



## **Editorial Guidelines**

**Revised June 2020**

### ***General Guidelines***

Airstream Life is interested in articles, illustrations, and photographs that have to do with the Airstream lifestyle. The following document details what sort of articles we seek, how to contribute, and what to expect. But in summary, here are a few important points:

1. We don't accept unsolicited articles. **Please send a query letter first!**
2. Authors are paid for upon publication, and per-word rates vary. If you have a rate expectation, please state it in your initial query.
3. We buy all rights to articles in both online and in print form, and also the right to reprint or repurpose articles for compilations and books.
4. You are much more likely to get published if you can also supply photography for your article, or point us to photography that is available.
5. Because the magazine comes out quarterly, it can sometimes take three to six months for your article to appear in print.

### ***Writer's Guidelines***

Airstream Life is a lively, inspiring publication. For all the types of articles we accept, writing should be clear, accurate, informative, and engaging. We look for unique perspectives, interesting opinions, entertaining historical accounts, and useful knowledge related to the traveling lifestyle. The writing should reflect a familiarity with RVs and the Airstream culture. Topical articles should have a long shelf life.

**Feature articles** should be free of overly technical and insider jargon, and generous with explanation, background, and character. They should also be rich with ideas, personalities, or provide new insight into the Airstream experience.

Both historical and current topics are welcome. For example, lively interviews or profiles of interesting people in the Airstream community are very desirable. Such people could be famous, infamous, unsung heroes, or merely representatives of the Airstream culture and current trends.

**Travel articles** should offer a unique perspective on some aspect of traveling with an Airstream. Rather than "here's what we did on our trip," or a re-hashing of well-known sights and stories, we look for articles that are a bit different and more in-depth, with strong Airstream content.

**Technical and informational articles** should be informative, well-researched, and useful. Writers of technical articles should have specific research or knowledge behind what they are saying, and their articles should be focused specifically on Airstream owners.

Articles can range from 700 to 1,800 words, depending on the department they fit into. Feature articles (800-1,800 words) must include photos or illustrations. (See Photo guidelines, below.) We can assist with access to Airstream historical archive photos as appropriate. In some cases we can arrange freelance photography, and we have access to relevant stock photography. We also have a large catalog of Airstream photography which may be useful.

We often develop story ideas ourselves and may assign them to freelancers. To be considered for such assignments, send 2-3 of your most relevant clips and a letter about your specialties or interests. (See Queries and Suggestions, below). Freelance authors should have more than a passing familiarity with RV'ing, and especially Airstream culture.

Authors will be asked to provide a list of sources used for their articles, including phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses for fact-checking and photography purposes.

### ***What We Don't Publish***

We do occasionally publish stories about exotic caravans, but only those that can be considered quality travel writing. Our stories are driven by personalities, places, and interesting events. First-person is discouraged unless you can weave an exceptional story.

Because we are a quarterly periodical, we can't do much with breaking news. We also do not publish poetry, fiction, product reviews, rally reports, club news, press releases, campground or dealership reviews, and stories purportedly written by dogs.

Generally, if it's identical to an article you could find in "Trailer Life" or "Blue Beret," it's not for us. Our feature style and orientation is closer to "Smithsonian," "Outside," and "National Geographic Adventure."

### ***Departments***

Many departments have regular authors, such as Interiors, National Parks, and Old Aluminum. However, we accept general "feature" articles that don't necessarily fall into any of the above categories, so don't be dissuaded. In the past we've run articles on Buckminster Fuller, how aluminum is made, bridges, old highways, US/Canada border procedures, sea turtles, celebrity owners, AirBnb, birdwatching, and many other diverse topics that can be related to Airstream travel.

# AIRSTREAM *Life*

## ***Fees & Deadlines***

Because Airstream Life is a quarterly periodical, we typically work about six months in advance of publication, a fact that contributors should bear in mind. **Payment for articles and photography is upon publication.** You should expect to submit a first draft and, in some cases a second draft after receiving editorial notes. **We try to work with authors to make them successful.**

We pay a variable rate of \$0.10 to \$0.40 per *published* word (after editing). This is dependent on the writer's experience (professional freelancers get the higher rates) and other factors. If you have a rate expectation, please state it in your initial query.

We buy exclusive print rights and all electronic rights to published pieces for 12 months, non-exclusive rights thereafter. No additional payment will be made for re-use.

In order to pay you, we are required to collect your name, address and social security or Federal tax ID number.

Byline credit and photo credit are always given.

## ***Photography Guidelines***

**Photo file size should be at least 1 MB. Smaller files may not be printable.** TIF and JPEG formats are acceptable but JPEG files must be at highest quality and not edited, cropped, or formatted for email.

Please don't Photoshop your photos unless you are a professional photographer. Usually the best photos come straight from the camera without any modification. We can make any minor corrections or crops that may be needed, during the layout process.

***If you use a phone to take photos (iPhone or Android):***

### **Take**

Avoid iPhone's built-in Camera app—it sometimes compresses details to the point of making the photos unusable. We recommend the Halide app instead.

For Android phones, try Open Camera or similar.

Avoid digital zoom in all cases.

### **Save**

Original size and format – DO NOT crop or compress

No filters (color saturation, convert to black + white, sepia or other effects)

No watermarks

## Send

Use Dropbox or Google Drive (email is OK for one or two images)

### *Images from 3<sup>rd</sup> party professional photographer:*

You must have permission to use photos taken by others, or own all rights.

## **Queries and Suggestions**

We welcome article suggestions and queries. **We don't accept unsolicited articles, so please send a query first.** It's best to include at least one sample of your writing and include the following information: your full name, mailing address, email and phone.

In your query letter, just describe the article you want to write in a paragraph or two. Let us know how you think it would fit into the magazine, and give us a brief idea of how you'd accomplish the article, or any special help you might need to research it.

We prefer queries submitted via email. Please describe the possibilities for illustration or photography, as well as your credentials. Authors who can supply good quality photographs with their articles get priority.

If the suggestion is appropriate for Airstream Life, we will respond within 30 days.

**Email to: [editor@airstreamlife.com](mailto:editor@airstreamlife.com)**

## **Top 10 Mistakes Made By Would-Be Writers**

If you've read all this, you're probably the kind of person who will succeed working with Airstream Life magazine. But if you are still wondering, check out this list of the most common (and most fatal) mistakes made by people who want to write for the magazine:

1. **Sending an article already written** before sending a query letter.
2. **Not being familiar with the magazine** before sending a query letter. It's amazing how many people think they can write for a magazine they've never seen. Subscribe, download a free sample on our website, or pick up a copy from an Airstream dealer or friend before you start your query letter.
3. Asking for pre-payment, a higher rate than other authors get, or other special terms when we haven't gotten to know each other first.
4. **Suggesting an article about yourself**, or "my first Airstream experience". We get that query every month. (If your story is really good, we might assign a freelance writer from our staff to interview you instead.)
5. **Proposing to write an article about your own Airstream.** If it's really interesting we might assign a writer.
6. **Writing in the first person** when it isn't absolutely necessary.

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## *Life*

7. **Being unwilling to accept editing** or suggestions. Writers need to be flexible to be successful!
8. **Failing to check your facts.** (It shows in the finished product.)
9. **Plagiarism**, or drawing too heavily from other published sources. We check.
10. **Being afraid to send a query!** Sure, this may all be intimidating and you may have no prior professional writing experience, but if you've got the right attitude and can write clearly, we want to hear from you!