MyHoustonLife

MHL Contributor Guide

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1 Introduction

This document is intended as a guide MyHoustonLife contributors. It will highlight MyHoustonLife dashboard basics such as how to create article posts, submit posts for review, create NextGen galleries, and uploading images. Caveats and "need-to-knows" concerning article creation, submission, etc., will also be convered in the sections below.
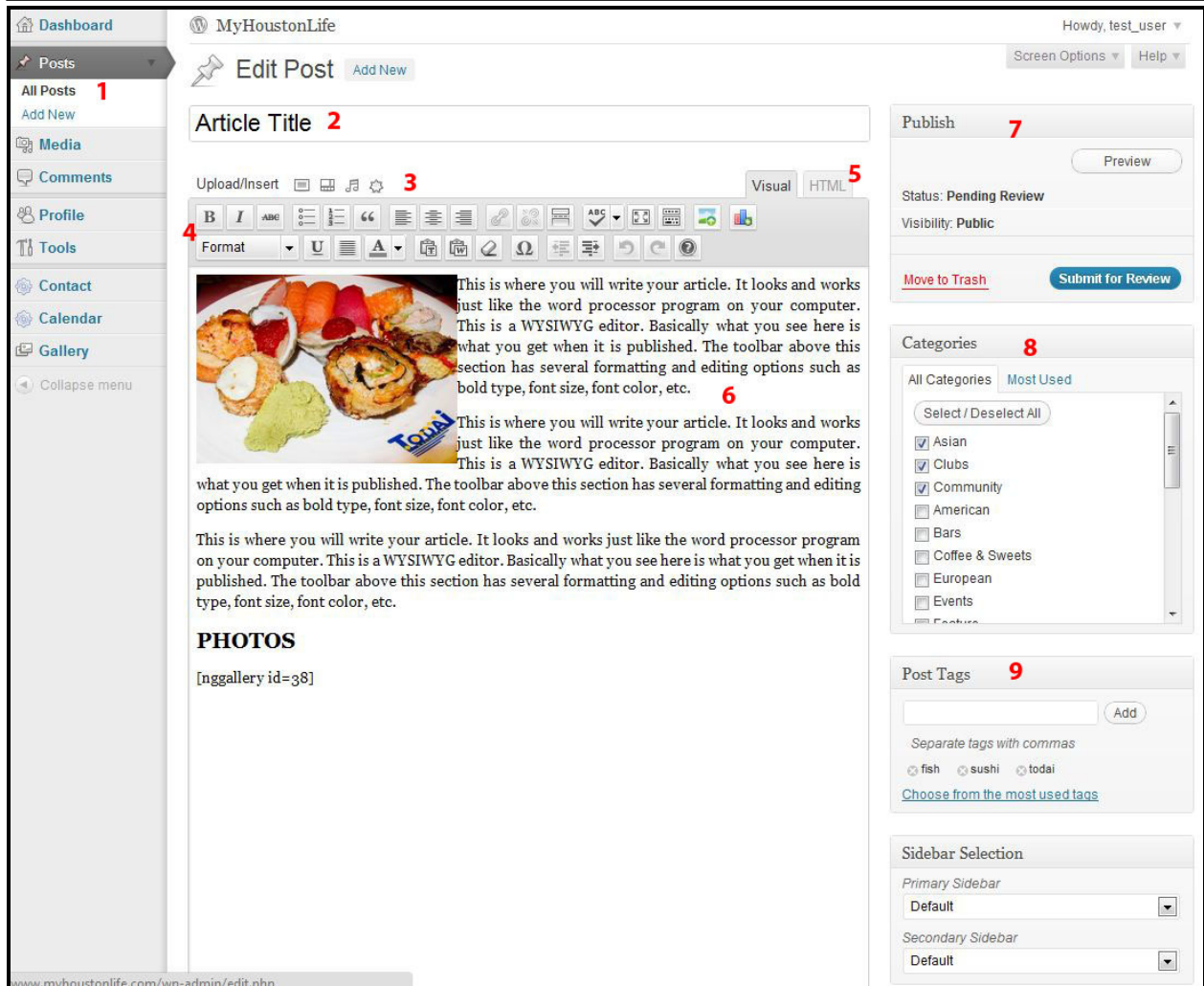
2 MyHoustonLife Dashboard

The MyHoustonLife dashboard is where you are redirected when you have successfully logged in to the MHL website. From the dashboard, you will be able to create, edit and submit articles, edit your MHL account/profile, and upload galleries of images.

1. **Post Menu** – expand to load Posts screen.

2. **MyHoustonLife Overview** – view number of posts, pages, etc. that make up the MHL site.

3. **Profile Menu** – expand to edit your MHL profile/account information.

4. **Gallery Menu** – expand to add new gallery, manage gallery, or upload images.

5. **Quick Press** – mini post editor for creating new post quickly.

6. **Recent Drafts** – overview of user's saved article drafts.

3 MyHoustonLife Article Editor

The article editor is the tool that you will utilize to create articles to be submitted to MHL editors for publishing to the site. The WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editor is similar to text editors such as Word on your local computer.

1. **Posts Menu** – load Posts screen or create new post.

2. **Article Title** – enter title of your post/article.

3. **Upload Media** – options to upload media into your article.

4. **Formatting Toolbar** – formatting options for your article.

5. **HTML Tab** – switch to HTML editor.

6. **Article Canvas** – this is where you write your article.

7. **Publish Menu** – save draft, preview your article, or submit article for review.

8. **Categories Menu** – select categories that your article belongs to.

9. **Post Tags Tool** – enter descriptive tags for the content of your article.

4 Writing an Article

This section will walk you through the basics of creating a new MyHoustonLife post, adding content, and submitting the finished article for review by MHL editors.

1. From your Internet browser, navigate to www.myhoustonlife.com. Select Log In from the navigation menu and enter your MyHoustonLife username and password to log in.
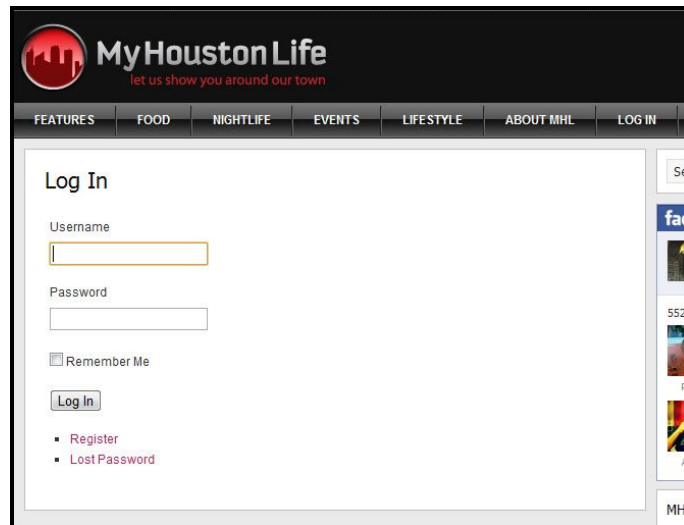

If you do not have a MyHoustonLife account, register for an account here. Once you have received an email with an account approval, you will be able to log in and begin posting content.

