

Become an Author— Write for the *CRB*

By Kelly M. Page

One of the most difficult challenges in my position as Editor of the *CRB* is finding great articles. When I am at meetings and conventions soliciting articles, I often get the following responses: “I have this great project, but I am not sure about how to turn it into an article,” “I don’t feel comfortable writing an article,” or “I’m a contractor, and writing is not one of my strongest skills.” So, to help and encourage any potential authors for the *CRB*, here are some suggestions.

Content

We publish several types of articles in the *CRB*. Many of them are case histories of a project with some unique characteristic. We also publish experiences with a new piece of equipment or material, new methods of using industry standard practices, or discussions of methodologies that have not yet become standard practice. If it involves current practices in the concrete repair industry, our readers will find it interesting!

I also get comments from people who are interested in writing an article, but their subject matter does not fit the theme of any of the upcoming issues. Keep in mind that though we do have a theme for every issue, we typically also include additional articles beyond the theme. If we receive an article that we know will be of interest to our readers, we will find an appropriate issue for publication.

Another factor to remember when writing for the *CRB* is that the submission should not contain specific product or company names. If you are writing about a project, use generic terms such as “contractor” and “engineer.” You may submit the names of the project team, and we will include them at the end of the article. If you are writing about a specific type of product, you must use the generic name of the product, such as “epoxy grout,” as opposed to the specific manufacturer’s product name.

Some of the best articles that have appeared in the *CRB* have been from authors who did not consider themselves good writers. Some of the most-read articles that have elicited the most comments have been from authors with great hands-on experience in the industry—articles from working practitioners for whom writing for a publication might not come naturally. Please remember that an article submission does not have to be grammatically perfect, it just has to be interesting and factual. We have a staff of Editors and Proofreaders who can turn great raw material into a quality article for publication.

Style

The best style for the *CRB*, and for most technical writing, is to present the information as clearly and concisely as

possible. Occasionally, we receive submissions from people with so many glowing adjectives that we immediately recognize that it has come from someone’s marketing department. That is not to say that we do not get great articles developed by companies’ marketing people, because we do. It is just that the good ones out there know that a strong article written as clearly and concisely as possible will do more to market to our audience than one filled with extraneous information.

Keep in mind that the bulk of *CRB* readers are busy concrete repair practitioners. Everyone in our industry seems to be busier than ever, and these people place a premium on quick and accessible information. Big words and complicated sentences do not impress; well-written articles that quickly cut to the heart of the issue at hand often do.

And though we have suggested guidelines for the length of articles, please keep in mind that these are only suggestions. Though most of our articles run 4 to 5 pages in length, we have had some terrific pieces that have run much longer or that have been as short as a page or two. The main criteria for a well-received article is that it be practical and convey some new or interesting information to our readers.

Are You Ready to Submit an Article?

When I talk to members about writing for the *CRB*, they often tell me of a great idea for an article, or of a very interesting project, but are not sure how to proceed with turning it into an article. In the case of the project, you do not necessarily need a lengthy description. If you have several paragraphs about the job, and some great photographs, especially of work in progress, staff can work with you to turn this into an interesting “case history”-type of article.

And if you have other ideas, but are not sure of the direction your article should take, or if it would be of interest to our readers, please do not hesitate to contact me or send me an abstract of your idea. Remember, the mission of ICRI is “...to be a leading resource for education and information to improve the quality of repair, restoration, and protection of concrete and other structures...” If our readers will learn something from your article that will help improve the quality of the industry (even if it is discussing something that did not work as planned), then your article meets the criteria of the *CRB* and fits the overall mission of ICRI.

If you have ideas for an article, or would like to discuss becoming an author for the *CRB*, please contact me at (847) 827-0830, or drop me a line at kelly.page@icri.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

Publication Guidelines

CONCRETE REPAIR BULLETIN

The bimonthly publication of the International Concrete Repair Institute

Concrete Repair Bulletin is a bimonthly magazine published by the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI). The average size is 40 to 48 pages, and the present circulation is approximately 14,000 copies. Readership includes engineers, contractors, facility owners, manufacturers, distributors, and educators involved in the concrete repair industry.

