

**Submitting your story as a contributor to Focus Mid-South magazine:
Rules and guidelines for writers and photographers**

Updated: November 11, 2019

Initial each page at the bottom, then sign the agreement on the last page to show that you understand all of the terms.

Policies:

Please abide by our published deadlines for contributors. Deadlines are printed in our Media Kit that is available on our website, focusmidsouth.com.

When submitting a story, please identify yourself on all documents that are sent in by typing in your name and the date submitted at the top of your Word document. Please give your electronic file a relevant name. For example, a story about birds might be saved as a .doc file as “Penguins_byJohnSmith.”

Submit your article as completely as you can:

- Check name spellings, phone numbers, and web addresses. Check them again.
- Support what you’ve written by using quotes from authorities in the field you’re discussing.
- Keep your notes.
- Get right to the point. The most important things come first. Less important things come after/last.

Writers should always expect that their story **will be edited**, including:

- Spelling and grammar
- Comprehension (do your words make sense?)
- Length (500-600 words is typically the word count for a one-page story)
- Any reason necessary to fit our brand, deadlines, word count...anything
- *Contributing writers must agree to this in writing before they can be considered a contributor

In any case, the good of the magazine will be considered above the interest of the writer or photographer. Stories will be edited accordingly.

That means that your work may be heavily edited or changed a great deal. This is not a reflection of the importance of you or your work. Writing for a magazine is a process that involves many people, deadlines, and space constraints. That’s just the way this works. No one’s work is ‘sacred.’ Egos can get bruised. If you don’t want your stories to be heavily edited (and still appear under your byline) for all the reasons we mention, we ask that you not contribute stories, or that you write under our Staff byline.*

*Writers may forego using a byline on stories that they submit. In this case, the ‘Staff’ byline will be used and no credit will be given to the contributor on the story itself or on the contributor page on the masthead. This will apply to all of the writer’s stories until written notice is given to begin using the writer’s byline.

Photos or images submitted by the story’s writer must have a signed photo release attached with the image owner’s signature, and their preferred photo credit spelled out exactly in legible writing (typed bylines are preferred). For example: story by Sally Ann Jones, or story by Sally A. Jones. Photographers must agree that they are giving Focus Mid-South magazine permission to use the photo, that they have the right to give permission, and that the use is free of charge. If the photo does not have this authorization, we cannot use the image. Photo credit will be given in the byline, or adjacent to the photo as per the standard practice. A photo release is available under a separate tab.

For commissioned photos, photographers are asked to put photo credit information in the ‘File Info’ area (Adobe Photoshop) of the electronic file. Also, please add a caption in this area and identify people and places in your image. Please note the date that the photo was taken.

Please initial_____

Focus Mid-South considers photos that are commissioned to be work for hire and as such, we reserve the right to manipulate them as we see fit.

Anyone who wishes to use photos that we have commissioned must have the express written consent of both Focus Mid-South magazine and the photographer. We do not charge for use of our images if we give consent, but it is expected that the photographer would be compensated. Arrangements for that would be made directly with the photographer if our consent is given to use the photo outside the magazine.

We guard our story ideas from other media outlets because sharing stories before they are published puts at risk our ability to offer unique content, and it creates an opportunity for us to get ‘scooped’ (someone hears our story idea and gets it to press faster than we can). Please do not share your story idea or draft with **anyone** (friends, partners...anyone) before the story is published in the magazine.

Though not considered professional practice, since most of our contributors are not trained writers, we will allow them to ask the subject of the story to review work. Writers should remind them of our policy: they are not to share even a rough draft or the story idea with anyone. Furthermore, even if the subject ‘approves’ the story, Focus Mid-South reserves the right to edit the story without notice to the author for the reasons mentioned above.

Focus Mid-South magazine is a not-for-profit endeavor. It is ‘work from the heart’ for the LGBT community. Compensation for writing or photography submissions is neither written nor implied. Contributors to the magazine are not paid for their work unless they have an express written agreement beforehand, directly with the publisher, Ray Rico. Occasionally, we can reward contributors with movie passes or tickets to events that we sponsor. If you would like either, please submit your request as early as possible. We cannot guarantee that we will have tickets available for you to use, but if we do, we are happy to share.

Contributors to the magazine shall not act as agents or representatives of the magazine for any reason, and therefore should not imply or offer to anyone else compensation for any work that is performed on behalf of the magazine. Questions about compensation for work should be sent directly to the publisher before work is started. For example, Jenny wants to write a story. She knows that she needs a photo to accompany the story. Her friend William is a photographer. Jenny asks William to shoot photos for the story. She makes sure to tell him that there is no compensation for the job, that he would be doing this ‘for the greater good’ of the LGBT community. She tells him that all profits from the magazine are shared with local organizations that provide services for the LGBT community in the Mid-South. William is an ally of the LGBT community and agrees to do the work for free. He signs the photo release and Jenny and William go on to create a great written and visual story for the magazine.

Stories may be shared with other outlets provided that the publisher (Ray Rico) provides express written consent for each use with each specific request.

- Stories, photos and illustrations, or any materials that have been submitted to Focus magazines (Mid-South/Middle Tennessee, for print or online) are considered the property of Focus Mid-South magazine once they are published. Compensation for a story or lack thereof does not constitute a change in the aforementioned practice.
- After receiving permission to release content to other outlets, a contributor may negotiate with the requesting outlet for personal compensation to reprint the work. The compensation should be at fair market value (as of the revision of this document, \$0.20/word). Compensation above the ‘going rate’ should be discussed with the publisher of Focus prior to settling on an amount with the third party. Focus shall receive a greater portion of any amount in excess of their ‘going rate’ or as agreed upon between the publisher and author.

All reprinted work must:

Be used only AFTER the work has appeared in print or online in Focus.

Work **MUST** carry the associated bylines for writers/photographers and include the credit:

©2019 Focus® Mid-South. Reprinted with permission. Focusmidsouth.com

or

©2019 Focus® Middle Tennessee. Reprinted with permission. Focusmidtenn.com

Photos must be credited if used with the reprinted material. Photographers shall be compensated at the 'going rate' for their work if a financial agreement is made with a third party.

Agreement

If you understand and agree to these terms, please sign, date and return this page. You may take a photo of your signed documents as long as all four corners of the page are showing.

Email signed and scanned documents:

editor@focusmidsouth.com

Or send signed and scanned documents via USPS:

Editor
2294 Young Avenue
Memphis, TN 38104

Print Your Name _____

Sign Your Name _____

Date _____

Thank you

Please initial _____