2. On the MHL Dashboard, select **Posts** from the left toolbar to load the Posts screen. To create a new post, click on the **Add New** button.
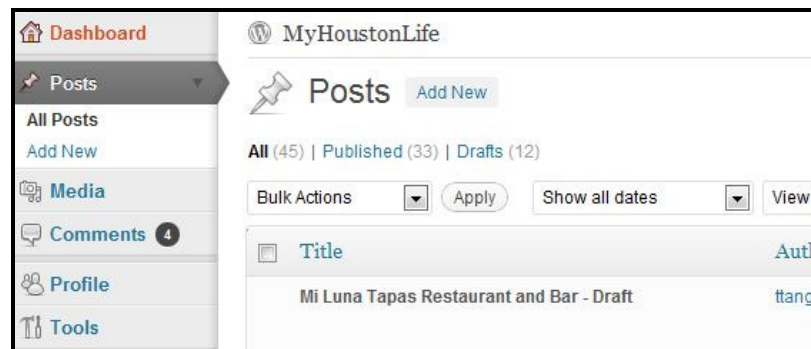

3. Upon clicking on the Add New button, the built-in Wordpress editor will load and you can begin to compose your article.
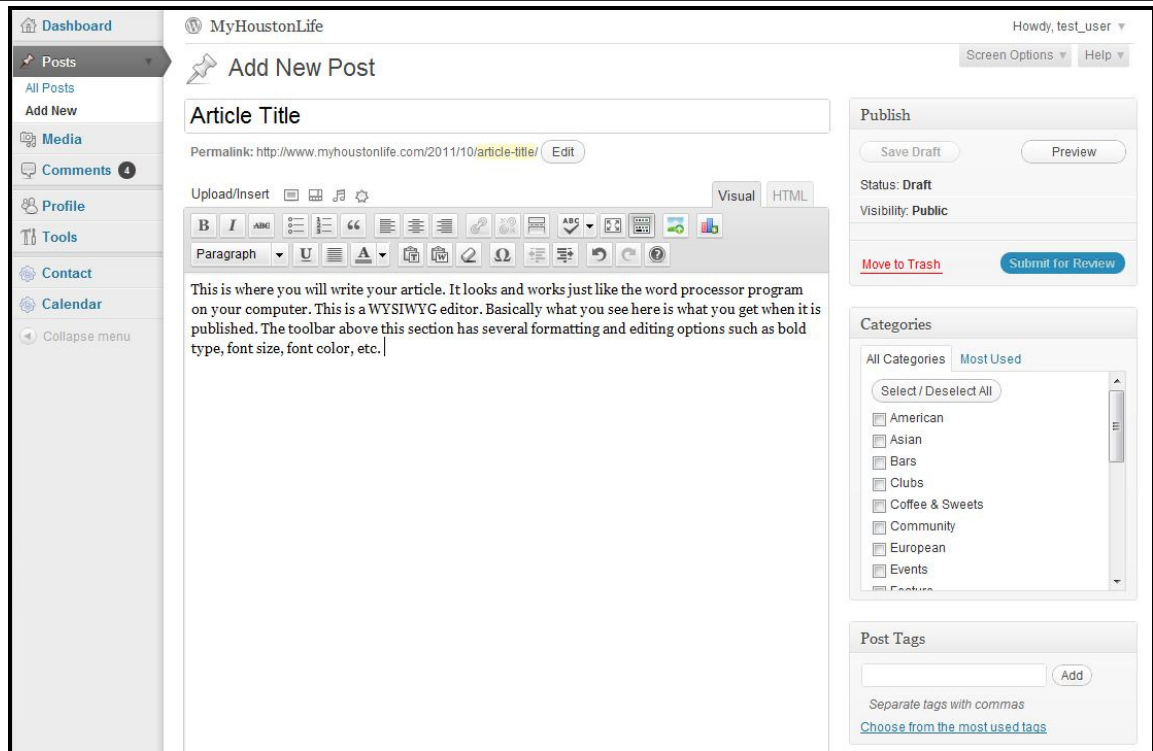
You will first need to enter a title for your post in the **Title** field. Then move on to working in the large blank space towards the middle of the screen. The editor looks and works like the word processor program on your computer. The editor is WYSIWYG. Basically, what you see in the editor is how it will look on the site.

4. To add media to your post, utilize the 4 icons above the formatting toolbar and to the right of the **Upload/Insert** tag. Selecting the first icon will allow you to insert an image.
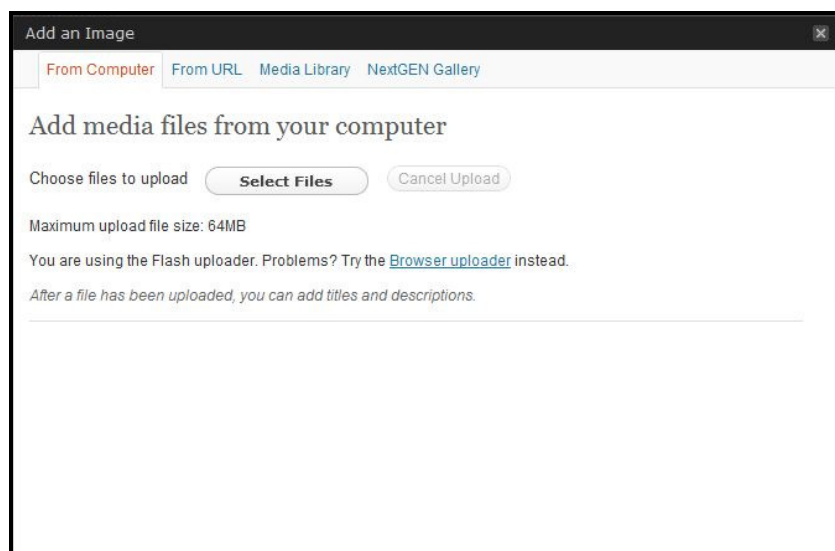
From this dialog box you can choose to insert an image from your computer, from the internet, from our media library, or from a NextGen Gallery (You will only be able to insert from a

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NextGen Gallery if you have previously created a gallery and upload images prior to writing your article).

