

## **CONTRIBUTOR GUIDELINES**

(Revised 8/2017)

GOLDENSEAL is a quarterly magazine published by the State of West Virginia, Department of Arts, Culture and History. Founded in 1975, GOLDENSEAL documents the state's rich cultural background and recent history by means of oral accounts, research articles, and old and new photographs. Stories and photographs are submitted by freelance contributors. We welcome non-fiction manuscripts on West Virginia folklife, traditional farming practices, industry and commerce, holiday and community celebrations, immigrants, music, crafts, herbs, architecture, religion, politics, medicine, sports, railroading, women's history, and similar topics. We prefer stories about living West Virginians, based on recent, direct interviews. We generally do not publish manuscripts that focus on the pre-20th century era (including the Civil War), out-of-state activities, genealogy, or fiction.

Our circulation is approximately 10,000; roughly 70% of our readers are in-state – most of the remainder are former residents or frequent visitors. Story ideas should be submitted to the editor, in writing, as far in advance as possible. Submissions or proposals should be mailed in hard-copy form or e-mailed as Word (or similar) files, along with high-quality images that could accompany the articles. Feature articles generally average 1,500-2,000 words in length, though shorter features are also accepted. Please let us know if the material has already been published or is being considered by other publications – ordinarily we cannot publish material printed elsewhere. Due to the high volume of submissions, contributors should allow nine months to one year for a response. Please be aware that it usually takes up to two years from initial submission to publication.

For story ideas, we recommend that potential authors review our on-line index. Typically, we do not publish articles if the topic has already been covered in GOLDENSEAL, unless it is a distinctly different angle on the story.

We prefer to process our own scans or copy prints of historical photographs, working from original prints whenever possible. For publication purposes, we usually cannot work from photocopies, laser prints, commercially produced copy prints, copies taken from other publications, or microfilm. Digital images should be submitted on disk as high-res tif or jpeg files only, generally at least 300 dpi for a 5x7 image. Be sure to include .tif or .jpg file extensions.

**Author payment:** We pay 10 cents a word for one-time use of original manuscripts. We regret that we cannot pay for travel or other reimbursements. Payment follows publication.

**Photographer payment:** We pay \$25 for photos we use that were taken specifically for that article. Photos must be of top professional quality. We always welcome historical photographs. While we cannot pay for their use, we handle them very carefully and return them promptly.

### **A FEW TIPS FOR GOLDENSEAL WRITERS**

**Veracity** - In many cases, an article in GOLDENSEAL may be the only published source for information on a particular subject, so please be careful with facts, dates, names, and spellings.

**Tone and format** – The best advice to authors is to read other articles that GOLDENSEAL has published, particularly within the last 10 years. Manuscripts should be written in an informal narrative style, with generous use of direct quotations. We cannot use stories written as formal academic papers. It is easy to be overcome with enthusiasm when writing about a state as wonderful as West Virginia, but please refrain from exaggerating or over-romanticizing your subject. We cannot accept manuscripts that are overly promotional, self-promotional, or express partisan political views.

**Verb tense** - Use the past tense in narrative writing. However, since so many GOLDENSEAL stories are based on oral recollections, we prefer that references to a living interviewee be kept in the present tense. This helps distinguish between what happened in the recent past – at the interview or in your other interaction with your subject – and in the "real" past, maybe decades ago. Use the first person when referring to yourself or when writing from your personal experience.

**Quotations** - Be accurate. Give exact words, especially when quoting from printed sources, and be as precise as possible when quoting from the spoken word. We try to convey our story subjects' natural way of speaking, as much as possible.

**Publication and editorial decisions** are final and rest entirely with the GOLDENSEAL editor. Decisions are based on the parameters set out in these guidelines, the short- and long-term needs of the magazine, the overall quality and style of writing, the author's willingness to accept the staff's final edits, and the editor's personal and professional judgment. All submissions are acknowledged promptly upon receipt, are read personally by the editor, and receive an individual response.

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