

# BETH WALTON BRAAKSMA

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<http://www.bwaltonwrites.com/>

## PROFESSIONAL REPORTING EXPERIENCE:

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### **Social Issues Reporter, Asheville Citizen-Times, Gannett Company, Asheville, NC, Oct. '14 to current**

- Reports on race relations, sexuality, gender, poverty, nonprofit and governmental social services in Southern Appalachia
- Awarded 2015 H.F. Guggenheim Reporting Fellowship for continued coverage of race and policing
- Awarded 2015 Equal Voice Journalism Fellowship to cover the intersection of race on poverty in Western North Carolina
- Responsible for weekly long-form enterprise features, short news dailies, Sunday column and briefs
- Cultivates and maintains a diverse base of sources for investigative and enterprise work
- Uses social media regularly to find, source and enhance stories
- Analyzes metrics to grow readership and personal branding

### **Staff Writer, Group Tour Media, Holland, MI, Feb. to May '12**

- Wrote and edited cover stories, blogs and travel news between Peace Corps assignments for a travel industry media company
- Created print and online media packages, including interactive audio and visual content highlighting global destinations
- Assembled regional and international travel itineraries for group tour operators

### **Staff Writer, City Pages, Voice Media Group, Minneapolis, MN, Jan. '08 to Jan. '09**

- Pitched and published cover stories, lifestyle features, news and blogs at Minneapolis' alternative newsweekly
- Awarded first place for short form news writing by the Association of Alternative Newsmedia (large circulation category); articles republished in *Best AltWeekly Writing 2009 and 2010*, Northwestern University Press
- Reviewed legal and financial documents, providing verifiable data for investigative work
- Developed multimedia news and feature packages for online content

### **Crime Reporter, Las Vegas Review-Journal, Stephens Media, Las Vegas, NV, Jul. to Dec. '07**

- Wrote daily news, features and briefs on deadline for Nevada's largest daily newspaper, covering crime, traffic and fire
- After a three month paid internship, hired and given a 35 percent raise to work as paper's temporary night police beat reporter; offered full time reporting job and additional raise one month later
- Conducted investigative research and legal document review
- Developed and maintained a large source-base for investigative work

### **General Assignment Intern Reporter, USA Today, Gannett Company, McLean, VA, May to Aug. '06**

- Selected as one of four newsroom interns for a competitive summer internship at a national daily newspaper
- Wrote features, news and briefs on deadline, including two front-page stories
- Researched national trends and conducted relevant interviews
- Secured post internship freelance work for *USA Today* and the *Gannett News Service*

### **General Assignment Reporter, The Holland Sentinel, Morris Communications, Holland, MI, Oct. '04 to Dec. '05**

- Wrote daily news, features and briefs on deadline for local daily paper, covering city councils and area schools
- Authored weekly "Neighbors" column, highlighting local leaders and active community members

### **Editorial Intern, The American Prospect Magazine, Washington, D.C, Aug. to Dec. '03**

- Wrote online content for the progressive political journal
- Reviewed submissions, copy edited and fact-checked articles
- Co-coordinated the broadcast of the New American Strategies and Securities for Peace Foreign Policy Conference

## OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

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### **National Coordinator, Stomping Out Malaria in Africa, United States Peace Corps, Rwanda, Jul. '13 to Jun. '14**

- Oversaw the work of 22 regional malaria volunteers and the development of the STOMP Rwanda Program
- Mobilized volunteer malaria prevention and control work nationwide, increasing activity by 42 percent
- Used social media, online resource sharing, targeted communication and bilingual training to inspire action
- Collaborated with an international team of malaria experts to reach global malaria elimination goals
- Developed monitoring and evaluation frameworks for impact assessment and programmatic growth
- Authored proposals and secured grant money for national malaria prevention and control projects

**Volunteer, United States Peace Corps, Rwanda, May '12 to Oct. '13; Kazakhstan, Mar. to Nov. '11**

- Taught healthy living and sports to 90+ Rwandan secondary school students at a village school
- Integrated preventative health practices and education into community services at a rural Rwandan health center
- Taught English as a Second Language to adult and student learners in Kazakhstan
- Trained English teachers in new methodologies to promote positive changes in the Kazakh classroom
- Directed a week long Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) Camp for 100+ participants

**Regional Development Specialist, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Jan. '09 to Feb. '11**

- Developed and maintained donor relations for a statewide, \$10 million nonprofit agency
- Oversaw fundraising activities for eight counties, authoring grants and proposals and securing major donor funds (\$20,000+)
- Spoke publically to community organizations and civic groups to mobilize and energize support
- Wrote and designed press releases, website copy, brochures, fundraising letters and e-blasts
- Selected as a team leader for companywide strategic learning process mandated by Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
- Planned and implemented large fundraising galas and small donor recognition events

**Writing Teacher and Consultant, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, Aug. '05 to May '07**

- Taught English 100 for underperforming first-year students
- Tutored undergraduate, graduate and special needs students as a university writing center consultant
- Created specific methods for working with remedial, international and visually-impaired students
- Trained new consultants and course tutors to successfully teach rhetorical and grammatical concepts to writers

**Community Health Intern, Planned Parenthood of South Central Michigan, Kalamazoo, MI, Aug. '06 to May '07**

- Co-wrote and initiated a university program to decrease sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies
- Trained collegiate resident advisers to better support students' sexual and reproductive health
- Developed a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the program's effectiveness during its pilot year

**Public Relations and Marketing Intern, The Center for Women in Transition, Holland, MI, May to Aug. '03**

- Wrote and designed press releases, brochures and newsletters for sexual assault and domestic violence prevention
- Assisted in developing the nonprofits' website, providing and editing copy
- Served as a crisis volunteer, offering immediate support to victims in emergency situations

## **EDUCATION**

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**Master of International Development and Administration, Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, April 2007, GPA: 3.82**

Concentration: Health Policy and Leadership

Independent Research Project: *International Family Planning: When Domestic Politics Interfere*

**Bachelor of Liberal Arts, Albion College, Albion, MI, April 2004**

Majors: English and Women's Studies; Minor: Journalism

**Washington Semester, American University, Washington, D.C., December 2003**

Area of Study: Print Journalism

Independent Research Project: *How Women Changed War: The Role of Female War Correspondents*

## **TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES**

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Experienced in basic website design, HTML and content management systems; search engine optimization; brand development and content marketing; social media; digital photography and multimedia; graphic design; and various news editing and publishing software, including Adobe Photoshop, Pagemaker, InDesign and QuarkXPress.

## **AWARDS, ASSOCIATIONS AND HONORS**

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Equal Voice Journalism Fellow, Marguerite Casey Foundation (2015); H.F. Guggenheim Reporting Fellow, John Jay College's Center on Media, Crime and Justice (2015); United States Peace Corps Volunteer (2011- 2014); Rotary International (2010-2011); First place for short form news writing, Association of Alternative Newsmedia (2009); *USA Today's* Hainer Award (2006); Managing Editor, *The Pleiad*, Albion College's student newspaper (2003); Editor-in-Chief, *The Albionion*, Albion College's yearbook (2002); Vice President of Foundation and Philanthropy for Delta Gamma Fraternity (2001); Recipient of several academic scholarships and financial awards (2000-2007).