

The Freelance
Journalism Issue



MARCH/APRIL 2018

02

The Official Publication
of the American Society of
Journalists and Authors

ASJA MAGAZINE



PARIS FOR ANOTHER DAY

*How one writer's trip to Paris helped
him discover new ideas for even the
most written-about topics*



ALSO INSIDE >> ASJA's 70th Anniversary Campaign
So You Want to Break Into Travel Writing?

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MARCH/APRIL 2018



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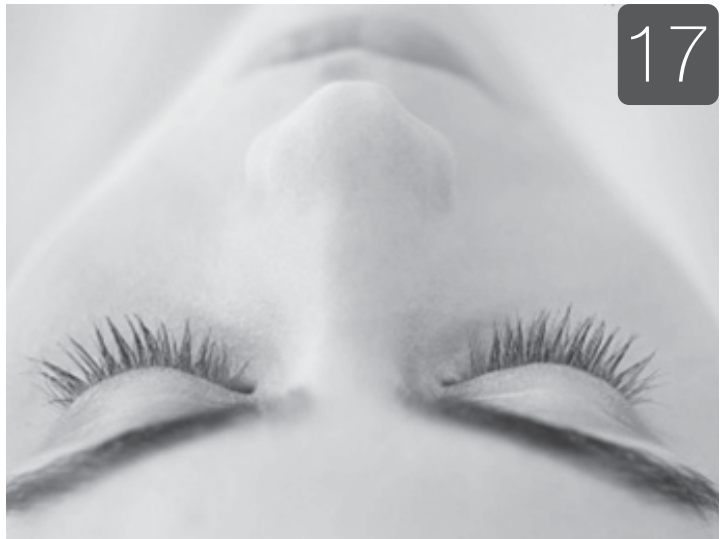
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ASJA MISSION AND ADMINISTRATION

Founded in 1948, the American Society of Journalists and Authors is the nation's professional association of independent and entrepreneurial nonfiction writers. ASJA is a primary voice in representing freelancers' interests, serving as spokesperson for their right to control and profit from the uses of their work in online media and elsewhere. ASJA and the ASJA Charitable Trust bring leadership in establishing professional and ethical standards, as well as in recognizing and encouraging the pursuit of excellence in nonfiction writing. Since 2010, the ASJA Educational Foundation has been offering programming that covers all aspects of professional independent writing for both established and aspiring writers. ASJA headquarters is in New York City.

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ASJA's 70th Anniversary Campaign

CHAIR Brooke Stoddard
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From the President's Desk



**SHERRY BECK
PAPROCKI**

*Freelance Writer and
ASJA President*

THIS IS THE YEAR THAT ASJA TURNS 70 YEARS OLD!

In the context of ASJA's 70th anniversary, the Board of Directors began thinking on a bigger, more strategic, level. The board has had multiple conversations over the past two years about the organization's vast achievements, as well as its current challenges and goals. Among the challenges, always, is the need to upgrade ASJA's technology.

"What if ASJA's Educational Foundation became a bolder organization?" I asked them at our New York meeting last May. "What if the knowledge and expertise of our very experienced members was made available to those who are just starting out? What if we created an enhanced version of the ASJA Educational Foundation that went far beyond conferences and drew on the experiences that our own members had to offer to those who are just starting out?"

We talked for an hour or two. This brain hive of board members added more thoughts. Chief among them was the desire to bring emerging voices from diverse and underserved communities into ASJA's realm.

A few months later, ASJA's 70th Anniversary Campaign was born when every member of ASJA's Board of Directors agreed to contribute. With some other early leadership gifts, we have already been able to raise nearly \$20,000 of a goal that is \$150,000. You'll hear from the campaign's leaders very soon about ways that you also can contribute.

It didn't take long for ASJA to find some funds to begin nurturing emerging voices, and I couldn't be more pleased. It is no coincidence that ASJA also landed a \$35,000 grant from the National Institute of Health Care Management Foundation by the end of 2017 to launch a national reporting project on Gender Identity and Mental Health. This program is providing mini-grants to ASJA members who publish on the topic, as well as providing awards for teen writers willing to address the issue in essays.

You're going to hear more about ASJA's 70th anniversary plans throughout this year. Among them will be an online charity auction, a July 4 giving campaign, a memorial

wall honoring those who contributed to your writing career and more. We are busy approaching sponsors and potential funders, hoping that our goal for further enhancing the Educational Foundation will soon be realized. Meanwhile, let us know if you can help out in this huge endeavor.

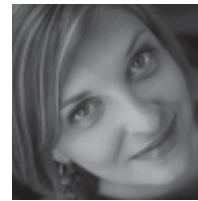
We are very fortunate that two of ASJA's long-term members, Brooke Stoddard and Neil O'Hara, agreed to serve as chair and treasurer, respectively, of this campaign. You'll hear more from both of them in the coming months, but take a look at Brooke's Q&A regarding the campaign—as well as the diagram that depicts what an enhanced Educational Foundation can look like—on page 7.

On a side note, I want to thank a few other super volunteers: Austin conference co-chairs Susan Johnston Taylor and Debbie Blumberg and their amazing team created yet another unforgettable conference.

Let's plan to celebrate the 70th when I see you in New York.



From the Editor



ALEIGH ACERNI
ASJA Magazine
Editor

THE FREELANCE JOURNALISM ISSUE

As I was working on this issue, two freelance journalists won the first American Mosaic Journalism Prize for their work, covering the struggles and hardships of immigrants to the U.S. The surprise award—they received confidential nominations and were selected by a panel of 10 judges—came with much more than just bragging rights. Jaeah Lee and Valeria Fernandez will receive \$100,000 each from the Heising-Simons Foundation, a Silicon Valley-based charitable organization.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), 37% fewer people worked in newsrooms in 2015 (according to the most recent data) than did in 2004. Many of us have fled for the freelance life—for flexibility, out of

necessity, or because finding a full-time job in journalism that pays a living wage is rarer than ever.

Freelance journalism can be extra challenging without the support and backing of a major news outlet. For one of her American Mosaic Journalism Prize-winning pieces, Lee spent 17 months with a mother who lost her son in a police shooting. That kind of reporting takes time, and when you get paid on publication ... well, it can become a luxury.

I believe freelance journalism is only going to become more important as news outlets continue to evolve. I hope you'll find some insights in these pages to help you feel supported and inspired. Of course, that brings me to my constant closing pitch: If you'd like to write for your peers (and I hope that you will!), my inbox is open.



*Want to write for your peers?
magazine@asja.net*



ASJA MAGAZINE EVENT CALENDAR

2018

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Winter SIG</i> March 5-April 1 | <i>Virtual Client Connections</i> March 20-23 | <i>Virtual Client Connections</i> Mid-June | <i>Virtual Client Connections</i> Mid-October |
| <i>Virtual Client Connections</i> March 20-23 | SPECIAL EVENT | <i>Virtual Pitch Slam</i> Mid-July | <i>Virtual Pitch Slam</i> Mid-December |
| | <i>ASJA Annual Conference in New York City</i> May 18-19, 2018 | <i>Virtual Pitch Slam</i> Mid-September | |



Q & A

BROOKE C.
STODDARD,
Campaign Chair

70TH ANNIVERSARY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Years
ASJA
WRITING
EXCELLENCE

ASJA has decided to take a significant step forward, to raise \$150,000 for enhancing and expanding the Educational Foundation, in order to offer and deliver increased educational and career information both to ASJA members and to the public.

The 70th Anniversary Educational Foundation Capital Campaign will provide a tax-deductible opportunity to contribute to the Educational Foundation in order to greatly expand its capability to help all freelance writers, including those from underserved and diverse communities. With the funds raised, the Educational Foundation will emerge from a little-known organizer of writers' conferences to a national hub for information and career assistance for all nonfiction writers.

HOW WILL IT ACCOMPLISH THIS?

The Educational Foundation will expand its offerings such as Client Connections; Virtual Client Connections; Virtual Pitch Slams; Market Reports; content in ASJA Magazine, ASJA Weekly, and the ASJA

Confidential blog; podcasts; and mentoring. It will also launch a progression of intensive workshops and specialized classes, instigate a professional coaching function, produce videocasts, and organize virtual conferences for those unable to attend conferences in major cities. Hopefully it will also offer more scholarships and grants to writers. We also want to include an educational component focused on the First Amendment and free speech.

ASJA ALREADY OFFERS A LOT; HOW WILL THESE PROGRAMS BE DELIVERED?

This being a "digital age," ASJA's mission needs to move increasingly to digital delivery. Useful and necessary education can be delivered via electronic means, and the Educational Foundation believes it should enhance its ability to do so. In addition, funds raised will, in part, go to vastly overhauling the Educational Foundation portion of the ASJA website. The new website will have more information and more functions as well as easier registration and payment methods.

IS THIS ASJA'S FIRST CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

Yes. In 70 years, ASJA has not appealed to members to raise funds for the Society in this manner. The Society does not expect in the foreseeable future to do so again. This is a very big deal for ASJA.

WHY NOW?

Why not now? Freelance nonfiction writing is a tough career choice. Men and women who make that choice need more help than ever honing their craft, finding the proper outlets for their research and prose, and receiving fair compensation for their product.

Within living memory, never has well-researched, fact-based, professionally delivered nonfiction journalism been crucial more than now. Writers need to exhibit professionalism and practice their craft with the respect they deserve in a world swirling in dangers to free expression, investigative reporting, and adherence to facts.

In the past, ASJA has celebrated its decennial anniversaries with publications and parties. In this, our 70th year, we celebrate by pledging to building up a component of the Society that will do vast amounts of good far into the future.



AREN'T MY DUES ENOUGH? WHY SHOULD I CONTRIBUTE TO THIS CAMPAIGN?

Despite delivering myriad services to members, ASJA has always run on a tight budget. The following, however, are costly endeavors: putting on conferences; funding scholarships; creating content for classes, podcasts, etc.; and creating a smoothly functioning website encompassing a large number of quality educational offerings.

