



# Quill & Ink

Fall.17❁Winter.18

# Changes in 2018

It seems appropriate that our first stop in our new lifestyle is the ocean. It is wild, sacred, beautiful, and unpredictable; it can be both giving and harsh. But there is an allure to it that seems almost primal. If all life on our planet originated in the sea, is that why we are drawn to it?

The ocean can represent many things, including change. Aside from our obvious change of location and lifestyle (which we chronicle in this issue), there have been changes in work-related areas, too. Several of our go-to tools and guides have also recently changed, and with them, there are new rules to learn, recommendations that have been revised or reverted, and words whose preferred spellings aren't what they used to be. We'll discuss some of these things, as

well as their implications.

We know that with change there is also opportunity and challenge, and we find ourselves ready for both.

And speaking of change ...

How would you like to change into one of our ScriptAcuity Studio T-shirts? They're free and up for grabs, while our supplies last. Reach out to us at [editors@scriptacuity.com](mailto:editors@scriptacuity.com) to request one, and we'll send it out with our warmest regards.

See the many octopus sightings below for a sample of the shirts, in charcoal with orange lettering and art. (SAS sweatshirts are no longer available, but the design on the back is the same for the T-shirts.)

As always, thanks for reading!

—S & C

BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Dave Quinlan, founder of Martial Way Self-Defense Center ([martialwayvt.com](http://martialwayvt.com)); Jared Whalen, president of Whalen PowerSports ([whalenpowersports.com](http://whalenpowersports.com)); intrepid editor Sara, on the waters of Coles Pond; artist Mike Stiler ([mikestilerart.com](http://mikestilerart.com)); Scott Stambach, author of *The Invisible Life of Ivan Isaenko* ([scottstambach.com](http://scottstambach.com)).



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## Quill & Ink

FALL.WINTER 2017.18

Quill & Ink ([quill-ink.com](http://quill-ink.com)) is written, photographed (unless otherwise noted), designed, and published seasonally by ScriptAcuity Studio.

## BEHIND THE NAME

The quill represents creativity and self-expression, in the written word and also beyond it. Because the inky octopus utilizes a wide variety of tools in the course of its day and is associated with such attributes as adaptability, flexibility, diversity, focus, intuition, and transformation—among others—it thus seemed a fitting symbol for ScriptAcuity Studio.

A little disclaimer: all thoughts, opinions, expressions, and comments are simply our perspectives.



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## Minimalism versus Essentialism

Curving along meandering mountain roads last spring led us to again dream aloud—perhaps for the thousandth time—about selling our home near Lake Champlain in northern Vermont and wandering the world indefinitely. “Why not? Let’s do it!” we’d joked so many times before, laughing and wistfully shaking our heads, the desire to live a life full of ever-changing surroundings and experiences settling over us like itchy pollen, making us squirm and tug at our collars with the usual longing for the seemingly unattainable.

What was different about that particular April morning? The morning when one of us again suggested, “Why not? Let’s do it!” and this time the other replied, “Yeah. I’m ready. Let’s do it”—no laughter, no wistful shaking of heads. No itchiness. The morning when a solemn yet thrilling feeling filled the space between us—an exhilarating dip in a bracing waterfall on a hot day, rinsing that pollen of longing and frustrating inaction away.

There were many things different about that morning and the circumstances leading up to and surrounding it, of course, but the point is that once we’d briefly paused in startled silence and then grinned at each other at finally, *finally* arriving at that long-awaited decision, the adventure of achieving it began.

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One of the first decisions we made as we began planning and preparing for our new life—even, in fact, before we’d returned from our scenic drive that sunny spring day—was to sell or donate virtually everything we owned.

How, we reasoned, could we realistically travel lightly while lugging with us an entire house’s worth of possessions? Though we already had far fewer personal effects than many people we know—resolutely maintaining our home’s Zen-like, uncluttered atmosphere with its empty spaces in our rooms and on our walls to the puzzlement and even the chagrin of many—we still had far more than we needed.

We had to come to terms with letting go of things we still really loved and wanted because, given our plan for a seminomadic lifestyle, it didn’t make sense for us to keep them any longer, but the process of releasing most of what we owned was in most ways far easier than either of us had anticipated. With every piece of furniture and lawn equipment we

sold, with every houseplant and element of décor we rehomed, with every dish and wineglass and article of clothing we wished well and released to its next caretaker, we felt lighter, freer, less reliant, more independent. It became invigorating, exciting. *What else can we release? What else can we do without?* The list lengthened. *Bedroom furniture, flat-screen television, gaming consoles. Wedding gown, autographed books, cookware and bakeware. Board games, stuffed animals, umbrellas. A blender, a Panini press, a rice cooker, a food processor. Clothing and hangers. Snowblower, lawn mower, tables, chairs, sleeping bags, electronics, rugs, shovels, rakes, lamps, patio furniture. A piano ...*

