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We publish eight issues per year (every six weeks from early February to late November). Each issue carries three to five feature articles of 800 - 1200 words. Shorter submissions are also welcome.

Articles rely as much on narrative as information. With a demographic leaning to an age group of 30+, mainly female, and ranging from new riders to old hands, our readers want to learn without being "instructed". Humour and warmth are just as much value as good information that will help readers improve their all-round horse activities.

While training, safety and medical articles are gender-neutral and of Canada-wide interest, any event reporting or personality spotlights should focus on NW Ontario, Manitoba or Saskatchewan.

Sample issues can be ordered from the address above: \$6 in Canada including shipping - mark the request envelope or email "Editorial Sample".

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

While this list is a small sample of appropriate topics, please enquire to see if we have already covered something or have something planned, prior to actually going ahead with an article on spec. We have a long list of "wants" and "in waiting" to cull from.

- Training articles for any discipline of riding. You must hold a nationally recognised qualification as a trainer or coach.
- "How-to" activities around horses. For instance, bandaging, braiding, clipping, safe tying, ponying, barn activities. A nationally recognised qualification as a trainer or coach is a requirement.
- Safety issues around the barn, in the corral, the show pen, trailering, general handling etc. A nationally recognised qualification as a trainer or coach is required.
- Personal articles of people's experiences with horses as long as they are "teaching a lesson" to the reader.
- Features on personalities in the equine industry in central Canada.
- Photo-stories illustrating training or medical articles. (Only recommended for an experienced coach and photographer working in tandem.)
- Other items of interest to the equine community on the prairies.

We do not pay for press releases from businesses, reviews of shows, lists of results, product reviews, book reviews. However, submissions may be considered for publication.

SENDING AN IDEA - QUERY EMAIL

A query (also called a query letter) is a one-page proposal in business-letter format offering to write a specific piece for a specific magazine, addressed to a specific editor there by name. This is the basic sales tool of professional and aspiring freelance writers.

Ninety-five percent of my queries that have resulted in assignments to write the article have used the following format: first, a lead paragraph that could double as the first paragraph of the published article; second, a description of the focus or angle, content, format and, sometimes, sources for the proposed article; third, information about myself and why I'm the person to write this article; and finally, anything else that the editor needed to know about timing, photos, etc. I print this out on a very plain letterhead that includes my name, address, phone number and email address.

Email a brief outline of your proposed piece, approximate number of words, whether a report of an event, biography, or "how-to" article. In the subject line, type "Editorial submission".

State your qualifications for writing on your selected topic, and/or sources you will use during research.

Please send samples of previously published work, and the publication name(s).

Include your full contact information on the query letter (phone, email, mailing address.)

We encourage youth and aspiring writers; if you would like some assistance, please contact us.

Items sent by regular mail are not guaranteed to be returned, and will go to the bottom of the review pile.

****Query letters or complete articles submitted which do not mention an expectation of compensation will be deemed to be offering the piece at no cost.****

IN OUR OFFICE

We strive to acknowledge query letters quickly but if you don't hear within two months, please contact us.

If we are interested in your idea, we will contact you to discuss at more length such things as slant, sources, deadlines, word count, etc. However, non-commissioned work may not be published for up to one year.

If a suggestion is received which we find interesting but needs more work to make it "publishable" we will discuss this with you.

We expect first North American print and web rights (including archival) unless arranged to the contrary.

WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR PIECE

Contributors should submit manuscripts via e-mail, as Microsoft Word attachments.

Use default Microsoft Word settings for all document formatting. Refrain from sending files that contain any custom formatting, including adjusted tabs or margins, headers, footers, page numbers, photographs or text boxes. When beginning a manuscript, simply open a new Microsoft Word document, select a font, and begin typing. Additional formatting shouldn't be necessary, and could slow our production process as the text is edited and prepared for design.

In the top left hand corner put your full contact information: name, mailing address, phone number and email, the month and year the story was written, and word count.

Please include a working title for your manuscript, as well as a one-sentence "deck" or subhead that sums up the gist of the story. Refer to any Horse Country feature article for an example.

Manuscripts should be broken into sections, with subheadings, for greater readability. Sections should be roughly equal in length.

Brand names should be excluded from manuscripts.

Be aware that all freelance submissions will be edited as needed to ensure clarity and adherence to style and space guidelines. Writers might be contacted during the editing process to provide clarifications or additional information.

Your piece may be sent back for discussion and revision if the editor deems it necessary.

If the story is about a person, put a confirmation note on your piece that the person (and anyone mentioned in it) knows about it and has approved the version that has been sent. Of course, you do this AFTER the subject has approved the text. If the story is in draft and is maybe waiting for minor approvals for quotes, please note this, and remember to send the final version when approval has been received. It is the writer's responsibility to check any facts in the story, for instance event dates, product names, spelling of horse and other names, etc.

Illustrations accompanying a piece

Include details of each photographic image, cartoon or illustration at the foot of the document with file name first, followed by caption.

Sample:

Retirement Sept_06.jpg: (l to r) Ernest Hemingway, Diana Gabaldon and Norman Mailer at Norman's cowboy-themed retirement from the military, September 2006.

Photo credit"

It is the writer's responsibility to obtain copyright releases from photos by professional photographers.

IMPORTANT

It is your responsibility to have all facts checked, copyrights noted, sources acknowledged and correct references made to people, places and animals in any story. Horse Country takes no responsibility for checking facts or statements sent to us for publication. Photographs which accompany a story should have model releases obtained where necessary - this is imperative where children are pictured. Where text used is not the writer's original work, approval for re-publication must be received from the original author.

You will be required to acknowledge that you have read the current Writer's Guidelines and accept all provisos therein.

In all cases, Horse Country makes no commitment to publication or payment until the editor reviews the finished manuscript and photographs. Freelance submissions are, therefore, written "on spec."

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