

# Actiongram

June 2014



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## Preparing for the interview

Many of us, regardless of the exact area of expertise in the field, are responsible for interviews. Some of us enjoy them. Others of us, well, it's a necessary evil. A means to an end.

This month, I've asked some folks I truly respect and admire for their advice on how to make the most of those few minutes on the phone or across the desk from a source.

The common theme? Preparation.

Speaking of preparation: have you made your plans to attend this year's Agricultural Media Summit July 26-30 in Indianapolis? The lineup of programs is spectacular, and we're going to have more fun than should be allowed. You can get the full scoop here: [www.agmediasummit.com](http://www.agmediasummit.com).

But back to interviews. Take a look at the tips below. You just never know what nugget of wisdom will help you the next time you pick up the phone to gather the information for your next article.

### Miranda Reiman

Certified Angus Beef® assistant director of industry information

"Starting out, my idea of interview prep was getting names and numbers, and giving a source a call. Then in college, my professors demanded we do lots of background research and write lengthy question lists. I'd like to think that I've struck the right balance of those two approaches now. This is probably not much different than what you all do, but here is my process:

- Google. I do a quick web search before almost every interview. That gives me an idea of what's already been written about the person, so I don't do the same old, same old, while also pointing out few things I may want to ask more about.
- Write down my 'musts.' Is there anything that I absolutely need to know before I can finish my assignment? I write down a word, phrase or question that jogs my memory so I'm sure to ask about that.
- Get it together. Recording a phone interview? I try to get that set before the exact minute I'm supposed to be calling. Heading on location? I make sure my camera batteries are charged, I've got a pad or two of paper and a couple pens (and a pencil, as I hear the voice of my J-school prof who said that will never run out of ink), and prepare for whatever weather I may encounter. Our tools of the trade are pretty simple, but there's nothing worse than tripping up because you ran out of space in your notebook. (That may or may not be a true story...)
- Don't overdo it. Preparation is good, but don't go overboard. Don't spend so much time worrying about what you thought you knew, or a set list of questions, that you forget to listen and follow-up on the most interesting parts of the interview.
- Have a plan 'B'. If my source doesn't know the answers to my 'musts,' I might ask them, 'Who would you consider an expert on this topic?' If a rancher hasn't been particularly talkative, I'll see if there is a feeder, a vet, an Extension agent, really just anybody who can help uncover their story."



Christy Lee  
Cee Lee Communications  
2013-14 LPC President



Miranda



**Jennifer Stewart-Burton**  
Strategic Initiatives  
Communication  
Specialist  
Purdue University  
College of  
Agriculture

*Jennifer*

“One of the most important steps in story writing is preparing for interviews. Doing homework ahead of time and going into interviews knowing about the topics at hand can save time, lay firm story foundations and show interviewees you care. Before I call or meet with an interviewee, I always read up on their work and any background information I can find about the story topic.

Interview questions are far more pointed and straightforward for news articles than feature stories. News questions are intended to get the facts and keep the source on track. With features, however, I like to start interviews in a

light-hearted fashion to get the sources to open up to me and really tell their stories. The more comfortable they are with me, the more likely they’ll be to share the best details.

While I always walk into interviews with a list of prepared questions (no more than 10), I think the biggest mistake would be to stay married to that list. Maybe the news peg is some aspect of a scientist’s research that is shared in passing during the interview. Maybe the real gem is a story the source has never told before. I try not to be so tied to a list of questions that I miss the good stuff.”

**Alexis Kienlen**



*Alexis*

Reporter with  
*Alberta Farmer Express*

“I Google and read previous articles or information about the person/farm.

***“The more comfortable they are with me, the more likely they’ll be to share the best details.”***

*~Jennifer*

I also look at their website and social media, if possible.

I always ask people to tell me a brief background or information about their farm. I generally try to do that first, as that puts people at ease. Whenever I think I’m done an interview, I always ask, ‘Is there anything I’m missing or is there anything that you think is important?’ Sometimes the interview subject will come up with a point that I’ve missed, a message that they want to reiterate, or a piece of information that they want to stress. This helps refocus me and helps me see what they think is important.”