Why contribute? We are only doing this once. We want to raise the money and get underway, not borrow nor attempt to build up a fund over a number of years by earmarking a sliver of dues, in order to put this effort into motion now, when it is needed and when it will be most effective.

WHO IS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS CAMPAIGN?

The current and recent ASJA Board has already pledged leadership gifts totaling nearly \$20,000. Past Presidents, Committee Chairs, and Chapter Chairs are also pledging generously. We will be approaching potential donors in the public realm, as well as foundations. But we are also counting on a substantial portion of the funds to come from current ASJA members, who will vastly benefit from these efforts.

HOW WILL THE CAMPAIGN BENEFIT ASJA MEMBERS?

The educational and career assistance ASJA now offers will be significantly upgraded and enhanced. By virtue of these measures, members should be able to boost their

efficiencies and incomes. Some members will be eligible for scholarships and grants to take advantage of conferences, classes, and national reporting projects, such as the Gender Identity mini-grant program recently introduced.

Additionally, ASJA members will benefit from the increased prestige of ASJA as a writers organization.

HOW WILL THE CAMPAIGN BENEFIT ASJA?

With the emergence of the Educational Foundation as an educational hub for North American nonfiction writers, ASJA will benefit from increased exposure and prestige.

HOW WILL THE CAMPAIGN BENEFIT NONMEMBERS?

The Educational Foundation has an obligation to offer educational content to the public. Nonmembers, as they do now for conferences, can pay to take advantage of the Educational Foundation's educational content. Although some offerings and content will be reserved for the exclusive use of ASJA members, by the expanded efforts of the Educational Foundation, men and women of the public should become better researchers and writers. ASJA members will have an opportunity to teach and help educate nonmembers and, perhaps, even be compensated for doing so. In addition, it is a goal of this Educational Foundation expansion to seek out and assist communities of writers underrepresented in the public forum, such as communities based on low income, ethnicity, geography, religion, and more.

CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THE ASJA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION?

ASJA has two components, i.e., ASJA (which is a private trade association of writers) and the ASJA Charitable Trust. The Charitable Trust itself has three components: the ASJA Educational Foundation, WEAFF (Writers Emergency Assistance Fund), and the Awards fund. The Charitable Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. It has a public responsibility to offer educational opportunity to the public. The Educational Foundation, for example, organizes and runs the annual conference in New York City and regional conferences in such places as Austin, Chicago, and Atlanta.

CAN THE CAMPAIGN ACCEPT STOCKS, BONDS OR SHARES OF MUTUAL FUNDS?

Yes. This is an excellent way to make a donation, especially while the stock market is high. Donors receive a potential tax deduction of the full present value of the securities and relieve themselves of any capital gains tax liability. The Campaign receives the full value of the securities (less transactions fees) but without a capital gains tax liability.

➤ HOW CAN SOMEONE GIVE TO THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?

We have made it easy to give via check, online, or by donation of securities. Please consider one of these options.

▶ **Make a pledge.** You may make a pledge by contacting Brooke C. Stoddard, past ASJA Secretary and 70th Anniversary Campaign Chair (stoddardbc@gmail.com) or Neil O'Hara, past ASJA Treasurer and 70th Anniversary Capital Campaign Treasurer (neiloh52@gmail.com).

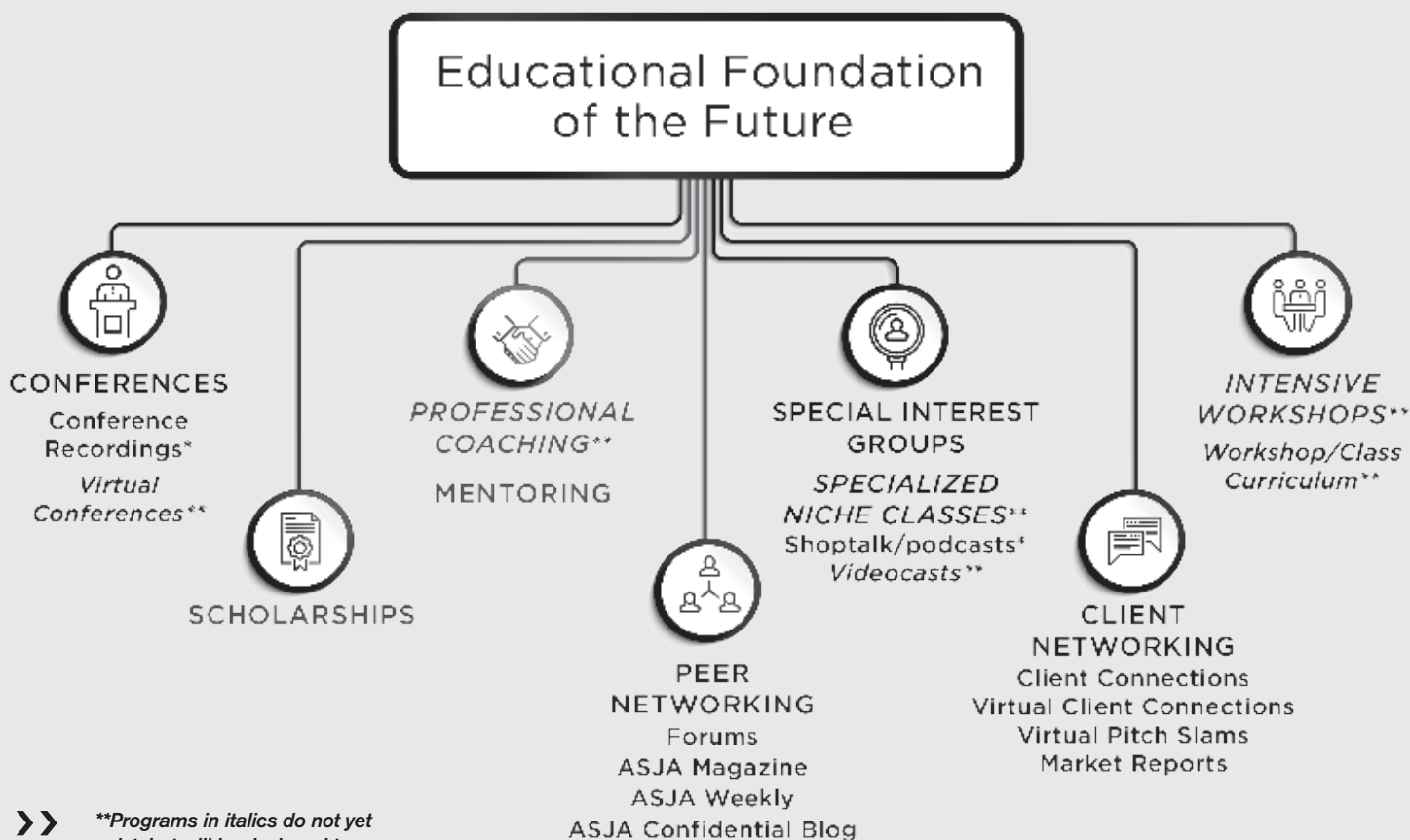
▶ **Contribute by mail.** Make out checks to ASJA Charitable Trust, with "for ASJA Educational Foundation" in the Memo line. Mail it to: ASJA Charitable Trust ATTN: 70th Anniversary Campaign 355 Lexington Avenue, 15th Floor New York, NY 10017-6603



- ▶ **Donate on the ASJA website.** You can use a credit card or PayPal: <https://goo.gl/qgg2CS>.
- ▶ **Donate securities.** For donations of securities, email Brooke C. Stoddard at stoddardbc@gmail.com.
- ▶ **Make a regular monthly donation.** To do so, visit <https://goo.gl/f8azda>.



ASJA's 70th Anniversary campaign is designed to generate funds that will strengthen the ASJA Educational Foundation by making the Foundation an educational hub for all nonfiction writers—including those with emerging voices from diverse and underserved communities—providing extensive professional growth via mentoring, coaching and peer networking. The ASJA Educational Foundation is a known resource that provides scholarships, conferences, podcasts, videocasts, virtual networking among peers and clients, and other specialized niche coursework focused on creating quality journalistic content.



>> ****Programs in italics do not yet exist, but will be designed to produce revenue.**
***Existing programs that already produce revenue for ASJA.**

NOMINATION SLATE >>

The nominating committee of ASJA respectfully submits this slate of candidates for the ASJA Board of Directors, with terms to begin in 2018

These candidates will become board members July 1 unless a member runs against this slate. To do so, said member must collect signatures of 3 percent of ASJA members—electronically is fine—and deliver them to the ASJA office by April 1. If someone files such a petition, all members will be given the opportunity to vote. If no such petitions are delivered, this board will be considered elected.

President: Milt Tobin

Vice President: Janine Latus

Treasurer: Howard Baldwin

Secretary:

Jennifer Goforth Gregory

At-large member with term to expire in 2019: Sally Abrahms

At-large members with terms to expire in 2021:

Carolyn Crist, Christina Chan, and Beverly Gray



**WELCOME NEW
ASJA MEMBERS!**

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Katherine Barner, Brooklyn, NY
 Ilona Biro, Toronto, ON
 Lenora Chu, Houston, TX
 Colleen Curry, Brooklyn, NY
 Janene Dawson-Two, Russellville, AR
 Laura Dorwart, Olmsted Township, OH
 Samantha Drake, Landsdowne, PA
 Karen Dybis, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI
 Pamela Ferdinand, Evanston, IL
 Michele Filgate, Brooklyn, NY
 Leta Fincher, New York, NY
 Peter Gerardo, Salisbury, MD
 Tish Hamilton, Bernardsville, NJ
 Casey Hynes, Fairfield, IA
 Beck Lawlor, Salt Lake City, UT
 Nora McGunnigle, New Orleans, LA
 Blanca Mesa, Coral Gables, FL
 Apryl Motley, Columbia, MD
 Ilona Nagy, Lambertville, NJ
 Erik Vance, Mexico
 Marcella Veneziale
 Amy White, Arlington, VA

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 Jana Riley, Summerville, SC
 Susan Sparks, New York, NY
 David Williams, Duncanville, TX
 Judith Zirin, Demarest, NJ

ELEANOR FOA
DIENSTAG
former ASJA President



Joan Barthel

It is with great sadness that I share the news that friend and colleague, and a long-time ASJA member, Joan Barthel, died in St. Louis. She had a long and distinguished career as a journalist and author. As a profile of her noted, “Not many journalists specialize in celebrities, crime, and Catholicism,” But Barthel built a strong career from that unusual mix. She received two awards from ASJA: the Outstanding Article Award and the Founder's Award for Career Achievement.