5. The majority of the time you will be inserting an image from your computer. To do so, select the **Select Files** button under the **From Computer** tab.
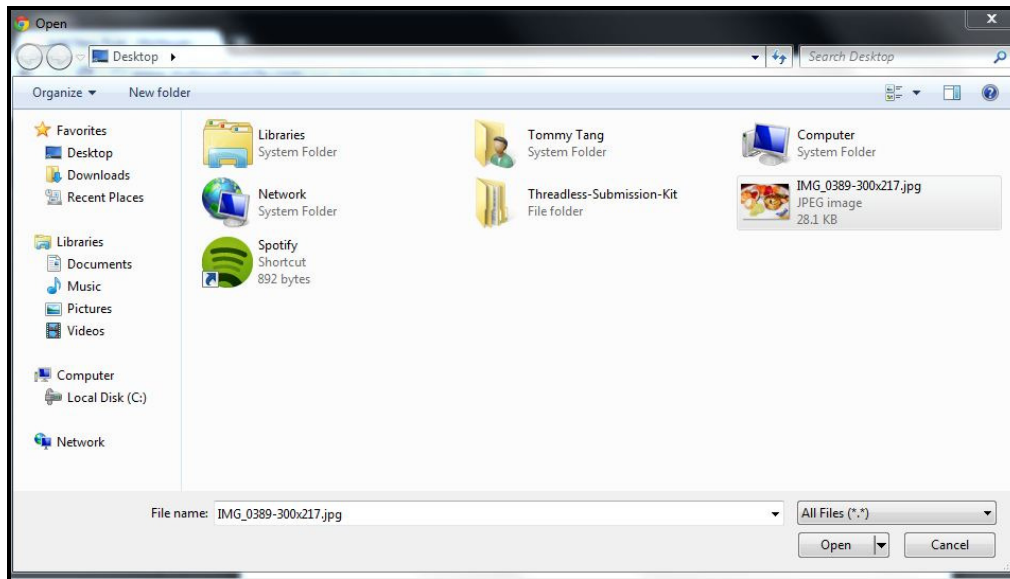
From the Open dialog box, select the image(s) that you want to upload and click **Open**.

6. The file will begin to upload and when complete the following window will appear. In this dialog box you will be able to edit the image's title, add a caption or description, etc.

Once you have finished entering the data associated with your image, select the **Insert into Post** button to insert the image into your article.

7. The image will insert into the editor wherever your cursor was when you selected the upload image button.
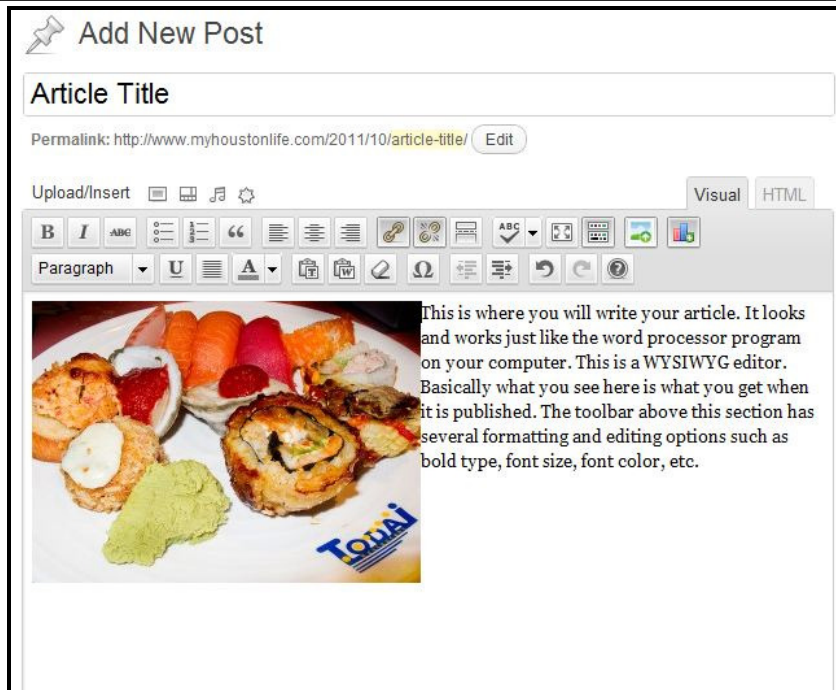
8. You can choose to edit your image by hovering over the image with your mouse cursor and picture icon that appears. If you would like to remove the image altogether, click on the "crossed out" icon.
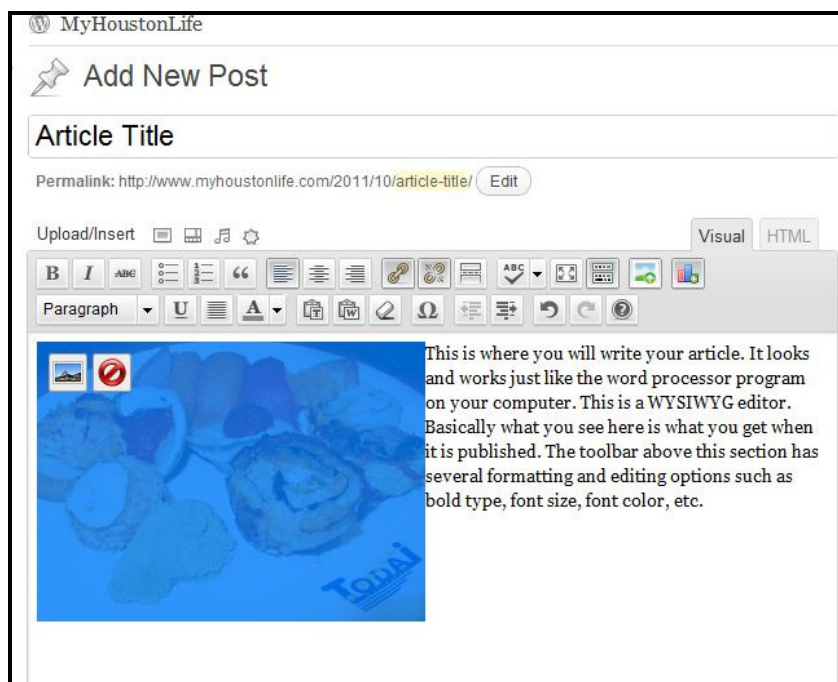

9. From the **Edit Picture** window, you have the option to adjust the size of the image by percentage, edit the Title, Description, etc., as well as select the alignment of the image. Click on **Update** to save your changes and return to the editor.

