

# Ruff Drafts: The Voice of DWAA™



DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.  
FOUNDED 1935

**August  
2009**

- Call for Contest Judges
- Member Survey Results
- Hall of Fame Inductees
- A Dog Story



*Adam Clipper and his best friend, Bashir. Bashir, Liz Palika's five-year-old Australian Shepherd, and Adam are able to get together just a few times per year but when they do, they have a blast and really enjoy each other's company. For a story about Bashir, see page 7. Photo by Liz Palika.*

# ≡ DWAA LEADERSHIP ≡

## DWAA Officers

### President

Deb Eldredge, DVM  
([debme15@hotmail.com](mailto:debme15@hotmail.com))

### Vice President

Susan McCullough  
([susan.mccullough1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.mccullough1@verizon.net))

### Secretary

Liz Palika  
([lizpalika@gmail.com](mailto:lizpalika@gmail.com))

### Treasurer

Rue Chagoll  
([rchagoll@capital.net](mailto:rchagoll@capital.net))

## DWAA Board of Governors

### Past President

Dr. Carmen Battaglia

### Class of 2010

Elaine Gewirtz  
Marion Lane

### Class of 2011

Dr. Caroline Coile  
Charlotte Reed

### Class of 2012

Eve Adamson  
Stephanie Smith, Ph.D.

## Committee Chairs and Members

### Annual Awards Contest

Terry Albert  
Kim Thornton (special awards)

### Annual Banquet

Marsha Pugh  
Pat Santi

### Archives

Pat Santi

### By-laws

Susan McCullough  
Committee Members:  
Dee Anderson, Linda Rehkopf,  
Cheryl S. Smith

### Chat List

Dr. Stephanie Smith

### DWAA Benefits

Deb Eldredge, DVM  
Susan McCullough

### DWAA / Cat Writers Liaison

Marion Lane

### Forum Administration

Pat Steer  
Forum "Shepherds":  
Chris Walkowicz, Diane Schuller

### Green Connections

Nancy Boyd

### Hall of Fame

Bardi McLennan  
Committee Members:  
Terry Albert, Linda Rehkopf

### Juniors

Kate Eldredge

### List Moderation

Stephanie Smith  
Committee Members:  
Chris Walkowicz, Kim Thornton

### Member Advisory Board

Linda Rehkopf

### Member Survey

Dr. Mary Burch

### Membership

Elaine Gewirtz  
Liz Palika

### Newsletter / Web Site

Editor:  
Matthew Schenker  
Assistant Editors:  
Cindy Read, Pat Steer

### Publicity

Elaine Gewirtz  
Committee Members:  
Elizabeth Jarrell

### Scholarship

Lea-Ann Germinder  
Susan McCullough

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## ≡ DWAA Writing Competition: Call for Judges ≡

I would like to invite members to serve as judges in the annual DWAA Writing Competition. Also, if you know some dog and/or writing experts that might be interested in judging, have them contact me or send me their contact info, and I will invite them. They do not have to be DWAA members.

If you are interested, and have time in October/early November, please send me the following:

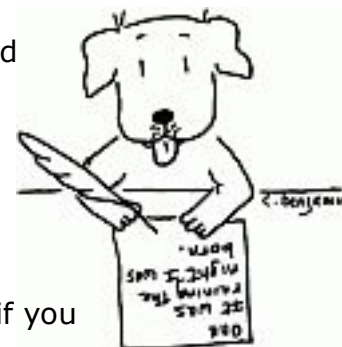
- Your name
- Your mailing address
- Your e-mail address
- If you are entering the contest, which categories are you entering?
- Your particular areas of expertise (in writing and/or dogs)

You don't have to choose categories, we will assign them, but let me know if you have a preference. More on the competition:

- Entries must be postmarked by September 1 (the earlier your entries arrive, the more time I have to notify you if there is a problem)
- Remember to enclose the entry fee (a lot of people forget this little detail)

Thank you!

