

### About the magazine

The Good Life is both for and about the people of Central Texas who live and work in the five counties (Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop and Caldwell) that make up the Austin metropolitan area. The Good Life is exclusively a local publication. We do not publish articles about folks who don't live in this area. All the articles we publish must have a local focus and cite local sources. Writers living elsewhere have rarely been able to produce suitable articles, because they're usually not able to get the local flavor and local sources that are needed for the magazine.

The Good Life premiered in October 1997 and has gathered an impassioned, involved readership. We aim for educated readers and our desire from the beginning was to smarten up the coverage, not dumb it down. Despite all the distractions that life has to offer we think that the Austin area still has plenty of people who want to read something meaningful, something that enhances their relationship with the community. While we do of course want to entertain and enlighten our readers, above all we strive to convey substance with style and to make an emotional connection with our readers. Through education and experience our readers have gained knowledge and wisdom that we respect. It's a challenge to meet their high expectations. To that end, we do not publish canned copy. No pabulum, no clichéd material aimed at the lowest common denominator. We hire the best writers and photographers to produce something original, something fresh, work of real value.

We publish a wide range of feature stories, from hard-hitting articles about weighty topics to pieces designed for sheer entertainment. Activism, the arts, the community, education, the environment, family, fitness, health, investigative reports, nature, neighborhoods, outdoor activities, parenting, participatory sports, pets, politics, profiles of interesting local people, recreation, renewable energy, sustainability, transportation, urban living, wellness, and many other topics--from the extraordinary to the off-the-wall--are good topics for features in The Good Life.

The features we publish must be written in the style of journalism, that is, to include multiple points of view from a variety of knowledgeable sources.

What all the people we have profiled in The Good Life have in common is that they are high achievers. They are people who have helped to make Austin the fabulous city that it is. They are people who recognize that while Austin is not perfect they nevertheless value what this city has to offer and they work to make it better, just as this city helps them to be better people.

We do not publish fiction. We do not publish reprints. We do not publish travel articles. We do not publish question-and-answer interviews. We do not publish stories about businesses (except in our regular short monthly feature called Austin Originals; these pieces are scheduled months in advance and are written by a regular contributor). We do not publish essays except those produced by our regular columnists. We have a talented team of regular columnists covering a variety of topics and we do not envision adding more columns.

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### **About the magazine's circulation**

The Good Life is widely distributed and is available free at hundreds of locations. Most of the locations are in Austin but we also distribute to the neighboring cities of Cedar Park, Georgetown, Lakeway, Leander, Round Rock and San Marcos.

Until recently we usually posted on our web site one feature story and a couple of columns from each month's print edition. That feature article was retained in our on-line archive to provide an ongoing sense of what the magazine publishes. The remainder of each edition's content was not published on the web. For readers to get the complete exciting package, they had to pick up a copy of the magazine. In July 2007 we began publishing the entire content of the magazine on-line and started the process of archiving the entire content of previous editions.

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### **About the features**

The Good Life usually publishes four or five feature stories in each edition, with two of those being health, wellness or fitness stories within the Gusto section at the back of the magazine. Gusto features are usually assigned at a length of 1500 words.

Other feature articles, which run in the middle of the magazine, are generally assigned to be written at a length of between 2,000 words and 4,000 words, although we have occasionally published pieces 10,000 words or more. The writer is required to produce the piece at or near the assigned length. However, if in putting the piece together it appears the length should be significantly shorter or longer, the writer must consult with the editor before submitting the finished piece to see if the different length can be accommodated.

I prefer to make assignments at least two months or more before they are due to give talented writers the time to do their best professional work. Due dates are typically set four weeks before

the magazine goes to the printer. (The magazine generally goes to the printer about a week before the end of the month.)

Barring unusual circumstances, articles are always published in the month scheduled, as indicated when assigned. By the same token, I do not over-assign features. I depend on writers to deliver assigned features in polished and professional form by the assigned deadlines.

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### **About The Good Life style**

We adhere closely to The Chicago Manual of Style. Over the years, however, we have developed stylistic preferences that may or may not conform to Chicago. A copy of our style sheet will be provided when making assignments.

Obviously, every piece of material we publish must be factually accurate. Beyond that, the quality I most want our readers to experience in reading our features is to feel something, to be moved emotionally as well as to be informed. Writers should work to include significant human interest, and to inject humor, wit, and anything else that will heighten the readers' interest.

We want all the features we publish, including personality profiles, to be realistic and not merely puff pieces. To that end we strive to include realistic assessments of the people and organizations we write about and that means including the comments of informed critics.

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### **About the writer's credit**

We do our utmost to promote our writers. We hope The Good Life will provide an important showcase that will attract significant additional interest to a writer's work. Feature articles carry a byline at the top and a quirky tagline at the bottom that brings the article to a thumping good close, and with a twist of humor if possible. In addition, the writer's photo will be published separately in the magazine along with a 50-word biographical sketch about the writer and the article.

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### **About reader feedback**

I will create an e-mail address for the writer and add it to the writer's tagline. That e-mail address will bounce messages to me and I will forward any messages received to the writer.