## LPC Best of the Bunch Photo Contest at Ag Media Summit

Get your cameras out and start snapping away or find that winning photo in your files because it’s time for the Best of the Bunch Photo Contest! Held each year during the Agricultural Media Summit it is named after **Paul Andre**, retired editor of BEEF magazine and long time coordinator of this contest. Cash prizes are awarded!

**Rules...Read carefully!**

**Photo Submissions**

- 1) Enter each photograph in one of four categories:
  - a) Livestock
  - b) Livestock industry people
  - c) Livestock scenic (such as a landscape)
  - d) NEW for 2014: Digitally enhanced** (the sky’s the limit!)
- 2) The photo contest committee reserves the right to reassign entries to appropriate category, if necessary.
- 3) All photographs must be mounted on lightweight stock. Minimum size for entry is 8”x10” to 10”x12”. With the mounting, the maximum size of an entry can be no more than 10”x14”.
- 4) All photos must be identified with your name, affiliation and category. This should be typed or printed on white paper and affixed to the back of each photo. Unidentified photos will be disqualified.
- 5) All photos must ALSO be submitted digitally for use in the slideshow presentation of winners, along with your headshot.
- 6) There is no limit to the number of entries you may enter.

- 7) There will be a small entry fee (\$5 per photo) but we have added larger cash prizes.
  - 8) Entries will be taken until 9 a.m., Monday, July 28 at the registration desk.
  - 9) You may enter without attending the Summit but contestants are responsible for making arrangements in getting their photo(s) returned.
- Eligibility**
- 1) All entries must be original un-retouched, **“straight out of the camera”** photos. (NEW for 2014)
  - 2) Those entering photos must work for a member publication of LPC (name must appear in the masthead) or be a service member of LPC. Student members of LPC are also eligible to enter.
  - 3) Any photograph that has won a division in the Best of the Bunch contest previously is not eligible for entry.

**Winning Photos**

- 1) Each category will pay \$100/first; \$50/second; \$25/third.
- 2) The LPC Executive Committee has the discretion to select the directory cover photo from the winners of each category.
- 3) The winner of the “Best of the Bunch” will receive a canvas print of their winning entry.

**General Information**

- 1) LPC retains the right to use any of the photos submitted in the Best of the Bunch Photo Contest for publishing in print or on the web.
- 2) ALL entries will go on the LPC web site and remain on there for one year with your name attached to the entry. We feel that this is a way of "advertising" for your photo(s) and then it's also like an online "portfolio" for you.

**For more information or questions contact**  
**Carey Brown at [cbrown@kycattle.org](mailto:cbrown@kycattle.org)**  
**Carrie Heitman [cheitman@angus.org](mailto:cheitman@angus.org)**  
**Reba Underwood [rebalorena09@yahoo.com](mailto:rebalorena09@yahoo.com)**



**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!** Here's a teaser schedule of the program set for this year's Ag Media Summit. Go to [www.agmediasummit.com](http://www.agmediasummit.com) for the full program with workshop descriptions. Watch for notices by joining the Facebook page and also for updates on the websites of LPC, AAEA and AMS. The event is July 26-30 in Indianapolis.

**ALL EVENTS ARE AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL DOWNTOWN**

**SATURDAY, JULY 26**

7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Ag Tours of the Central Indiana  
7 p.m. ACT Student Social Mixer, Marriott Hotel

**SUNDAY, JULY 27**

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration desk open at Marriott Hotel  
8 - 11:30 a.m. LPC board meeting  
8 - 11:30 a.m. LPC board meeting followed by PIF meeting  
Noon Lunch on your own  
1 - 5 p.m. Video Skills Workshop (\$90 additional fee)  
2 - 4 p.m. ACT Welcome and Student Professionalism Sessions  
2 - 5 p.m. InfoExpo exhibit set up at  
5:30 - 6:45 p.m. First-timers reception  
7 - 10 p.m. Famous Welcome Party at the Marriott Hotel

