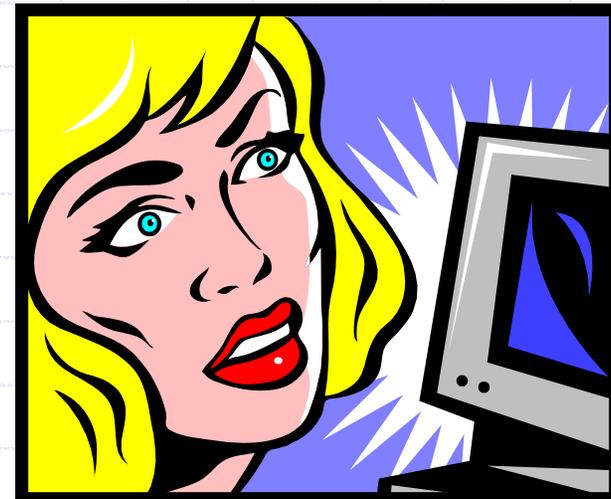


FEATURE WRITING

What Works!



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Getting from Good to GREAT

- ◆ Good features tell who, what, when and where.
- ◆ GREAT features add the how and why.
- ◆ GREAT features tell a story. They have a beginning, middle and end.
- ◆ Good features include an interview with quotes.
- ◆ GREAT features include GREAT interviews (more than one) that elicit memorable quotes.

Getting from Good to GREAT

- ◆ Good features vague it up with words such as "many," "most" and "some."
- ◆ GREAT features use specifics such as \$5 million, 27 percent, 3,000 members.
- ◆ Good features are solidly written.
- ◆ GREAT features are mindful of the reader's attention span and include sidebars, charts and lists of resources.

Getting from Good to GREAT

- ◆ Good features spell everyone's name correctly and have no grammatical or typographical errors.
- ◆ GREAT features do that too—and leave the reader thinking, “Wow, I didn't know that.”

Getting from Good to GREAT

- ◆ Good features entertain or inform.
- ◆ GREAT features do both. The GREATEST features do both—and inspire the readers to take action, whether it's to start a similar venture within their own farm or co-op, take a vacation or write a letter to a congressman.

2. Entertaining Feature

Coverage giving a colorful and entertaining personality to a subject, person or event.



What's Entertaining?

- ◆ Features about people who experience some sort of change, internally or externally, that resonates with the reader.
- ◆ Features that take us on trips, mentally or emotionally.

Honorable Mention:

"Aboard the Blue Heron"

- ◆ "Once you gain your sea legs, there's plenty of room to get up and walk around the deck. While the pontoon boat remains steady in calm water, it can rock up and down a bit as barges, larger than two football fields, pass in the deep river channel. If you're prone to sea sickness you might consider bringing along some Dramamine."
- ◆ "'When kids get excited, it's contagious,' says Jim with a smile. 'It's about creating a memory that may last a lifetime. It's a big adventure when you're young to go out on a boat.'"

3rd Place: "A Shrimp Tale"

◆ "The first time I bought them I thought, 'You idiot. You spent this much money, and you don't even know if you're going to get home with them alive. You could have bought a cow with that money!'"

2nd Place: "Saving Time"

◆ "Empty and alone on the banks of Cub Creek in Stewart County, an abandoned two-room log house was simply biding its time, succumbing slowly to the forces of nature as it waited to be rescued.

"The 'cavalry' arrived in 1974.

"That's when JoAnn and Glenn Weakley moved the 132-year-old structure to Montgomery County and gave the logs new life as the first phase of their visionary project to construct a living history museum on their Southside farm.

1st Place: “Linemen Step Up to the Plate”

◆ “As darkness falls, the community gathers. Children with gloves, helmets and bats take their positions on the diamond. The ballpark is their stage, the people in the bleachers their audience.

“The first crack of bat against ball unleashes the crowd’s enthusiasm, as the stadium lights illuminate the figures of young athletes running bases, throwing balls—all trying to make the big play. The familiar smells of hotdogs and nachos waft through the warm spring air. It’s all part of a timeless American tradition.