Terry Albert, 2009 DWAA Contest Chair ([petportraits@cox.net](mailto:petportraits@cox.net))



## ≧ **President's Message** ≦

Our big family excitement of the summer—Kate passed the VST (Variable Surface Tracking) test in Whitewater, WI, on July 5 to earn the coveted Champion Tracker title with her 11 ½-year-old Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Flash! This has been a long journey, from a 7-year-old girl who wanted a Corgi desperately, to a confident and skilled handler/trainer competing at the highest levels of dogdom. She has grown well!

I want DWAA to grow well, too. I am so pleased at the high percentage of responses to the survey from our membership, with many people not only taking the time to answer questions but also offering comments. Many members have stepped forward to undertake projects—such as Dr. Mary Burch with the survey and Patricia Kelly contacting AKC clubs to get newsletter entries for our contest. DWAA has so many talented people, and I hope you all feel comfortable offering your expertise to the organization.

We have one new job opening. Pat Steer has made major strides in turning our forums into useful and fun places to visit. She now needs to hand the reins, or perhaps I should say leash, over to another member. Please read the job description and if you feel you can fit the bill, don't hesitate to let us know.

On a benefits note, check out the latest additions to the Web site ([www.dwaa.org](http://www.dwaa.org)). The member directory is now posted and will be updated regularly with additions and changes. The *Ruff Drafts* archives have been re-worked for easier viewing. The site contains detailed results of our member survey.

I am also happy to tell you that DWAA members may ask for Press passes to the 2009 Cynosport World Games in Scottsdale, AZ, on November 11-15. Amazing and fun competitions include agility, flyball, and dock jumping. If you write for a breed club publication or a regional newspaper or magazine, contact Annie DeChance at [aceomatic@cox.net](mailto:aceomatic@cox.net) or 602-321-2205 to find out which dogs of your breed or from your area will be attending. She can also help set up interviews. Now is the time to jump on this to get some work! Heather Smith ([info@usdaa.com](mailto:info@usdaa.com)) is the one to ask directly about a pass and to let her know you will be coming.

Remember, success in writing may seem elusive, but if we all work together we can help each other and make DWAA even better!

*Deb Eldredge, DVM, DWAA President*

### **DWAA Seeking a New Forum Administrator**

The forum administrator manages the day-to-day business of the discussion forum, and works closely with the DWAA Secretary, the Web editor, and the e-list administrator. The forum administrator shares thread/post moderation duties with forum moderators and works with them to analyze member needs and improve the forum to address those needs. As needed, the administrator provides information and statistics on forum use to the board, technical expertise in managing the forum and other DWAA Internet venues, and must provide a contact e-mail address for the forum.

#### **Specific duties include:**

- Moderate, approve, and welcome new registrants; notify new applicants ineligible for registration how to become members
- Orient new registrants; resolve member registration, ID, password, and e-mail notification questions
- Maintain anti-spam controls using software controls available to the administrator

#### **Suggested skills and experience:**

- Experience: at least 1 year administering or moderating a discussion forum with >100 active registered users; at least 2 years of active participation in discussion forums (either DWAA or another site)\*
- Familiarity with forum software in current use and/or similar product; willingness to learn/evaluate new software as needed, and ability to maintain the forum as needed; advanced understanding of discussion moderation, forum use dynamics
- Excellent communication skills and ability to facilitate multi-purpose teams
- Self-direction, and ability to accomplish defined goals on an established timetable

\* Provide references from other forum owners with URLs and access to forums cited as examples of moderation/administration/forum participation experience.