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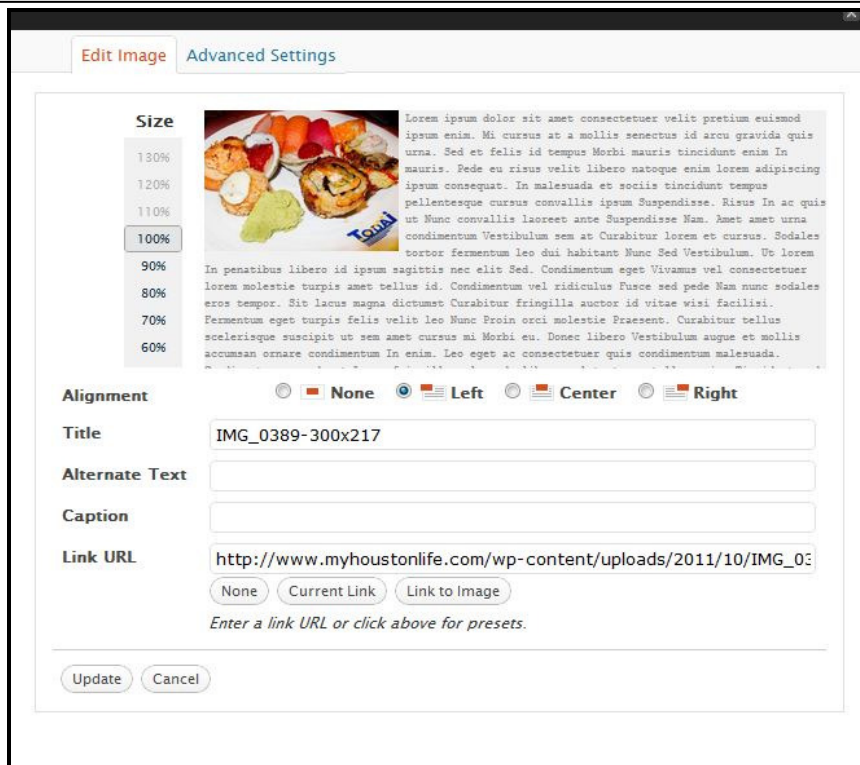
10. At this point you may want to see how your article will look on the MyHoustonLife site. To do so select the **Preview** button from the **top right of the right toolbar**.
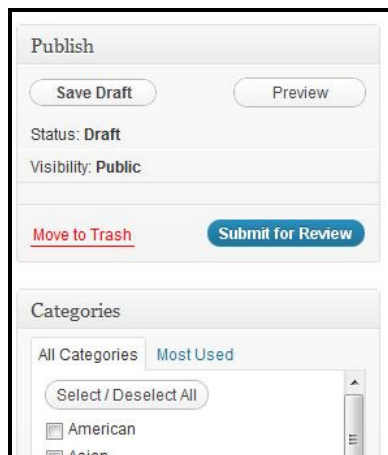
Depending on the browser you are using, a preview of how your article will look on our site will load either in a new tab or on the same tab that your are currently on. See the above test article's preview below.
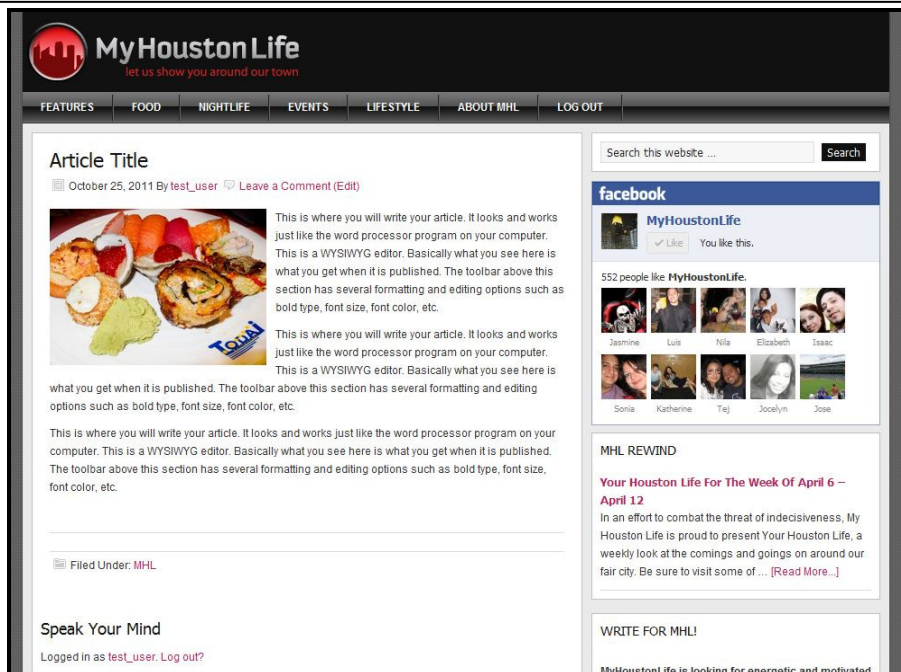
11. If you have additional images for your article and would like to insert a gallery at the bottom of your post, you will need to first create a NextGen Gallery gallery. Learn how to create a gallery in Section 5: Uploading Images to a NextGen Gallery and how to insert the gallery in Section 6: Adding a NextGen Gallery to Article.

12. Before submitting your article to be reviewed by our editors, it is important to select the proper categories associated with your article as well as entering descriptive tags for the content of your article.
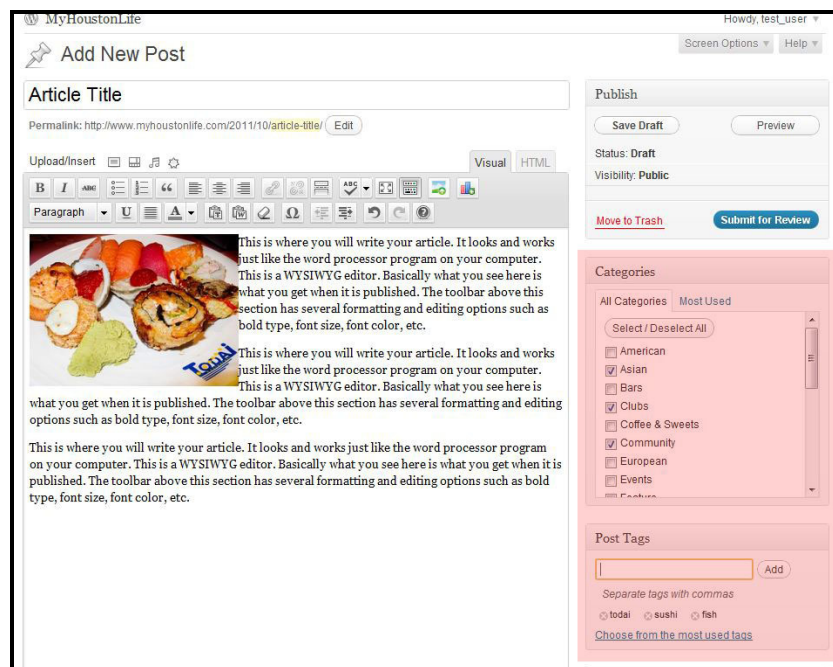
Selecting the correct categories and adding tags will allow your article to be published to the correct areas of the site.

