

Sucker for Publication

By Cory Bickmore

You haven't published enough articles in your life. You may have thought otherwise, but, boy, you are WAY wrong. So very, very way.

Happily for you help is available, Mr. Behind Author. A crack team of Internet-surfing, cousin's-basement-living research nerds have compiled the 83 metric ton *Writer's Market*, the universe's premier how-to book on getting published and a darn handy paperweight. This hefty tome cheerfully lists about eleven billion magazines, book publishers and other purveyors of twaddle that accept submissions from aspiring writers, i.e. you.

Before setting pen to paper, take a moment to squint through this year's *Writer's Market's* miles-long list of periodicals. (I used the hopelessly obsolete 2003 edition while writing this column, by the way. Moral: Do as I say, not as I do.) You may be tempted to try your luck by submitting articles to so-called 'A-list' titles like *Better Homes & Gardens* or *Glorious Tattoo*. Do not even bother, my friend. You can do much, much better. In the immortal words of that one guy who wrote the Bible: "He who aims for the stars eventually runs out of oxygen." Go for those prestigious magazines that generate its lucky scribes healthy slices of fame, not to mention rich, creamy dollops of fortune.

Take, for example, the *Dairy Goat Journal*. "We are looking for", its *Writer's Market* entry states, "clear and accurate articles about dairy goat owners, their herds, [and] cheese making. Some readers own two goats; others own 1,500 and are large commercial operations." Now, not many writers can claim to have made the goating world a better place. Just one well timed treatise exploring "Two Dairy Goats or Three? Mowing Your Lawn the Natural Way" will shoot your scribal star heavenward.

(The entry goes on say "We love good articles about dairy goats and will work with beginners, if you are cooperative". Indeed. Emerging goatly authors need every possible encouragement, but alas, they can be stubborn old, well, goats when it comes to being team players.)

See what I mean? The literary world lies positively rife with many such possibilities for the would-be columnist. I now include a small sample list of actual magazine titles from the *Writer's Market* to whet your creative appetite: (Again, the 2003 edition—sorry! Well, not really.)

(I promise I did not invent any of the following *Writer's Market* titles.) (Or the descriptions.) (Maybe some of the descriptions.) (Alright, most of them.) (But not the parts marked by quotes.) (Except the bits of dialogue.) (Which I made up.) (Really.) (I'm quite certain on this point.) (Honest.) (I swear!) (Go away!) (Will somebody euthanize me, please???)

Artichoke. "Western Canada's Visual Arts Magazine". Because no vegetable better evokes the spirit and visual grandeur of western Canada than does the artichoke. It also accurately evokes the average western Canadian.

Moody Magazine. For the bitter man-hater in your life.

Shaman's Drum (formerly *Narcissistic Wacko's Trumpet*). "We are looking for examples of not only how shamanism has transformed individual lives but also practical ways it can help ensure survival of life on the planet". Such wisdom will certainly come in handy when that bloodthirsty fleet of 600 foot-tall dreamcatchers invades the Earth.

Sheep! Magazine. Well, bust! my buttons! A magazine! about Sheep! is! a GREAT!! idea, don't you think?(!) I do believe, though, such enthusiastic coverage ought not be limited to Sheep!, no matter how adorable and

malodorously wooly. What about Cows! Frogs! Fingernails! Dingoes! Hyperventilation! Squid!?! Do not these less visible topics deserve similar rapture? Let us by no means neglect these important possibilities.

Fate. You are destined to write for us. Don't fight it anymore.

Circle K Magazine. For the latest word on Slushees and squalid service station bathrooms.

Miniature Donkey Talk. Although primarily concerned with articles that "deal specifically with donkeys", it also accepts "fictional stories on donkeys". (Hey, Irma! This heeyur li'l donkey's back agin wid 'nudder story tep't to it!)

The Numismatist. I'd wager an uncirculated limited edition 1905 San Francisco gold nickel in mint condition you don't know what this word means. But in other news, I'm real handsome!

Rice Journal. "Articles must discuss rice production practices". From the same nice people who brought the world *Dry Paint Watcher* and *Dust Monthly*.

Horse Illustrated. How best to draw on horses. I imagine some beret-wearing Frenchman doodling on the flank of a longsuffering Clydesdale. ("Eeet ees horsey magnifique!")

Outlaw Biker. "All writers must be insiders of biker lifestyle." No doubt most prospective authors already submit articles from the 'inside', if you catch my drift. In addition, this magazine's "features include coverage of biker events, profiles [mugshots?], and humor [mugshots?]."

Western Livestock Reporter. Geraldo Rivera coming to you live from Farmer Bob's place where three Miniature Donkeys and one Sheep! have devoured a visiting Artichoke, which the alleged animal masticators described as tasting "rather bland".

Remarks

The idea for this column came when I ran across a copy of the 2003 *Writer's Market* belonging to my brother-in-law. As he opened the book to a random page, the first entry I saw was indeed that of the Dairy Goat Journal. I immediately knew I wanted to write a column about it.

I love taking on the role of “oblivious mentor” making erroneously assumptions about the reader’s goals and forcing sincere-yet-worthless advice on how to achieve them, kind of like a grandfather explaining to the kiddies how to saddle a plow horse when all they wanted was a Twinkie.

How many different persons, groups and objects do I poke fun at in this column? Let’s list them: computer geeks, goat farmers, Canadians, spiritualists, sheep owners, gas stations, the reader’s supposed poor vocabulary, the rice industry, publishers of donkey magazines, French artists, felonious motorcycle gang types and fringe-interest publications in general. Quite a day, if I do say so myself!

The *Sheep! Magazine* paragraph gave me no end of trouble. You would think the title would easily lend itself to humor, what with the word “sheep” followed by its inexplicable exclamation mark—the reason I selected it from the *Writer's Market*. Despite this, I kept coming up empty from beginning to end. I finally gave up and went with what’s written. The nagging thought I missed a funnier, more obvious joke keeps scampering about my head. Oh well. You can’t win ‘em all.

The phrase “that one guy who wrote the Bible” delights me to no end. I giggle like a schoolgoat every time I read it.