

A Freelance Writer's Guide to the Review

Pitch UNC news and feature stories where alumni, faculty or students play a key role.

The *Carolina Alumni Review* engages writers for a variety of feature work that informs and entertains the alumni and friends of the University and helps them maintain valued connections to the things they loved about Chapel Hill, their interest in Carolina today and their hopes for its future.

The magazine has been published continuously since 1912, and that covers less than half of UNC's history. We publish six issues per year. You can delve into the archive at alumni.unc.edu/CARarchive (the most recent five years are password protected for GAA member access only, but previous years are open to the public).

Our readers look to us in print and online for lively profiles, stories of scientific discovery, trends in teaching and learning, extracurricular student life, historic sketches, sports and UNC's place in broader higher education issues. We also are considered a primary source of current news.

We work as journalists, employed by a self-governed, nonprofit alumni association, not as a public relations wing of the University. The experience we seek is in magazine and newspaper feature writing — advocacy, not so much.

WHAT TO PITCH

An idea for a short piece in our news and features opening section, "The Hill," — 400 to 900 words or so — might be a good way to get started with us. We also publish feature stories in the 2,500-word-and-up range in every issue.

The Hill, which takes up the first 30-some pages of the magazine, covers news of the University in stories written somewhat like newspaper reports and news features about the issues facing the school now. The straight news usually is done in-house. We hire writers to write short profiles of campus people — students, faculty and staff; we also hire writers to write short profiles of alumni, two or so per issue.

Our feature well consists of pieces that are at least 2,500 words and can go substantially longer if needed. These stories typically require a deep dive into the subject, multiple sources, thorough interviewing. Organization is a bigger challenge at this length, and our writers must bring that experience.

You are encouraged to include photography and graphics ideas for print or for stories targeted for the web. The main distinction between print and web writing is timing. Sometimes we want to get the information out to our audience quickly, so a story might be written for web publication and then retooled for the next print edition. Most of our major print-first stories and features get published on the web as well, in addition to our magazine archive, so keep in mind additional content, links or other digital aspects that might enhance a story in that transition.

Lead time varies based on timeliness of publication and availability of sources, but we generally give writers two to three months, and we expect them to adhere to agreed-upon deadlines. We pay upon acceptance.

You will work with a staff that includes the editor, two associate editors, design and art directors and a digital editor (who in addition to web development of stories, also produces podcasts associated with some features).

WHAT NOT TO PITCH

Naturally, alumni like to share their achievements. That's why every alumni magazine has a Class Notes section. Our writers understand the difference between recognition and storytelling — recognition is inherent in a success story, but it is neither the reason for nor the intended outcome of the story. First, find a compelling story; second, find the alumni or campus connection to it. Do not pitch stories about great achievers whose achievements may impress readers but whose stories will bore them. We also don't want to wander down memory lanes of their college years unless a particular experience is relevant to the story at hand.

We avoid stories that aim to promote the commercial achievements of a particular alumnus — we are not their marketing vehicle.

Above all, don't pitch to the University — pitch to the readers. We are focused on what alumni and friends want to read.

DIRECT PITCHES TO:

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Related Content

Music to Michelangelo

Posted on March 22, 2022

Renowned North Carolina artists are back right where they came from, larger than life-size, in the inspiring murals of Scott Nurkin '00.

by Eric Frederick '81
photos by Grant Balverson '93

"I couldn't believe when I found out how many musicians — not just musicians, but trailblazers — happen to be from North Carolina."

Scott Nurkin '00 was looking at a grand lot, Earl Swaggins, from outside Shelby, invented a large technique that bears his name. John Coltrane (born in Hamlet) and Thelma Houston (Shelby County) transformed jazz. Robert Flack (Black Mountain) is the only solo artist to win consecutive Record of the Year Grammy awards.

Now Nurkin, a Chapel Hill resident, is emulating them, and many more, in their hometowns. In a big way.

Nurkin recalls that during his moving artist period in the mid-2000s, he "kept going in the tank" by painting lots of these murals and signs. Many were on the walls of

CIRCULATION: ~70,000

ESTIMATED READERSHIP: 175,000

LEAD TIME: 2-3 months

FREQUENCY: Six issues per year; continuous news online

FORMATS:

- Print issue
- HTML edition
- Digital replica edition