

## ***Down East* Submission Guidelines**

Thanks for your interest in contributing to the magazine of Maine. We are always looking for new ideas and perspectives as we continue our 60-year tradition of telling the stories of a place that means so much to us. There are a few things a prospective contributor should know.

### **The basics:**

- *Down East* accepts very few unsolicited queries and manuscripts each year. Most of our articles are written in-house or written on assignment by regular contributors.
- Everything we publish in *Down East* is directly related to state of Maine — its culture, history, personalities, destinations, current events, and more. We are unlikely to respond to submissions that do not have a clear and strong connection to Maine. If the idea you're pitching could be covered by another city/regional magazine elsewhere in the country (e.g., the resurgence in the popularity of contra dancing, the fallout of the housing crisis, an explanation of a fishing technique), it will not be a good fit for us.
- Submissions can be sent to [editorial@downeast.com](mailto:editorial@downeast.com). We prefer to receive pitches and submissions by email. **Unless you have a previous relationship with an editor, please do not call our offices to pitch a story by phone** — it makes it difficult to give your ideas the attention they deserve, and it's much harder to circulate a pitch among other editors.
- Pitches should be accompanied by two or three clips, to give us an idea of your writing style. Manuscripts should be sent as attachments, compatible with Microsoft Word.
- If email is not possible, we will read queries and manuscripts submitted by mail to:  
*Down East* Submissions  
PO Box 679  
Camden, ME 04843

If you require a postal response or any items to be returned, please include an addressed envelope with sufficient postage. We take every precaution to ensure that materials are safely returned, but we assume no responsibility for unsolicited photos or manuscripts.

- We try to respond to all unsolicited submissions within two months. Please feel free to nudge us with an email if you haven't received a response in that time.
- **We are not seeking any unsolicited poetry or fiction at this time.**
- Payment varies, depending on the subject and intended use in the magazine, but generally falls between \$.40/word and \$.70/word.

### **A few tips for a successful submission:**

- Please keep in mind that *Down East* runs a three-month lead time, and we often have

- stories assigned much farther out. A pitch with a strong tie to November, for example, should be received no later than July, and much earlier for features.
- Particularly in our feature well, we place a lot of importance on accompanying visuals. Your pitch should mention what kind of images you envision accompanying your story.
  - It is essential to study at least six months' worth of back issues before submitting. Submissions that show little familiarity with the magazine have a low chance of success.
  - The more recently we've covered a topic, the less likely we are to revisit it any time soon.
  - Submissions should be targeted to a specific section of the magazine. If you can't tell us where in our pages you feel your idea would fit, it's likely not a story for us.
  - The key questions your pitch or manuscript needs to answer are *why is this interesting?* and *why is this interesting right now?* The existence of a great restaurant or a lovely store is not by itself a story. Give us a hook, timely or otherwise.
  - Attention to detail helps us thin the herd of submissions. The name of our magazine is *Down East*. (It's not, for example, *Downeast* or *DownEast*.) Getting the name of the mag wrong in a pitch does not inspire confidence in a writer's ability to execute an assignment.
  - Certain topics have a very low chance of acceptance, mainly because we receive many similar pitches or because it's a topic that has already gotten attention from *Down East* or another publication. A few to avoid: Profiles of farmers or trend pieces about organic farming/farm-to-table dining. Beer stories or brewery profiles. Stories about entrepreneurs selling Maine lobsters outside of Maine.

### ***Down East* sections open to submissions**

#### **NORTH BY EAST**

Our front-of-book section is mostly written in-house, but we will occasionally assign a piece based on an unsolicited submission. North by East pieces are newsy and often a little offbeat, an eclectic selection of vignettes about Maine life. They share a "house voice" that's informed and a little playful. Many items are something other than straight narrative — lists or graphic items, for instance. The What's in a Picture page is written in-house. We sometimes run short (~500 word) historical essays in North by East. Most North by East pieces are timely and 200–500 words long, with the exception of Talk of Maine. Talk of Maine stories address newsy issues and current events, involve significant reportage, and run 1500–1800 words.

#### **DOORYARD**

Our Home and Garden features are mostly written in-house or by one of regular contributors, but we will occasionally assign an article based on unsolicited submission. These short features (around 400 words) are highly visual, with the text typically responding directly to the photographs and design. We give priority to living spaces, old or new, that have a strong sense of

the owners' personal style and reflect life in Maine. We advise submitting scouting photos with any house or garden pitch.

We welcome pitches for our Critters features about Maine wildlife. Stories about animals should have a sense of fun and an eye toward the peculiar or uncommon. Recent examples include an Aroostook County colony of flying squirrels regularly sought out by filmmakers, the strange life cycle of the blackfly, and a rare butterfly found only on the Katahdin tundra. Critters stories run 600–1,000 words.

We are always looking for good pitches of innovative Maine businesses and entrepreneurs to profile in our Making it in Maine pages. These need a strong hook and often have an air of the unexpected. Recent examples include a Maine company that makes clerical garb and a designer of prosthetic eyeballs. It's critical in this section to look a dozen or so recent examples. Making it in Maine stories run 1000–1200 words.

My Maine is our section most open to new contributors. My Maine stories are personal essays of 800–1000 words that focus on some aspect of the writer's relationship to Maine and the Maine landscape. Pieces are often lyrical, sometimes humorous, and almost always have a strong first-person component. We receive more submissions for My Maine than any other section of the magazine; please give us three months to respond to your submission before following up.

## FEATURES

It is exceedingly rare for us to assign a feature to a first-time contributor without a strong track record in magazine journalism. Again, the best way to get a sense of what we look for in a feature pitch is to read through several recent issues. Recent features that are characteristic of what we look for in a feature submission include this piece on the Shaw House program for homeless teens: <http://goo.gl/61U764>, this piece on Bangor's Waterfront Concert series: <http://goo.gl/hlfcHV>, this piece on the controversy over beach access: <http://goo.gl/AUaLwy>, or this piece on the dwindling number of full-time residents on Monhegan Island: <http://goo.gl/fsjSLH>. We also run occasional feature-length profiles. Almost never is a *Down East* feature simply explanatory (e.g., a description of moose mating habits, an account of some historical event). Unsolicited first-person essays have a very slim chance of acceptance.

*Down East* features run anywhere from 1000 words for a photo-heavy piece to upwards of 6,000 words. Most feature stories fall between 2,000 and 3,500 words.

Our feature well also often contains town profiles and service features (Best of Maine, lighthouse tours, Portland dining guide), but these are written almost exclusively in-house or assigned to our

regular contributing writers.

## GUIDE

The Guide covers dining, arts, culture, and events around the state. Our dining reviews are mostly written by a stable of regular contributors. We will not read unsolicited manuscripts for a dining review. We are open to pitches, but we very rarely assign reviews to first-time contributors. Clips showing some experience with food-and-beverage writing are a must. We review new restaurants after they've been open about a year. We sometimes revisit old favorites when there's been a change in ownership, chef, or menu.

Much of the rest of the Guide is written in-house, although we do accept pitches for arts coverage, excursion pieces, and occasional artist profiles.

**Thanks again for your interest in contributing to *Down East!***