## ≡ Secretary's Page ≡

Submitted by Liz Palika

### Dues Reminder

Dues should have been sent by March 31. If you have questions, Contact Liz Palika ([lizpalika@gmail.com](mailto:lizpalika@gmail.com)) or visit the renewal page of the DWAA Web site: [www.dwaa.org/join-us/membership-renewal.html](http://www.dwaa.org/join-us/membership-renewal.html)

### Changes to membership information:

**Terry Cardillino**

1230 Hudson Rd.  
Cambridge, MD 21613  
410-901-6020  
[TCardillino@hughes.net](mailto:TCardillino@hughes.net)  
Professional 2000

**Deborah Parkhill Mullis**

Freelance  
[dogreporter@hotmail.com](mailto:dogreporter@hotmail.com)  
[www.dogreported.blogspot.com](http://www.dogreported.blogspot.com)  
[www.metrolinadoglovers.com](http://www.metrolinadoglovers.com)

**Ellen Price**

Pet Sitters International  
213 E. Dalton St.  
King, NC 27021  
336-983-9222 x 316  
336-985-5673  
[www.petsit.com](http://www.petsit.com)  
[www.takeyourdog.com](http://www.takeyourdog.com)  
Professional 2007

**Fran Shaw**

1761 Wickersham Ln.  
Lancaster, PA 17603  
717-397-9531  
[franshaw1@juno.com](mailto:franshaw1@juno.com)  
Professional 1993

**Myrna Shibolet**

P.O. Box 40010  
Mevaseret Zion, Israel  
90805  
97225341718  
972523712704  
[myrnash@netvision.net.il](mailto:myrnash@netvision.net.il)  
[www.canaandogs.info](http://www.canaandogs.info)  
[www.coliies-israel.com](http://www.coliies-israel.com)  
Associate 2003

**Jill Lieber Steeg**

[jill.steeg@gmail.com](mailto:jill.steeg@gmail.com)

**Jo Watkins, Ph.D.**

P.O. Box 9416  
Truckee, CA 96162  
530-320-3368  
Professional 2004

**Murray Weinstock**

302 West 79th St. 4E  
New York, NY 10024  
[murrayweinstock@nyc.rr.com](mailto:murrayweinstock@nyc.rr.com)  
[www.dogtunes.com](http://www.dogtunes.com)

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## ≡ Treasurer's Report ≡

Here's hoping your summer has been enjoyable.

My spare time these weeks has been spent training and retraining, in hopes of putting a Utility obedience title on my rescued Golden. In obedience circles, trialing at the Utility level is often referred to as "futility"—and that is a pretty appropriate description of how things are going thus far!

I am pleased to report that all payable accounts are current, and that through expense management measures implemented the last few months our cash flow lately has been positive. Dues continue to trickle in, and we are now receiving contest entry fees.

As you might imagine, sponsorship funds are tight everywhere these days, but we are making good progress on sponsorships for the 2010 banquet.

Now I have a couple favors to ask: If any member is in possession of art work, either hard copy or electronic, for either the DWAA logo or the Maxwell logo, please get in touch with me at [rchagoll@capital.net](mailto:rchagoll@capital.net). Next, if you pay your dues, banquet, or contest fees through a checking account under a business name, please also write your name on the check. It is awfully difficult, if needed, to try and backtrack to who operates as "Freelancing for Fido," etc.

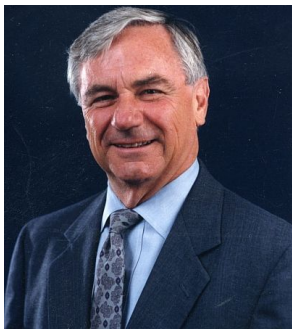
Wishing you well in your canine and writing pursuits.

*Rue Chagoll, DWAA Treasurer*

# Hall of Fame Inducts Two Members

Submitted by Linda Rehkopf

The Hall of Fame committee had a daunting task of recommending two inductees this year. Our list included dog writers, artists, photographers, and editors, any of whom could have been named. We had long, productive discussions about what the Hall of Fame represents: a person who is committed to dogs and dog writing, but who also unselfishly mentors new writers, artists, and photographers. We are delighted to present two Hall of Fame inductees who exemplify our requirements:



