

DENISE BALKISSOON

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Skill summary

- Writing and editing
- Content planning
- Strategic thinking and planning
- Project management
- Idea synthesis
- Creative brainstorming
- Excellent communication and people skills
- Highly motivated, energetic and proactive
- Budget management
- Proven ability to organize simultaneous projects and meet multiple deadlines
- Quantitative and qualitative research skills
- Proficient in print and web publishing software for both PC and Mac platforms

Career highlights

- Honourable mention, 2009 National Magazine Awards, for “What a Fifth Grader Wants,” *Toronto Life*, December 2008 issue. Honourable mention, 2006 National Magazine Awards. Shared silver National Magazine Award in 2003
- Listed on the mastheads of *Report on Business* and *Toronto Life*
- Honed small business skills, including accounting, project prioritizing and forward project and budget planning
- Initiated successful relationships with editors, PR representatives and other writers located all over Canada, and internationally
- Concepted and wrote a new, weekly arts and entertainment newsletter for *Torontolife.com*, *Preview*, which eventually reached a base of 22, 000 subscribers
- Participated in two redesigns and re-launches for *Torontolife.com*

Selected work

Current affairs

- “One Big Gay Family,” *Toronto Life*, February 2009: the story of Morgan, the toddler son of two lesbian moms from Toronto and two gay dads from the U.S.
- “What a Fifth Grader Wants,” *Toronto Life*, December 2008: interviews with students at one of Toronto’s most multicultural elementary schools. Nominated for a National Magazine Award
- “Victimology,” *Toronto Life*, March 2008: an exploration of the state of race and racism in Toronto, through the experience of Jamaican immigrant Evon Reid
- “Party Monsters,” *Toronto Life*, July 2007: about the evolution of Toronto’s club district, a neighbourhood rife with crime and unhappy home-owners
- “Protecting whom?” *Eye Weekly*, April 26, 2007: about the Safe Haven initiative, a constitutional challenge against the criminal code led by a group of prostitutes
- “Dating Without Borders,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 12, 2006: looking at how on-line matchmaking sites spur long-distance romances
- “Starting Over,” *Toronto Life*, November 2005: about the difficulties facing skilled immigrants to Canada, profiling Chinese engineer Barry Gong. Nominated for a National Magazine Award

Travel

- “Art, music, modernity, revelry all nuit long,” *Boston Globe*, September 7, 2008: travel piece about Nuit Blanche, Toronto’s all night art party
- “Motor City Magic,” *Toronto Star*, May 3, 2008: travel story on Detroit, Michigan, highlighting architecture and re-emerging urban life
- “The Urban Jungle,” *EnRoute*, March 2008: travel story on Miami, Florida, looking at the opportunities for natural exploration in and around the city limits

Lifestyle

- “Bookmark This Site,” *Chatelaine*, March 2009: a short note on Monthly Info, a website where women can track their reproductive cycles
- “Raising the Bar” and “Protein Punch,” *Report on Business*, March 2009: reviews of energy bars and the recipe for the Toronto Raptors’ protein shake

Corporate

- Report writing for Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, August 2008: took point form scientific copy on environmental threats to the Lake Simcoe watershed and worked it into clear, concise sentences. 11 pages.
- Website copy for Imason investment brokerage, summer 2007: copy revamp of corporate website, from helping design site architecture to writing executive bios and company history. Visit site at www.imason.com

Editorial experience

Toronto Life magazine – Oct. 2000 – Dec. 2004

Associate Editor, City Guides and Assistant Editor, torontolife.com

- Promoted into associate editor position
- Handling editor for service listings guides to city on a variety of wide-ranging topics, from food to fashion to children’s services to continuing education
- Liaised with PR reps, trend experts and store owners to refresh guides annually
- Successfully conceived and produced new titles in the series
- Found and managed stable of 20 qualified writers
- Ensured that all material was fact-checked and copy edited
- Worked with art department on visual approach
- Assistant editor for then-brand new site, Torontolife.com
- Chose stories for home page based on timeliness and user interest
- Conceived, assigned, edited and wrote new content
- Conceived and wrote new arts and entertainment email newsletter, *Preview*, including subject lines, headlines and teasers—analyzed weekly statistics to align content with user interest
- Taught others to use content management system, oversaw intern uploading and managed organization of the content backend
- Worked closely with the site manager, designer and programmer to re-imagine Torontolife.com through two re-launches
- Met budget and strict deadlines

Education

Carleton University, Ottawa

Bachelor of Journalism, class of 1999

Double major with High Honours in Journalism and Women’s Studies