In the 1970s, Barthel was a pioneering female journalist, and one of the first female staff writers for *Life* magazine. After the magazine folded, she launched her freelance career with a cover story for *New Times* that led to a book with a preface by the distinguished novelist, William Styron. The story and book, *A Death in Canaan* (1976 Dutton; Dell 1977), was a true crime tale about a teenage boy accused of murdering his mother. Her book helped to prove his innocence. The astonishing success of her first nonfiction book, which was also turned into an acclaimed TV movie, led to several other true crime books: *A Death in California* (1989 Congdon & Weed; 1982 Dell), also turned into a TV movie, and *Love or Honor* (1989 William Morrow; 1990 Avon), about an undercover police officer who falls in love with a mob leader's daughter and loses his identity in the process. These books are not only gripping but beautifully written.

In 1975 Joan wrote a *New York Times Magazine* cover story on the first American-born Catholic saint, Elizabeth Seton. From that moment on, Barthel, a liberal and fierce feminist Catholic, wanted to write a full-blown biography of Seton. That dream finally came true in 2014 with the publication of *American Saint: The Life of Elizabeth Seton*, published by St. Martin's Press. Like the saint she idealized, Barthel went through

innumerable personal and professional trials—as well as enormous success—in the intervening years.

She wrote for all the top magazines and profiled a host of celebrities, including Paddy Chayefsky, Nancy Reagan, Bob Hope, Ingrid Bergman, Katharine Hepburn, Dan Rather, Mario Cuomo, Sidney Poitier, Christopher Reeve, and a string of strong women. In fact, in 1999, she wrote a highly acclaimed biography of Rosemary Clooney, *Girl Singer* (Doubleday; 2001 Broadway Books), which quickly became a best seller.

All the while, she kept doing research and gathering notes about Elizabeth Seton, but no publisher was interested.

In May 1993, Barthel was on the cusp of a whole new level of fame and fortune. She'd written the authorized autobiography of Oprah Winfrey. Knopf, the book's publisher, expected to sell two million copies. Just before the book went to press, Oprah changed her mind and pulled the book. Barthel was devastated. It took her a long time to recover from that setback, but that unexpected loss eventually led her back to the biography of Seton, the book she'd wanted to write for decades.

For Barthel, *American Saint* was an act of love, faith, and devotion. She wrote and rewrote the book multiple times. Her proposal was rejected over and over again by editors who felt it wasn't commercial enough. Finally, four decades after that first cover story, Barthel published her biography of Seton. Carol Burnett's blurb for the book said, “An amazing true story about a woman who beat all the odds.”

I believe the same can be said for Joan and her career. The product of a strict Catholic home in St. Louis, where neither of her parents went to college, she was “measured for the habit,” and expected to enter a convent. Then, feminism sent her on a path that began with a college degree, a first job at *The New York Times*, (mainly pouring coffee), and a nationally renowned career. She became friends with many of the feminists she wrote about, including Gloria Steinem, who also wrote a glowing blurb for *American Saint*.

I came to know Joan, and her daughter, Anne, a writer and editor, through ASJA. Throughout the good and bad years, she was a generous friend and went out of her way to help other writers—including me—sharing her contacts and always supporting her ASJA colleagues. For many decades she lived in New York, but, in part to take care of her ailing mother, she returned to her hometown of St. Louis.

To me, Joan personified—and her career encapsulated—the successful working professional. Her amazing talent as a writer, her dedication to her craft, her persistence, her grit, her ups and downs, her love of life, were an inspiration. I will miss her, as will everyone who had the good fortune to know her, personally and professionally.



MAY 18-19 2018

WELCOME

from the tri-chairs



NANCY DUNHAM
Freelance Writer and Writers
Conference Chair

What a joy it's been to work with my 2018 ASJA Conference Co-Chairs Dorri Olds and Carolyn Crist to organize your May 18-19, 2018 New York conference.

When we joined ASJA President **Sherry Paprocki** and others to plan the event, our goal was straightforward: to create an array of sessions that would suit writers of all specialties at every stage of their career. That was quite a daunting task, especially considering the exceptional speakers and takeaways at past national and regional ASJA conferences. I like to credit Dorri's conference theme—Navigate, Motivate, Captivate—as our first concrete success. It perfectly conveys the offerings at the 2018 ASJA Conference.

Carolyn has designed an introductory track to assist writers as they begin to *Navigate* the writing

world. I developed *Motivate*—the intermediary track—to show mid-career writers how to jumpstart and reinvent their careers. Dorri shaped the *Captivate* track to guide veteran writers to even greater success. You might wonder which track to follow. That's the great news—you and other attendees can mix and match sessions to design a conference that perfectly suits your unique career and goals.

Consider some of the intermediate session tracks that range from **Cheryl Alkon** leading a session on parenting and writing to **Lilly Dancyger** coaching attendees on refining their personal narratives to **Linsey Knerl** offering top takeaways

on strengthening your influence and business. Plus, authors **Beverly Gray** and **Andrea Jarrell** will offer expert guidance on publishing, and former ASJA President **Randy Dotinga** is back with an array of agents ready for the pitch slam.

And, of course, **Wendy Helfenbaum** and her team have again recruited an incredible line up of editors and agents eager to sit down for face-to-face meetings with members. Whether you're a brand-new member or a veteran, we have designed this conference with you in mind.

We look so forward to seeing you there. Please join us!

REGISTER NOW!

TO REGISTER ONLINE PLEASE VISIT

WWW.EISEVERYWHERE.COM/EHOME/ASJA2018NYC/REGISTRATION



CAROLYN CRIST
*Freelance Writer and Writers
Conference Chair*

*Whether it's learning about verbal pitches with **Candy Arrington**, long-form narratives with **Laura Laing**, or ways to find 100 or more content marketing clients, we have sessions to appeal to both beginners and experienced freelancers.*

To expand your business mindset, we'll talk about branding with **Megy Karydes**, starting a writing group with **Mary-Kate Mackey**, and how to discuss money with **Lisa Rowan**. On top of that, if you need to figure out how to balance it all, **Hilary Sutton** will explain how to look at your freelance life beyond the "rat race" to create a schedule and business that works for you and your priorities.

Thank you for joining us for this terrific conference!



DORRI OLDS
*Freelance Writer and Writers
Conference Chair*

It has been an honor to work on the conference as the advanced track chair.

First I want to thank ASJA's fantastic president Sherry Paprocki and my co-chairs, Nancy Dunham and Carolyn Crist, for making this such a rewarding experience. I am proud of our line-up of sessions. Each track has top of the line speakers and we hope you enjoy yourselves.

For the Captivate track, you will hear from Peter Catapano of *The New York Times*, **Molly Simms** of *O, The Oprah Magazine*, **Wayne Hoffman** of *Tablet Magazine*, **Beth Dreher** of *Woman's Day*, and more. **Estelle Erasmus** and **Candy Wechsler Schulman** will teach you tips and tricks for improving your essay writing. **Sree Sreenivasan** is back with

new social media tips, and **Damon Brown** teaches how to make money in your sleep.

You'll learn how to nail SEO in the age of digital media from **Amy Kraft**, **Miral Sattar** and myself. **Christine Parizo** and **Court Stroud** will cover how to transition from journalism to content marketing. And **Sherry Amatenstein**, the author of four books, and a former magazine and web editor, will moderate the incredible editors panel.

Even though I'll be flitting around as a conference co-chair please don't hesitate to come up and introduce yourself! Networking is one of the best perks of joining ASJA!



KEYNOTES & SPEAKERS



No matter where you are in your writing career—just beginning to navigate your own writing business, motivating yourself to reach professional milestones, or captivating clients and audiences with your hard-won expertise—you want to tap into the most dynamic, forward-thinking writers and editors in our business. Experts like our three keynote speakers.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**DAN
JONES**

You know Dan as the editor of *New York Times*' Modern Love column, but he is also an in-demand author and journalist whose work appears in many publications, including *The Times*, *Parade*, and *Harper's*. His other career successes include podcasting, as evidenced by the 20 million downloads of *The Modern Love Podcast* in its first year. He's a recognizable thought leader whose comments are sought by NBC's Today Show, ABC News, and many other media outlets.



**KATHERINE
REYNOLDS LEWIS**

Katherine is one of the most highly respected journalists on the East Coast, known for her work with *The Atlantic*, *Fortune* magazine, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *MSN Money*, *The New York Times*, and other major publications. Katherine's book, *The Good News About Bad Behavior*, was developed from her Mother Jones article that was the most widely read story in the magazine's history. The book is scheduled for release just prior to the conference.



**AIMEE
ROSS**

You likely know Aimee from her well-received articles published by LifeIn10Minutes and SixHens. Her writing appears in *Beauty Around the World: A Cultural Encyclopedia*, *Scars: An Anthology*, *Today I Made a Difference: A Collection of Inspirational Stories from America's Top Educators*, and *Teaching Tolerance* magazine. Aimee is also an award-winning educator who served for a decade as regional educator in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Her book, *Permanent Marker: A Memoir*, is scheduled for release just prior to the conference.

»»»» SAMPLE OF SPEAKERS

Lisa Roepe: “How to Turn a Nugget of an Idea into a Book Proposal”

What are some of the takeaways attendees can expect from your session?

There is no one right way to get a book published, and perhaps the traditional way isn't the best way anymore. I'll also talk about working with an independent editor to develop your idea into a 50-plus-page nonfiction book proposal, and how to take a less traditional route and go from idea to published book in seven short months.