**Lorenz "Don" Arner.** DWAA member since 1974, owner/founder/editor of *Off-Lead* magazine, which began publication in 1971. "Opening our media to thoughtful, appropriate, and truly knowledgeable dog training information" was his most significant contribution, Don said. "For several years in the late 1970s and early 1980s, almost every book published on dog training was written by an author who was first published in *Off-Lead*." Don has won four Maxwell Awards, including best training series in the *German Shepherd Dog Review* and articles in *Groom and Board*. *Off-Lead* magazine has won more Maxwells than any other special-interest canine magazine, paws down; its writers have won Maxwells under Don's tutelage. Books awarded the Maxwell through his company, Arner Publications, include Glenn Johnson's *Tracking Dog: Theory and Methods* and Jack Volhard's *Teaching You To Train Your Dog*. His most important contribution to canine communication, he said, was "Realizing that what I edited and published was appreciated by so many others in the field." Don's field wasn't restricted to the page, however, as his work—literally in the field—in Search and Rescue research and application—led him to train two of his own dogs and several dozen other dog/handler teams. "This is the single most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life, K-9 Search and Rescue. My field was air scenting like a bird dog might do, not tracking or trailing as they do in AKC or Schutzhund. We found that for locating lost persons in the wilderness, air scenting was much more effective and reliable than tracking and trailing." Don retired to a consulting position with various companies, developing innovative uses of dogs in detection work. He helped agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture and helped institute programs like the "Beagle Brigade" in American ports and airports. Don also worked with military, police, field trialers, trainers, breeders, kennels, and groomers through his work with Hills Pet Nutrition. A former combat navigator for the U.S. Air Force, he served two tours in Vietnam and one in Thailand. DWAA honors Don's service to his country, his writers, and his students. Photo courtesy Don Arner.



**Robert T. Self, Sr.** Started in dog sports through obedience training and trialing, earning Utility Dog, Master Hunter, and Schutzhund titles on 20 dogs he owned and trained, including eight Doberman Pinschers, four German Shepherd Dogs, three Poodles, four Golden Retrievers, and an Australian Shepherd. All these dogs were pets and house dogs. "I never was highly competitive, so far as winning was concerned," Bob said, "but I wanted each to be respectable, and most were used as demonstration dogs in clinics given throughout the U.S. and Canada. Some were also trained in protection and four were Master Hunters, but all were friends." Bob became an obedience judge in 1952 and still judges small trials. He has served on all the AKC's obedience advisory committees from the mid-1960s through 2006, was on the Tracking Advisory Committee, and on the advisory committee that accepted Agility as a regular AKC event. Today, he is an honorary member of the Peoria (IL) Obedience Training Club. In the mid-1950s, as Bob began teaching obedience, he rented a former dance hall located on the third floor of a business in his hometown. "There was a wind-up Victrola and one record named 'Doodly Do' by the band leader Tiny Hill. In order to liven up heeling sessions, we played the record and the record and the sessions and movements evolved into 'doodling.'" These movements evolved into a new sport—Rally Obedience, refined by Bud Cramer. Bob ventured into publishing with books and booklets, "Dogs Self Trained," then in 1971 co-founded *Front and Finish* magazine, with Dr. Jack Harler of Jo Lynn Shelties Kennels. *Front and Finish* was, and continues to be, geared towards competitors and trainers in obedience. Today, the magazine is a premier four-color glossy featuring top trainers and writers throughout the country, the only publication devoted to obedience and rally, and Bob gives his writers—from the experienced through the novice—great latitude to present new ideas and methods. *Front and Finish* correspondents also contribute columns on tracking, field work, agility, and canine legislation, and they report on accomplishments of dog-handler teams from different sports and venues, from the AKC's National Obedience Invitational Championship, to the UKC's newest competition, rally. Bob is still the publisher. Several of his writers have received Maxwell Awards and nominations. His mentorship and encouragement of beginners in the field of canine writing cannot be understated. He encourages and celebrates all his correspondents' successes. DWAA honors Robert T. Self Sr. with the Hall of Fame Award, and with this award, brings him into a new "family of friends"—the Dog Writers Association of America. Photo courtesy Robert T. Self.

Your Hall of Fame committee is honored to have been involved in the selection process this year.