**MONDAY, JULY 28**

All day Registration desk open at Marriott Hotel  
6:45 a.m. 5K Fun Run (open to all, no fees)  
8 a.m. Golf Outing (extra fee)  
7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Hot Breakfast  
8 a.m. - 3 p.m. InfoExpo set up  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m. ARC silent auction open for bidding  
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. DEEP DIVE SESSIONS  
-Writing Deep Dive: Tools of Originality  
*Profiles in Journalism: Putting personality in the news*  
-Writing Deep Dive: Blueprints for sound storytelling: structure and organization  
*What to put in? What to leave out? Where to put what?*  
-Design Deep Dive: **Secrets of an InDesign pro**  
*Tips and techniques that will turn you into an InDesign layout whiz*  
8:30 - 10 a.m. BLOCK 1 SESSIONS  
-Generating and Executing Great Ideas  
-Vision Web  
-Newsmaker Panel: **Agricultural privacy laws cause discussion across the country**  
10:15 - 11:30 a.m. BLOCK 2 SESSIONS  
-Newsmaker Panel: **Hypoxia: From the Microscope to the Gulf of Mexico**  
-Overpower the Sun  
10 - 10:15 a.m. Morning coffee break  
**11:45 a.m. Student awards and recognition luncheon**  
1:15 - 4 p.m. DEEP DIVE SESSION: PHOTOGRAPHY  
1:15 - 2:30 p.m. BLOCK 3 SESSIONS  
-The New Breed of Seller  
-Clearing the Fog: Plain Language Writing  
-Making InDesign & Word Play Nice Together: Best Practices for a smooth editorial and design workflow.

2:30 - 2:45 p.m. Afternoon coffee break  
2:45 - 4 p.m. BLOCK 4 SESSIONS  
-Goal Setting and Achieving  
-Sentences with Style  
-Tweeting, Pinning and Posting for a Cause  
4 - 7 p.m. InfoExpo Grand Opening followed by a free evening.  
4:30 p.m. ACT Critique and Contest Awards at the Hyatt Hotel  
**TUESDAY, JULY 29**  
All day Registration desk open at Marriott Hotel  
7:30 - 8:30 a.m. LPC annual business meeting  
LPC Contest awards will follow LPC meeting.  
8:30 - 10 a.m. Breakfast in InfoExpo  
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. ARC silent auction open for bidding  
10:15 - 11 a.m. BLOCK 5 SESSIONS  
-Consult, Collaborate, Cooperate, Cultivate  
-Form and Content  
-Ready, Set, Tweet: The Journalists' Guide to Social Media  
-Think Big - Act Big  
11 - 11:45 a.m. BLOCK 5 SESSIONS  
-Intro to your DSLR  
-There's an App for That: Handy Apps for Ag Communicators  
-Make Time to Dream; Plan to Meet your Dreams  
-Code Words: How Journalism Ethics Become a Code to Live By  
-Understanding the Evolving Media Habits of Farmers and Ranchers  
12 noon - 1:15 p.m. LUNCHEON  
**Lighten Up and Laugh for the Health of It!**  
**Craig Zablocki**  
1:30 - 3 p.m. Dessert in InfoExpo  
3 - 6 p.m. InfoExpo teardown  
3:15 - 4:30 p.m. AAEA business meeting  
4:30 - 5:30 p.m. ACT business meeting  
5 - 6:30 p.m. AAEA awards presentation  
6:30 - 7:15 p.m. Cocktail Reception  
7:15 - 9 p.m. Joint Dinner and Awards Banquet and Dessert Reception  
9 p.m. After Party at the Marriott

**HOTEL INFORMATION**

ALL ACTIVITIES WILL BE AT THE MARRIOTT  
(NOTE - THIS IS NOT THE JW MARRIOTT HOTEL)  
Indianapolis Marriott Downtown  
350 West Maryland Street, Indianapolis 46225  
Room rate: \$145 single/double  
Reservations: 800-266-9432 • Hotel: 317-822-3500  
<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/AgriculturalMediaSummit2014>



