

Pitching for Success - Sell that Story -

CFG's
Business of Freelancing
Series



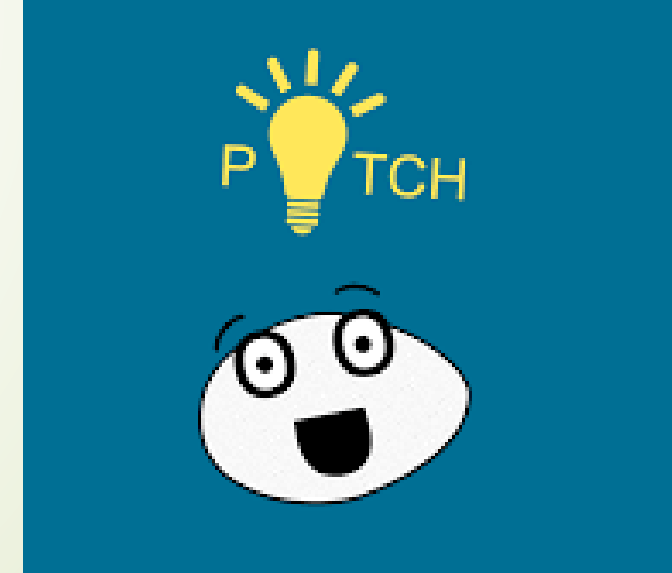
SANDRA PHINNEY

Online
12 pm ET
7 July 2020

When asked if there was a formula for writing, Paddy Chayevsky replied, "Yes, it's ass plus seat."

Formula for writing pitches?
Sandra says, "See above."

Also known as grunt work.

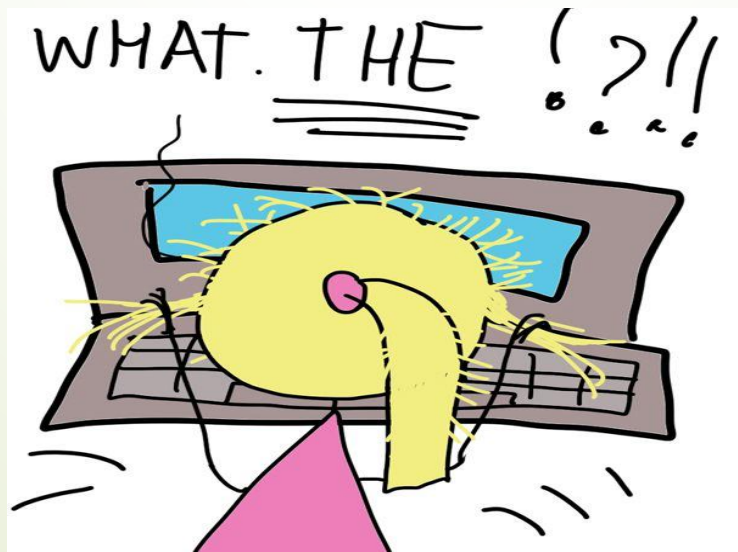



Overview

- Most common complaints from editors (3 min.)
- Capitalizing on that knowledge (35 min.)
 - How to get savvy about pub.
 - Tips to make your query jump off the page
 - Sample pitches
- Finding markets (2 min.)
- Q&A (15 min.)

Comments by editors ...

- “Missed what I’m looking for by a mile.”
- “Not focused ... trying to cover too much.”
- “Don’t pitch be ABOUT anything. What is your story?”
- “Boring pitch = boring story.”
- “Some queries lack an actual hook. Dangle that angle!”



- 
- ➡ Gotta KNOW the publication/readership
 - ➡ Gotta have a STORY + angle or hook
 - ➡ Gotta FOCUS FOCUS FOCUS
 - ➡ Gotta catch editor's attention pronto

HOW?

