AGCJ 404: Communicating Agricultural Information to the Public

Week #11: Photographs

If You Were an Editor, Which Would You Choose?

- A well written press release covering a recent meeting of the Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board, or
- A well written press release covering a recent meeting of the Texas Turfgrass Association complete with high quality photos with good captions?

Problem

- How do you use photographs to increase the likelihood of getting your articles published?

Objectives

- Given a photograph, prepare it for submission with a press release according to the procedure discussed in class.
- Given a photograph, evaluate it based on accepted newspaper photography principles.

Photography Principles

- Using the principles of good photographs make photos that help to tell the story in a pleasing way.
  - Leading lines
  - Simplicity
  - Action
  - Rule of thirds
  - Balance
  - Framing

Leading Lines: Center Interest

- Add interest and lead the eye to the center of interest (COI)
  - In this photo the logs create the lines leading to the crane
Leading Lines: Add Interest

- Photographing the fence at this angle creates a line that is more interesting than a full front shot and leads the viewer off into the snow covered woods.

Simplicity

- Keep backgrounds simple and uncluttered. Don’t try to get everything in to one photo.
  - Move around your subject to get a simple background—using the sky—rather than the rocks or bushes. Keep things uncluttered to make your COI stand out so your reader knows what you are showing.

Simplicity

- Simple is also more dramatic

Action

- Action photos are more interesting—show people doing things not posed.
  - This action shot shows what soccer players do and is more interesting than having the player standing with the ball at their feet. When your subject is moving always keep more space in front of them in the photo so they appear to have some place to go or move.

Action: Meeting/committee

- Even though this photo is staged it shows more action than four people lined up facing the camera with a clean table or standing in front of a sign. Posed action is better than none.

Action: On the Job

- When showing people on the job show them actually at their work station and simulate them doing the job rather than stand with it in the background.
Rule of Thirds: Horizon Line
- Divide the photo into thirds horizontally and vertically. The COI should be placed at or near one of the intersections. Horizon line at the top or bottom third, not middle.
- Here the horizon line is shown in the bottom third and the rock with is the center of interest is shown in the right third.

Rule of Thirds: COI Placement
- Here the dual centers of interest are show at the right and left thirds also providing balance.

Balance
- Keeping the objects in the photo in balance, not necessarily equal.
- Balance is using objects to keep the photo in balance—balance doesn’t mean they have to be the same—but have more the same weight or value.
- The triangle created by the kite and the people is another photographic device to create interest.

Balance
- This photograph shows balance even though the windmills are different sizes; the photo doesn’t look like it is going to fall over.

Framing
- Use natural features or features in the photo frame the action and add depth and perspective to the photo.
- In this photo the trees in the foreground frame the person giving depth to the photo and adding interest and perspective.

Framing
- The beam on the right and the container on the left frame the action and add depth to photo.
**Photography Don’ts**

- **Mergers**
  - Mergers are created when something merges with the edge of the photo or the colors are so close together that you cannot tell objects apart.
  - Border-heads or arms half in or out of the photo
  - Color—more of a problem with black and white photos.

- **Grip ’n grin**—photos for awards don’t really tell the reader anything.
- **Hold the trophy**—very static photo.
- **Over 7 people**—most newspapers don’t take them because the faces are so small you can’t identify the people in the photo.
- **Static situations**—people sitting at a table/standing in a line.

**Mergers: Border**

- Note the cows feet in the upper right corner.

**Mergers: Color**

- The rabbit is hard to pick out in the color photo—impossible if you tried to print it black and white.

**Hold the Trophy**

- Nice photo—nice people but you can’t tell anything about the award or even who won it.

**Over Seven People**

- If you were in the photo you would have to know where you were standing even to find yourself. Move one or two out in front and use the rest of the choir for background.
Under Seven People

- This photo more appropriately shows the group representatives.

Static Group

- What’s wrong with this photograph?

Submitting With Captions

- Type line across sheet of paper halfway down
- Tape the photo in the top half
  - (5 X 7 photos are best)
- Type name of article and caption on bottom half
- Use clear placement
- Spell the names correctly

Evaluation

- Final Exam