What do you hope to takeaway from ASJA?

Every year I come back with inspiration about who to pitch, what to pitch and how to market myself better. I also come home with at least one new friendship.

What is the best advice you were ever given or give yourself to journalists/writers?

My college professor told us not to buy any heavy furniture because we'd be moving a lot. That was so true during my newspaper reporter days. I think I moved once every year for about four years, always to get a job at a larger newspaper.

Christine Koubek: “How to Break into Travel Writing”

What are some of the takeaways attendees can expect from your session?

We'll discuss how to maximize your chances of placing a travel story, what editors dread in travel pitches, and what captures their attention. We'll also look beyond the popular travel magazines for other markets where writers can place travel stories.

What is the best advice you were ever given or give yourself to journalists/writers?

In terms of travel writing or really any writing—be curious. Talk to people. Be curious about their opinions and stories. Be curious about a place's history, and be curious about the stories behind the feel of a restaurant, inn, or city. Also, think about different story angles, different pieces you could write from one trip. We'll talk more about this in the session.

What is the one book you'd recommend people read this year?

I've taught personal essay as well as travel writing workshops at The Writers Center in the Washington, D.C. area and there are several wonderful essays in *Why We Write About Ourselves: Twenty Memoirists on Why They Expose Themselves (and Others) in the Name of Literature* that touch on questions and issues that come up with personal writing. Twenty creative nonfiction writers contributed to the book, including New York Times bestselling authors Cheryl Strayed, Sue Monk Kidd, and Pat Conroy.

Sherry Amatenstein: “Breaking into Women's Markets” Pitch Slam

What are some of the takeaways attendees can expect from your session?

I invited editors from a variety of markets—both for print and online—with a big range of demographics and subject matter. It was thrilling that all five of these editors said yes! My panelists are from Lenny Letter and *New York Magazine's* "The Cut" and giants like *Oprah* and *Woman's Day*. And Jeannie Ralston edits a terrific website for women over 45, called NextTribe.com.

How do you manage wearing different hats, as a writer and a therapist?

I was a writer before I was a therapist and the two actually blend well together—both involve listening and curiosity. And empathy.

As a long-time ASJA member, what can you suggest to conference newbies?

As a shrink I work with a lot of writers and artists because I understand the demands of creative pursuits. I am happy to offer a 20-minute comp phone or Skype consultation to ASJA members.

Jennifer Goforth Gregory: “How to Find 100 (or More) Potential Content Marketing Clients”

What are some of the takeaways attendees can expect from your session?

I'll explain how to identify agencies and direct clients that are a fit for attendees' expertise. In small groups, we'll use a worksheet to brainstorm potential clients. The goal is for each

writer to leave with a list of clients to contact and the tools to brainstorm more. You'll also get a tip sheet with a sample LOI, as well as instructions on how find the right contact and how to follow up.

Why do you think so many ASJA members (of all tracks) are becoming more interested in content marketing now?

Many members realize that they have been writing content marketing for years—for airline magazines, alumni publications, and association magazines, such as AARP. With this experience, they can grow their client base and increase their income. Also, it's become clearer that there are fewer differences between content marketing and journalism. You can still produce high quality, reported pieces as content marketing, but instead of a newspaper or magazine, the client is a company, such as American Express OPENForum or Costco Connection. Finally, journalism requires constant pitching, which can be time consuming and frustrating.

What was one thing you wished you knew when you first started working with content marketing clients?

That content marketing requires the clients' voice, not mine. Almost every time a client doesn't like one of my pieces it is because I didn't get the tone right. I now ask clients up front to describe the tone that they are looking for and to send me examples. This increases a client's confidence in me from the start and also decreases the number of revisions.

Caitlin Kelly: “How to Write for the New York Times”

What are some of the takeaways attendees can expect from your session?

The key lesson is to truly understand why the *NYT* is unlike any other publication: its culture, its history, its scope, and how its editors think and behave. It is not like a website or a magazine—in some ways, yes; but in others, it is very different.

Why do you think so many writers are too shy to pitch places such as the *NY Times* and other major outlets?

It looks impenetrable, but it's not. If you have consistently produced good work that is similar in tone, content, and length to that publication (and ideally have been referred in by someone

the editors know, like, and trust), why be fearful? There is no guarantee, but those are the basics.

Writers are often unsure if or when they should hire writing coaches. What are some rules of thumb a writer should use to decide if one is needed?

Are you achieving your goals? If your pitches aren't finding favor, if your essays are still too dense or too personal, if you want to reach for better-paying, more competitive markets ...there are many reasons! I've coached many satisfied writers, and what I offer each one is frank feedback that is tactful but honest, along with the next steps that can help them move ahead. A good writing coach focuses not just on copy but also on your strategy and goals.

Andrea Jarrell: “Why It's a Good Time to be a Late Bloomer”

What are some of the takeaways attendees can expect from your session?

I gathered this panel of successful late-blooming, mid-career authors as proof that it's never too late. I want to push back against the idea that as we age we become invisible. That has not been my experience, and I want to encourage others to go after their publishing dreams and stop thinking it's too late.

Why do you think we're afraid to reinvent ourselves?

I did it for years: I think we are often afraid to do the work. The real work is a lot more than writing and that is hard enough. How many times do we tell ourselves, “Just do it, just go for it, just write the freakin' book!” And yet even in the face of new resolve, our lives and the shoulds and don'ts and what ifs and fears get in the way. We're going to talk about going from dreaming to doing when it comes to publishing. We'll unpack what the work really is—at least as we've experienced it.

What is the one book you'd recommend people read this year?

I have too many must-reads on my list to mention just one. Here are some of my recent favorites: *Hourglass* by Dani Shapiro, *Heating & Cooling* by Beth Ann Fennelly, *The Child Finder* by Rene Denfeld, *The Art of Misdiagnosis* by Gayle Brandeis, *Flood* by Melissa Scholes Young, and *Guesswork* by Martha Cooley.



To find out more, please contact volunteer co-chairs Linsey Knerl at linsey@knerlfamilymedia.com or Nancy Dunham at NancyDunham@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEERS

Don't just attend—join in the fun at the New York Conference

It's that time of year when we not only share the fantastic benefits realized by attending the annual NYC conference, but we ask for your help in making them happen. With all the hustle and bustle of the event, it may seem that your schedule won't allow for you to volunteer—a natural assumption. So, what if we told you that you might get even more out of the conference by lending a little of your time and expertise?

Why volunteering matters to you

Volunteers will tell you the work rewards you with purpose and fulfillment. For the already busy writer, however, it can seem like just another thing to add to the to-do list. Let us encourage you to consider these benefits that come from giving even just a few hours of your time to the cause:

- »» Meet new people, which is especially beneficial for new members of ASJA.
- »» Exercise those social skills you might have forgotten when stuck behind a desk all day. (We're looking at you, introverts!)
- »» Discover new trends, contacts, and opportunities that can benefit your long-term career.
- »» Have fun and boost overall life satisfaction.
- »» Get as involved as much or as little as you desire. ASJA has numerous opportunities to help with as little as a few hours a year!

COME TO NEW YORK. STAY FOR THE FRIENDSHIPS

Many of our volunteers started out as strangers but end up finding lifelong friendships with their fellow volunteers. Spending time together working on projects big and small has opened up the window for writers who would never meet in real life to find common purpose. While we all start out tackling conference tasks lists, it's not uncommon for the work to continue long after the event is over. In fact, many of our volunteers continue to work together on writing projects, serve on volunteer boards, and speak together on panels at other industry events.

THE FUTURE OF ASJA IS YOU

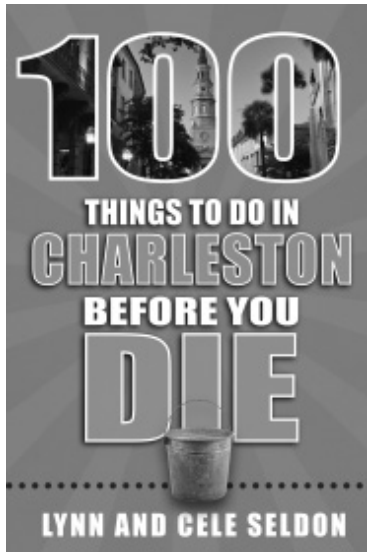
Our most pressing need is to fill volunteer positions for the New York conference, but we invite you to continue your volunteerism even after the event. Some of our most gifted members volunteer on a regular basis, eventually going on to leadership positions within the ASJA community. Whether your goal is to share some tweets during the event—or you aspire to hold a future conference chair position—volunteering is the surest way to start down the path of ASJA leadership.

Our community is made up of today's boldest, brightest, and most innovative writers. Your talents are needed to breathe fresh life into the organization and keep our events on the must-attend list of writers nationwide. We encourage you to sign on for NYC in either an in-person or virtual volunteer role, but we won't be surprised if you love it so much you become part of our loyal and committed volunteer group!



MEMBER NEWS

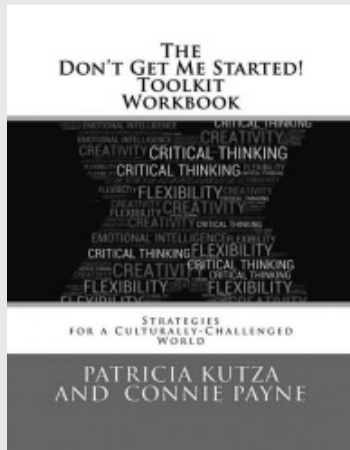
>>>> Book News



Lynn Seldon recently co-authored *100 Things to Do in Charleston Before You Die* (Reedy Press) with his wife and long-time business partner, Cele Seldon. The book, which debuted as a No. 1 New Release on Amazon.com, is filled with easy-to-follow suggestions of where to go, what to see, can't-miss dining, outdoor recreation, events and entertainment, and where to shop 'til you drop—along with seasonal activities, suggested itineraries, and lots of insider tips.