# Review of LPC Events & Programs

We have had many new members join LPC through the past few years and we thought it would be good to put in a quick review of the major events and programs that LPC is involved in. There is more information on the LPC website: [www.livestockpublications.com](http://www.livestockpublications.com)

## Agricultural Media Summit (AMS)

The Agricultural Media Summit is headed into its 16th year and is a joint convention of LPC, AAEA (American Agricultural Editors' Assn.) and Agri Media Council. The student group, Ag Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) also hold their annual

meeting and events at the AMS. More than 600 professionals attend whose job titles range from publishers to graphic artists, sales people to production managers, editors to ad agency folks. It is a professional development event and includes educational workshops, a trade show (referred to as

InfoExpo) with more than 80 booths of companies involved in agriculture and the ag publishing industry. These companies include seed companies, commodity groups, divisions of the USDA, printers who focus on the ag industry, plus a wide variety of other companies.

The Summit also includes the annual meetings of LPC and AAEA including the election of officers and ends with a big closing dinner and awards presentation on the final evening. This year's event will be July 26-30 at the Marriott Downtown Indianapolis. The direct link to register is: [www.agmediasummitregistration.com](http://www.agmediasummitregistration.com).

## Honored Professional Awards

The Hall of Fame and Headliner awards are prestigious awards that have been given since 1981 and recognize outstanding individuals in the industry. Formal presentations occur at the Ag Media Summit and at the new event in November and the Royal Gala in Kansas City (see more about the Gala below). Any LPC member may nominate a candidate for these awards.



Wayne Bollum  
(posthumously)  
2014 Hall of Fame

The **Hall of Fame** honor is reserved for those who have adhered to high standards of professionalism in all aspects of their endeavors. The award is open to anyone who has been listed on the masthead of an LPC member publication or a service member. Nominees may be persons who are currently active or those who have moved on to other endeavors and is open to persons in sales, circulation, production and editorial. The **Headliner Award** honors a person from outside the livestock publishing field for actions that produce a positive change in livestock production and marketing. These actions could range from genetic research to marketing advances or scientific discoveries. The important factor is that these actions produce a positive change.

This year's winners are **Wayne Bollum** who will be inducted posthumously and **Dave Nichols**, Ankeny, Iowa.



David Nichols  
2014 Headliner

## Student Programs

LPC is a big supporter of student programs and the major award presented each year is the **Forrest Bassford** Student Award presented to a deserving college student majoring in agriculture communications or journalism. The winner will receive a \$2,000 scholarship while the other three travel award winners will receive \$750 travel awards to attend the Summit. Many past winners of this award continue to work in the livestock communications field. This award also honors **Forrest Bassford**, a founding father of LPC who served the organization for many years as secretary-treasurer and then executive director. As the executive director emeritus, he passed away in 2006 at the age of 100.



2013 Forrest Bassford Student award winners with sponsor representative, Ann Hess, Alltech. Kari Weis, Reba Underwood, Claire Carlson and Logan Britton.

## Critique Contest

A long standing contest for LPC is the popular LPC Contest. This Contest recognizes outstanding work from its members and the presentation of awards will be on Tuesday morning, July 29 right after the LPC annual meeting in Indianapolis. For many years the Contest included a judge's critique of each entry. However four years ago a separate program was established so there is now a "Contest" and a "Critique Review". New for 2014 is that the Critique Review will be available all year. The Critique Review allows for members to enter their work, it is reviewed by an experienced judge and a in-depth review is given. More details will come out on this soon regarding deadlines.

## Flanagan Award

Each year there is the opportunity to enter for the coveted award referred to as the Flanagan Award for the Most Improved Publication (named after long-time supporter of LPC and developer of the contest, **James Flanagan**). The award is reserved for the publication which has shown significant improvement in overall design and content and judged by comparing issues over a three year period. It's a great honor to receive and shows the dedication that our members have to improvement.

## Best of the Bunch Photo Contest

Here's another popular contest held during the Summit which brings out the photography buffs. It is named after **Paul Andre**, retired editor of *BEEF* magazine and long time coordinator of the contest. Cash prizes are awarded with the top photo printed

on the cover of the LPC Directory. Categories include: livestock; livestock industry people; livestock scenic/landscape and a general category. This is a great contest for staff members who can't attend the Summit, but still want to participate as you don't have to be present to win! The entry fee is \$5.00 per photo and all entries are available to view on the LPC website.

