

Briarpatch AGM

Tuesday, November 17, 2020 @7:00 PM

7:05 – Call to Order

Financial & Previous Minutes M/S/C – Deanna/Marty

Waive 2019 financial Audit M/S/C – Jacq/Risa as per discussion

Staff Reports – As submitted

Approval of New Board Members:

Alejandra Cabrera - M/S/C – Deanna/Saima

Natalie Owl – M/S/C -Deanna/Darin

Shobna Radons – M/S/C – Deanna/Darin

Risa Payant – M/S/C - Marty/Saima

Emmy Ritenburg – M/S/C - Saima/Jacq

Jacq Brasseur – M/S/C – Marty/Saima (Jacq abstained from vote)

Adjourned 9:00 PM

Briarpatch Annual General Meeting

Editor/Publisher Report

November 4, 2020

Publisher

Finance

Complete financial statements for 2018-19 (April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019) have been compiled by Iris Howden, and are available in a separate document. A few highlights are provided here:

	2019-20	2018-19
Revenue	\$211,979	\$200,879
Subscriptions	\$38,042	\$32,491
Advertising	\$28,832	\$27,998
Grants	\$31,930	\$61,691
Donations	\$102,190	\$67,767
Expenses	\$194,454	\$218,640
Salaries & benefits	\$91,849	\$91,591
Magazine production	\$67,895	\$60,484
Net income (loss)	\$15,789	(\$17,761)

The change in net income can be accounted for in the following ways:

- PSAC's annual donation for 2019 and for 2020 were both received in this fiscal year.
- Longtime supporter Gloria Cymbalisky bequeathed \$7,500 to Briarpatch in November 2019.
- Subscriptions were up substantially.
- Monthly donations were up well over projections on a quarterly basis.

That said, there are some trends to look out for:

- Printing & postage costs from the office are up overall, which makes sense given an increase in subscriptions.
- Magazine production costs (comprised of printing costs and SaskAbilities mailout costs) are up 10% over the previous year.

Circulation

Subscription levels for 2019-20 were between 1653 and 1498. Previously, circulation had been under 1600 since 2010, and was at its lowest in 2016, at 1218.

Issue	May/Jun	Jul/Aug	Sep/Oct	Nov/Dec	Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr
Circulation	1595	1653	1560	1510	1498	1569

To boost subscriptions, we applied in 2018 for a large government of Canada grant (the Canadian Periodical Fund Business Innovation grant) and got the application approved in summer 2018 for \$44,900 for activities to increase circulation. Activities related to the Business Innovation grant, like gift offers, direct mail design, printing, and mailing, and more began after the Nov/Dec 2018 issue. Subscriptions subsequently peaked at 1653 for the July/Aug 2019 issue. The lowest subscription count for an issue since the direct mail campaign's completion was 1479, in May/June of 2020, and the following issue saw circulation back up to 1500 subscribers.

Revenue from sales of subscriptions

Year	Revenue (\$)
2014-15	34,802
2015-16	19,077
2016-17	30,577
2017-18	40,047
2018-19	32,491
2019-20	38,042

Advertising

2019-20 saw steady ad placements in the magazine. Toward the end of the year we lost advertisers COPE 397 and SFL, but consistently high ad placements (especially in the Labour issue) ameliorated those losses somewhat. Consistent ad bookings in the September and November 2020 and through the January and March 2021 issues will appear in next year's financials and include new advertising by the Mackenzie Art Gallery and New Star Press.

Staff

Briarpatch operates with a core full-time staff of two: editor Saima Desai and publisher John Cameron. Former publisher David Gray-Donald resigned last August after requests to try working remotely outside of Saskatchewan for some months at a time were rejected by the board. John was hired in November 2019.

We contracted about 100 people to write articles, make art, contribute photos, fact-check, copy edit, and proofread. This is slightly higher than normal, which can partly be attributed to the May/June 2019 Just Transition issue, featuring a greater number of contributors and editorial collective members.

In addition to our normal contracting, we have contracted Sara Birrell on an ongoing basis to produce the *Sask Dispatch*, a free print publication distributed to all Saskatchewan Briarpatch subscribers and (pre-COVID) in select locations around Regina, and the RWDSU *Defender* newsletter.

In the summer of 2020 (the 2020-2021 financial year) we hired a summer student, Xicotencatl Maher Lopez, for an eight-week period. This was financed by a \$3,088 grant from Service Canada's Canada Summer Jobs program. Xico performed several editorial tasks, including proofreading and writing articles, and publishing tasks, including drafting letters and producing advertisements for ad swaps with other magazines.

Fundraising

We continue to do two appeals per year to subscribers (except sustainers), and the swimathon in December. The appeals raised around \$3,000 each and the swimathon a little over \$5,000.