ANALYZE THE ADS>>> READER PROFILE

- age
- education
- income
- rural/urban
- interests





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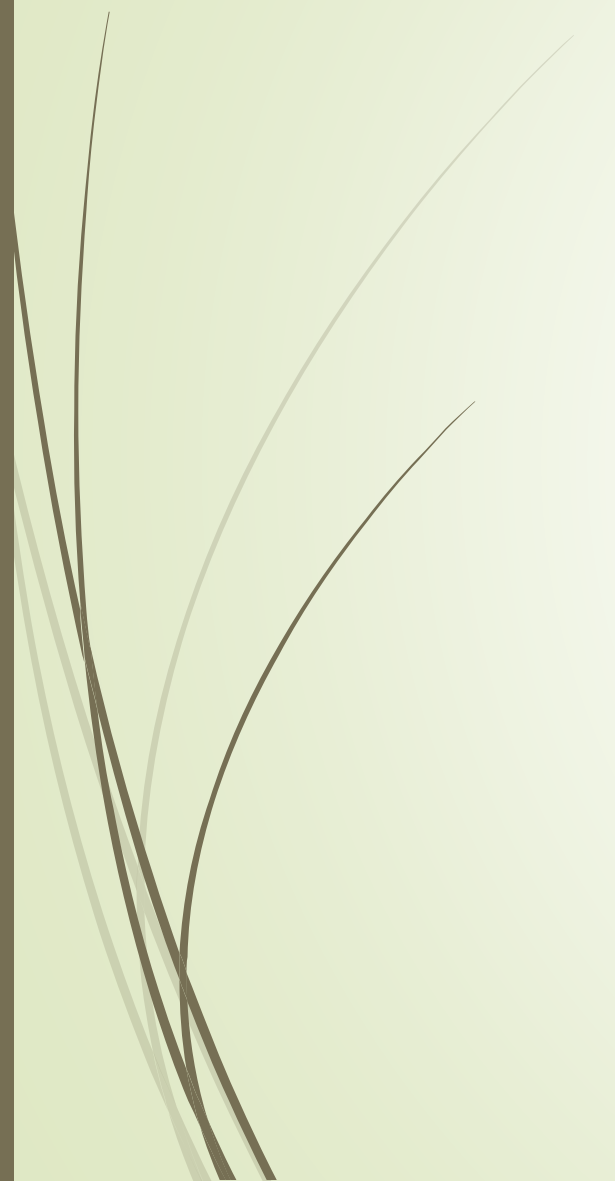


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ANALYZE STORIES FOR TONE & STYLE

- 
- Formal, business or conversational?
 - Last names, first names?
 - First person; third person?
 - Number of people (types) quoted?
 - Scope vs depth (or both?)
 - Photography?
 - Sidebars?

COVER STORY



360

But the true star of the collection has to be the 1967 Subaru 360, of course. "It's where it all began for the brand, really, isn't it?" Paul suggests. "This one actually belongs to Subaru UK and they're kind enough to leave it here with its siblings. I'm helping them to locate some of the rare restoration parts like the roof, which actually blew off as it was being transported to a show on a truck! If anyone out there has any bits they can help with, we'd love to hear from them!"

For now, though, the diminutive vehicle makes for a cute and cuddly reminder of how far the brand has come over

the last few decades. The Subaru 360 is also one of the first examples showing how Subaru never takes the easy or obvious route to solving an engineering problem. "That's the appeal of these cars for me," Paul concludes. "They're so beautifully made and packed with such innovative engineering and design. Collecting them is truly addictive."

As he makes one final request to anyone out there who may be looking to sell a Leone Coupe, Paul goes back to applying yet another coat of polish to the gleaming flanks of the red Impreza. Also on his shopping list: a bigger garage. +



BY SANDRA PHINNEY

TRAVEL



The Greatest Escape

six star magazine 19

Stranded in Rigolet

Situated along the northern coastline of Labrador, the Nunatsiavut region is home to five communities linking Nain in the north to Rigolet in the south. The region, which means "our beautiful land" in the Inuit language, is accessible only by ship or plane in the summer, dog sled or snowmobile in the winter.

After spending the night in a comfy berth aboard the Northern Ranger out of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, I stepped ashore at Rigolet, the oldest Inuit community in Labrador. Later on that morning, I dropped into the community centre where a group of women showed me how to make beaded jewellery and pleat moccasins. I was hopeless at both tasks, but gained a deep appreciation for the level of artistry involved.

After lunch, I met Martin Shiwak who offered to take me scalloping. We motored for an hour in his small boat then dropped a homemade metal rig that filled with scallops after a short drag. Martin taught me how to sort and shuck the catch, and we ate a few au naturel. I tasted the sea, which was both heady and sensual.

Hiking along the 4.4-kilometre coastal boardwalk that evening, I met some kayakers. They invited me to join them for supper—freshly caught salmon and trout cooked on top of hot flat rocks over a fire next to the shore. As dusk fell and the fish sizzled, a full moon rose over the horizon and a pod of minke whales surfaced in the cove. I had to remind myself to breathe.

