

Why not be a Guest Author?

By Rod Fraser



If you're interested in writing an article for this blog, why not read Don's story below? It'll let you know what being a guest author is about. Enjoy!

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Don told me he found a website late last year that offered opportunities for writers of short stories and non-fiction articles. After thinking about it, he

thought the odd short story (or article) written by a guest author might be a welcome addition to his blog, so he signed up.

Interested authors were directed to submit their short stories or articles to participating publishers (including Don) by email. If they aligned with the interests of the readership (and were well-written), they would likely be published.

Don plans to pay \$75 for each article published. It isn't a lot, but his readership is not a big one. He started his website a couple of years ago and it is pretty much a hobby. There isn't the budget for larger fees for writers.

What he does offer for those who love to write, is a forum in which to do so. Don edits and formats their work, offers thoughtful advice, and publishes their articles on a blog with a receptive (but small) readership. Some argue this is a fair exchange for writers who would like to get their work published.

"It's none of their business that you had to learn to write. Let them think you were born that way."

—Ernest Hemingway

In the last few months, two writers contacted Don about publishing their work on his website. One wrote a short story and the other a non-fiction piece. According to Don, both submissions were nicely done.

He read each one, in turn, to see if it would interest his readers (largely older people). This required some judgement on Don's part, but he was comfortable making these decisions.

The articles were just fine, so Don edited them to make them terse and pithy. Before publication, he sent copies back to the writers for comments. All in all, Don considered his guest publishing project a success. He was hopeful he might interest other writers in the future.



The following week, Don and I discussed this project over coffee. Here's what he had to say,

"Guest authors can learn a lot by submitting an article for publication. I take care to ensure their article or story is compatible with the formatting, punctuation, and general look of the publication."

"Often I make their copy more readable by suggesting changes when there are logical inconsistencies in the writing, or where disparate thoughts aren't skilfully connected with a timely word, phrase or sentence."

"In the past, there were lots of opportunities for young writers. Newspapers and magazines were everywhere, supported with oodles of advertising dollars. My current daily newspaper, while still excellent, is getting thinner and thinner all the time. Advertising has now moved to the internet."

"The market for short stories is even worse. In the distant past, major magazines such as The Atlantic or Harpers (and Macleans in Canada) contained at least one short story in each issue. Those days are long gone."

"It's clear to be a good writer, you must write regularly. Young people should never miss a opportunity to put pen to paper. They should get their thoughts down, and then polish, clarify and rewrite. This is where their time is most wisely spent."



I left our meeting with lots to think about. Like Don, I also publish a blog that contains personal articles and book reviews. Up to now, all the postings on my blog (with two exceptions) were written by me.

I thought I might follow Don's lead, and encourage guest writers. Most successful blogs, offering similar reading material, have a number of contributing writers. People seem to like that.

I will follow Don's example and pay \$75 in

Canadian currency for any article I agree to publish. It isn't much, but my blog is just a hobby; these payments will come out of my pocket.

If you're interested, I suggest you submit articles or book reviews that are of interest to an older audience. The odd short story would also be welcome. Submissions should be emailed to acute@post.com

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