13. You will also need to add a featured image for your article. To do so, select the **Set Featured Image** option from the **bottom right of the right toolbar**.


14. The upload/insert media dialog box will pop up again and you will be able to select an image to used as the featured image for your article. The featured image of your article serves as the visual preview for readers of the site.
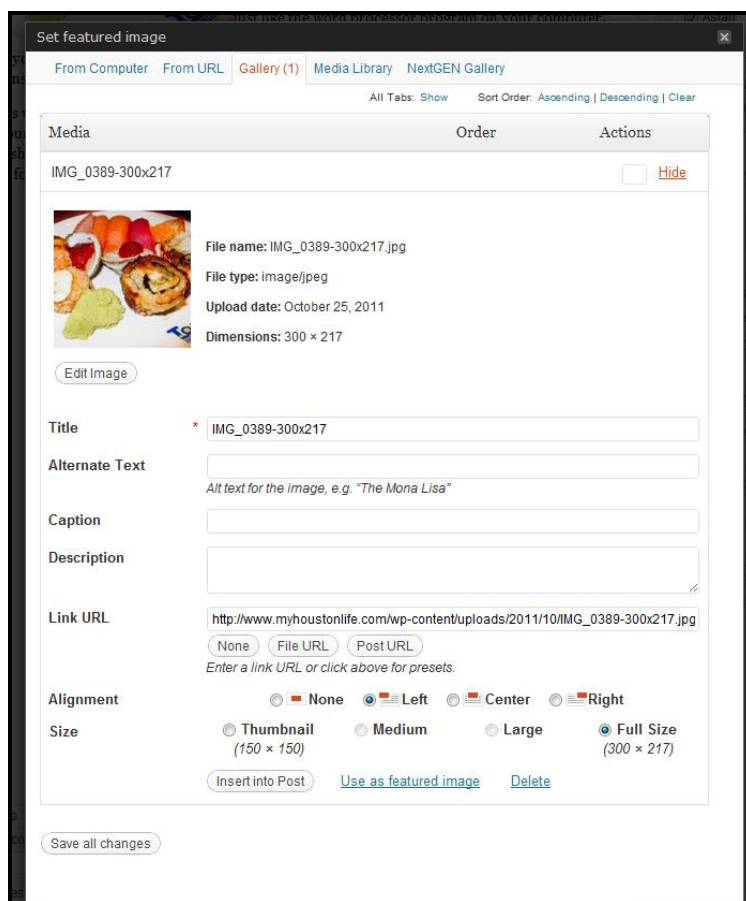

To insert an image as the featured image, select the **Use as featured image** link towards the bottom of the window. You will now see your featured image in the right toolbar.

Featured Image

Remove featured image
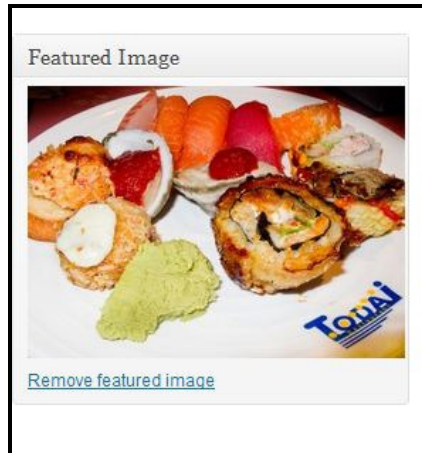
15. At any time you can select to save your article as a draft by selecting the **Save Draft** button at the **top right of the right toolbar**.
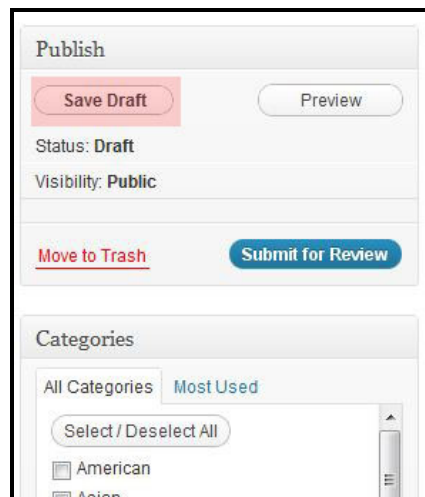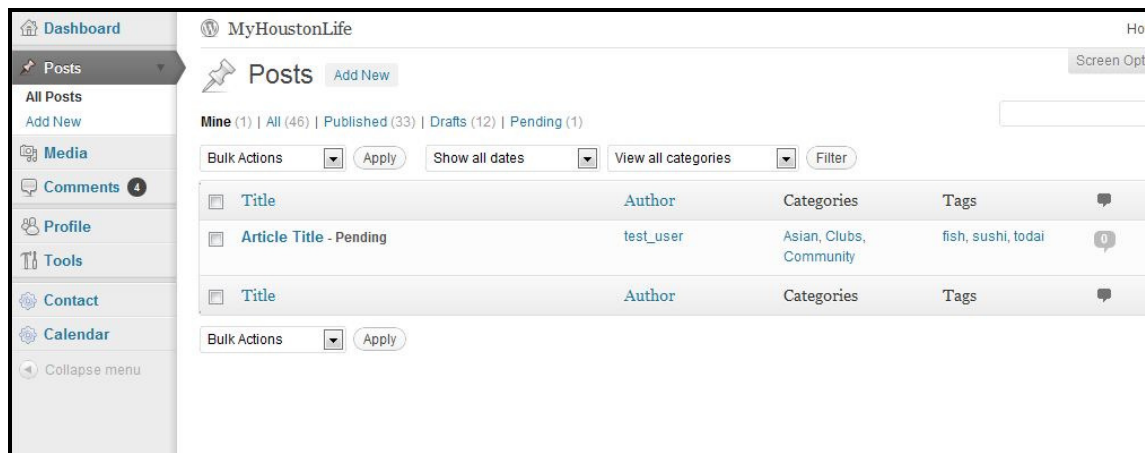