The next morning, news spread that the ship had engine troubles and wouldn't return for a couple of days. I was stranded in Rigolet. The room I had rented was booked for someone else who was arriving, but this didn't disturb the owner of the unit for even a moment. "No problem," she said, "you can have my son's room and he'll go to a friend's."

This is how they do things in Labrador, a place where being stranded is no hardship at all. +



Referred by some travellers as the last frontier on Earth, Labrador is so vast that the rest of Atlantic Canada, including Newfoundland, could fit inside its borders. This sprawling land is home to the Innu and the Inuit, with roots stretching back so far and so deep, it's difficult to grasp the significance of it all.

Evidence gathered by archaeologists suggests that humans inhabited Labrador over 7,000 ago. Now, with the Trans-Labrador Highway having opened in 2011, this vast expanse of history and intrigue is more accessible than ever, but still well off the beaten path. Soon after the highway was completed, my husband and I decided to make the 1,221-kilometre trek across the province.

Unlike most road trips in Canada, a journey across Labrador requires extra planning and more than a little flexibility. It's not uncommon to see road signs that say: NEXT SERVICE 294 K. CHECK FUEL. Cell phones don't work along the route at all. But you can pick up, and then drop

off, a satellite phone at several places between Wabush and L'Anse au Clair, a free service provided by the government.

Aside from some extraordinary landscapes, the most striking feature of Labrador is the people. The hospitality we experienced went far beyond what you would consider normal practice. For example, when constructing our itinerary, it wasn't possible to find a room in Labrador City or Wabush because of a construction boom at the time.

Prepared for any eventuality, we brought camping gear and were ready to pitch our tent at the Grande Hermine RV Park about 40 kilometres outside of Labrador City. A friend called the campground on our behalf, but the owner said: "No way! There was ice on the lake last night. They stays with us!"

Shortly after we arrived, we were enjoying Cavel Burke's peanut butter cheesecake, while her husband regaled us with his stories of hunting caribou and landing the 20-kg trout mounted on the wall.

Before leaving the next morning, Cavel made a typical Newfoundland breakfast: bacon, sausage, bologna, beans, eggs, fruit and touts. Touts are made from fresh bread dough that's formed into patties, fried until golden brown and served with molasses. No doubt my cholesterol count shot over the moon, but I had seconds, as my husband, Barrie, said, "Just to be polite."


Next stop: Churchill Falls. Although this company town would never win an award for its natural beauty or design features, it does lay claim to a massive hydroelectric generating station. The powerhouse is carved out of granite, some 400 metres underground, and houses massive penstocks and turbines. It resembles what I imagine a space station would look like—only bigger.

We rushed through the town as we had a 281-kilometre drive on to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and wanted to get there before dark. Even though we knew that our destination was the hub of Labrador, arriving there to see so many homes,

PHOTOGRAPHY: (COVER PAGE) Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism; (THIS PAGE) all photos by Sandra Phinney except (centre bottom) Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism (NEXT PAGE) (left to right) Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism and Sandra Phinney



Norie Quintos (Nat. Geo. Editor at Large) ... interview re: perfect pitch with World Nomads

- What's the story?
 - Where do you see it fitting in the outlet (what section or department)?
 - Why now?
 - And, why you?
- 
- Stay pithy ... no more than a page ... include a few short lines describing yourself (your specialties, past credits, website, and where you're physically based).

A few more today...

- Lowest Rates is looking for pitches for their Financially Naked series about a financially vulnerable experience, or maybe a financial regret or mistake. (Hopefully the name "Lowest Rates" doesn't refer to their freelance fees). https://twitter.com/lisacoxon_/status/1242125653652144130
- Emerge is taking pitches for their 'People' section <https://twitter.com/TarnRJ/status/1242062735417974787>
- Novara Media is looking for pitches: <https://twitter.com/CharlottEngland/status/1242055806138437632>
- Live Canon's international poetry competition is open for entries: <http://www.livecanon.co.uk/poetry-competition>
- The Psychologist is looking for pitches from freelancers who have a track record writing about evidence-based psychology <https://twitter.com/psychmag/status/1241734373189263363>
- in:cite journal is looking for a freelance copy editor https://twitter.com/incite_journal/status/1241794656385589248
- The Rumpus is taking feature pitches: https://twitter.com/crf_pdx/status/1241457659636678657

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Lisa Coxon
@lisacoxon_

Just a friendly reminder amidst all the COVID-19 chaos that I'm still looking for pitches for our Financially Naked series, which is set to launch very soon.