Topics cover all areas of concrete repair (no new construction) such as buildings, parking structures, roads and bridges, materials for repair, and methods of repair. Each issue has a central theme; however, other topics may be presented. Articles are primarily written by members. With rare exceptions, specific product names are not mentioned in articles. The Publications Committee and/or ad hoc advisory group reviews and approves articles before publication.

Photos may be submitted in color or black and white in glossy print, slide, or transparency form. Ideal cover photos are vertical shots and feature one or more persons, show action, and have clear colors. Photos will be returned if requested.

Feature articles in the *Concrete Repair Bulletin* are intended to give readers information on methods, equipment, or materials to broaden their general knowledge of the repair industry. Articles are required to be general or generic in nature and pertain to a range of materials, techniques, applications, or other activities. Although a process or material may at present be performed or supplied by a single source, this fact is not included in the text. The author is given a byline and a brief biography and photo are published with the article. Feature articles must not appear to promote one product over other similar available products, even without brand names mentioned. Case studies are desirable to illustrate successful use of the subject of the article.

Specifications for feature articles:

- Average length is 1500 to 2000 words for feature articles;
- Product names are not used;
- Please submit an electronic file of the text in Word on any IBM-compatible disk or via e-mail;
- A short author biography is also needed (name, title, employer, education, industry experience, and association memberships);
- "Head shot" photo(s) is requested of the author(s);
- Four to six (total) images are preferred for feature articles (photos, tables, charts, detail drawings);
- Color images are preferred over black and white;
- Digital, high-resolution (300 dpi) files for photographs are preferred for the best printing reproduction. Line art should be JPEG or EPS files at 400 dpi, same size as originals. All electronic image files can be sent on CD, e-mailed, or transferred via our FTP site;
- Photographic prints may also be acceptable. Note that we cannot accept color inkjet printouts and color copies of photos, which will produce inferior results. Please do not send art or photos copied from websites;
- We prefer not to use embedded graphics as submitted final manuscript materials unless they are 300 dpi at 4 x 6 in. Because of the lower resolutions often found in embedded graphics in word processing or slide presentation program files, the images generally convert as files with well below the print quality and enlargement capabilities required;
- Do you have additional photos available as possible cover art? Electronic images must be high-resolution (300 dpi) and sized to at least 8 x 10 in. Good quality photographic prints or 35 mm slides may also be considered; and
- All submitted artwork will be returned after publication if requested.

Project Profiles

Project profiles are articles that may refer to the use of a single product or family of products in a successful application on a particular project or group of similar projects. The names of manufacturers or products are not used in the text. It is acceptable and desirable to state specific properties of a product (for example, strength, percent of elongation) to point out their importance in the specific application. The author is given a byline and a brief biography and photo are published with the article.

Specifications for Project Profiles

- Average length is 500 to 1000 words;
- Profiles should include: project name and location; type of repair; square footage of repair; total project cost; listing of contractor, structural engineer, and material supplier; age of structure; and completion date;
- Product names are not used;
- Please submit an electronic file of the text in Word on any IBM-compatible disk or via e-mail;
- A short author biography is also needed (name, title, employer, education, industry experience, and association memberships);
- "Head shot" photo(s) is requested of the author(s); and
- Photos are very desirable (see under "Specifications for feature articles" for photo/illustration specifications).

New Products

New product listings are included as a service to the readers to keep abreast of the latest materials, equipment, and services available to the industry. A summary (approximately 50 to 75 words) of product information and a photo, if available, are included in each listing.

(For more information, contact Kelly Page, ICRI Executive/Technical Director, at 847-827-0830 or kelly.page@icri.org.)