After saving, you will be redirected to the **Posts** screen where you can see your saved article listed as a draft.
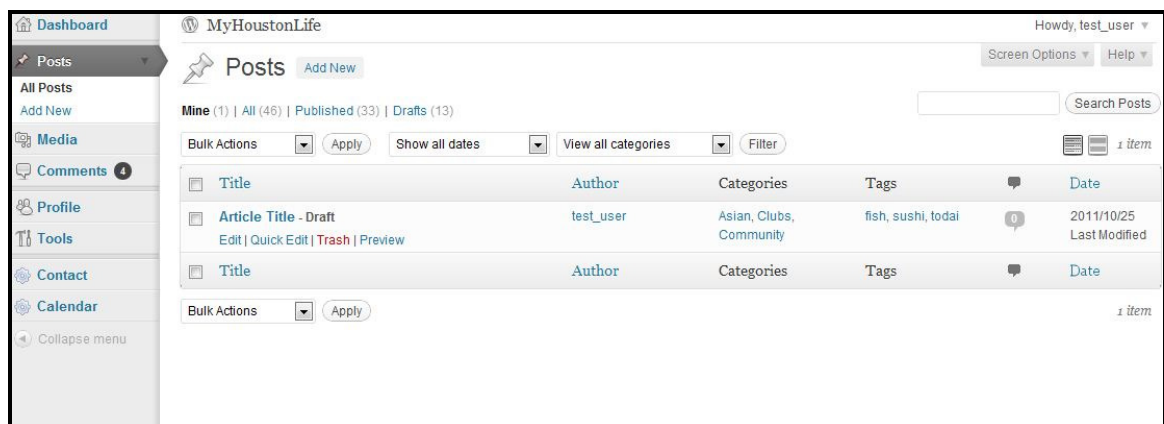
16. To submit your finished article, select the **Submit for Review** button.

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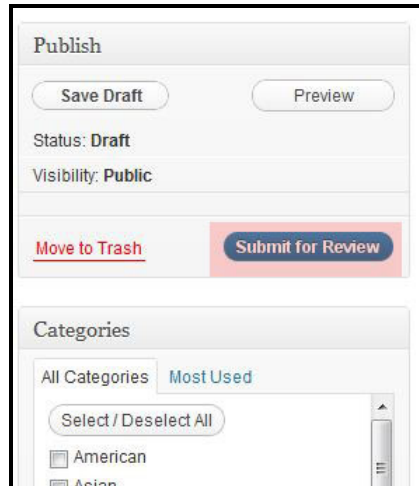
17. Your submitted article will now show as **Pending** on the **Posts** screen.


18. Once your article has been reviewed by the MHL editors, you will receive an email notifying you that your article has either been approved and published or it has been denied.
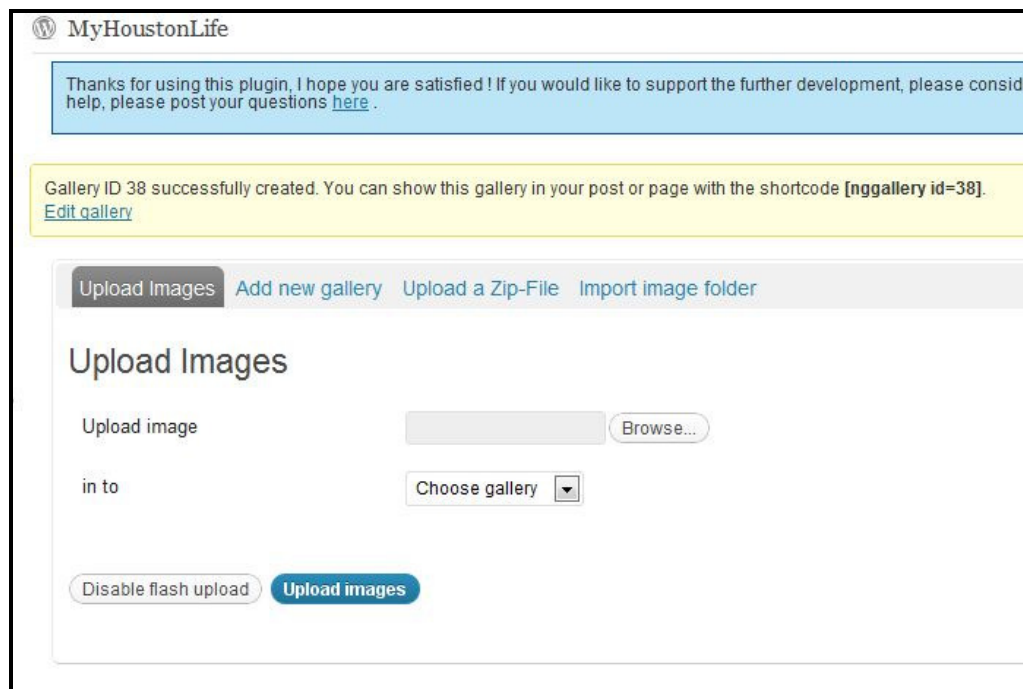
5 Uploading Images to a NextGen Gallery

If you have several images for an article, it may be more convenient and more visually appealing to display the images as a gallery in your post. MyHoustonLife utilizes NextGen Gallery to manage and display image galleries.

1. To begin uploading images to a gallery, expand the **Gallery** menu from the right toolbar on the Dashboard.
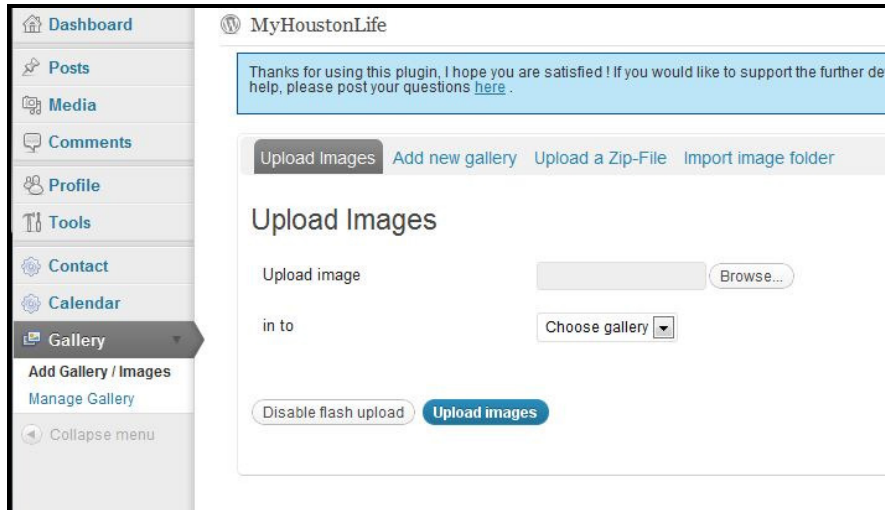
Choose **Add Gallery/Images** to bring up the Upload Images tool.