We're looking for writers to bare all about a financially vulnerable experience, or maybe a financial regret or mistake.

1:26 PM · Mar 23, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

7 Retweets 16 Likes






Lisa Coxon @lisacoxon_ · Mar 23

Replying to @lisacoxon_

If you have a story you'd like to share (and you'd like to get paid to share it!) email me at lisa@lowestrates.ca.

5 1 1



Rosie Benny @queenrosie4 · Mar 26

Replying to @lisacoxon_ and @journoresources

Hiya! I'd love to be apart of this, definitely would like some more information - I've sent you an email and look forward to hearing back from you

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Lisa Coxon
@lisacoxon_
editor and writer [@LowestRates_ca](#) get in touch: lisa@lowestrates.ca

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#TorontoStrong

From: Sandra Phinney <sandracphinney@gmail.com> Gmail - sandracphinney

To: Lisa Coxon <lisa@lowestrates.ca>

Subject: Re: ptich for Financially Naked

Variable Width

Insert a smiley face

u, Mar 26, 2020 at 12:40 PM Sandra Phinney <sandracphinney@gmail.com> wrote:

o Lisa,

ure this: in the summer of 2016, two well-established writers decide to get up close and personal with their own 'hoods by doing something in their respective backyards and blogging about it for 31 days.

s became knows as The July Project and featured Melanie Chambers in downtown Toronto and Sandra Phinney in rural Nova Scotia. (They each had 100 km radius from their homes to explore). The project was successful and garnered such positive feedback from readers, they decided to roll out the concept across Canada. They set up a business called *HeartSong Travel*. In a nutshell, they challenged Canadians to: "Go nowhere in your own backyard; do something that makes your heart sing; and tell us about it."

y created a business plan, borrowed \$10,000 and hired a company to create a website. They traveled to meet with various financial supporters starting in Atlantic Canada and Ontario (with the intention of trying on across the country.) *HeartSong Travel* launched in the spring of 2019. The project fell flat on its face; it never got off the ground.

dra and Melanie pulled the plug on the project six months after its launch. They were each about \$8,000 in the hole but they cut their losses and moved on. Most importantly, their friendship survived.

* * *

, we'd love to tell *Lowest Rates* readers about our story in the *Financially Naked* series you have planned. We'd write the story together, (share the byline) and explain to readers what our vision was, what we did to accomplish, What we did, and why we failed. No doubt your readers would find "lessons learned" enlightening.

hope this story is of interest and look forward to hearing from you.

ers,

dra and Melanie

lanie Chambers is a prolific travel writer, who's biked around the world for extensive periods of time. When she unpacks her bags, her home is in Toronto where she commutes to Western University weekly to teach undergraduates how to be travel and food writers. See more about Melanie here: www.melaniechambers.ca

Sandra Phinney has written for over 70 publications and has penned four non-fiction books. Her beats include everything from business writing to health, lifestyle and travel. She lives off the grid on the Tusket river in the wilds of Nova Scotia in a home she and her husband built. For story samples, visit www.sandraphinney.com

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From Lisa Coxon <lisa@lowestrates.ca>

Subject Re: ptich for Financially Naked

To Sandra Phinney <sandracphinney@gmail.com>

Cc Melanie Chambers <melanie.writing@gmail.com>

2020-03-27, 3:31 p.m.

To protect your privacy, Thunderbird has blocked remote content in this message.

Options

Hi Sandra and Melanie,

Thanks so much for sending along this great pitch! It's so unique and I'd love to run it as part of the Financially Naked series.

No problem on the co-byline, though with that in mind I do want to discuss fee. Because this is a more unusual arrangement (we've budgeted for one writer per piece as well as an illustration to accompany each story), I was wondering how the two of you felt about putting together a 700 to 1,000-word piece for a fee of **\$400 total** (which I presume you'd split 50/50).

Let me know your initial thoughts. I'm happy to discuss.

Best,
Lisa

On Thu, Mar 26, 2020 at 12:40 PM Sandra Phinney <sandracphinney@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Lisa,

Picture this: in the summer of 2016, two well-established writers decide to get up close and personal with their own 'hoods by doing something in their respective backyards and blogging about it for 31 days.

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Sandra and Melanie pulled the plug on the project six months after its launch. They were each about \$8,000 in the hole but they cut their losses and moved on. Most importantly, their friendship survived.