An ongoing contract with RWDSU to produce the *Defender* newsletter has provided a much-needed injection of funds that has also allowed us to continue producing the *Dispatch* by covering the costs of having Sara Birrell on contract.

As part of her work with IndieGraf's Indie News Challenge, Sara Birrell ran an online fundraiser for the *Dispatch* in October 2020. This fundraiser has raised approximately \$3,700 so far and

will be included in the 2020-2021 finances. Greater detail on the program is included in the editor's report.

Events

We are trying to focus on putting on events that: spark community organizing conversations that wouldn't otherwise happen, strengthen Briarpatch (visibility, subscription sales, donations, etc), and/or strengthen the political analysis around an issue.

Events we put on included:

- Ten swimmers raised around \$5,000 in the December 2019 swim-a-thon fundraiser in Regina, including stalwart swimathoneer Phil Johnson, swimming for his 27th time!
- There was no annual holiday party at Huston House, unfortunately.
- In November 2019, Briarpatch sponsored a book launch for Annahid Dashtgard at the Artesian in Regina. A small but attentive crowd showed up and bought copies of the book; Briarpatch had no financial commitments to the event.
- Also in November 2019 we threw a small farewell party for David Gray-Donald at Tandoori Kebab on Albert St. After expenses we raised around \$500.

Throughout 2020 Briarpatch has put on or cohosted a number of online webinars:

- March 28: Covid-19, Recession, & the Future, cohosted with Solidarity Winnipeg and New Socialists. Featured Isaac Murdoch, Nandita Sharma, David McNally, John Clarke, and David Camfield. Saima moderated the discussion.
- May 13: Pandemic Profiteers & the Movements Trying to Stop Them, cohosted with Resource Movement. Featured Simran Dhunna, Thomas McKechnie, Ricardo Tranjan, a rep from ACORN Canada. Dave Gray-Donald moderated, representing Resource Movement.
- June 25: Policing, direct action, & infiltration: ten years since the G20, cohosted with Between the Lines Publishing and Upping the Anti. Featured Aruna Boodram, Butterfly Sabrina GoPaul, Mandy Hiscocks, and Irina Ceri. Moderated by BTL author Lesley Wood.
- Sept. 15: Land Back issue launch meme workshop with ijotiKak. Facilitated by Saima.
- Oct. 1: Why Reconciliation Died: A talk by Veronica Fuentes, cohosted with APIRG. Part of APIRG's AWOL event series. Facilitated by Shima Robinson from APIRG.

Grant Applications

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year we applied for and received our annual grant from the Aid to Publishers program, \$21,590, and an \$1,100 grant from RPIRG for our annual Writing in the Margins contest.

ECMF - Edna Curran Memorial Fund

(The volunteer board that owns and manages Huston House; both staff are members)

John and Saima sit on the ECMF Board. The building is almost fully occupied (3rd floor is vacant), and the ECMF is in good financial standing. There is over \$70,000 available for repairs to the house, which may be necessary soon. The roof is having problems, and there was a drip last winter (2018) by the front door, which we believe was ice-damming. After minor repairs, this did not happen again in 2019 winter.

Briarpatch administrates the Huston House parking lot (with help from Arlene), and so receives a \$200 discount on monthly rent paid to ECMF. Rent is \$400, so Briarpatch now pays \$200 in rent per month after the discount.

Editor

2019 Briarpatch print content

Jan/Feb

Cover: Our first Northern Writing Prize winner. Police brutality and the death of Josephine Pelletier in Calgary; the grunt work of antifascism; Ontario's Indigenous child welfare agencies; Jason Kenney borrowing from Israel's anti-BDS playbook to take down Alberta's environmental activists. James Wilt's article about the leftist's case against the carbon tax continues to be read and cited widely.

Dispatch: Coverage of the Just Transitions Summit, Saskatoon Co-op strike

Mar/Apr

Cover: Inside Indian-occupied Kashmir's deadliest year in a decade. Protecting Akikodjiwan from a condo development; Canada's supply management system and NAFTA 2.0; Tracking the Indigenous opposition to Line 3; Writing in the Margins winners included a photo essay and creative non-fiction on the internment of Japanese people in Canada, and a poem about Indigenous land defense. Julia Metraux's article about the resurgence of the Jewish left in Canada helped fill a gap in *Briarpatch's* editorial coverage of Jewish activism and antisemitism.

Dispatch: Housing supplement; geothermal power plant; UofR and UofS legal battles over access to information and funding

May/Jun

The Just Transition Issue. Included articles on the history of the just transition movement; what "giving land back" really means; a roundtable with climate justice activists; case studies; borders

and the transition; degrowth; economics of the transition; and visionary fiction. This was a very well-received issue published at an important time in the conversations around responses to climate change, and we continue to see demand for the issue.

