, pre-career event where juniors have the opportunity to learn and make new friends and contacts, she says.

"This may be a noncompetitive activity, but we still expect excellence from these juniors," French says. "We kept a level of professionalism but also kept that young feel to our publication."



► Tossing around story ideas or just making new friends, *The Scoop* staff enjoyed working together.