Today Pane

4:27 PM

We tried to start a business together and it failed miserably

By: [Sandra Phinney](#) and [Melanie Chambers](#) on May 22, 2020



How to successfully pitch The New York Times (or, well, anyone else)

Most bad freelance pitches are bad for the same few reasons. But they're often salvageable with a little tweaking.

By **TIM HERRERA** Oct. 22, 2018, 9:42 a.m.

TRANSLATIONS

Leia em português



Freelancing is tough! It can be an unpredictable, unreliable grind, and sometimes things fall through even if you've done everything right.

As Smarter Living editor at The New York Times, the bulk of my job is working with freelancers. On the slowest days, I'll get around a dozen cold pitches in my inbox; on busy days, almost 200. (Lol sorry if I owe you an email, promise I'm working on it.)

The thousands of pitches I've read over the last few years usually fall into

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Additional comments from editors (from Herrera's article)

- ➡ “You didn’t check the archives.”
- ➡ “You pitched the wrong editor or section.”
- ➡ “You’re too aggressive with following up.”
- ➡ “Your story is too low-stakes or narrow.”
- ➡ “You don’t disclose conflicts of interest.”



TRACKING ~ FROM PITCH TO PUBLICATION



From Rachel Sanders <rachel.s@telus.net> ★
Subject [The Lancer] Opportunities and calls for pitches February 5
To thelancer@cmgfreelance.ca ★

2020-02-06, 12:28 a.m.

Reply Reply List Forward Archive Junk Delete More

A few calls for pitches...

- National Geographic looking for "thoughtful pitches on biomedicine/global health/enviro health/health economics. <https://twitter.com/MoNscience/status/1224423051548352518>
- The Economist is looking for pitches for their magazine 1843: <https://www.1843magazine.com/1843/pitching-guidelines>
- The history magazine Contingent is looking for pitches: https://twitter.com/Marc_A_Reyes84/status/1224813143567818752
- There's a new managing editor at the music magazine Spin and he's taking freelance pitches: <https://twitter.com/danielkohn/status/1224769617798631424>
- Yes Magazine is looking for pitches on migration for their summer issue: <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2020/01/15/call-for-submissions-migration/>
- The Toronto Star is looking for food related pitches <https://twitter.com/karonliu/status/1225185120962981888>
- The Canadian poetry magazine Arc is looking for reviewers: <https://twitter.com/ceeejohnson/status/1224811889001222146>
- ReWire News is looking for Black History Month freelance pitches with a focus on reproductive rights and justice https://twitter.com/Rewire_News/status/1224410985412354049
- Clothing company Universal Standard is looking for "evergreen pitches around the theme of connection: essays, reported features, as-told-tos, etc." <https://twitter.com/amandakater/status/1224380018106736646>
- The deadline for TWUC's annual short prose competition for emerging writers is less than two weeks away: <https://twitter.com/twuc/status/1198980144666419201>
- And in case there are any post-secondary students here, Media Girlfriends is offering a scholarship of \$7,000 for women and non-binary students looking to pursue majors in journalism, communications, media or tech. <https://j-source.ca/article/applications-open-for-media-girlfriends-college-or-university-scholarship/>

--
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Karon Liu ✓
@karonliu



I get asked often if [@TorontoStar](#) is looking for food-related freelance pitches. We always are! Send pitches to [@serwilloughby](#) at SWilloughby(at)thestar(dot)ca.

6:31 PM · Feb 5, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

15 Retweets 43 Likes



Karon Liu ✓ @karonliu · Feb 5
Replying to [@karonliu](#)



For emerging writers/students: my first paid freelance piece was in the Star when I was in my second year of j-school. It was about Threadless (lol remember them?)

1



4



Eager Journeys @EagerJourneys · Feb 7
Replying to [@karonliu](#) [@TorontoStar](#) and [@serwilloughby](#)



Can these be travel-related food stories or do they have to be based in Toronto/Canada? Trudeau is currently in Ethiopia and I'd love to send some related food pitches from this African country. :)



1



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Karon Liu ✓
@karonliu

Follow

Culture reporter, mostly food, some recipes for [@TorontoStar](#). He/him [instagram.com/karonliu](#) Email: karonliu@thestar.ca (It's pronounced Kar-On)



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@serwilloughby

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From Sandra Phinney <sandracphinney@gmail.com>★

Subject **food pitch: Dining on porcupine? Of course!**

To SWilloughby@thestar.ca★

2020-02-06, 3:32 p.m.

