



# Intern of the Year: *Getting Started*

GPN and Nexus are looking for 2004's Intern of the Year. Are you that someone, or do you know someone who is?

By Carrie Burns and Bridget White

**G**ood employees are hard to find, or rather, hard-working, knowledgeable employees are hard to find. When you do find them and hire them, you want to reward them. While an intern may not be a permanent employee, they typically work hard because this is what they want as their career.

An internship is a winning situation for many people. The intern gains industry knowledge he or she could never receive in the classroom; the employer acquires a hard-working hand at a minimal cost; the university or college cements a satisfied and successful alumni who can attest to the experience he or she has gained through the school; and the industry gains a knowledgeable and experienced personality.

If you had a great intern this summer — one you think worthy of notice — GPN and Nexus Corporation have the perfect way to reward that hard-working up-and-comer. The winner will appear on the cover of GPN's January 2004 issue and in a feature article about them and their experiences as an intern. Oh yeah, did we mention the \$3,000 scholarship check for the winner and the \$500 check for the runner up?

## WINNERS

We've had some outstanding winners the past four years, and with each passing year, the competition gets tougher and tougher. These young women (yes, they have all been women, and this is a direct challenge to all the male interns out there!) exhibit the qualities that every grower is searching for in their employees — loyalty, innovation, determination, knowledge, etc. — and we are proud to have sponsored them in their careers.

**Jennifer Browne.** The 2003 winner hailed from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. She completed her internship with North Creek Nursery, Landenberg, Pa. Here is a quick excerpt from Browne's winning essay: "The radio is turned to some R&B hip hop station, and Junior, Poncho and I are in a potting rhythm: Make a hole in the soil, tease the roots, stick in the plant, cover the roots...This is what we've been doing all afternoon for the last couple of days and what we will continue to do in the weeks to come so we can fill an order of 3,000 quart-sized plants placed by a single customer."

**Janna Hogue.** The 2002 winner came to us from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, and completed her internship at Metrolina Greenhouses, Huntersville, N.C. In her essay, Hogue explained what she gained from the internship: "My initial hope for my internship was to work not only in different types of greenhouse structures with numerous crops, but also with several growers. I am extremely pleased that I was given that opportunity. Each grower taught me many special skills that I will carry with me." ♦



2003 winner Jennifer Browne

## management

**Sarah McQueen.** The winner of the 2001 scholarship graduated from Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. McQueen carried out her internship at Andy Mast Greenhouse, Grand Rapids,

Mich. Though she had completed other internships previous to this one, McQueen learned about large-scale production the year she was awarded the intern scholarship. "My summer at Andy

Mast Greenhouse was unique in that it was the first time I saw how complicated and labor-intensive a large wholesale greenhouse operation can be. Workers were busy all summer while I was there, but the

real busy season doesn't even start until November when poinsettia shipping begins...Working in the commercial production sector really emphasized the seasonal nature of the industry."

**Melinda Froning.** The first GPN/Nexus Intern Scholarship, awarded in 2000, went to Froning, a graduate of University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn. Froning completed her internship at Four Star Greenhouse, Carleton, Mich., and took the readers of her essay through each facet of the internship. "I spent my first two weeks in the shipping department...I then worked in customer service...I then worked as a section grower in the poly houses...I enjoyed working in the trial/research department because of the few people involved and the newness of the work...Since I worked in so many different capacities, I closely observed the relationships between



Intern Scholarship winners, left to right: Janna Hogue 2002, Sarah McQueen 2001 and Melinda Froning with advisor Terri Starman 2000.

### Why the University Focus?

We've thought long and hard about the requirements for the *GPN/Nexus* Intern Scholarship. Why focus on students at 4-year universities? Why require a production-oriented internship? Why grade for good writing? What we've found over the years is that our scholarship gives one student a great opportunity, but along with that, they get to carry the hopes of the industry on their shoulders.

This can only be accomplished by a certain kind of person — one who has been exposed to much more than the inside of a classroom or the basics of plant production. Today's graduates of 4-year institutions have both the education and experiences to develop the future leaders and horticulture business managers for the floriculture industry, a feat that can only be accomplished over the entire four years and through a variety of experiences.

According to Dr. Terril Nell, chairman of Floriculture at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla., and the current Society of American Florists president, "Education must include floriculture, agribusiness management and communication skills, while the experiences must include required internships, field trips to see industry innovations and international trips to learn the international scope of production and sales in floriculture." The goal is to provide the industry's next generation with the full range of education and experiences they need to be true leaders, both within the industry and the greenhouse. And at this point, that goal can only be accomplished through accredited 4-year institutions.



*University of Florida students get a hands-on tour at Taisuco de Costa Rica, San Jose, Costa Rica, where they learned about the quality issues involved in having to remove the media prior to shipping into the United States. (Photo courtesy of Jim Barrett)*

departments, management and section growers. From this, I realized the importance of communication and cooperation in a company."

### QUALIFICATIONS

Applications for the 5th Annual *GPN/Nexus* Intern Scholarship are being accepted now through October 15, 2003.

To be considered, applicants must meet the following requirements: enrollment in a 4-year, accredited university during the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years; pursuit of an undergraduate degree in a branch of floriculture; and internship in a production greenhouse during the summer of 2003. Applicants who meet these requirements should send a cover letter requesting consideration for the scholarship and telling what university they attend; a letter from their academic advisor recommending the applicant and attest-

ing to enrollment; and an essay that describes their intern experience, including who they interned for and what their responsibilities were. Essays will be assessed by a panel of judges on the quality of the experience, knowledge gained and the applicant's ability to describe the experience.

All applications should be mailed to: *GPN/Nexus* Intern Scholarship, c/o Bridget White, 380 E. Northwest Hwy., Suite 200, Des Plaines, IL, 60016. Applications must be postmarked by October 15, 2003 to be considered. For further information, contact Bridget White at (847) 391-1004 or [bwhite@sgcmail.com](mailto:bwhite@sgcmail.com). **GPN**

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