## ≧ VP Page ≦

Matthew asked me to say a few words, so here they are—although there are a little more than a few.

I've always been proud to be a member of DWAA and—not paradoxically—am humbled to be your vice president. Deb has probably told you elsewhere about what the officers and Board are doing, so I won't add to that. I'm involved in some of those pursuits, but I'll save info on those for a future missive.

One thing that's always interested me about DWAA and dog writing is that there are many different paths to both. While many writers and DWAA members come to this pursuit and organization through their participation in conformation dog shows and other dog sports, some of us have ventured into the organization and into dog writing from other perspectives. These varying perspectives is one reason why I've always enjoyed judging the DWAA writing competition. Some of us write about conformation, others about performance, others about therapy dogs, and still others about companion training. To have the chance to sample the wide-ranging talents of our members is truly awe-inspiring—which is why, if you haven't already, I hope you'll volunteer to be a judge in this year's writing competition. E-mail contest chair Terry Albert if you're interested. (Terry, you got my email, right?)

Another wonderful aspect of dog writing is that it lends itself to other, related pursuits. For example, in addition to my writing, I'm working as an apprentice trainer to Pat Miller, former president of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers and one of the country's leading positive reinforcement trainers. It's grueling work—made more so by the 150-mile round-trip commute from my home to her facility twice a week—but incredibly rewarding. I get to audit classes, observe private consultations with clients and their problem dogs, and assist at behavioral evaluations of animal shelter dogs. Soon, I'll be training some of those dogs and doing some practice teaching. The latter prospect makes me quake—but heck, I'm already so far out of my comfort zone that some extra quaking shouldn't matter!

I hope that all of you can continue to work on behalf of the dogs we all love through the power of the written word, and through any additional pursuits that your writing leads you to. Meanwhile, your DWAA officers, Board members, and fellow dog writers are here to lend a hand.

*Susan McCullough, DWAA Vice President*

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## ≧ E-list Update ≦

Submitted by Stephanie Smith, E-list Moderator

We have had some interesting discussions on the e-list this month. I hope that you will consider joining and contributing your two cents.

I would like to discuss a couple of issues that I have noticed this month on the e-list. First, please understand that your log-in to make changes to your e-list subscription, your log-in for the Web site, and your log-in for the forums are independent of each other. Just because you have one log-in does not mean you have another. Please be sure you use your same username and password for all three if you do not want to have to remember three IDs and passwords. If you have trouble with the forums or Web site, contact either Pat Steer or Matthew Schenker. I can only assist you with the e-list.

This brings me to my next point: to make changes to your subscription, such as setting it on "no mail" while you are traveling, go to [www.dwaa.org/mailman/listinfo/dwaa-group\\_dwaa.org](http://www.dwaa.org/mailman/listinfo/dwaa-group_dwaa.org) to do so. You will need your password and the e-mail address used for the list. This is important, as many of us have more than one e-mail address. If you forget your password, you will have to fill out a request for the system to send it to you. I cannot access your password.

If you have difficulties with the mechanics of getting on or off the e-list, or adjusting your subscription options, please let me know. Sometimes I can tell you an easier way to do something. Other times, it is a system problem that needs to be reported to the host company.

### **The Power of the DWAA-L**

The discussion began with ethnic foods for dogs over the weekend, continued with the venerary words today, which then morphed into "On a More Serious Note," which led to specific actions one member could take with regards to a sad dog and owner situation, at which point we discussed how to break up a dog fight.

There has been friendly discourse, laughter, coffee being spit onto monitors, serious discussion, suggestions, and all the while, work being done on present and future assignments.

This has been a fruitful day.

*Linda Rehkopf*

# ≧ DWAA Survey Results ≦

Submitted by Mary R. Burch, Ph.D.

Thanks to all who took the time to participate in our member survey. The response was phenomenal, with 170 DWAA members participating. A summary of the results is below. Please go to the DWAA Web site ([www.dwaa.org](http://www.dwaa.org)) to see a detailed version, with graphs and comments.