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Hello Serena,

Picture this: an all-you-can-eat dinner featuring dishes made from porcupine, bear, moose, goose, duck, deer, sea trout, eel, lobster, beaver--all from the wild. If you are lucky enough to get one of 300 tickets to the annual Wild Game Evening and Auction in Quinan, count your blessings. It only happens once a year, on the first Saturday of March, at Le Club des Audacieux located in a small Acadian village in Southwest Nova Scotia. People travel for miles to attend.

For the past 10 years, the community has hosted a gargantuan buffet dinner, celebrating local hunting and trapping traditions. In the process, funds are raised to keep the hall and community events operating.

This story will tell readers how the Wild Game dinner started; what they can expect to eat--including a weird Acadian dish called rappie pie. But it's not a pie. It's made of grated potato, hot broth, meat and seasonings. It looks like a plate of thick grey glue with bits of meat sticking out, yet it's as tasty as can be and hugely popular in this part of Nova Scotia. In the olden days, you'd likely find a rabbit's head in the corner of the pan, considered a delicacy, which was served to the matriarch of the family.

Aside from some anecdotal stories and comments from both the organizers and guests at the event, I can include a recipe or two. (Readers could substitute chicken or pork instead of rabbit or porcupine.)

I have several photos from past Wild Game dinners and can deliver this story in two weeks. If you'd prefer, I can also take photos from this year's event March 7, and file the story within two days of the dinner.

For samples of food stories I've written (illustrated with my photos) please check these out:

PEI ... Chef Michael Smith's FireWorks Feast <https://www.re-creation.world/magazine/celebrating-pei-cuisine-farm-fire-feast/>

Newfoundland food scene: https://sandraphinney.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/newfoundland_foodies.pdf

NS In praise of haddock https://sandraphinney.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/fishy_love_story.pdf

Disclosure: I wrote about this story for a regional magazine eight year ago. This story would be new content, new lead/ending, new quotes and different photos (my own this time). In other words, a completely different story, albeit the topic is the same.


I look forward to hearing from you!

Cheers,

Sandra

-

www.sandraphinney.com
(902)648-0462
<http://ca.linkedin.com/in/sandraphinney>



Hi Sandra, I love this idea! I'm wondering if one of the volunteers making food would let you into their kitchen so you could write about how they prepare it? Could you look at the challenges of preparing game? I've heard bear can be tough so slow-cooking is a way to get around it. Are you planning on attending this year? I'd love for the story to describe some of dishes they serve. And yes photos from this year's dinner would be great. If that all sounds good I can send you a freelance agreement. Do you have a rate for a 800ish word story with photos?

Thanks for sending, Serena

Thanks for your swift response Serena!

Yes. Can arrange to spend time with one of the volunteers at their home while they are making some of the dishes. (Lucky for me, I live within 30 minutes of Quinan.)


Yes. Will explore the challenges of preparing game dishes.

Yes. I plan to attend this year and will describe some of the dishes that are served.

Yes. I will do a photo shoot of this year's event.

re: rate for 800-ish story and photos? Serena, I've been paid all over the map, from peanuts to gold. I have a couple of outlets (magazines) that pay me .60 cents a word up to \$1.50 word + \$50-\$200 per photo but there's not a newspaper in Canada that can match that ... **and I realize this! So please just give me your best rate and I'll say "OK."**

Back to you, and I look forward to working with you ~
Cheers, Sandra



Thanks Sandra,

So for the rate, we usually do \$300 for an 800ish word story with less than 3 sources, we can do \$350 for 3 or more sources. For photos we usually do \$150 for up to 4 hours work and you just send us whatever you shot that you want to send.

So, as long as your story has 3 or more sources we can do \$500 for the package. If that all sounds ok, just sign the attached freelance agreement and get it back to me, no worries if you don't have an HST#. Let me know when you think you'll file and when you send it in can you send it to edtlife@thestar.ca -- I will be on holidays as of March 8, so one of my colleagues here may handle the story.

Thanks and can't wait to read it,
Serena

Some in Quinan, Nova Scotia, were skeptical people would pay to eat game meat. But the annual wild game fundraising dinner sells out every year.