Dispatch: Will the labour movement lead the charge for a just transition in Sask?; an interview with Wascana Solar Co-op; student climate strike

July/Aug

One of our strongest issues, with many of the stories being shared widely on social media. Cover story: the fight to halt the construction of a new migrant detention centre in Laval. Women activists pivoting to electoral politics; #BlockSidewalk in Toronto and organizing against Big Tech; Islamophobia within anti-racist organizations; AMLO and resource extraction; a critique of voting as “harm reduction”.

Dispatch: Deep-dive into the functioning of the Co-op; Sask Wildfire operations funding; two years after the end of NORTEP and NORPAC

Sept/Oct

Sophia Reuss’ cover story on climate reporting and the death of local news was extremely well-reported and researched, though not as widely read as it should have been. An article featuring conversations with disabled, trans, and racialized disaster preppers was very popular. Lessons from high-school organizers fighting Ford’s education cuts; responses to new security screening at Winnipeg’s downtown library; Andrea Walker prize winner on death doulas and palliative care; a somewhat insepacific article on 2S-LGBTQ poverty.

Dispatch: Abortion access in Saskatchewan; Northern deforestation

2020 Briarpatch print content

Jan/Feb

Particularly well-read articles included: “The implicit militancy of gardening,” an article about the role of community gardens in the labour movement; “Platforms for people, not profit,” an article about democratic platforms and cultural production in Canada; and “Border poem,” a lyric essay about the ongoing Indian occupation of Kashmir. The Northern Writing Prize-winning article, “A new era for Old Crow,” required extensive editing and ultimately didn’t fulfil the prize’s intention to have the Briarpatch editor mentor a Northern writer.

March/April

The cover story, “Canada and the crisis of capitalism,” was received enthusiastically by some readers, but was too dense and theory-heavy for others. In this issue, we published the winners of the Writing In The Margins contest – a strong set of articles. Also: a deep-dive into Resource Movement, an overview of the global migration system, and an interview about Sikhi, leftist politics, and anti-colonialism.

May/June

A massive – but very well-reported – cover story about the history of The Pas. An extremely well-received article about grassroots translation and migrant-Indigenous solidarity. A tricky-to-edit but original article about Indigenous authorities in Guatemala. An article about Canada’s online-only socialists. A solid overview of the politics of Toronto’s Tamil community.

July/August

One of our best issues. A long but very well-researched cover story about MGEU’s support for jail-building. An extraordinarily well-read and well-written article that included case studies of Indigenous ecological practices. A very solid article about pension funds’ ties to the housing crisis. The Andrea Walker prize winner, an article about whistle-blowers at Canadian aid NGOs. A very well-read parting shot calling about “Feminism against resource extraction.” A well-received letter from the editor about defunding the police.

September/October

The Land Back issue. Massively well received – hundreds of new subscribers, and thousands of new social media followers and individual orders. Highlights included an article about land as a social relationship; shared Indigenous jurisdiction on the Prairies; Indigenous women hunters; Indigenous sex workers and ceremony; “Land Back means protecting Black and Indigenous trans women,” Wet’suwet’en hereditary leadership, visionary fiction about Wood Buffalo National Park.

November/December

Ordinarily our Nov/Dec issue is our Labour Issue – this year, we made it the Labour in the Pandemic issue. Included a call for salts by a collective of Amazon workers, a roundtable with Foodora workers, reporting on migrant workers’ organizing, efforts to defund the police and replace them with crisis workers, a roundtable about Black women’s labour, and an article about rural postmasters.

Editorial changes

For the Land Back issue, Saima changed some of Briarpatch’s practices and its style guide to be in line with Indigenous Protocols and Knowledge. You can read about those changes [here](#) (scroll down to “a note on our style guide”). Those style guide changes have been made permanent.

For the Land Back issue, we also accepted money from Journalists’ for Human Rights’ Indigenous Reporters Program. It allowed us to offer five Indigenous writers \$500 in payment for their articles, and cover most of the costs of paying the editorial collective.

Things we did well in editorial this year:

- Published more deeply-researched longform that really punched above our weight (see: “Great Manitoba,” “Prison Unionism,” “Decolonizing Ecology”)
- Published a higher number of quality blog posts on timely issues

- The Land Back issue: Developed a template for how to successfully create special issues with the help of an editorial collective. Built relationships with a lot of great Indigenous writers, artists, and radicals
- Published more freelancers in the Sask Dispatch – including in our Municipal Election Package

Areas of editorial difficulty are:

- Paying writers fairly. \$100-\$300 isn't remotely close to fair, considering how much work many writers put into their articles. We should consider increasing our contributor fees.
- Keeping up with the pace of news and the scale of crisis during the pandemic. A lot of our reporting – especially in the early, urgent days of the pandemic – felt like it was too little, too late. The same is the case during this present period of heightened settler violence against Indigenous Peoples across the continent.
- We still need to develop a clear mandate & editorial procedures for both Briarpatch and the Dispatch – this will help us become eligible for journalism grants
- We need to keep building trust in communities of colour – especially Indigenous writers' communities.
- Managing social media and the website, publishing articles on the blog, and making six print magazines each year is too much for one editorial staff person. We either need to cut down on the volume of digital content we publish & amount of social media promotion we do, or find a way to outsource some of it.

