

# Rock&Gem WRITERS' GUIDELINES

*Rock & Gem* has been the leading magazine for rockhounding and lapidary hobbyists since 1971. Our goal is to provide informative and entertaining articles and to draw new people into the hobby. This document contains all the information you need to succeed in having an article published in *Rock & Gem*.

## WHAT WE WANT

*Rock & Gem* is particularly interested in a wide variety of articles.

This includes articles pertaining to general specimen collecting topics, gold prospecting, club activities, basic and advanced lapidary skills, and lapidary artist profiles, and articles that educate beginning rock collectors or lapidaries, and promote active participation in the hobby.

## FEATURE ARTICLES

*Rock & Gem* accepts submissions of full-length feature articles, which consist of 2,000 to 3,000 words, plus eight to 10 quality, high-resolution photos and a list of full-sentence, informative captions. Compensation is discussed on a per submission basis.

Field trip articles should give specific, easy-to-follow directions to the collecting site(s) described. Research sites carefully to make sure they are not under claim or closed to collecting at the time of submission.

The photos should show the site(s) and types of specimens collected. Include a clear, specific, hand- or computer-drawn map of the field-trip area(s) as a .jpg, .tif or .pdf file.

Freelance authors accept responsibility for the accuracy of the facts in the articles they submit, and should confirm any statistical or factual information with a reliable source before submitting an article.

## QUERIES

You may contact the editor to ask whether your topic is suitable for *Rock & Gem*. After that, we want to see the complete article, with photos and captions.

Only send articles that have not been previously sold for publication (club newsletters don't count).

## ARTICLE SUBMISSION

All article submissions are taken on speculation and are subject to editing.

Submissions must be sent electronically, either by e-mail or by a file transfer program. Contact the editor to get a link to *Rock & Gem's* Dropbox folder.

Always include a cover letter that gives your name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, e-mail address), and put your byline at the beginning of your article. If we can't identify or contact the author, we cannot use the submission.

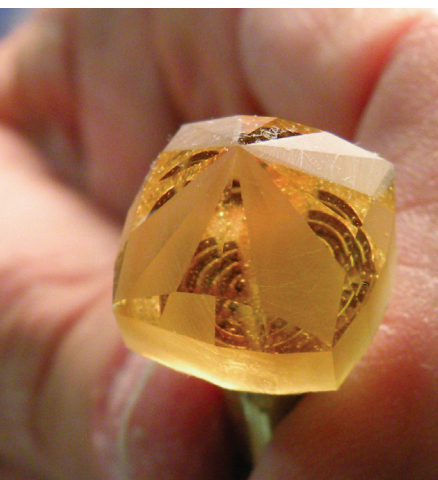
Save manuscripts and caption lists as document files (.doc, .docx, .rtf), not in pdf format.

Do not embed photos in your document or refer to them in your text. Use captions to explain the photos.

Contributors agree to work with the editor to bring their submission up to publication standards.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Provide eight to 15 clear digital photographs to illustrate a full-length feature. We cannot use articles



without photos. Don't send an excessive number of photos.

*Rock & Gem* accepts digital photos that are:

- .tif or .jpg files;
- high-resolution (300 dpi at 4 in. by 5 in. minimum);
- in focus and well lit.

## **CAPTIONS AND CREDITS**

Type an informative, full-sentence caption for each photo in a list at the end of your article or in a separate file. For examples, see the section How to Write Good Captions.

Use the exact photo file name to match your captions to your photos (i.e., DSCNO234.JPG).

Do not make the caption your file name.

Give the exact photo credit required.

- "All photos by the author", if that is the case.
- When multiple photographers must be credited, type the specific credit after each caption.

## **CAPTION LIST FORMAT:**

DSCNO234.JPG

Write a complete sentence caption that explains how the photo relates to your article.

Harold Smith photo

The editor takes no responsibility for errors that result when a contributor does not provide clearly labeled captions or specific credits.

## **RIGHTS AND PAYMENT**

*Rock & Gem* contributors understand that their submission is a work for hire, and that by signing the independent contractor agreement they grant U.S. copyright and all rights in it to the Company (Beckett Media).