SP By **Sandra Phinney** Special to the Star
Tue., March 17, 2020 | 4 min. read







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Updates for 2 Jul 2020

Calls for pitches July 2, 1 post(s), Rachel Sanders, 2 Jul 2020 12:57 PM;

Digital Editor/Manager for EcoParent Magazine, 1 post(s), Rachel Sanders, 2 Jul 2020 12:55 PM;

Operations Permit Writer (Edmonton), 1 post(s), Robyn Roste, 2 Jul 2020 8:29 AM;

Writer (Calgary), 1 post(s), Robyn Roste, 2 Jul 2020 8:27 AM;

Freelance Writer, News-Current Affairs-Sports (Belleville), 1 post(s), Robyn Roste, 2 Jul 2020 8:24 AM;

Senior Marketing Specialist Company (Amazon, Victoria, BC), 1 post(s), Robyn Roste, 2 Jul 2020 8:23 AM;

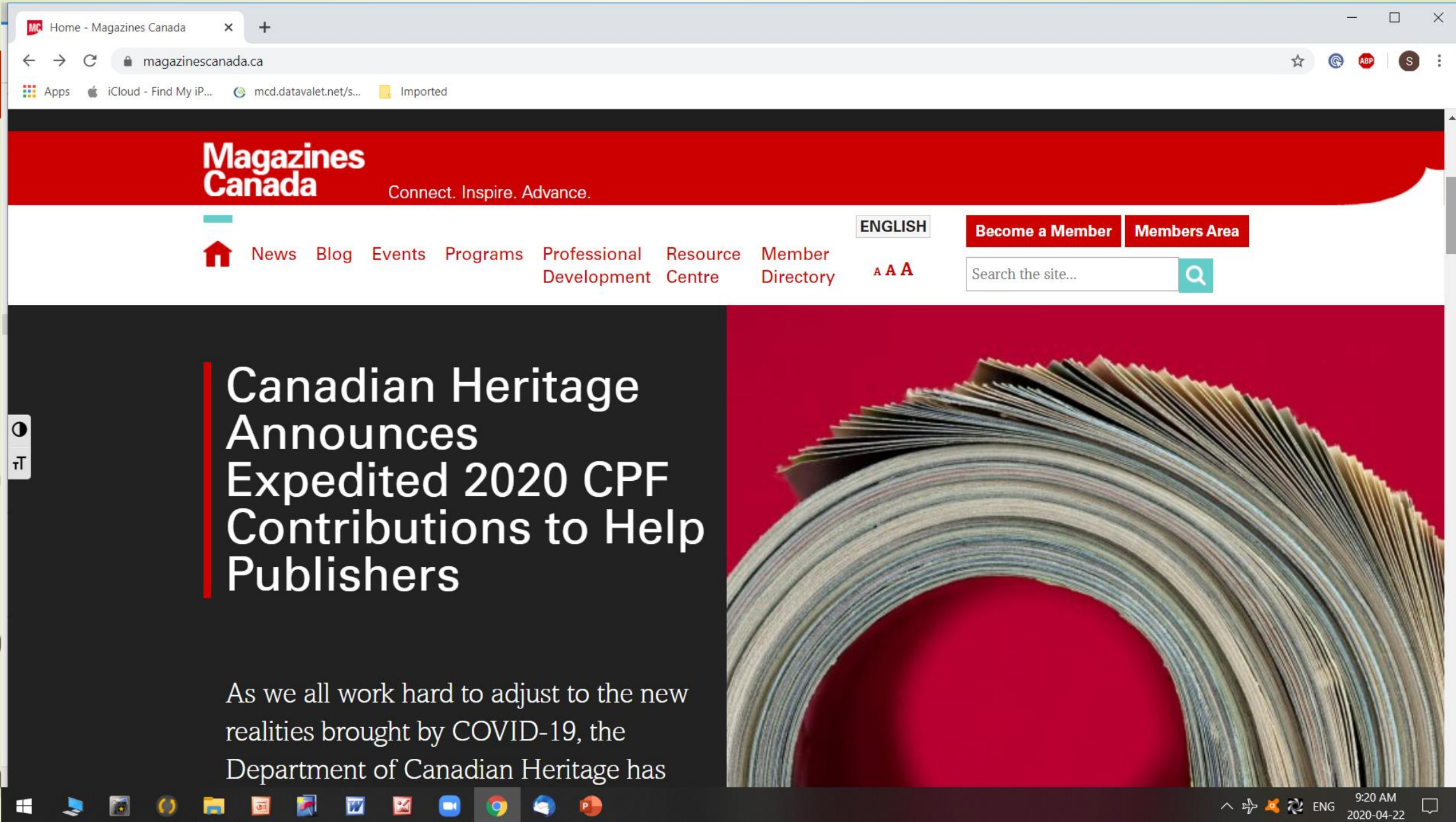
Digital Writer and Reporter, CTV News Vancouver, Bell Media, 1 post(s), Robyn Roste, 2 Jul 2020 8:21 AM;