>>>> Other News

Patricia Kutza's *The Don't Get Me Started! Toolkit Workbook* (co-authored with Connie Payne) is now part of the class curriculum in several public and private K-12 schools in Northern California's Contra Costa County.



Got news to share with ASJA?

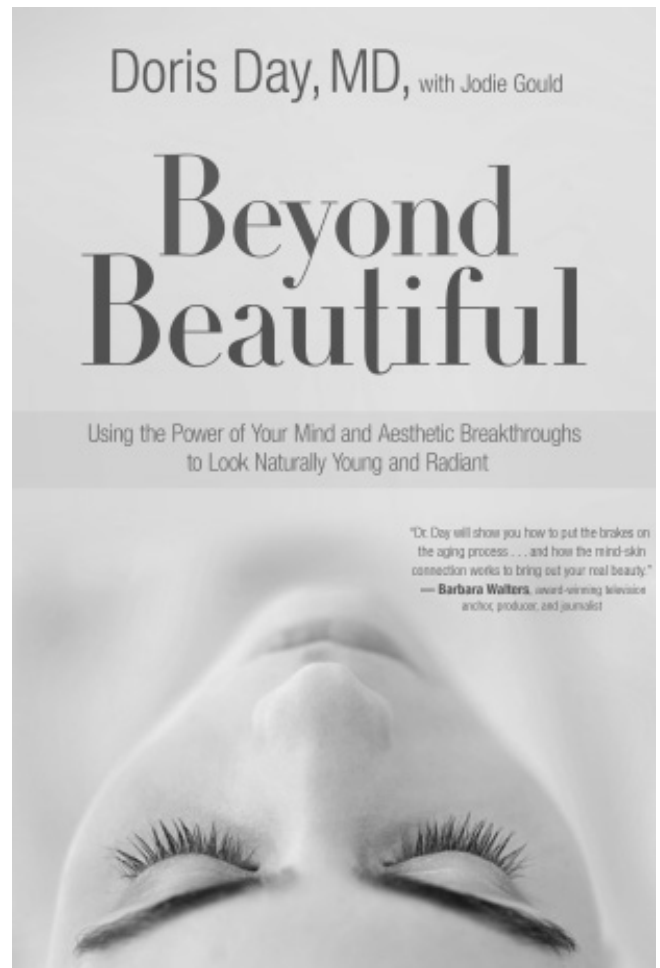
Submit your items at asja.org/members.

Go to MyASJA/WhatAreYouUpTo?

>>>> Awards & Honors

Jodie Gould's 13th book, *Beyond Beautiful: Using the Power of the Mind and Aesthetic Breakthroughs to Look Naturally Young and Radiant* (Hachette/January 2018), coauthored with award-winning cosmetic dermatologist and "Doctor Radio" host Doris Day, MD, is No. 1 on Amazon.com's "Health, Fitness & Dieting" list. The book was endorsed by Christie Brinkley, Barbara Walters, Vanessa Williams, and Dr. Mehmet Oz, who featured Dr. Day on his nationally syndicated TV show.

► jodiegould.com



"Dr. Day will show you how to put the brakes on the aging process . . . and how the mind-skin connection works to bring out your real beauty."
— **Barbara Walters**, award-winning television anchor, producer, and journalist



To protect the confidentiality of information filed with Paycheck reports, additional details including rights and more are available at ASJA.org/members/paycheck.



PAYCHECK

DAME

Article, consumer pub
600 words
\$300

Disaster. I submitted the piece at the requested length. Comments came back at about as many words and would have required the piece to be doubled. I said they'd have to raise my fee. She balked and then suggested a revision that would have made the story not true. I pulled the piece. Not worth it.

Feedback: 1

NONFICTION BOOK

Ghostwriting
22,000 words
\$6,000

Ghosted a book for a small but established publisher. Ghostwrote a 22,000-word book for a client for whom I had done developmental editing on previous books of this length. Worked out to \$200 per hour for ghostwriting, which was the same as developmental editing. Books in this series are key to the author's brand and income for courses, private clients, etc. I charge my top rate because the client procrastinates and needs me to drop everything to complete the work. Offered a discount if he agrees to book me ahead.

Feedback: 10

Payment: Timely

NARRATIVELY

Article, consumer pub
1,000 words
\$200

Upped payment to \$300 second and third times I've written for them. Smart editors. Thorough fact checking. Picky about pitches (they have themed issues), but they're easy to work with once in. Contract included film/TV rights and they don't like to negotiate those out.

Article terms: POP

Feedback: 10

Payment: Timely

PRIVATE CLIENT

Editing / Rewriting
Proofread and edit college entrance essay
\$100

The client found me through a Google search. The essay was his intern's. After I turned in the work, the client mentioned that his company is looking to redo the content on their website, and he would like to speak with me about that. So, yay!

Feedback: 10

Payment: Timely

MEN'S HEALTH

Article, consumer pub
6 articles, 1,000 words each
\$12,000

After meeting through ASJA, editor Dan Simmons requested six articles as the start of a new column for Men's Health. Each article would pay \$2,000 (the project total \$12,000). After delivery, Dan quit. His boss, Melissa Jewsbury, said they would run one of the articles, but not the others. She said Rodale couldn't pay the kill fee for the remaining five, because they didn't have the money. I offered to set up a payment plan so they could pay over time, and she said this was a great idea. Editor Bill Steig then called, killing all articles. He accused me of making up Dan's request for six articles in order to scam Rodale out of kill fees, and attacked the articles' quality, saying I was "no Garrison Keillor." He said Melissa and Dan had only praised their quality to be nice. He then offered me \$500 and said I would take it or get nothing. It's now been four months since delivery and I've had to file suit in small claims court. I also filed an NYC complaint under Freelance Isn't Free.

Feedback: 1

Payment: Late

TRADE MAGAZINE

Article, trade pub
1,000 words
\$700

I'm coming up on one year of writing a monthly tech column for C-level executives for this B2B niche industry news site. I also write features for the publication and have a great working relationship with my boss, the ME, who typically gets edit requests back to me in a matter of days, if not hours. I'd give them a higher feedback score if they paid faster; as it stands, I invoice when I turn in copy and am paid in 45 days.

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 8

Payment: Timely

NONFICTION BOOK

Books
20,000 words
\$7,000

Standard rights, although agent retains foreign language and TV/film/merchandising rights. My coauthor and I both received about \$7,000 after the agency fee to do updates on our award-winning evergreen parenting book. Will receive no royalties on sales until the new edition earns out. It took 80 hours for me to do my half of the updates, making the rate \$87.50 per hour. An update will generate future foreign sales (we hope), perhaps an audiobook, and future royalties on a book that has sold 8,000 copies a year for 10 years. Coauthor makes more off workshops, articles, and sponsorship gigs. I haven't fully monetized the brand.

Book agent? Yes

Nearest percentage to agent: 10 percent

Feedback: 7

Payment: Timely

LA WEEKLY

Article, consumer pub
650 words
\$300

Article terms: POP

Feedback: 9

Payment: Timely

LA TOURISM BOARD

Article, consumer pub
500 words
\$250

Nice editors, but disorganized accounting. Contract states payment is net 30, but it's usually more like 60 to 90.

Article terms: POP

Feedback: 8

Payment: Late

GQ

Article, consumer pub
1,500 words
\$700

An overall good experience, with competent and pleasant editing and fact checking. I found Conde Nast's payment process confusing, but I eventually figured it out. My story got good exposure and currently has a film production company's interest for an option, which was my goal in publishing. At first, I was offered a putrid Conde Nast WMFH contract. I refused it—I had a unique story that they wanted. Got the contract improved to something very close to FNASR.

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 9

Payment: Timely

UCONN MAGAZINE

Article, custom pub
750 words
\$750

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 8

Payment: Timely

HOSPITAL NEWSLETTER

Article, consumer pub
\$350

Assigned articles of 250 to 400 words (paid \$250) and 350 to 400 words (paid \$350).

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 9

Payment: Timely

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Ghosting
5 hours
\$225

Year-long contract to write a few stories per month for a nonprofit organization's newsletter. Work involves interviewing sources the client provides, writing the story, and making changes if requested.

Feedback: 9

Payment: Late

SKYWORD / ADP THRIVE

Blog
1 post
\$400

As soon as the posts go in for editorial review, which is usually within two weeks, I'm paid. Regular posts are \$300. If I have to interview anyone, pay is bumped up to \$400. I'm going on four years writing for ADP (Thrive and Spark) through Skyword. The editors are great. Deadlines can be changed. If I have any problems with an assignment, they always listen.

Feedback: 10

Payment: Timely

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FOR VACATION RENTALS

Blog
400 words
\$200

I am contracted to write a weekly blog for a vacation rentals property management company, responsible for obtaining photos as well. I bill monthly; paid upon receipt of invoice.

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 9

Payment: Timely

ARTHRITIS TODAY/ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION

Article, consumer pub (online or print)
2000 words
\$2,000

Senior editor Bryan Vargo is a delight—thoughtful, knows his readers, a terrific collaborator, and great with comments/notes for revisions. I met him at the ASJA Atlanta regional conference, more proof of the power of ASJA on-site conferences

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 10

Payment: Timely

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS

Article, trade pub
1,800 words
\$1,200

Editor is a pleasure to work with. She gives clear direction but is open to change if reporting takes story in a new direction. Editing is thorough, but fair. Feedback score would be a 10 if pay were better. I've been writing regularly for this magazine for a few years.

Article terms: POP

Feedback: 8

Payment: Timely

HEALTHGRADES

Article, consumer pub
1,200 words
\$400

This opportunity was listed on the ASJA job listings. The editor was friendly and professional. The back and forth to get the article accepted was lengthy, requiring a pitch, then a more developed outline, then an outline submitted via their own template, and then finally the draft in a template they provided. The actual project—once greenlighted—was simple. Payment was made almost immediately and even though they didn't end up using my story the way they thought they would, it did finally run. I would work with them again.

