

Martlet Volunteer Handbook

Volume 72

Emily Fagan, Editor-in-Chief

First steps

So you want to get involved with the Martlet. That's great! Let's figure out where you should start.

Want to know more about the Martlet? Head to page **one** for a brief explanation of what we've been up to since 1948.

Maybe you want to get involved, but don't have time to submit anything right now. That's okay! Check out page **two** to see all of the ways you can still be a part of our team more casually.

Want to write for us, but aren't sure what you'd like to write about? Don't stress — jump to the bottom of page **two**.

Have an idea for a story already? Find out how to pitch us on page **three**.

Ready to write and submit that story? Read page **three** first for a guide on the format and best practices.

Once you've submitted your article, there's still more to be done. Check out page **five** for what to expect during the editing process.

Want to get involved, but graphics, illustrations, or photography are more your thing? We'd love to feature your art — head to page **six** to find out all the details.

Interested in staying involved with the Martlet, and joining our team? Take a look at page **six**.

Wait, what's the Martlet?

The Martlet is the independent student newspaper at the University of Victoria. We're a non-profit, student-run, and fully independent from the university and student society — and actually was founded before both institutions, when UVic was Victoria College.

Our office is located in the basement of the Student Union Building, room B011, and we're usually around or out chasing down stories between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., if you want to stop by.

For over 70 years, we've caused quite a stir both on campus and in the greater Victoria community — from the time we partially caused a president of UVic to resign, to when we stole a cannon from Royal Roads University and shot it off in front of the SUB.

Because we're a non-profit, the Martlet is made up largely by student volunteers. The Editor-in-Chief and Business Manager make up the full-time staff, and the rest of the team is usually filled out by around 10 other part-time members of paid staff, including the Design Director, Editorial Assistants, Writers, Photo Editor, Web Editor, and Ad Sales Representative. We've also got volunteer staff — keep reading to find out how to join their ranks.

Casual involvement

There are several ways to get involved with the Martlet a bit more casually, especially for people who are new to the Martlet or don't quite have the time to pitch or submit stories to us at the moment.

Copyediting

One of the easiest ways to get involved with the Martlet is to volunteer at one of our copyediting nights. Copyediting is held every two weeks (or monthly during the summer), on the Tuesday before our new issue comes out in print. From 4 p.m. into the evening, volunteers are invited to help read through pages from the forthcoming issue and catch any issues before they reach the presses. There's free pizza and soda for anyone who attends, and you get your name on the masthead of the paper for lending a hand in the editing process.

Not sure when the next copyediting night is? Email the Editor-in-Chief at edit@martlet.ca or stop by the office to find out.

Story meetings

Story meetings are a great way to get involved, whether you have an idea for a story or not. Every other Wednesday at 11 a.m., everyone gathers in the office to pitch out stories or topics they'd be interested in pursuing or seeing someone else cover for an upcoming issue. Volunteers aren't required to pick up stories if they attend — sometimes it's just a nice way to feel out what the Martlet's like and help shape the next big stories.

Finding a story

Figuring out what you'd like to write about can be daunting, especially if you've never written an article before. Here's a quick overview of the Martlet's sections to give you an idea of the type of articles we typically publish.

News — From hard, breaking news to softer stories, we're always looking for a good scoop. Investigative or explainer pieces are always great. If you're looking to write about national or international news, it's always good to find a local angle to pursue.

Opinion — Send us your takes! Informed, well-researched, and witty op-eds make for excellent reads. Again, finding a local or unique angle is best when discussing a topic of national or international significance.

Features — These are the big guns — usually 1500 to 3000 word pieces that range from profiles to investigative deep dives. Features can be a little more casual and carry a bit more voice than a hard news story.

Culture — Film, theatre, fashion, and the arts find their home in the culture section. Basically, anything cool you've recently discovered and would suggest to a friend can be worthy of writing about here.

Lifestyle — Lifestyle is the most fluid of the sections — it typically contains anything from guides, profiles, personal stories, and recipes. Don't be afraid to have fun with a lifestyle piece!

Sports — As you might suspect, here's where we cover all things sports. It's not all Vikes — sometimes sports medicine innovations, takes on bigger teams, or tips for beginner athletes make this page.

Humour — Finally, this is the section where you can let loose a bit. We're always looking for good satire articles and comics, especially if they're witty and topical.

Still not sure what you want to write? There's stories all around campus and Victoria. The best things to write are the kind of stories you'd most want to read, but haven't yet. And if you're stuck, you can always come to a story meeting or sign up for the Martlet pitch list by contacting edit@martlet.ca.

Pitching

Once you've got your story, pitching is the easy part. Either attend a biweekly story meeting or email your pitch to edit@martlet.ca.

A complete pitch should be 100-200 words, and contain a brief explanation of the story and sources you hope to pursue. Don't forget to say why you feel this piece is newsworthy — is it new, interesting, or important for students and members of the community? It's also helpful if you specify if you're able to provide any images with your story and how long it will most likely take you to write.