“It’s the beginning of youth-league ball season in Crewe on the Beamer and Hackney fields. This evening’s game was made possible in part by a special group of retired Southside Electric Cooperative (SEC) linemen who epitomize the core values of electric cooperatives and their commitment to community.”

"Linemen Step Up to the Plate"

- ◆ "'When you're a part of the co-op family, you love what you do and that always involves serving other people. For example, we did the lighting on the ballpark for the area's youth, but it's no different than back in our linemen days when we'd be out late at night during storms getting the lights back on—only we did that for our co-op members. It's a mentality that sticks with you even after you retire from the co-op family.'"

1. Informative/Investigative Feature

Serious, informative story, providing in-depth coverage and/or analysis of a subject, event, or issue.



Honorable Mention: "Crafting Menus for the Future"

- ◆ "Behind the thick redwood doors of an imposing 19th Century stone monastery, the table is being laid with America's menu for the 21st Century.
"The St. Helena, Calif., edifice—formerly the Christian Brothers' famous winery—is now the Greystone campus of the renowned Culinary Institute of America and the new Ventura Foods Center for Menu Research and Development."

"Crafting Menus for the Future"

- ◆ "Food is often about the memory of something that makes you happy, almost puts a giggle on your tongue."

3rd Place: "A Nickel at a Time"

◆ "The 1930s were brutally lean years in Tennessee, just like everywhere else in the country. Employment was scarce, and most folks were left to scratch the dirt of their own homesteads—if they were lucky enough to still own any land—in an attempt to grow enough food for their families.

"So in retrospect, it seems almost absurd that the daily survival of hundreds of Middle Tennesseans hinged upon the retail success of a candy bar.

"Absurd, but true.

"In 1923, the Milky Way candy bar was just a good idea for Frank Mars..."

"A Nickel at a Time"

- ◆ "...Most of the 38 state-of-the-art livestock barns built in the 1930s have succumbed to fire or neglect, the stone walls of a few rising out of thistle and poison ivy like ancient Greek ruins. An extensive, 20-mile network of gravel roads, once crowded with livestock and delivery trucks, has largely faded back into pasture, traveled mainly by grazing deer and wild turkey."

2nd Place: "The Natural"

- ◆ "CNB is a cooperative without bricks or mortar. 'We own zero net assets and have zero net liabilities,' Lowell says. It is strictly a marketing cooperative, without employees. The functions of production, feeding, marketing and finance are performed by teams headed up by individual CNB ranchers. These 'internal partners' have their own employees and are responsible for their area of expertise. In the beginning, everyone volunteered their time and talent, but these ranchers are now compensated for their efforts. Mary, a CPA, heads the finance office from a house on a ranch near Antelope. The co-op's sales now top \$40 million annually, and are growing about 16 percent each year."

"The Natural"

