

See beyond the basic facts.

Thumb through an old yearbook or past issues of the student newspaper. Find a basic fact-driven story. Now, write about the same topic but as a more visual, interpretive approach. Explain what the facts mean. Interview. Observe. Extrapolate. Do not editorialize.

For example, this is a basic fact-driven story:

As part of its fund-raising effort to go to the Orange Bowl Parade of Bands next January, the band raised more than \$700 selling Christmas trees last month.

“We have wanted to go to this festival for several years but could not afford it,” band director Jerry Downs said. “If we stay on target, we will have sufficient funds to afford this trip.”

Band president Brad Nichols said hauling the trees was hard work but added, “It will be worth it because everyone is looking forward to going to Miami. It’ll be great to be on the beach and away from this cold weather.”

On the other hand, this interpretive approach reveals a more interesting, colorful truth.

Huddled around a small heater, four band members waited for the next customer and argued.

“I’m not going out there again. I waited on the last guy,” junior Roger Wharmund said. “It’s your turn.”

“No way. I’m freezing,” senior Angel Walker answered. “Let Ann go. She hasn’t been out in an hour.”

“I can’t go. Look at this blister,” sophomore Ann Hughes said. “My hands will never recover.”

“You should have worn gloves,” senior Brad Nichols answered. “What did you expect? That unloading Christmas trees would be fun?”

These students and others spent Friday hauling Christmas trees from a refrigerated truck to an outside lot, where the fog and snow gave the event a festive holiday atmosphere that lasted only until the students started shivering.

Why all this? For two years, band members have raised money to pay for next January’s trip to the Orange Bowl Festival of Bands in Miami, Florida. Still, the thoughts of sunny beaches did little to warm the band members as they braved the bone-chilling weather.

“It was fun at first, but after a while we all got tired and cold,” Hughes said. “We tried to break up the boredom with a little snowball fight, but even that didn’t work.”