Online-only

We renamed the “blog” section of the website to “online-only” – “blog” sounded a little too early-aughts for us. Saima has been publishing 1-3 blog posts per month; we have a budget of \$2,400/year for the blog, which allows us to publish 2 posts a month at \$100/post. We should endeavour to increase this rate.

Right now blog posts are copy-edited and fact-checked by Saima. It seems to work ok for now, but it does establish an unspoken hierarchy between print articles (which are copy-edited and fact-checked by contractors) and online-only articles.

Contests

Writing in the Margins

This year, because of COVID-19, promotion for the Writing in the Margins contest is being done entirely by paying for ads on social media (typically it's done by ad-swaps in literary magazines, and sending letters to the heads of university writing departments and other writing/photography groups). We'll see how well it works in December, and it will inform our ad strategy in the future.

For the past three years (including this year), a reader donation of \$250 has allowed Briarpatch to offer 10 bursaries to cover the cost of entry for low-income entrants.

Andrea Walker

The quality of pitches was high this year, and the winning entry in 2020 was very well-written and well-received. We've almost depleted the prize fund – we have one or two more years of prize money left. The prize doesn't serve an important purpose at Briarpatch, so the board has decided to end the prize when the prize money runs out, unless funding is secured to continue the prize.

Northern Writing Prize

We received more – and better – pitches than previous years. The winning pitch for 2020 (to be published in the Jan/Feb 2021 issue) is a very strong one by an Indigenous northerner.

E-newsletter

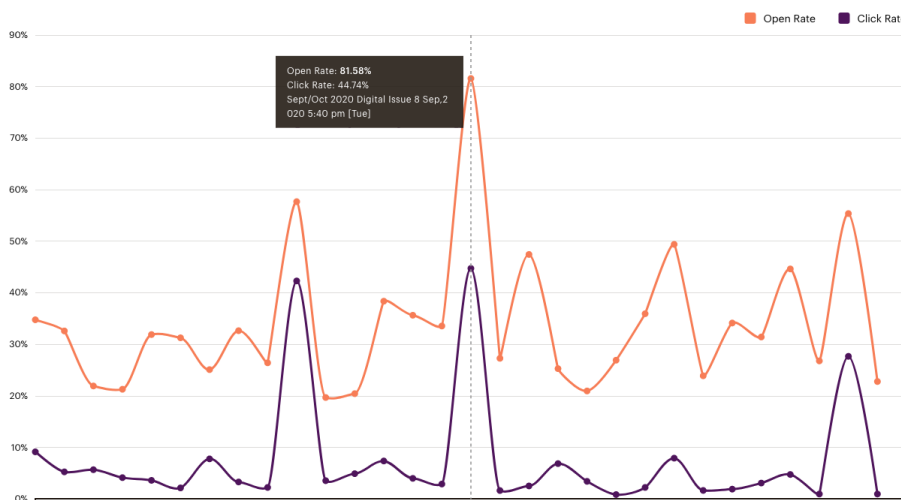
Our open rate is 28%, higher than last year's 22%. Our average click rate is 5%, up from 3% last year. This is likely due to the fact that we've started sending PDFs of the magazine to digital subscribers via Mailchimp – those emails have a very high open and click rates.

Our free Mailchimp account only allows us to send to a maximum of 2,000 addresses per day. Thus, our list is segmented into two parts, and Saima sends the same email to those two different lists. If money becomes available in the future, we should get a paid Mailchimp account.

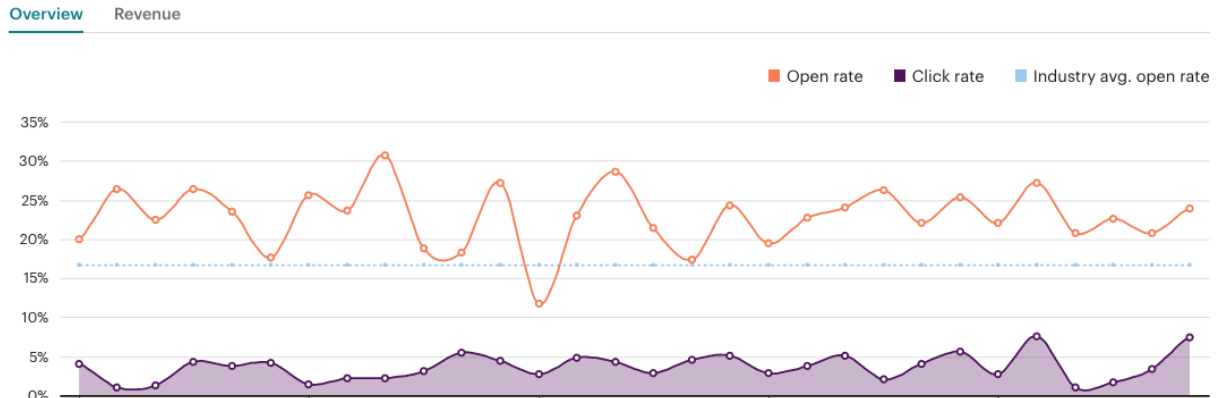
Last year our total audience was 3,160, with 2,350 of them being active subscribers. This year it is 3,799 with 3,027 of them being active subscribers.