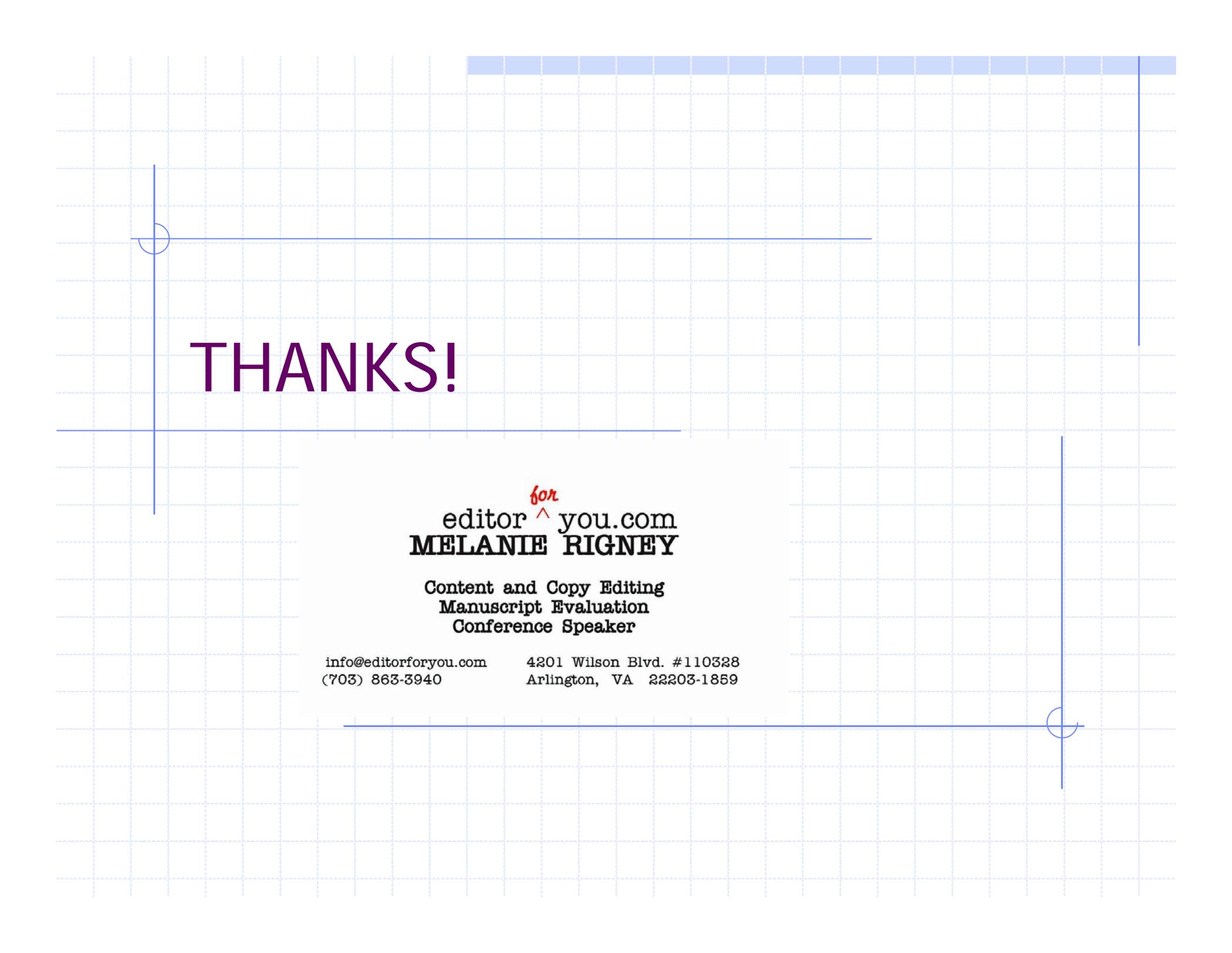
- ◆ "'We hope our business model spreads,' she continues. 'We're helping to sustain family ranches and doing it by producing a product that is bringing more people back to beef. I'm sure it can be replicated by others. We would give our right arm if sharing information about what we've done can help others do something similar. It is our hope that 100 years from now, families will still be raising cattle on these ranches.'"

1st Place: "Left Behind"

- ◆ "In his 25 years as executive director of the Minnesota Grain and Feed Association, Bob Zelenka has faced farm crises, droughts and floods. But nothing has shaken him or the 600 country grain elevators and feed mills he represents as deeply as the current ethanol boom. "It's been the biggest thing to hit our industry," says Zelenka, "and the hardest to adapt to."
- ◆ "In the last year alone, Zelenka has seen almost a dozen Minnesota grain elevators go out of business and several others forced to consolidate 'because of the ethanol industry's growth,' he says."

"Left Behind"

- ◆ "Whether large or small, grain crops are 80 percent dependent on weather,' says Roose. 'If we ever get a dramatically reduced crop as we did in 1983, '88, '93 and '95, we're going to have to ask, "What gives?" or, more to the point, "Who gives?"'"



THANKS!

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