

StarDate™

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Guidelines for Writers

StarDate is a bimonthly, popular astronomy magazine published by the McDonald Observatory at the University of Texas at Austin. A good way to get a sense for the kind of articles we publish is to study back issues. For a sample copy, call 1-800-STARDATE.

Content

StarDate magazine covers a wide range of topics related to astronomy, space exploration, skylore, and skywatching. Many of our readers rely solely on us for this information, so articles may cover recent scientific discoveries or missions, serve as basic astronomy primers, or illuminate the history or future of astronomy. Topics should appeal to a wide audience, not just professional or amateur astronomers. Articles are not limited to hard-core science. They can cover other areas as long as there's a solid connection to the sky.

While accuracy and clarity are paramount, articles should be written in a feature-like, magazine style, full of fresh observations and lively anecdotes — nothing encyclopedic or dogmatic. Articles that fail to follow these guidelines will be returned to the author for revisions. Keep in mind that examples and analogies with pertinent human interest are often the best way to introduce, explain or emphasize a complex or esoteric concept. If necessary, contact the Editor for clarification of these guidelines before submitting your article.

When considering topics, look for offbeat subjects, or give a familiar topic a unique spin. Research findings don't have to make the front page of the newspaper to be interesting. If you'd like to write an historical piece, look for offbeat items and events; we've already covered Copernicus, Kepler, Tycho, Newton, Herschel, and the like pretty well.

Proposals

Writers should send their story ideas to *StarDate* in the form of a query letter addressed to Rebecca Johnson, the Editor. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your query and please give us about six weeks to assess your idea before calling to follow up. Queries should convey your writing style and should give the editors a sense of your angle and the sources you plan to consult. The more focused your idea, the better chance it has of being accepted. Do not send manuscripts or writing samples unless asked to do so.

Manuscripts

Submit manuscripts only at the Editor's request. Features run from 1,700 to 3,000 words. All articles should be a Microsoft Word for Macintosh file. *Please include a list of your sources, references, and any illustrations available for use with the article, as well as a short (2-3 sentence) biography of yourself.* Articles are edited for technical accuracy by an astronomer at the University. All other editing is done in-house.

Payments & Rights

StarDate buys first North American serial rights and all radio rights at rates that vary by article. All authors are compensated; payments are made upon acceptance. A signed writer's agreement indicating rights assigned and payment terms must be on file in the *StarDate* office before payment is made.



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