Nov 2019 - Nov 2020

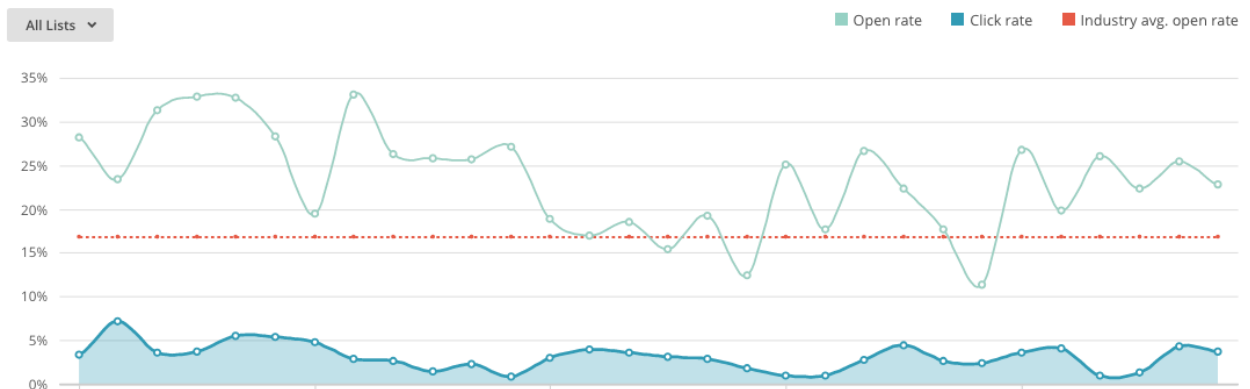
Campaign performance



July 2018 - Sept 19



July 2017 - Sept 2018



Website

We created a [library finder function](#) on our website, but haven't yet populated it with the libraries where readers can find Briarpatch.

We don't have best-practices for accessibility on web or social media. We should do an accessibility audit on our website in the future.

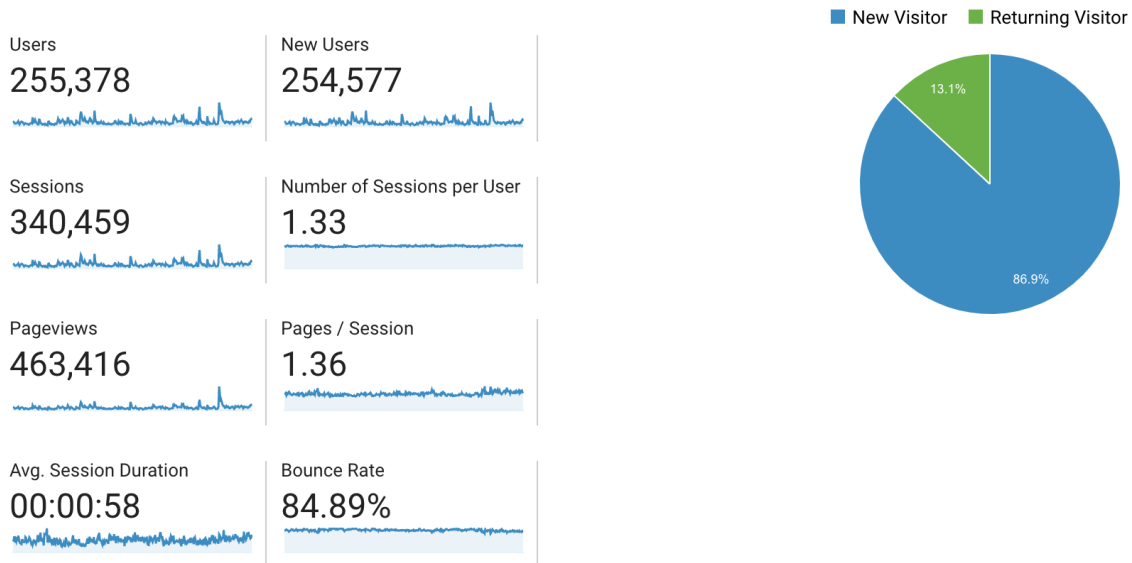
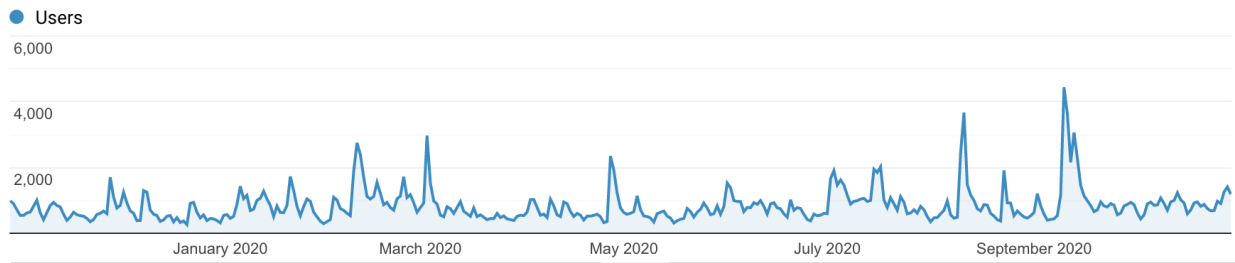
Web Traffic