Feedback: 9

Payment: Timely

EDUCATIONAL APP

\$20,000

The project was to write both fiction and nonfiction short stories for an educational app being done by two college professors. They had funding. I produced 38 short stories in four months. (I had other deadlines woven into this period of time.) Good terms, they have one-time rights. This was a project that I got through ASJA. The professors, both very busy females in their 40s, were a dream to work with. My work has been done for nine months, but the app is still being produced.

Article terms: POP

Feedback: 10

Payment: Timely

KIMPTON HOTELS / LIFE IS SUITE BLOG

Blog
1 posts
\$400

I really enjoyed working with this client, but it's now been six months since my first piece for them was accepted, and I still haven't received payment. They were receptive when I asked them to track it down, so I agreed to write a second post. Big mistake. Now I'm owed \$800 and have no idea when or if I will receive payment. I spoke with another writer who also had trouble tracking down payment, so this isn't an isolated issue. Steer clear.

Article terms: Acceptance

Feedback: 2

Payment: Late



ASJA MEMBER SINCE: 2016

»» Deborah Lynn Blumberg

HOUSTON, TX

SPECIALTY/FOCUS: BUSINESS AND
HEALTH & WELLNESS

This month, we are thrilled to share how a newer member of the organization is making positive ripples in the writing world—and our own members’ lives—with her contributions as Co-Chair of the ASJA Regional Conference in Austin, TX. The event, which was well-received, marks one of Deborah’s most notable projects yet!

Deborah shares how she has used her passion for writing to help fuel her colleagues’ success in our latest interview.



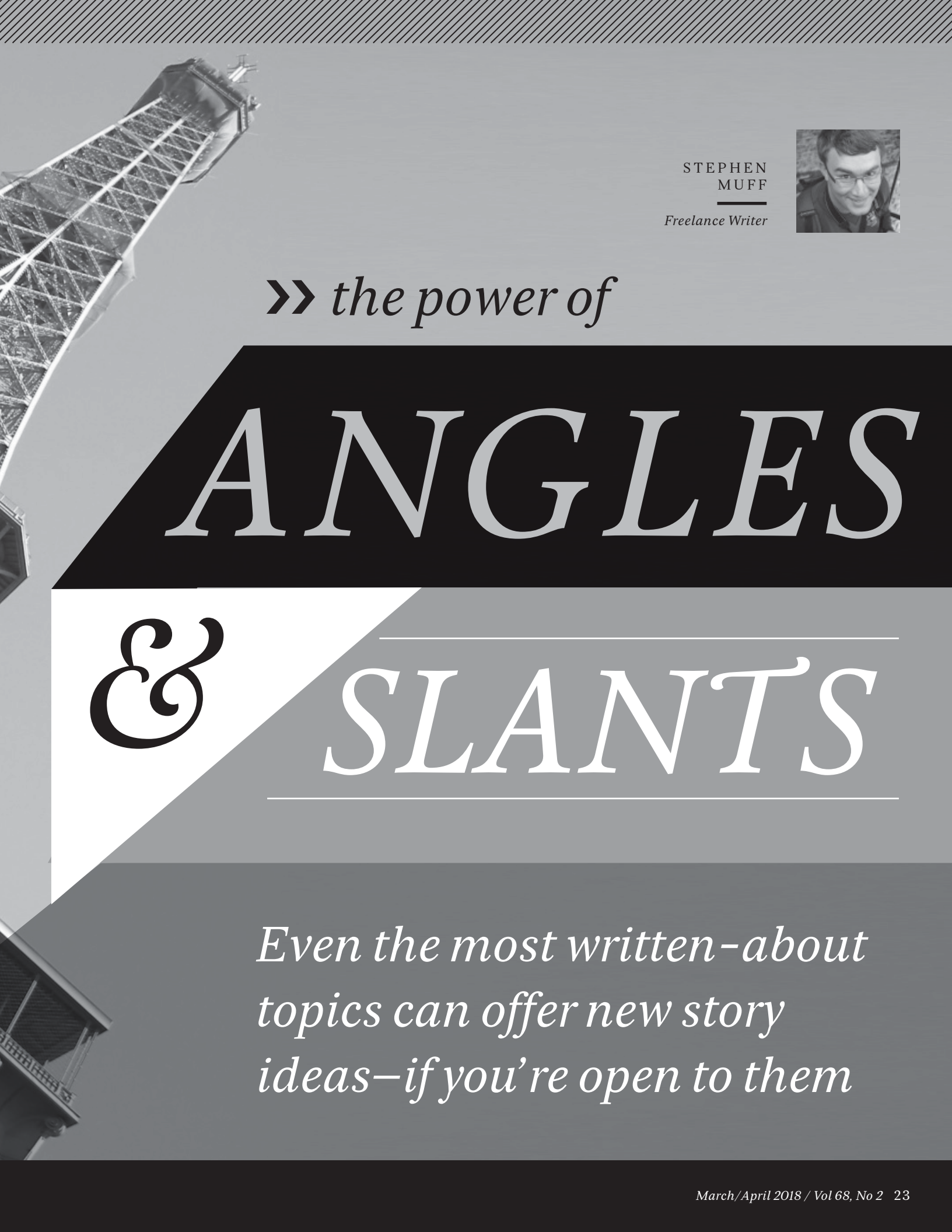
How did you come to join the organization, Deborah? At what point did you decide that volunteering was for you?

I joined ASJA in 2016, right before I made the plunge and left my full-time job in marketing and communications to freelance full-time. That year, at the New York conference, I volunteered to be a conference ambassador. (It’s a personalized outreach program that pairs members with nonmembers attending the event.) The next year, when I moved back home to Texas from New York, I teamed up with fellow ASJA member Susan Johnston Taylor to start an ASJA Texas chapter. We jumped right in, organizing a lunch for members with a prestigious local writer and editor. After that, we were approached about helping out with ASJA’s first regional conference in Austin, and we were excited to lead the charge. I’ve also lead a Special Interest Group, “From Journalist to Novelist.”

You really did jump right in! Since new members tend to be a bit shy about helping, what made you choose to be such an active member?

I thought it would be a great way to meet more fellow members and expand my network, and it’s done both. By volunteering and connecting with other writers and editors, you pick up tips and ideas for your business that you otherwise might not have come across. Networking events like lunches





STEPHEN
MUFF

Freelance Writer



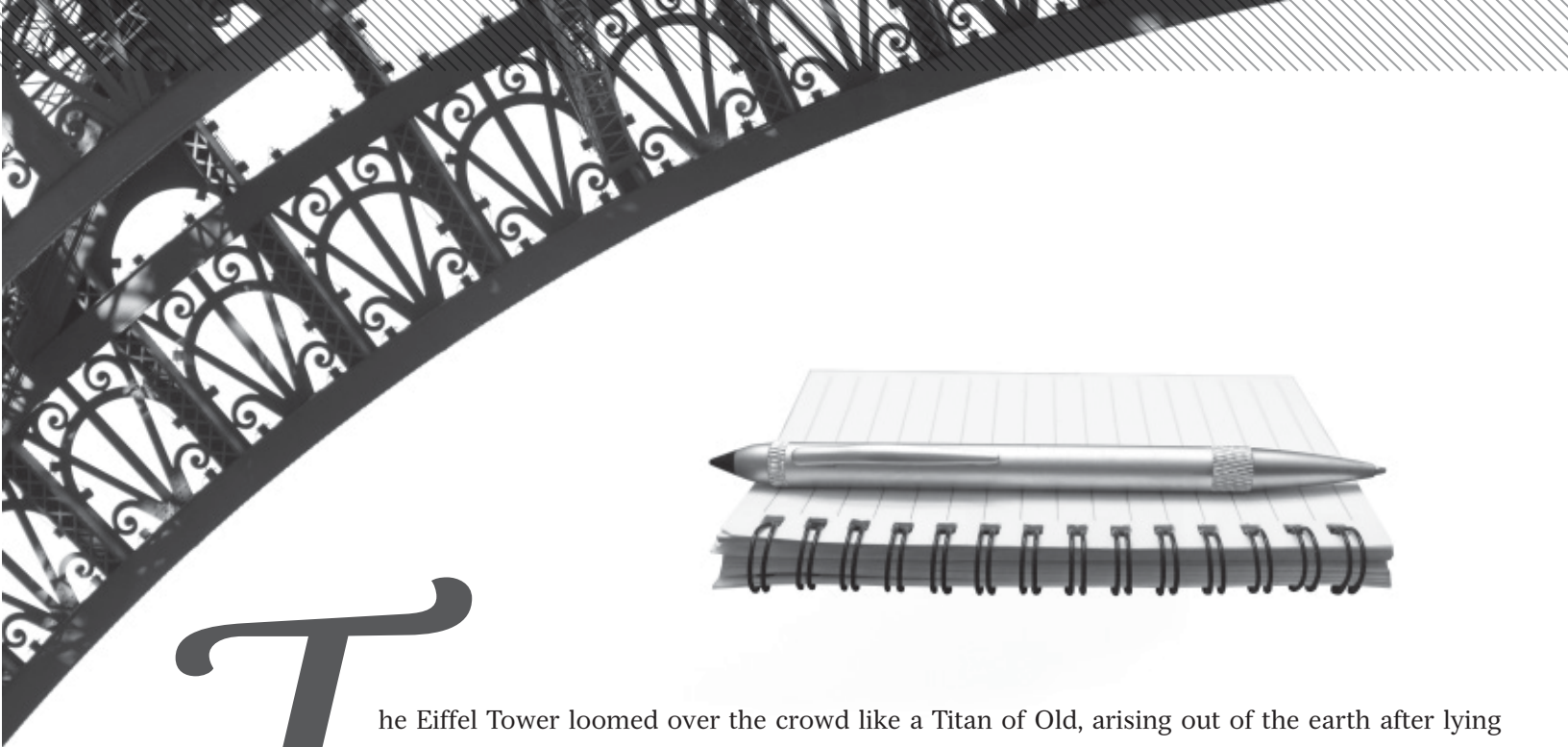
»» *the power of*

ANGLES

&

SLANTS

*Even the most written-about
topics can offer new story
ideas—if you're open to them*



T

he Eiffel Tower loomed over the crowd like a Titan of Old, arising out of the earth after lying dormant for eons. It's fitting that such a mythological structure stands in Paris, the city that has perhaps summoned the muses more than any other. If a picture is worth a thousand words, seeing the city in person was worth a hundred thousand. And that is precisely the problem. ♦ But how can a writer have anything original to say about a city that has had millions of volumes of books written about it? Does a writer simply repeat the same tired storylines or the unoriginal observations regularly made by some of the many tourists found there on any given day? Of course not! Of all the stories about Paris, none of them ever featured my family, tomorrow's news, or the millions of stories about the fascinating visitors from all corners of the globe. What my brief trip taught me is that Paris—and everywhere else—will always have another story waiting for me to write.