2. Before uploading images, you will need to first add a new gallery. Select the **Add new gallery** tab. Enter a descriptive name for your gallery.
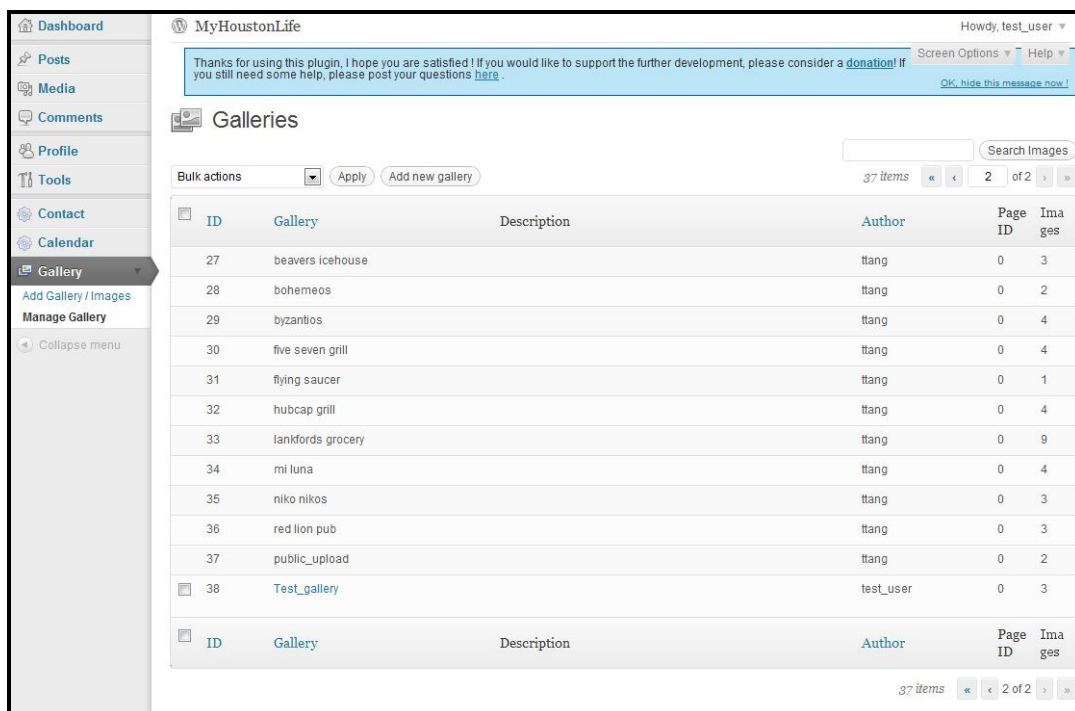

Be sure to note your new gallery's ID. You will need that ID to insert the gallery into your post.
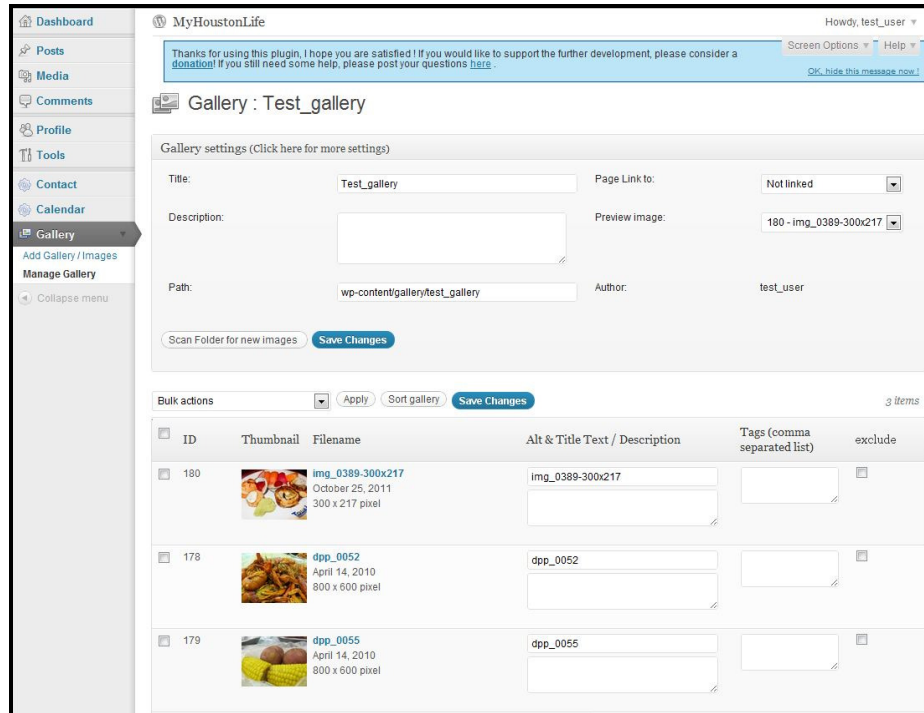
3. Click on **Upload images** to begin uploading images to this gallery (be sure to select the correct gallery from the drop down menu).
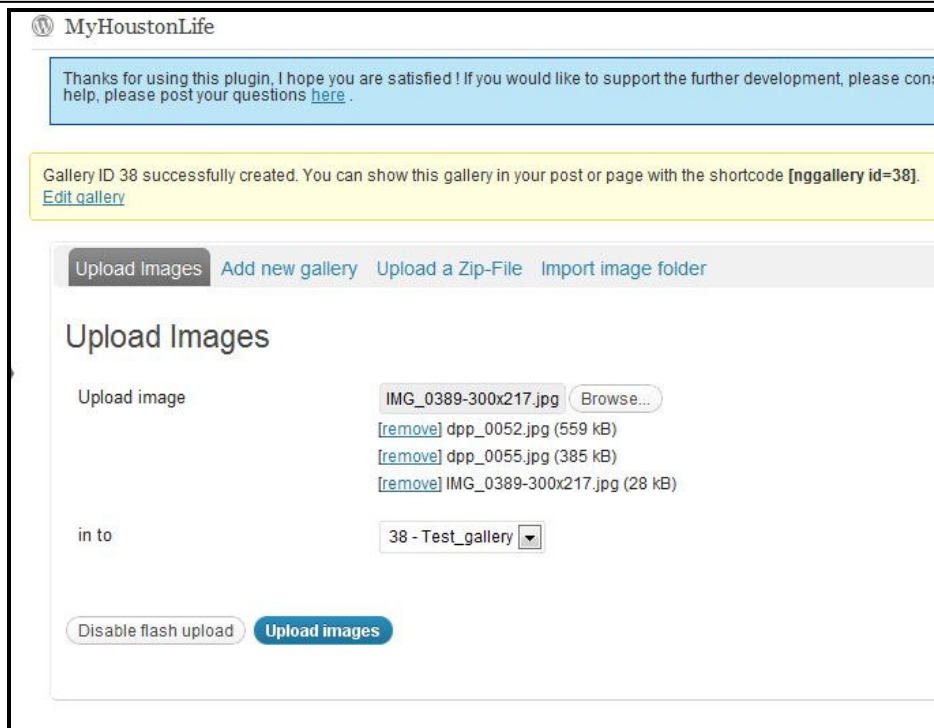
4. You can view your new gallery and uploaded images by selecting the **Manage Gallery** link from the Gallery menu in the toolbar.