We've doubled our website traffic over the past five years. By far, the largest chunk of that growth has happened over the last year. Other metrics – like the number of sessions per user, bounce rate, and session duration have remained constant.

- Sessions
 - 340,459 sessions in 2019-20 (October 30, 2019 - October 30, 2020)
 - 224,241 sessions in 2018-19
 - 204,205 sessions in 2017-18

- 196,100 sessions in 2016-17
- 175,618 sessions in 2015-16
- Pageviews
 - 463,416 pageviews in 2019-20 (October 30, 2019 - October 30, 2020)
 - 301,053 pageviews in 2018-19
 - 274,355 pageviews in 2017-18
 - 279,380 pageviews in 2016-17
 - 257,255 pageviews in 2015-16

An overview of our web metrics from October 30, 2019 - October 30, 2020



The cities where most of our web readers are browsing from:

City	Users	% Users
1. Toronto	28,914	10.94%
2. (not set)	18,166	6.87%
3. Regina	10,454	3.96%
4. Vancouver	10,339	3.91%
5. Montreal	8,318	3.15%
6. Calgary	8,099	3.06%
7. Ottawa	7,884	2.98%
8. Edmonton	6,808	2.58%
9. Winnipeg	6,652	2.52%
10. Saskatoon	6,232	2.36%

Our most-seen pages and articles:

Page ?	Pageviews ? ↓	Unique Pageviews ?	Avg. Time on Page ?	Entrances ?	Bounce Rate ?	% Exit ?
	463,416 % of Total: 100.00% (463,416)	418,124 % of Total: 100.00% (418,124)	00:02:42 Avg for View: 00:02:42 (0.00%)	340,423 % of Total: 100.00% (340,423)	84.89% Avg for View: 84.89% (0.00%)	73.46% Avg for View: 73.46% (0.00%)
1. /	29,882 (6.45%)	24,323 (5.82%)	00:01:53	20,456 (6.01%)	43.46%	41.61%
2. /articles/view/a-short-introduction-to-the-two-row-wampum	11,534 (2.49%)	10,540 (2.52%)	00:06:02	10,371 (3.05%)	91.09%	89.73%
3. /articles/view/decolonizing-ecology	8,844 (1.91%)	8,061 (1.93%)	00:06:34	7,746 (2.28%)	90.27%	87.48%
4. /articles/view/we-is-actually-we	8,793 (1.90%)	8,250 (1.97%)	00:07:15	7,963 (2.34%)	92.06%	91.02%
5. /issues/view/september-october-2020	7,885 (1.70%)	6,489 (1.55%)	00:01:25	5,542 (1.63%)	59.09%	50.81%
6. /submissions	7,871 (1.70%)	6,596 (1.58%)	00:02:09	4,090 (1.20%)	65.01%	53.69%
7. /articles/view/a-note-on-call-out-culture	7,802 (1.68%)	7,171 (1.72%)	00:04:43	6,964 (2.05%)	85.78%	84.06%
8. /articles/view/decolonizing-together	6,693 (1.44%)	6,110 (1.46%)	00:05:01	5,821 (1.71%)	90.31%	87.58%
9. /about	6,477 (1.40%)	5,626 (1.35%)	00:01:12	952 (0.28%)	57.88%	36.62%
10. /saskdispatch/view/what-happened-to-the-saskatoon-co-op	6,219 (1.34%)	5,958 (1.42%)	00:05:29	5,917 (1.74%)	95.61%	94.66%