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There is, of course, a balance to strike between simplifying for convenience and freedom and oversimplifying such that it creates inconvenience and loss of freedom. The ability to easily pack and carry with us only that which will fit in our sole vehicle may simplify our lives in some ways but complicate it in others if we do not make conscious, thoughtful, intentional decisions. The challenge is that the balance point is, in many ways, a bit of a moving target and highly unpredictable. Bulky and cumbersome heavy-duty winter gear and snow tires, for example, are largely considered essential by those living in cold-weather climates, and so to discard them in favor of traveling lightly will only lead to a different set of complications once the temperatures and snow plummet should we happen to be in such a climate at that time. Not knowing where in the country or the world we will be a few months into the future means that we must remain, to the greatest extent we can, adaptable and flexible, carrying with us that which is important to our quality of life under a variety of potentially as-yet-unforeseen circumstances—all while still maintaining a high level of facility and maneuverability.

This is where a distinction between what has become popularly known as *minimalism* and the perhaps lesser-known *essentialism* comes in. Much has been written about this, and the intent here is not to rehash it or promote one idea over the other but rather to offer and support acceptance of the notion that we are all on our own paths in life, and as such—as with bioindividuality or investment strategy or interpersonal relationships or anything else that often compounds life’s complexities—no single approach will work perfectly all the time. Choices and decisions are often made after consideration of what is known ... and what is known actually exists as multitudinous grains of sand comprising an ever-shifting, ever-changing dune. We make the best decisions we can based upon the information we have at that moment and hope for the best. If those de-



cisions work out well when the dune inevitably transmutes, wonderful! If not, best to cheerfully adapt and shift gears as much as possible. This applies to everything from the seemingly infinitesimal and flippant to the seemingly astronomical and agonizing of life's decisions, and—like DNA—each are distinct and unique.

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For us, the idea is not about living with as little as possible but about editing out what is extraneous and superfluous in our lives, living intentionally and focusing instead on what is most important to us while simultaneously conserving our natural, energetic, and economic resources. As such, our process has primarily involved discovering how to evaluate the perceived versus the actual importance of our possessions combined with cleverly strategizing how to optimize what we still retain. Thus far, almost without exception, once we made the decision to release something, we were okay with it. We even accidentally discarded a few

things we'd intended to keep—and didn't realize it until months later—and don't feel badly about it even though we thought we'd wanted them at the time. We are not looking to replace any of our possessions with versions that are perceived as greener or more compact, such as books, CDs, or DVDs, with their electronic or downloadable iterations. We focus on only having what truly enlivens and optimally facilitates our life experiences rather than unnecessarily minimizing our possessions to the fewest number reasonably possible only to thereby end up complicating those life experiences down the literal or proverbial road. It is likely that some of what we currently think is essential will eventually prove not to be so ... and some of what we currently think is inessential to our lives is, in fact, not.

Are we likely to nail it right out of the gate? Probably not. Can we get close? We think so.

Thoughts? Suggestions? Please drop us a note at [editors@scriptacuity.com](mailto:editors@scriptacuity.com) and share them with us. ■

## New Year, New Tools

So long, sweet sixteen.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*, seventeenth edition, was released in September 2017, ushering in a revised set of rules and guidelines governing the writing, editing, and publishing world.

The first iteration of *CMS* was published in 1906—way back during Theodore Roosevelt's administration!—for use by the University of Chicago Press and has since become largely recognized as the preeminent authority on grammar, punctuation, and citation style for books published in the United States. And now here we are, 112 years later, cracking the spines on the seventeenth edition and rolling up our sleeves to dig deep and absorb the updated style standards.