The many angles of the Eiffel Tower

People can walk 1,665 steps to the top of the tower's 18,000 metal parts, but perhaps the most spectacular thing about it is seeing the 20,000 lightbulbs that make the tower sparkle every hour of the night. On my first trip to the City of Lights, I loved gazing up through the Eiffel Tower at the many different angles and slants of the metal beams. This alone could be the foundation of a story.

As a writer, I thought of the story behind the construction of the landmark, the nationalism and patriotism tied to it, the tragic stories of those who jumped or fell from it, along with the story of France's increased security due to recent terrorist threats. As I approached the base of the structure, people from Colombia, Romania, and China told me about their reasons for coming to see the Eiffel Tower. Indeed, a single object has infinite stories. Imagine a whole city. Imagine

your city. Next time you get a few minutes to take a walk around your town, think about what you would tell a visitor on their first trip. Now, go ahead—tell it to an editor!

The power of slants

My wife is a Francophile who has visited the country on numerous occasions and speaks the language quite well. I had never been to Paris. I wanted to also visit places that would be new for her and memorable for our two girls (ages 3 and 5). The combination was fairly difficult, but, as we planned the itinerary, stories emerged.

My 5-year-old daughter, who is following in her mother's footsteps, has a deep love for St. Joan of Arc. She faithfully looked for signs of St. Joan in France, and she found them. There were statues of her in cathedrals and on city sidewalks. This exploration generated an inspirational story about Joan of Arc, which I sold to a Catholic publication. Fantastic!

“The art of slants and angles for your articles is not only business-savvy for a professional writer, but it is also quite rewarding.”

STEPHEN MUFF

After visiting the Basilica of Saint Denis, I pitched an article about its namesake. As the story goes, he was the first Bishop of Paris sent from Italy by the Pope in the third century. The locals decapitated him, but he picked up his head and walked quite a way down the road while preaching about repentance. The editor came back and asked me to write about what Charles Martel, the famous (or infamous) warrior-king of France, would see if he came out of his grave in the Basilica of Saint Denis. Would it be the France he knew? I took the bait and wrote the article.

Don't get stuck on originality

There is so much to say about Paris that I learned to stop worrying about being original and love the muse. It doesn't matter if something has been said before. What matters is whether an editor and readers want to read it. One of the most important parts of writing articles for magazines is learning to pitch a slant that matches a publication.

If you have a niche, the slant is where it shines. I write mostly about family travel and Catholic Christianity. I took a toddler and young child across the world to the home of Gothic architecture. It gave me plenty of material. And it was a blast!

What I missed—and what I didn't

A coworker told me I had to go to Sainte Chappelle. I didn't. Multiple travel sites said I had to go on a dinner cruise on the Seine. I didn't. Everyone knew that I had to go to the Musee du Louvre. I didn't. It might sound shocking or raise a few eyebrows, but we were only in France for about four days, and we're from California. It was quite a whirlwind!

However, in a few short days, we saw a plethora of sites, indulged in some magnificent food, and enjoyed each other's company.

My older daughter and I sampled some escargots and cuisses de grenouilles (frog legs), which could be pitched to a culinary magazine or a magazine about teaching kids to be adventurous.

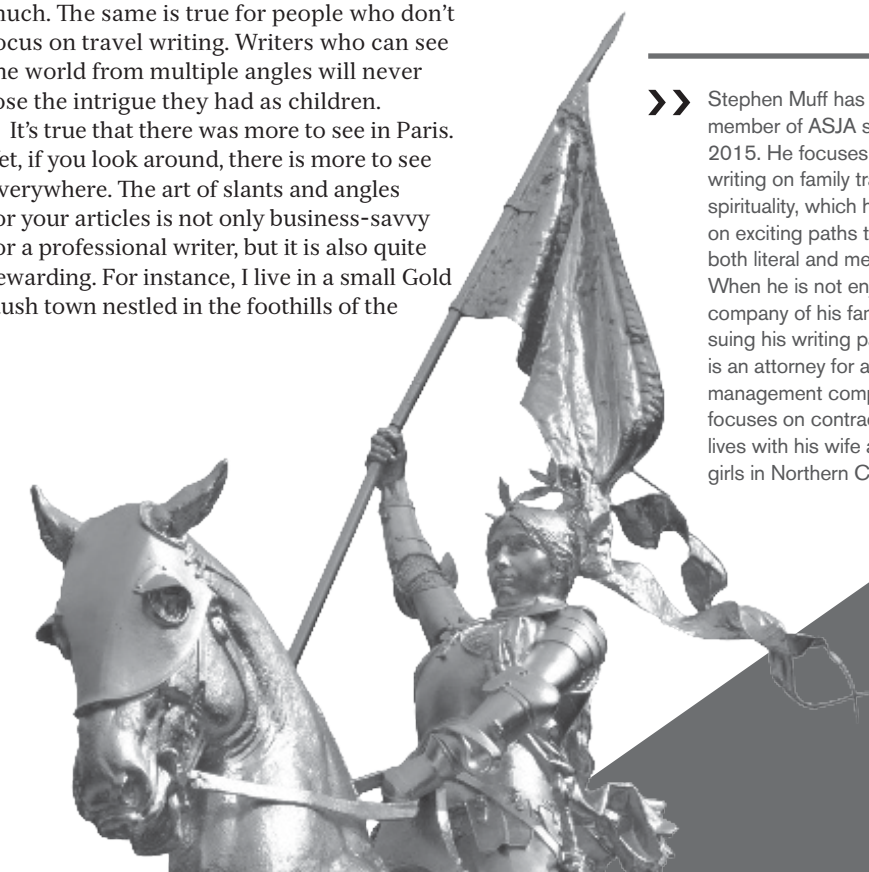
The power of slants and angles enriched my travel in ways I never expected. I started looking at everything with more wonder and awe. I didn't mind the fact that the trip was so short because I saw and experienced so much. The same is true for people who don't focus on travel writing. Writers who can see the world from multiple angles will never lose the intrigue they had as children.

It's true that there was more to see in Paris. Yet, if you look around, there is more to see everywhere. The art of slants and angles for your articles is not only business-savvy for a professional writer, but it is also quite rewarding. For instance, I live in a small Gold Rush town nestled in the foothills of the

Sierra Nevada mountains. Yet I have never written about it, the rough-and-rugged history that matches the landscape, or how it has transformed into one of the great leaders of the farm-to-fork movement.

Whether you are at home or abroad, remember that there is always more to see and more to do. There are more ways to angle and slant your articles. There is always a Paris for another day.

»» Stephen Muff has been a member of ASJA since 2015. He focuses his writing on family travel and spirituality, which has led him on exciting paths that are both literal and metaphorical. When he is not enjoying the company of his family or pursuing his writing passion, he is an attorney for an appraisal management company who focuses on contracts. He lives with his wife and two girls in Northern California.



SO YOU WANT TO BREAK INTO »»»»

Travel Writing?

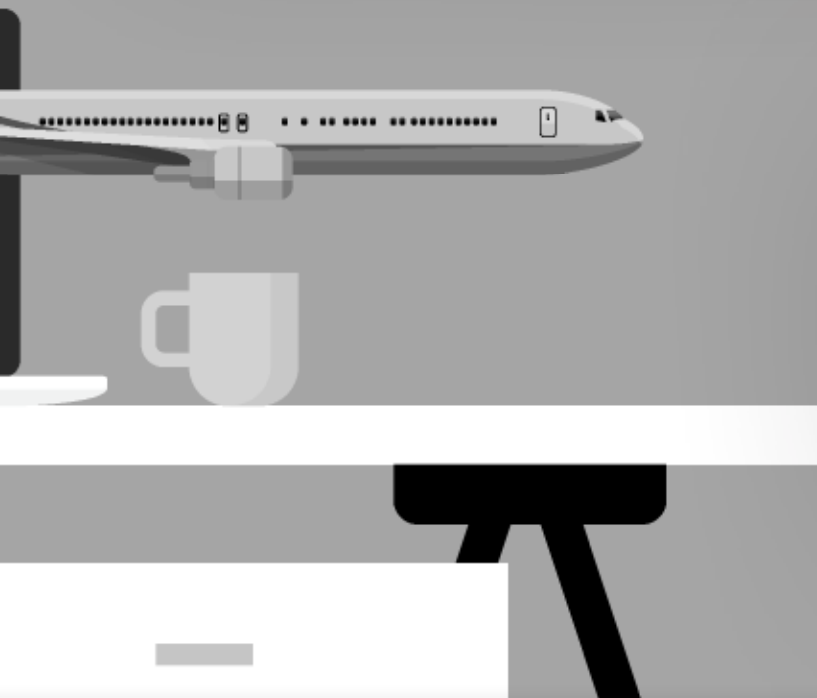


MARGIE
GOLDSMITH

Freelance Writer



Are you one of those people who looks covetously at writers posting pictures on Instagram or Facebook with their feet dangling in the private swimming pool of a monstrously large villa in Fiji? Do you wish it were you? Perhaps you imagine yourself in Italy as a server sprinkles mounds of truffles onto your steaming pasta and you drink bubbly from a crystal flute? Do you follow travel writers' blogs and sigh with envy as they post about private tango lessons in Buenos Aires and share photos of adorable baby penguins in Antarctica? Surely, you think, what could be better than being a travel writer and getting paid to see the world?