11.	/subscribe	4,893 (1.06%)	4,025 (0.96%)	00:01:11	1,291 (0.38%)	45.31%	31.04%
12.	/articles/view/police-protect-corporations-not-people	3,967 (0.86%)	3,660 (0.88%)	00:04:37	3,481 (1.02%)	91.27%	88.86%
13.	/checkout	3,749 (0.81%)	2,871 (0.69%)	00:01:04	168 (0.05%)	62.50%	13.39%
14.	/saskdispatch/view/public-private-partnerships-p3s-screwed-over-saskatchewan	3,680 (0.79%)	3,540 (0.85%)	00:02:51	3,463 (1.02%)	95.03%	93.04%
15.	/issues	3,634 (0.78%)	2,715 (0.65%)	00:00:28	413 (0.12%)	56.42%	18.49%
16.	/blog/view/free-transit-is-just-the-beginning	3,596 (0.78%)	3,350 (0.80%)	00:04:19	3,250 (0.95%)	92.03%	89.74%
17.	/cart	3,537 (0.76%)	2,296 (0.55%)	00:00:22	350 (0.10%)	61.71%	13.88%
18.	/articles/view/what-is-land-back-a-settler-faq	3,384 (0.73%)	3,151 (0.75%)	00:03:30	2,311 (0.68%)	84.64%	73.17%
19.	/announcements/view/youth-summer-job-publishing-editorial-assistant-2020	3,166 (0.68%)	2,821 (0.67%)	00:05:00	2,496 (0.73%)	85.62%	81.90%
20.	/articles/view/taking-your-transition-into-your-own-hands	3,031 (0.65%)	2,906 (0.70%)	00:05:41	2,857 (0.84%)	94.19%	92.97%
21.	/articles/view/mutual-aid-for-the-end-of-the-world	3,018 (0.65%)	2,763 (0.66%)	00:06:47	2,624 (0.77%)	91.01%	87.81%
22.	/articles/view/canada-and-the-crisis-of-capitalism	2,959 (0.64%)	2,724 (0.65%)	00:05:04	2,447 (0.72%)	89.95%	85.70%
23.	/articles/view/when-memory-outlives-toronto-tamil	2,912 (0.63%)	2,596 (0.62%)	00:06:37	2,462 (0.72%)	88.38%	84.72%
24.	/checkout/payment	2,827 (0.61%)	2,199 (0.53%)	00:01:09	37 (0.01%)	54.05%	8.21%
25.	/articles/view/when-a-disease-is-racialized-coronavirus-anti-chinese-racism	2,795 (0.60%)	2,591 (0.62%)	00:04:04	2,438 (0.72%)	91.43%	88.66%

Social Media

All our social media accounts' follower numbers have been growing faster than in past years. The fastest rate of growth has been on Instagram. Twitter has also grown fast.

Briarpatch social media

Facebook: 9,447 followers (+925 in the last year)

Twitter: 10,198 followers (+2,442)

Instagram: 2,986 followers (+2,011)

Sask Dispatch social media

Facebook: 292 followers

Twitter: 449 followers

The Sask Dispatch

We have been publishing a Saskatchewan-focussed news publication, the *Sask Dispatch*, for two years. It has allowed *Briarpatch* to maintain a national focus, while also dedicating more space to Saskatchewan issues in a publication that will reach a more targeted audience. Using the money from the *RWDSU Defender*, we are able to pay Sara Birrell (who produces the *Defender*) two work for 10 hours/week as a reporter/editor for the *Dispatch*. Sara will continue to do so at least until September 2021, when she graduates from the UofR.

Editorial content

The Dispatch has published 30 articles over the last 12 months; 13 of them were by freelancers (i.e., not Sara or Saima). Some highlights:

- “On the Prairies, the drug crisis is not opioids, but meth”: a fantastic reported piece about government responses to the drug crisis in SK
- “CLC throws support behind locked-out Refinery Co-op workers”: reporting on the Refinery Co-op lock-out
- “City’s body rub parlour decision risks worker safety”: Talking to sex workers about Regina’s decision to restrict body rub parlours to industrial areas
- “‘A culture of perpetration’: what’s behind sexual violence in Saskatchewan”: A deep dive into the first provincial report on sexual violence.
- “Emergency rally for Black lives draws hundreds”: Reporting on the BLM rally in June 2020
- “When collecting CERB means losing disability benefits”: analysis on CERB and social assistance
- “‘We have buried too many’: A Q&A with Tristen Durocher”: A very well-read and widely-shared interview about the northern Indigenous suicide crisis
- “The space to tell stories”: A longform reported feature on the groundswell of Indigenous women’s cinema in Saskatchewan after the end of the Film Tax Credit
- 2020 Regina Municipal Election package: In preparation for Regina’s 2020 municipal election, the *Sask Dispatch* asked eight progressive community members, activists, and experts to pick one pressing issue facing the city, and write about how to address it.