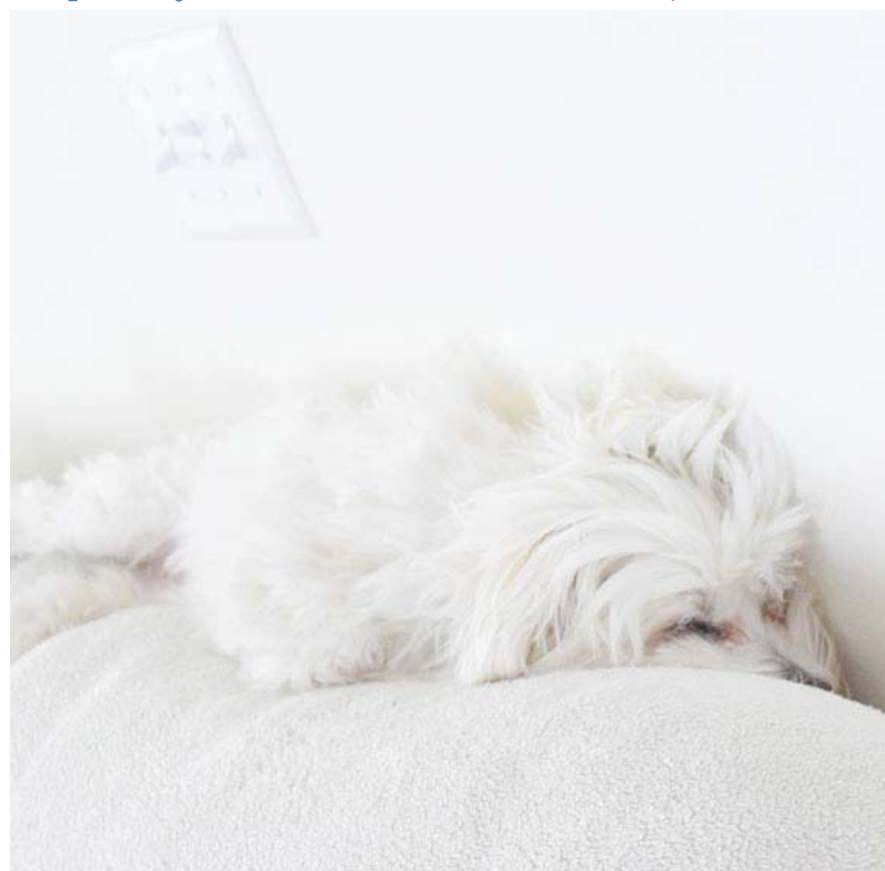
Why does it keep changing? In short, because the world keeps changing. *CMS* continually evolves in response to ever-shifting social paradigms, legal requirements, publishing practices, and technological advancements. After all, the need for gender-neutral/genderless pronouns and the treatment of HTML code, website names, electronic publishing regulations, and social networking methodology and standardization were never thought of at the time of the publication's inception. So, too, with dictionaries; Merriam-Webster.com recently updated its entries with more than one thousand new terms and definitions that also reflect our ever-changing lexicon, incorporating recently minted vocabulary that has solidly entrenched itself in mainstream society (think *binge-watch*, *froyo*, *woo-woo*, and *yowza*) encompassing everything from politics (*alt-right*) and technology (*ransomware*) to sports (*schneid*) and medical advancements (*cardioverter*). Everything changes, and so, too, must the industry's

critical reference materials to remain relevant. Of course, like many changes, it may take some time before the current version becomes the norm. (Which version of Windows are you using? Which version of Word?)

Editorial work is nothing if not regular calisthenics for our trusty gray matter. Have questions? Comments? Reach out to us at [editors@scriptacuity.com](mailto:editors@scriptacuity.com)! ■

NEXT PAGE: The first snowfall of the season, as seen from various places on MDI.

BELOW: On a cold, snowy Maine day, Gili takes time to rejuvenate.









# Beavers!

Beavers are incredible creatures. The world's second-largest rodents are highly intelligent, industrious, family-oriented, and communicative. Atypically of rodents, they are monogamous. Though their young unfortunately have a high mortality rate, those that survive to adulthood have an average life span of twenty-four years in the wild.

Beavers are primarily nocturnal, semi-aquatic herbivores and are supremely physically adapted to their environment; in addition to their specialized tails, webbed feet, ability to digest cellulose, nose and ear valves that shut out water, goggle-like transparent eyelids, waterproof fur, and amazingly powerful teeth, they can remain submerged for approximately fifteen minutes if required.

Beavers dramatically impact and partially create their habitats with their intricately and expertly crafted dams. These dams, the sites for which beavers sometimes scout and study for suitability in advance of construction, are built with site-specific needs in mind; the beavers adapt and vary their dams' construction as necessary, including expertly ensuring that the resulting pond will not freeze solid during winter months, enabling them to access their caches of food diligently stockpiled around their lodges. The result provides bridges used by other animals and includes deliberate spillways and tunnels that affect the water table and help to break down pesticides. The resulting ponds reduce flooding and soil erosion and offer a refuge for many other mammal species as well as various fish and fowl populations, making them a vital component of the ecosystem.

Beaver lodges are also cleverly constructed to include secure, underwater entrances, multiple rooms, food repositories, and even ventilation systems. Beavers are often generous and hospitable, sharing their lodges and food with muskrats, and trumpeter swans often nest atop beaver lodges.

Beavers are model conservationists, wasting nothing and utilizing everything from their log-

ging and ferrying operations. They eat the bark, buds, and leaves of the trees they fell for their construction work, and they also feast upon the aquatic vegetation through which they create channels for ferrying their raw building materials. Excavated mud, silt, and stone are used for plastering their dams and lodges.