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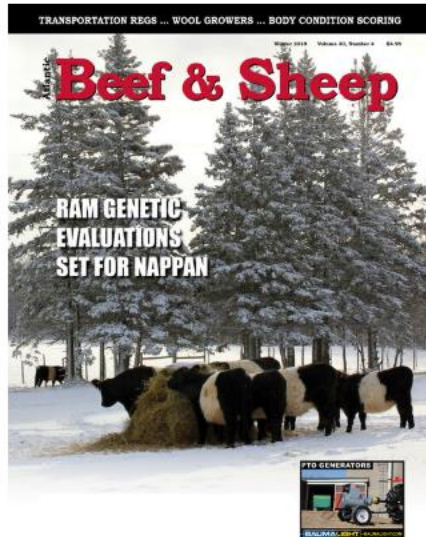
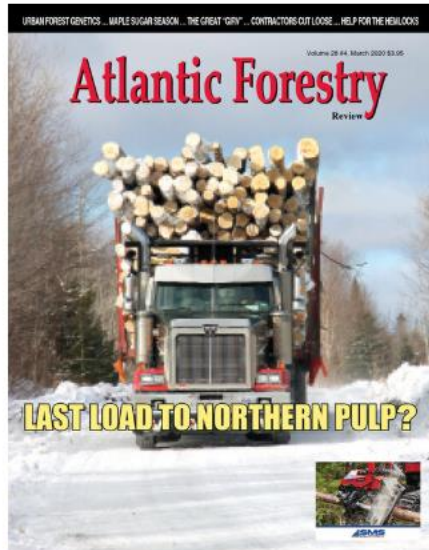
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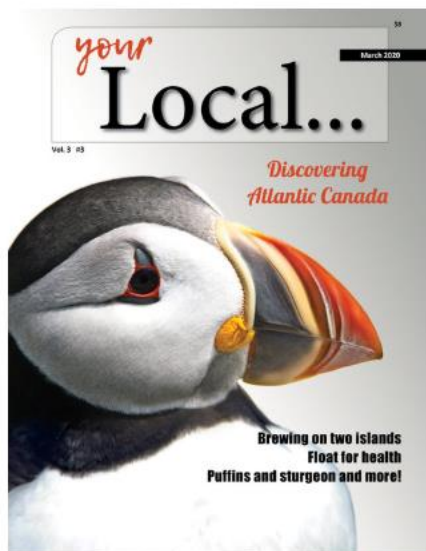
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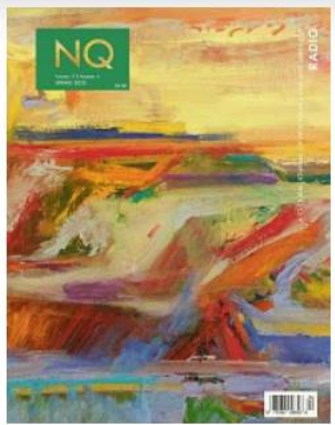
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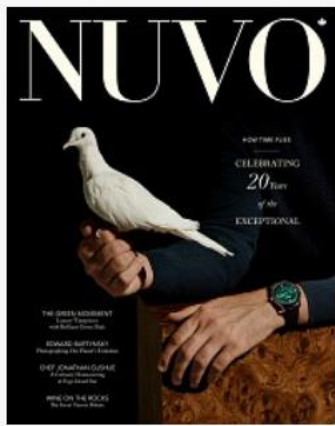


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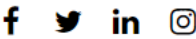
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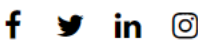
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Queries and submissions should be sent by e-mail to **editorial@nuvomagazine.com**. Telephone queries are not accepted.

Story ideas should be submitted in the form of a query letter, with one idea per letter. Query letters should include the writer's contact information, an outline of the story you are proposing (including relevant elements and direction, and your proposed length), and the availability of photography or art that could accompany the story. Letters should also include a brief CV and a list of previously published works. Samples of previously published works are encouraged and appreciated.

Due to the volume of queries, NUVO will only respond to those being considered for publication. NUVO is published quarterly and so time-sensitive material may not be suitable.

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- Double your batting average in landing assignments?
- Win an award?
- Make more money?
- Work less, earn the same?
- Diversify & broaden your repertoire?

GAME PLAN!

- *** To-do-list[s]