An independent contractor agreement will be sent for each submission upon acceptance and must be completed, signed and returned before publication. Rights and payment are specified in the contract.

By submitting another person's photo to *Rock & Gem* for publication, you certify that the owner has given permission for the use and understands that she/he is surrendering copyright to the image.

## **HOW-TO ARTICLE GUIDELINES**

**These guidelines are intended as a supplement to the preceding general *Rock & Gem* writers' guidelines. All requirements in the guidelines apply.**

*Rock & Gem* is always interested in submissions of step-by-step lapidary project articles, especially projects using self-collected materials.

"Lapidary" includes, but is not limited to, cutting, grinding and polishing semiprecious or precious gems and stone; wire wrapping stones and gems; silver or gold smithing; and stone carving.

Step-by-step articles must clearly communicate instructions, in words and photos, that will allow the reader to understand the steps and successfully finish the project.

An understanding of basic lapidary techniques on the part of the reader may be assumed.

Lapidary project articles that do not fit the step-by-step model will be considered. Please query first.

Our readers are also interested in instructional articles about building their own lapidary equipment, display cases, and prospecting equipment, putting together competition displays, cleaning and preserving specimens, and so on.

## **WORD LENGTH**

How-to word length ranges from 800 to 1,000 words. Use as many words as it takes to explain the project clearly; some projects take more, some fewer. The same principle applies to photographs. Do not refer to your photos or drawings within your text, as not all of them will be used.

Provide a sidebar that lists all the tools and materials needed for your project so the reader can assemble everything before beginning work.

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Provide a sharp, well-lit, close-up, color photo of each important step of the project and several clear shots of the finished item. Do not submit blurry, dark or grainy photos or photos with an unnatural tint.

Black-and-white line drawings are acceptable as illustrations if they are in digital format.

## **CAPTIONS**

If the reader can't visualize a step from reading your explanation, a photo and its caption will help make the instructions clear. Type a full-sentence caption for each photo in a list at the end of your manuscript or in a separate file. Submissions without adequate captions will be rejected.

Place the credit for each photo beneath its corresponding caption, or specify that all photos are by the author.

## **EDITORIAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## HOW TO WRITE GOOD CAPTIONS

Photos are a critical element of your *Rock & Gem* submission, and it is equally important that you provide adequate captions for them. Poor captions can cause your manuscript to be rejected.

*Rock & Gem's* caption style is to use informative full sentences that tell readers more than they could see by looking at the photo. Only you know why you took the photos you did, so only you can explain what is relevant about them.

It is not enough to identify a specimen and give its dimensions. Use captions to more fully explain an aspect of the article.

While you and your friends and relatives may like being identified in a caption, remember that details about the minerals and collecting sites are most important to the reader. What would you want to know if you were the reader? Put that information in your captions.

If you are having trouble writing an original sentence for a caption, find a sentence in your article that relates to the photo and copy it to your caption file. It's that easy to write good captions! If you can't find any text in your article that relates to your photos, you probably need to take new ones.

This works for how-to stories, as well. Just copy the text that describes the step pictured, condense it a little, and paste it into your caption file. You can also use the caption to further explain the step.

## **EXAMPLES:**

**Poor:** Two hand samples of ricolite

**Good:** Ricolite is a unique banded serpentine with intricate green banding.

**Poor:** David Rogers shaking a sapphire screen  
**Good:** Shaking the material in the screen causes the heavy sapphires to concentrate at the bottom.

**Poor:** Drill hole in bezel

**Good:** Using a carbide drill bit, make a hole in the bottom of the setting to allow light to pass through the gemstone.

**Poor:** Six-inch emerald crystal

**Good:** Chromium ions give this 6-inch emerald crystal its deep green color.

**Poor:** The finished "S" element

**Good:** Twist the end of the wire into a circle, then stretch it across your index finger to form an S shape.

**Poor:** The author digging gems at the Pitt mine.

**Good:** The decomposed shale is easily broken apart with a rock pick so the crystals can be removed.