### Communications and networking

Your annual dues also include the *Actiongram* newsletter distributed via e-mail, which updates you on current news along with details of upcoming events. All past electronic newsletters are also archived on our website. Your membership includes a listing in the annual directory which is a key piece of information for those involved in livestock communications. This is published in the fall of each year.

LPC offers an incredible network of people who know people. If you are looking for a position within the industry or need a freelance writer, artist or a new sales person for your publication or organization, we offer direct links to the people you need to know. Members may post positions available too via the job postings on the website as well.

And, of course, LPC has a presence on Facebook so join up! Lots of information is updated often for LPC and the Ag Media Summit. •



photo by Jennifer Carrico

*Samples of winning Best of the Bunch photo contest which may appear on the cover of the LPC Membership Directory.*



photo by Beverly Moseley

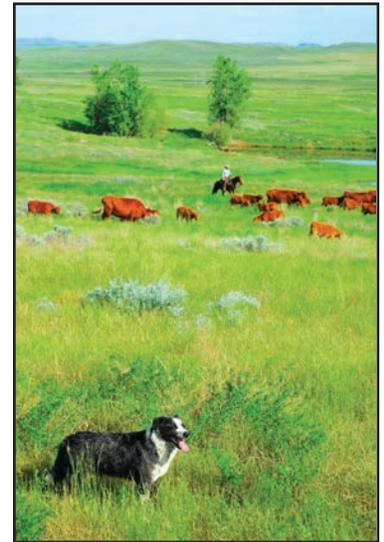
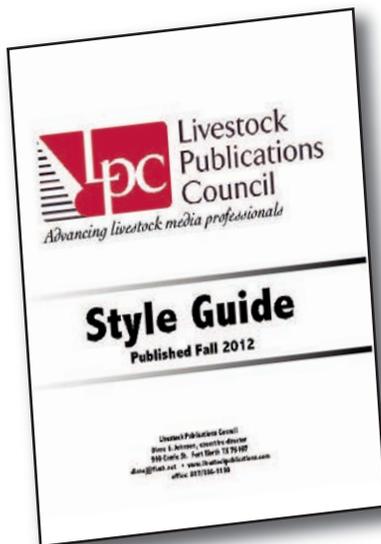


photo by Amanda Johnson

## Style Guide Available



One of the major projects that LPC now offers to everyone is a Style Guide that focuses on livestock terminology. This was unveiled at the Ag Media Summit in 2012.

It is available for download from the LPC site and is free of charge. We encourage you to promote the Style Guide to others in

the livestock industry who could benefit from it including your local newspaper, livestock shows, extension offices, etc. Please contact the LPC office for clarifications or to add your style guide information. **Find the Style Guide on the home page: [www.livestockpublications.com](http://www.livestockpublications.com)**

## Spreading the ag cheer

by Jennifer Carrico

### Benefiting children at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indy

For the past three years, the Ag Media Summit committee has led a community service project at each of the host cities. Those projects included shoes in New Orleans, books in Albuquerque and coats in Buffalo. This year we will be taking donations to benefit children at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

When children spend time in a hospital, the Child Life program helps to minimize the stress and

anxiety children often experience during hospitalization and the Cheer Guild helps distribute donations to these children.

We think it would be great to provide these kids with agricultural-related items in the categories which the hospital is in need.

We are asking AMS attendees to donate smaller-sized books, coloring and activity books, and individually wrapped or packaged match-box-size trucks

and/or tractors. Gift cards to iTunes, Hobby Lobby, Michael's, Walmart, Target, Amazon.com, Best Buy, Barnes and Noble and monetary donations will also be accepted.

These donations will help the Cheer Guild give out 13,000 – 16,000 items each month to in and out patients at Riley Hospital for Children. If you have any questions, contact Jennifer Carrico at [jcarrico@hpc.com](mailto:jcarrico@hpc.com)