Once the Editor-in-Chief gets back to you, if they accept your story, they will give you a word count and deadline for the story.

Submitting a story

So you've got your pitch and the Editor-in-Chief has assigned you a deadline and word count. What now?

While you're writing your story, make sure to keep all of the materials you cite in your article together — this means links to websites, PDFs, interviews, photos, emails, you name it. Oh, and make sure to record all interviews or speeches you want to directly quote or pull information. All of this will become very important when it comes time for an editor to fact check your work.

If at any point you think you can't meet your deadline or want to change your angle, let your editor know. It's best to communicate this early, so that contingency plans can be made and bigger problems can be avoided.

Format

All stories should be shared in Google Docs, as that's what your editors will be using to edit your piece. At the top of your article, make sure to include the following (except, instead of the italics, fill in your own information as much as possible):

HED: *Your heading*

DEK: *A brief subheading*

By: *Your name / Contributing Writer*

PC: *A caption or suggestion for the potential image with your article*

SM: *A social media caption, short enough to fit on Twitter.*

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Then comes your article, which I'm sure is a beautiful, well-researched work of art that would shake even Ronan Farrow to his core. No fancy font needed here — 11-point Arial is just fine with us. Make sure to leave a line of space between each paragraph, and don't indent.

At the end of the article, write "-30-" to let your editor and our design team know that's where the piece ends.

Sourcing

For every story, there must be facts. And where there are facts, we're gonna need to see your sources.

Any time you state a fact that is not common knowledge or mentioned previously in the piece, highlight part of the sentence and comment on the document with a link or attribution to the source you got that information from. You can hyperlink if you'd like, especially if it is to reference another article or an important resource. If the information is from an interview,

include a timestamp of when it is said (for example, if it's exactly three minutes in the timestamp would read "3:00"). All interviews conducted in person or over the phone must be recorded so that they may be checked.

Your editors will comment "checked" under this comment once they've fact checked the piece — **do not** resolve their fact checking.

Please note: submitting a list of sources bibliography style is not the way to go. This can be confusing and labour-intensive for the editing team to sift through all of your sources and correlated everything referenced in your piece to each source without any guidance, and they've got lots of other articles on their plate with very strict deadlines. Please, save an editor and properly source your sources.

A quick note on style

The Martlet, like most media outlets in Canada, adheres to Canadian Press Style and the Canadian Oxford Dictionary. However, we do have our own [in-house style guide](#) which supersedes CP Style (which means yes, we do use the oxford comma).

Here's a few common parts of CP and Martlet style that often trip up our writers:

- It's B.C. not BC, unless you're talking about a company (such as BC Transit, the Royal BC Museum, or BC Ferries).
- For numbers with four digits, we use a space in place of a comma.
 - eg. 1 000 not 1,000
- Punctuation goes inside quotation marks, except if the punctuation contradicts the tone of what you're quoting.
 - eg. *How can you call UVSS meetings "boring"?* not *How can you call UVSS meetings "boring?"* but *I said, "Where's your car?"* not *I said, "Where's your car"?*
- When attributing a quote (since all quotes should be attributed), remember to use a comma inside the quotation marks prior to "said" or "says."
 - eg. *"The university president is stepping down," said Jen Lowry, UVic Vice-President of Internal Information.*

From first draft to final copy

Now comes the editing process — we use a two-stage editing process for all articles before they're published. Your first editor will most likely make more edits than the second, as they'll be editing for clarity, content, CP and Martlet style, and structure. It can be overwhelming to open up a Google Doc to a big page of edits, but everyone — senior staff included — experiences this. Please resolve all of the edits on the document (but not the sources) and read / respond to

all of the suggestions before contacting your first editor to let them know it's ready for the next stage.

Second editors mostly edit for grammar, accuracy, and anything the first editor may have missed. They're also the ones who will be fact checking your piece.

Once that's all set, the Editor-in-Chief will review the piece and send it to final copy. Once the piece has gone to final copy, please do not make any further revisions or changes — the web and design team will be finalizing your article for publication.

Graphics and photography submissions

We're always looking for more artists on our team! To join the graphics and photography pitch list, where our Design Director sends out stories that we need images for in the upcoming issue, contact design@martlet.ca.

Are illustrations, comics, or graphics your jam? Contact the Design Director at design@martlet.ca to see how you can get more involved.

Love photography? Hit up the Photo Editor at photo@martlet.ca to see if there's any upcoming events or shoots you can get involved in covering.

Join our team

Want to get even more involved with the Martlet? That's awesome.

A few times a year (usually in September), we'll post job openings for senior (read: paid) staff. These staff members are hired through a typical interview process, and preference may be given based on past experience with the Martlet.

If you've contributed to the Martlet three or more times (with graphics, photos, writing, or editing), you're eligible to apply for volunteer staff! Check out the full information on how to apply in the [staff policy](#) on the Martlet's website.