

fetch WRITERS' GUIDELINES

Thank you for your interest in writing for FETCH. FETCH's unique focus on the North Bay community of dogs, indoor pets, and their people provides you with a great opportunity to write with passion about topics of interest to FETCH's readers. Please visit the FETCH web site at www.fetchthepaper.com to see the topics that we'll be covering in our upcoming issues.



It's our team's philosophy to ensure that our articles provide a readable, fun, and informative editorial environment for our readers and advertisers. To that end, we've provided the following guidelines. We appreciate writers who take the time and effort to follow these guidelines; doing so helps ensure your article will make it into print (and that you will get paid).

GETTING STARTED

We prefer that our writers contact us first (editors@fetchthepaper.com) to find out what we're looking for or to pitch an idea for an upcoming issue. All new writers will be asked to submit a writing sample (preferably from a previously published, bylined article).

If we give you an assignment, we will send you the specifications we've agreed upon (topic, length, due date, etc.). Please adhere to our agreements; if something changes contact us right away. We strive to be flexible, and we ask that you do your part by keeping us informed of any changes to our original understanding.

If you've already written something that you think is right for FETCH, we do accept unsolicited manuscripts under the following conditions:

- If the article was previously published, you must have rights to repurpose/reprint the article in our publication and web site.
- We will not return unsolicited materials, so please don't send us your only copy of the article or images.

THE FETCH STYLE

Our goal is to have FETCH readers enjoy our paper's editorial style and quality. We want to leave the impression of being readable, smart, informative, fun (except for some serious topics, which we do not avoid), and open. We will not sacrifice good grammar, journalistic integrity, and story organization in the process.

Some guidelines:

- Keep paragraphs short. Organize your article so that you draw the reader in, present key information, provide details, and (except for news stories) include a definite "close" that will leave the reader satisfied.
- Use sub heads to highlight the main "sections" of your piece. Subheads should be short and snappy. They must fit on one line.
- Avoid passive voice (e.g., "The dog was walked" (passive) vs. "He walked the dog" (active) and use of prepositional phrases (e.g., "The most respected vet in town" vs. "The town's most respected vet"). These practices tighten your writing.

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- Unless you are writing an opinion piece (for which we usually do not pay) we expect you to be objective and factual in your writing. Present as variety of views from multiple sources whenever possible. Use sources that are reliable and have authority in their field. Double check all facts, phone numbers, statistics, etc., and provide source notes when possible. Be especially careful when doing research on the internet, where a lot of what's available falls short on facts.
- We will have your article edited to our style and for correct grammar, punctuation, etc. However articles that arrive with significant problems will be returned without payment.

PREPARING YOUR ARTICLE

Now that you've got your assignment and are preparing it for publication, what else do you need to know? Here are the ten key steps to follow:

1. Our preferred format is Microsoft Word files, with a minimum of formatting. That means no bolding, boxes, tabs, underlining, extra spaces between sentences or paragraphs, etc.
2. Please ask for and use our standard template, it will save you a lot of time. (The template is currently in development and will be available shortly at www.fetchthepaper.com)
3. Make sure you include all the following elements clearly defined in your document:
 - Your name (as you want it to appear in your byline);
 - A short bio
 - Three suggested pull quotes. Choose fun or important phrases from the body of your article;
 - Resources and further info (these will be placed in a box at the end of your article and should include URLs, phone numbers, etc.,) for resources mentioned in your article);
 - Reading recommendations (please include ISBN or other sourcing information)
 - Picture captions
 - Sidebars
 - Total word count
4. Please provide your article in a PC-friendly version.
5. Any photos or other graphics accompanying your article should be hi-resolution and suitable for printing. We will not print photos that are muddy, don't size-up well, etc.
6. Punctuation: no spaces around hyphens (-) or em-dashes (—). Use exclamation marks sparingly!!!!!!! And please, only ONE space after a period.
7. Gender—please alternate genders when referring to non-specific individuals and dogs. Dogs are never “it”—use he, she, or a name, please.
8. Refer to the reader as “you.” We want our readers to feel involved in your story, and addressing some anonymous third party is not the way to accomplish that.
9. Include your email address and phone number so the editor can reach you if needed.
10. Relax, and enjoy writing for FETCH. Contact us any time with questions—we'll help all we can.



THE MONEY QUESTION

You won't get rich writing for FETCH, so that means you are likely doing this for love of dogs—that's great, so are we. To protect all parties, we have the following financial/legal policies:

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- We are buying right of first publication. FETCH may publish your article once in the paper and once on our web site. This leaves you free to sell it to someone else later, if you desire. Other arrangements by negotiation.
- Our column and department names, graphics not supplied by you, etc., remain the property of FETCH/MARA Publishing.
- We do not pay for letters to the editor or other purely 'opinion' pieces. Contact us if you would like to submit an opinion piece.
- We reserve the right to reject any submission. If we accept your article but subsequently decide not to publish it, we pay a "kill fee" of 50% of the payment for a published article (see scale below).
- Generally we pay within 45 days of accepting an article for publication. That means if you submit an article for the June issue and we hold it until November, you won't have to wait until November to be paid—your payment will be within 45 days of receiving our acceptance letter.
- We believe in clear separation of editorial materials and advertising.
 - If an advertiser submits ad materials that, in our opinion, resemble editorial content, we will label it as such.
 - We reserve the right to reject articles that, in our opinion, promote a particular business or service to the point of becoming "advertorial".
- We pay for published words, not what you submit. That means we determine payment after we've accepted your article and edited your copy. Payments are based on the following scale:

Word Count	Payment
Up to 499 words	\$40
500 to 799 words	\$50
800 to 1199 words	\$75
1200 to 1599 words	\$100
1600 to 1999 words	\$125
2000 to 2400 words	\$150

Thanks for your interest in writing for FETCH. Please contact us at editors@fetchthepaper.com with your ideas, questions, and inquiries.