5. Click on your gallery to bring up it's images and options page.

From this screen you have the ability to change the name of your gallery as well as any of the image titles, remove images from the gallery, as well as several other options.

6 Adding NextGen Gallery to Article

Adding a NextGen Gallery to you article is very simple. You simply need to add the following shortcode, **[nggallery id=xx]** to your article in the editor.
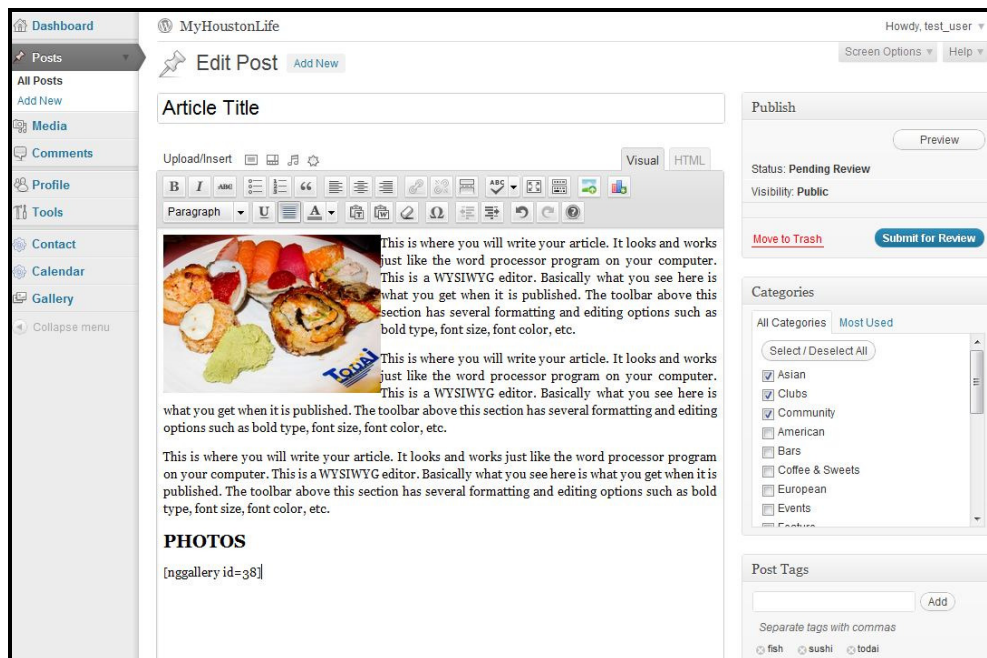
By previewing your article, you will then see that your specified gallery is visible at the bottom of your article post.
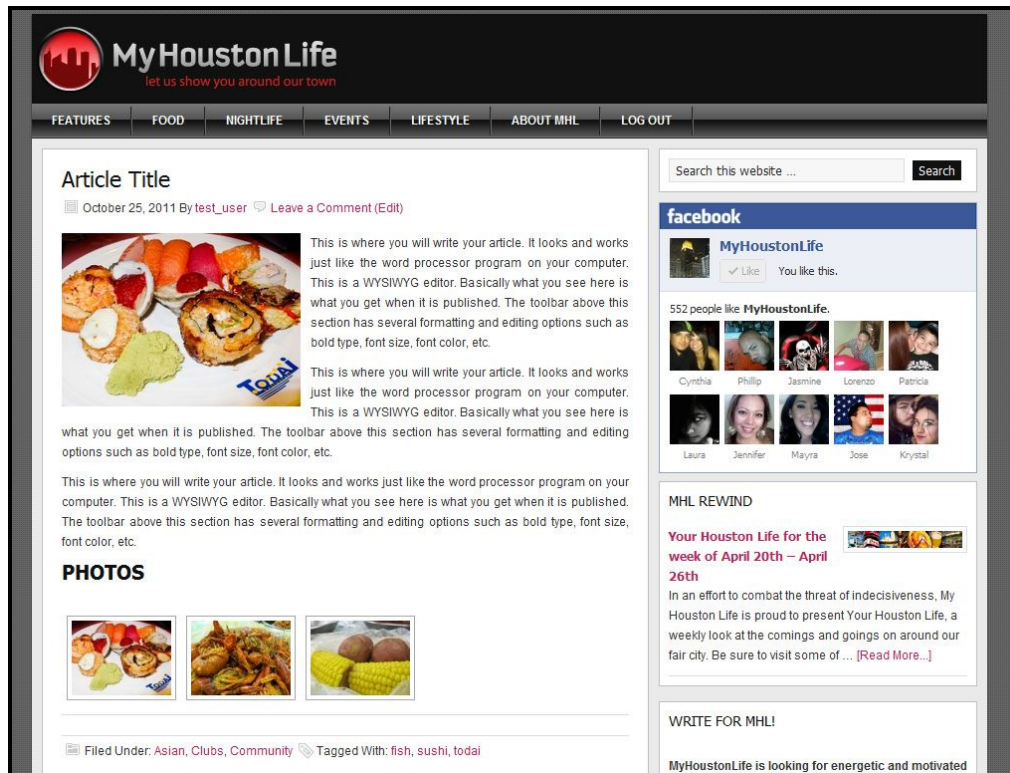
7 Known Issues and Troubleshooting

7.1 Formatting Toolbar missing options

The missing options are simply hidden from view. To show all of the formatting tools on the formatting toolbar, click on the **Show/Hide Kitchen Sink** button (third from the right) or use the Hotkey combination, Alt+Shift+Z.

7.2 Gallery Menu is missing from dashboard

If you do not see the Gallery menu in the toolbar on the right of the MyHoustonLife dashboard, is it likely that your account does not have the proper permissions to create, edit, etc., galleries. To resolve this issue, please contact us at info@myhoustonlife.com.

7.3 Upload Media icons are missing from editor

If you do not see the upload media icons above the article editor, is it likely that your account does not have the proper permissions to upload media. To resolve this issue, please contact us at info@myhoustonlife.com.