>> Margie Goldsmith is the recipient of 66 writing awards, including the SATW Gold Lowell Thomas Award and the ASJA Best Personal Experience story (twice!). She has traveled to 134 countries and written about them all. Her stories have been published in *American Way*, *Robb Report*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Business Jet Traveler*, *Islands*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Globe and Mail*, *Coastal Living*, *Virtuoso* and others. Besides travel, she writes many CEO/celeb interviews, is a triathlete and marathoner, practices Mixed Martial Arts and plays blues harmonica.



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ell wake up, because the life of a travel writer can be extremely difficult, full of hours of drudgery just to earn the right to get to the destination in the first place. And don't think all those writers sit in business class on planes, en-

joy private butler service, or have guides and drivers waiting for them everywhere. They don't. If only it were as easy as all those posts and photos look! Travel writers on press trips are usually forced to look at multiple categories of rooms and every meeting destination and restaurant on site; they are herded like sheep into vans or coaches and have no choice but to follow a packed itinerary starting at breakfast and not ending until long after dinner. (Editor's note: Some publications, such as *The New York Times*, prohibit freelancers who have accepted free press trips.)

So if you're hoping to make it as a travel writer or at least add a few travel clips to your portfolio, be prepared for a long hard slog, and, as cliché as it sounds, do not quit your daytime job—yet. Twenty years ago, I sold my film production company to make my living as a freelance writer. Fortunately, the sale gave me enough cash to back up my passion. Good thing, because it took three years before I was able to get past low-paying regional magazines and break into some glossy higher-paying national publications.

And while we're on the subject, let's talk about higher-paying pubs. In the early 2000s, I was writing 2,000- to 3,500-word features and being paid anywhere from \$1 to \$3 a word. Today, most travel features have been slashed to 1,500 words, and some formerly well-paying magazines are trying to cut writers fees to below \$1 a word. These days

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there are also fewer narrative features. Look at any magazine and you'll find more service pieces: “chunklets and particles,” is what Larry Bleiberg, former editor of the *Dallas Morning News*, predicted would become the future. He was absolutely right. Flip through magazines and newspaper travel sections and see 5 Perfect Beach Vacations; A Weekend in Madrid; 10 Top Destination Spas...you get the point.

And then there's attrition. Since 1997 when I became a full-time freelancer, more than 44 of the publications I've written for have folded, including *Travel Holiday*, *Travel and Life*, *Executive Traveler*, *More Magazine*, *Global Business Traveler* and many others. Worse, many of my former editors are now competing against me instead of assigning stories. That's the bad news. The good news is you can still make a living writing travel for magazines and newspapers that pay at least \$1 a word and sometimes more, but you must be very persistent. Getting a story published is only 1 percent inspiration, but it's 99 percent perspiration (as Thomas Edison said about genius). Forget the romance of being a travel writer. The only way you're going to get a destination piece published is if you put in the time and hard work required to successfully nail an assignment. Here are my best tips for writers hoping to break in to the travel-writing market. Here are my best tips for writers hoping to break in to the travel-writing market.

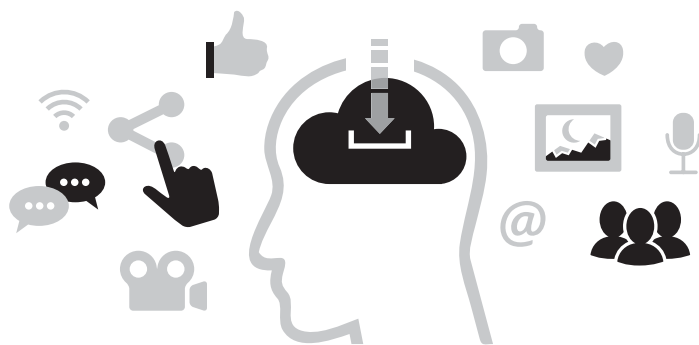
Pictured above left to right: Goldsmith teaches harmonica to kids in Cartagena, Colombia. Goldsmith chopping into Beaver Creek. Goldsmith at Sun Studios, Memphis, where Elvis recorded “Blue Suede Shoes.” Margie Goldsmith. Goldsmith on an early morning run with the accounts manager at Four Seasons George Cinq in Paris, France.

1 STUDY THE MAGAZINE RELIGIOUSLY. Don't just look at the issue on the stands. Instead, read at least six back issues, or even a year. Most archives are online, and if not, there's always the public library. Look at what kinds of stories they publish. What's the style? Are there essays? Is it all chunklets and particles and listicles? Do they go for a certain geographic location? Who's advertising with them?



2 WHAT SHOULD YOU PITCH? Not every publication takes narratives, and writing first-person might not be your strong suit. Are you a meticulous researcher? Why not pitch a “Best of” or “Top 10” list of something you know well such as specific types of hotels? (Tree houses? Overwater bungalows? Eateries? Wines?) You won't know if the topic you want to pitch is something the editor is looking for unless you research the publication. And don't forget that travel writing is not limited to magazines, newspapers, and online sites. Travel content includes advertorials, alumni publications, medical magazines, regional outlets, travel anthologies—you can Google everything these days, so find a publication which might be open to your query.

3 HOW DO YOU WRITE A GOOD PITCH? Once you understand the publication, you'll be in a position to craft a pitch. Make sure you spell the editor's name correctly. It might sound like a no-brainer, but every editor mentions that right up front. And do not write an “evergreen” pitch, which is obvious because you forgot to change either the editor's name or the name of the publication—it's just another reason for an editor to hit “delete.” Never send a pitch with, “Hi, I'm going to Paris. Want a story?” or pitch a personal essay on cycling in Croatia if the publication only publishes service pieces. What's most important is that you come up with a great idea that meets their needs and demographic, and that means making sure you have a fresh angle. If you're going to pitch a “Best of” or “Top 10” list, make sure it's not something they've done before, and make sure it's unusual. No editor wants the same-old, same-old. And if you're pitching an experiential piece, make sure it ends with an aha! moment.



5 PRACTICE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY—AND PHOTOGRAPHY-SOURCING—SKILLS. It's not enough to be able to write a great story. Many editors expect writers to source their own photos (most of the time for no additional payment), so you need to take excellent shots or find the right “free” sources (CVBs, etc.). I personally think the future is going to be video, not still photography, and soon a photo will feel as dated as a CD compared to an MP3. But take heart; you don't need a cameraman or soundman to create good video. Even a Go-Pro can take excellent footage.

4 BUILD A FOLLOWING—AND TOUT IT. How many Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn followers do you have? Most editors insist that the writer promote their articles through social media. It's important that editors be able to find you online as well—through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and on your own website. More and more magazines are appealing to millennials, and you need to make good use of social media if you hope to be successful with this demographic.





Market Report | PACE COMMUNICATIONS

PACE >>>

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PACE COMMUNICATIONS

Based in Greensboro, N.C., Pace Communications is the largest independently owned content agency in the U.S., with satellite offices in New York, Dallas, Bentonville, Arkansas, and San Antonio. Although it started out as a custom publisher, focusing on inflight glossies and destination publications, as an agency, its primary focus has switched from print to digital.

You'll still find Southwest and print clients like AAA on the client roster, but the company has pushed past its print and destination origins to focus more on being a full-service digital agency. It was named Agency of the Year at Content Marketing World in 2017, the second time in the past five years Pace has taken top honors, and it's the only agency in its category to be named a finalist every year since 2013.

Perhaps CEO Bonnie McElveen-Hunter—who founded Pace in 1973 and is the current chair of the American Red Cross—was seeking to deepen this full-service mindset when she named Jason Whiting the company's new president in 2017. Whiting was formerly the lead executive of MR.Y, a New York-based global digital marketing agency. He has also had leadership roles at digital agencies including Huge and AKQA.

Pace doesn't have many copywriters on staff, relying heavily on freelancers,

often looking for writers with subject matter expertise for their clients. However, it can be challenging for freelancers to break in, because staffing changes can be frequent, and having a relationship with a Pace editor or creative director doesn't always mean you'll get pulled in on work for other accounts.

Pitch your expertise directly with a letter of introduction. "I like a short and sweet note," says Liz Olech, an associate creative director at Pace. "How you got my info/who referred you, the topics you cover (your expertise), or topics you want to cover. Even if you know I assign financial content, but you like to write about DIY, include it. We switch accounts and trade writer info with our peers, so it helps to just say it all." Olech joined Pace in 2015 as a senior editor on the Blu e-cigarettes account. Now her primary client is Wells Fargo, and she leads the bank's content program that targets the high school and college-aged audience, plus young professionals and parents. She also works on other accounts,

Payment: Fees vary by client and complexity of the assignment, but are typically 50 cents to 75 cents per word. "If you're bringing more to the table, I am always willing to be flexible," says Olech. "For instance, sourcing multiple experts or sources, or researching a graphic to be designed for the piece, or crunching numbers to provide contextual examples. Doing stuff like that—and doing it well—is invaluable to me."

Rights: All rights.

Kill fees: Yes, but fees can vary by client.

Queries: Send letters of information on personal finance, travel, and fashion to Liz Olech, liz.olech@paceco.com. General LOIs can go to Elaine Russell, elaine.russell@paceco.com.

including Choice Hotels and RetailMeNot, and she's interested in personal finance, real estate, retail, and lifestyle content. "Send me direct hyperlinked headlines to your best clips. It's like clickbait for me. Sending me to a portfolio link is just another step to review your work, and it's not as enticing as the actual headline."

Writers might have luck by sending a letter of introduction to Creative Resources Manager Elaine Russell, who is in a new role and has been tasked with finding support (internally and externally) for creative teams. Make sure to include your subject matter expertise, but don't forget to mention content specialties that aren't topic-specific, such as experience writing copy for infographics, quizzes, video scripts, or branded blog posts.

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