Web analytics (most-read articles) for October 30, 2019 - October 30, 2020:

Page ?	Pageviews ?	Unique Pageviews ?	Avg. Time on Page ?	Entrances ?	Bounce Rate ?	% Exit ?
	28,961 % of Total: 6.25% (463,416)	27,174 % of Total: 6.50% (418,124)	00:04:11 Avg for View: 00:02:42 (55.17%)	25,632 % of Total: 7.53% (340,423)	92.68% Avg for View: 84.89% (9.18%)	88.47% Avg for View: 73.46% (20.43%)
1. /saskdispatch/view/what-happened-to-the-saskatoon-co-op	6,219 (21.47%)	5,958 (21.93%)	00:05:29	5,917 (23.08%)	95.61%	94.66%
2. /saskdispatch/view/public-private-partnerships-p3s-screwed-over-saskatchewan	3,680 (12.71%)	3,540 (13.03%)	00:02:51	3,463 (13.51%)	95.03%	93.04%
3. /saskdispatch/view/saskatchewan-prairies-drug-crisis-opioid-meth-funding-policing	1,852 (6.39%)	1,744 (6.42%)	00:05:48	1,655 (6.46%)	93.24%	90.50%
4. /saskdispatch/view/we-have-buried-too-many-tristen-durocher-suicide-prevention	1,456 (5.03%)	1,347 (4.96%)	00:04:55	1,283 (5.01%)	91.74%	89.22%
5. /saskdispatch	1,067 (3.68%)	851 (3.13%)	00:01:27	489 (1.91%)	58.28%	41.42%
6. /saskdispatch/view/the-sorry-state-of-abortion-access-in-saskatchewan	1,005 (3.47%)	962 (3.54%)	00:08:50	947 (3.69%)	94.40%	93.73%
7. /saskdispatch/view/when-collecting-cerb-means-losing-disability-benefits	945 (3.26%)	876 (3.22%)	00:05:26	842 (3.28%)	92.04%	88.78%
8. /saskdispatch/view/clc-throws-support-behind-locked-out-refinery-co-op-workers	943 (3.26%)	892 (3.28%)	00:03:30	863 (3.37%)	93.63%	91.20%
9. /saskdispatch/view/business-in-wascana-violates-master-plan-and-threatens-the-parks-future	822 (2.84%)	736 (2.71%)	00:05:24	709 (2.77%)	90.27%	87.35%
10. /saskdispatch/view/my-quality-of-life-has-been-compromised-our-study-finds-stc-closure-has-had-a-devastating-impact-on-saskatchewan-people	588 (2.03%)	550 (2.02%)	00:04:34	512 (2.00%)	93.36%	89.12%

Indiegraf programs

In July the *Dispatch* was accepted into Indiegraf's [Indie News Challenge](#), which is a nine-week program that takes a cohort of nascent local news publications and helps them develop an editorial and marketing strategy. Sara is currently working on the program, devoting seven hours per week to it. The fundraising campaign that she's currently running has raised \$3,700 in the past week for the *Dispatch*; we're hoping to use that money to build a website, start a newsletter, and pay more freelancers. In November, we're planning on holding an event where we pitch to bigger donors.

We were also offered a spot in the pilot program of Indiegraf's Indie Engine, a program that would build a website for the *Dispatch*, and provide marketing support. Staff and board members decided to reject the offer to join the program. You can read details of the program and our rationale [here](#).

Challenges

The *Dispatch* is still trying to settle on a winning editorial strategy – we're often uncertain whether to choose reporting vs. analysis; longform reportage vs. news; radical anticapitalist politics vs. engage-with-the-NDP-to-pull-it-left politics; and grassroots stories vs. electoral stories. Doing leftist reporting in Saskatchewan sometimes feels like screaming into a void.

The *Dispatch* needs its own website; right now it lives on a semi-hidden corner of Briarpatch's site. Our social media followers have grown recently – but the numbers are still small.

We have a \$200/month budget to pay writers for the *Dispatch*. We have no money budgeted for fact-checking, copy-editing, or artwork.

Most importantly, while the *Dispatch* is a lot more sustainable than it was a year ago (thanks to being able to pay Sara part-time) it still takes up too much of the Briarpatch editor's time. Ideally, it would be produced entirely independent of the Briarpatch editor, who already does way too much work.

The RWDSU Defender

Briarpatch staff have partnered with their union, SJB-RWDSU, to write and produce the RWDSU's newsletter, the *Defender*. This, like the *Dispatch*, will allow for a dedicated space for more detailed Saskatchewan labour reporting, and to reach an audience of union members. We've produced about four issues of the *Defender* to date, and it's been going smoothly.