Though beavers were once hunted and trapped to the brink of extinction for their fur, castoreum, and meat, their populations have fortunately improved and stabilized following conservation policies. Celebrate and protect this incredible creature!

*We are passionate about environmental conservation, sustainable living, and responsible guardianship of the natural world. ▀*

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BELOW: The beavers of Coles Pond, in Walden, Vermont, in October 2017.



## First Light

When deciding where in the world we would live first in our new vagabond life, coastal Maine essentially seemed a foregone conclusion. Having spent the better part of fifteen years exploring it as often as possible and actively strategizing solutions for how we could make living here—even if only for a little while—a reality, it made sense that we would designate it as our first stop on our big adventure. Because our original arrangements for moving here in early September unexpectedly shifted just before we formally sold our house, we spent the intervening restful, restorative time nestled into a cozy roost on longtime family land a breath away from the Canadian border high in the Cold Hollow Mountains, its hills, ledges, and history wrapping around us like an ancestral hug. From that peaceful perch, we beheld the surrounding nature stretch its arms, sigh, and tuck itself in for its winter rest, its colors blazing and then fluttering and swirling away, its creatures chattering and gathering and busying themselves in myriad brisk preparations, the sun gradually swinging by for increasingly briefer visits as we spun toward our perihelion, Canis Major barking at us in the night from just around the celestial corner.

Now that we are here at last in this beautiful place we've known best during autumn, we are marveling at a windswept landscape that is at once so familiar and yet, with its frosty and glittering cloaks and its remarkably hushed surroundings, so simultaneously extraordinary. The dusty crinkle of dry leaves underfoot on exploratory strolls is replaced with the sharp crunch of ice. The roar of tourists and traffic is now simply that of the wind and the sea. The harbor, always bustling with touristy seafaring craft in warmer months, is now nearly silent; even the *Margaret Todd*, a 151-foot schooner and iconic symbol of Bar Harbor, is now lazily luxuriating in the balmy bathwaters of the Caribbean while we roam around frozen streets rimmed with sleeping hotels entirely devoid of lights.

In charming contrast, many of the steadfast sailing vessels are lit up in the harbor at night, quietly and demurely dazzling, bobbing and swaying beneath a sea of glimmering stars like buoyant, joyful ducks.

This island is highly protective of its night sky, with an ordinance in place to minimize light pollution, and indeed the firmament resplendently displays a vast field of stars; we can discern tiny, shimmering clusters in areas never visible from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



RIGHT: The supermoon over the Shore Path, in Bar Harbor, December 2017.

BELOW: Late morning along the Shore Path, November 2017.





our former home near Lake Champlain. And there is more than just the beauty of the scenery—there is the welcoming nature of the many people we’ve met here, some of whom we’ve known for years already. One of these newfound friends recently told us, “We’ve got to find a way to get you guys here year-round!” This statement was an echo of several years earlier, when a young lady we talked to said, “You’d fit right in here!” And these are not the sole instances of welcoming we’ve received. We’ve been greeted by name throughout the village, received hugs from various folks, and were even extended invitations to family holiday gatherings.

As one of the many positive souls we’ve encountered here remarked, there is good juju that permeates the soil—much of it stemming from the wondrous nature here and also from the overwhelming energy that exudes from people in the presence of such wild places and amazing people. He said, “This could be your anchor.” The possibility is there, and that such a possibility exists is in itself exciting.

The question is: What now? We love being here, and we are now considering our next destination. Where will it be? Stay tuned ... ▀



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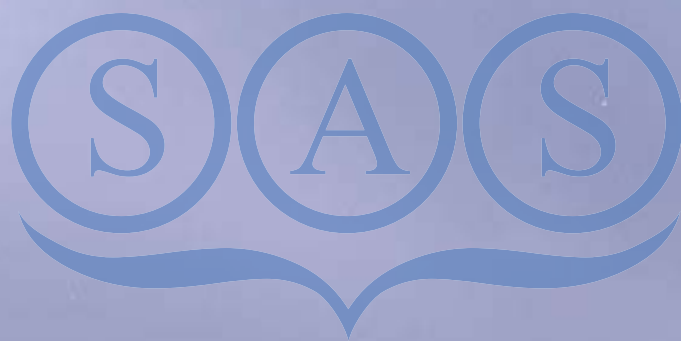
ABOVE LEFT: Our SAS mascot, enjoying the view.

LEFT: The sheep bank mentioned in our November 18, 2018, blog post. The label reads: “Relocation to Maine Fund.”

BELOW: A sunny and unseasonably warm day just after Thanksgiving 2017. Observe the two editors taking a brief (but well-deserved) break.







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