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### **About feature submissions**

Writers will submit the article, tagline, 50-word biographical sketch, and their photo via e-mail to [editor@goodlifemag.com](mailto:editor@goodlifemag.com)

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The writer's color photograph will be attached as a JPEG or TIFF, scanned at a resolution of 300 dpi, or a digital camera image of the same resolution. If you are unable to e-mail the image, then you would snail-mail it to the address given below.

In addition, first-time writers must also furnish a mailing address (so we know where to send a check for payment), a social security number (so we can satisfy IRS requirements), and phone numbers where they can be reached.

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### **About the editing**

Our deadlines are assigned far enough in advance of press dates to provide sufficient time for thoughtful editing, ordering and obtaining necessary original art to illustrate the piece, proofreading, and doing the production work on a routine cycle that will result in an attractive, interesting and professional presentation.

I edit and fact-check everything that goes into the magazine. As soon as I edit a feature, I e-mail the edited article to the writer, noting any substantive changes that were made, pointing out any questions that need to be resolved, and inviting the writer's suggestions for changes. I will also provide a copy of the edited feature to our proofreader for review. Upon receipt of the writer's suggested changes and the proofreader's recommendations, I will go through the article to introduce approved changes, go over it again, and then put it into the queue for the next edition. (The final version of the feature will not be e-mailed to the writer, as the logistics of another round of review are not practicable.) During production to ready the magazine for printing, I will proofread the entire edition on the built pages.

On personality profiles, it is my policy to allow the subject of the story to read it and offer suggested corrections before publication. The writer will furnish a copy to the subject identical to the copy submitted to The Good Life, and the subject will be invited to communicate feedback to the writer. Do not ask the subject to edit the piece, but do give the subject the opportunity to prevent publication of factual errors that would mar accuracy.

Changes that the writer needs to make in an article after the initial submission must be e-mailed to the editor as soon as possible for consideration. In the event changes seem necessary, the writer is asked not to resubmit a revised manuscript but instead to indicate via e-mail:

Replace: (the sentence as it reads in the edited version).

With: (the replacement sentence as you want it to read).

If requesting additions, the writer simply indicates the insertion point, as follows:

After: (indicate the last sentence preceding the insertion).

Insert: (the additional sentence or paragraph you want to add).

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### **About the pay**

Health, wellness and fitness features that are published in the Gusto section of the magazine are usually assigned at a length of 1500 words and The Good Life pays \$150 to \$250 for these features. The higher fees are paid to people who have been writing for the magazine regularly or are widely published.

For all other feature stories, The Good Life pays from \$200 to \$750, depending on the writer's experience, the assigned length of the article, and the degree of difficulty. The higher fees go to people who have been writing for The Good Life regularly, or are widely published, and who take on more challenging assignments. Features that earn the highest fees address complex topics, require a demanding amount of research and interviews, and provide comprehensive, in-depth or investigative coverage.

It is not necessary to submit invoices for payment. I will compile the necessary information for checks to be cut based on the assigned rates.

Checks for payment will be mailed on the 15th of the month of publication.

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### **About expenses**

Generally, the writer bears all expenses associated with producing the assigned feature story. However, for unusual assignments, The Good Life may agree to cover certain expenses if negotiated at the time the assignment is being made, or subsequently approved by the editor while the story is being produced. The Good Life will not pay for expenses billed after the fact and not previously authorized by the editor.

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### **About the rights we buy**

The Good Life purchases first North American publication rights for original material. The Good Life also will post all articles to our site on the World Wide Web. However, the writer will retain copyright for reuse elsewhere.

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### **About unsolicited material**

The Good Life welcomes unsolicited material that meets these guidelines. Items snail-mailed to The Good Life will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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### **About kill fees**

Because The Good Life generally hires only experienced writers and will be reviewing writing samples before making an assignment, it is rarely necessary to kill a story. However, in the event a feature does not seem suitable even after editing or rewriting, a kill fee of 25 percent of the assignment fee (up to a maximum kill fee of \$100 ) will be paid on the 15th of the month in which the story was originally scheduled for publication.

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### **How to get an assignment**

I am open to queries by mail, e-mail or telephone, but it will save a lot of time--and will help to endear me to your proposal--if you pitch only developed ideas that fully describe the topic and

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your desired approach. Study the features on our web site and in back issues to get a sense of what we like to publish.

Please do not submit work previously published or articles that has been submitted for publication elsewhere.

Before making an assignment, I will need to see a few feature clips that demonstrate the writer's best work. I look for previous publishing experience and need to see samples before making an assignment. If a writer does not have published work of sufficient quality, chances are I would only take the writer's article on speculation; this means you would write the article, I would review it, and you would only be paid if the article is published. While there is no guarantee of payment when writing on speculation, it affords a good opportunity for less experienced writers to break in with The Good Life. I confirm all feature assignments in writing via e-mail, to be sure that the writer's expectations are in line with our needs. I include detailed guidance such as what elements the story should include, the expected length, the deadline, the writer's responsibility for providing contact information for people to be photographed, the writer's fee and when it will be paid.

I make every effort to create a relationship that nurtures writers by being straightforward, honoring agreements, and paying on time. If you want to write for a high-quality publication, have talent, and can produce interesting material for our Central Texas audience, I welcome your queries .

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