A few of you wrote comments and requested that we send you something, or that someone contact you. You'll have to get in touch with a Board member. The survey was "blind," meaning we could not see your e-mail address and don't know who wrote the comments. For members who responded via paper, envelopes were removed when the mail arrived, so unless you wrote your name on the form (2 people did this), we have no way of replying.

In the survey summary below, decimals have been omitted (they are included in the detailed report on the Web site). Results of members who responded by paper are included in the results.

## **WHO ARE DWAA MEMBERS?**

- 42% have been members longer than 10 years; 71% longer than 5 years
- 37% live in the Northeast; 59% live in other parts of the country (29% South & Southwest, 17% Southeast, 11% Midwest, 3% outside the US)
- 48% write part time; 21% make their living writing
- 7% are photographers, artists, graphic designers, etc.
- 72% have written books, 72% write for all-breed magazines
- 6 members have ongoing television shows and 15 have ongoing radio shows

## **THE DWAA CONTEST**

- 86% have entered the contest
- 63% said categories are correct as they are
- 75% said Special Awards are correct as they are
- 57% suggested winners be contacted in advance (comments related to tough economy and hardship/cost of travel)

## **AWARDS BANQUET**

- 50% have attended the banquet 1-5 times
- 37% wanted to keep the banquet in NYC with Westminster; 63% requested alternatives such as alternating coasts, moving and combining with a writer's conference
- 56% wanted to keep the "sit down dinner" format

## **AWARDS FORMAT**

- 62% wanted to shorten the awards and read only names of winners; have the names of all finalists in a program on the table; many suggested name badges that identified finalists

## **USE OF INTERNET**

- 100% (including those submitting paper surveys) said they have access to a computer:
  - 65% receive DWAA emails
  - 19% are using the forums
  - 46% are on the lists (DWAA and WriteDog)

## **WEB SITE**

- 73% said they never or rarely use the Web site (many said since the new Web site will be a resource that is frequently updated, they will use it)

## **NEWSLETTER**

- 67% would be fine with receiving the newsletter online
- 17% (26 people) preferred the paper version (some said their dues should cover this)
- 50% said the newsletter is fine the way it is
- 25% said the newsletter needs some updates (some suggested new columns)

## **MEMBERSHIP IN DWAA**

- 91% indicated they enjoy their DWAA membership
- 56% said "my input as a member has been valued in the past"
- 94% would recommend DWAA to other dog writers, photographers, artists, etc

## **SERVICES**

The most interest was expressed in getting to know agents, publishers, having a "job board," learning new writing skills, having a conference, and having group insurance.

## ≧ Forum Updates in Your In-box ≦

Submitted by Pat Steer, DWAA Forum Administrator

Welcome to everyone who registered on the forum in July: Suzanne McKay, Mychelle Blake, Carole Presberg, Anne Hart, Carol Munsch and Laurie Kaplan. As always—an open invitation to new members and everyone else to join in the forum's current hot topics:

- Computer Use/Internet Access Poll (results in next month's *Ruff Drafts*): [www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1479](http://www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1479)
- Protecting online content and revisiting a discussion on copyright, "Someone Stole my Blogs": [www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1498](http://www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1498))
- "Copyright Infringement": [www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=894](http://www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=894)
- And a special shout-out to Christie Keith, who uploaded directions for filing and a sample Digital Millenium Copyright Act (DMCA) Take-Down Notice: [www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1534](http://www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1534)

Would you like to keep up with discussions on the DWAA forum, but can't check in every day? Did you know you can subscribe—to entire forums, to individual threads, or both?

You can start forum subscriptions from the front page list of all forums. Start thread subscriptions from the "Thread Tools" link in the menu bar at the top of the discussion. Follow a topic or forum as long as you like; stop your subscriptions any time from the User Control Panel.

### Here's the how-to:

Subscribe to an entire forum (get e-mail notifications for *all* conversations in that area).

- From the list of forums, click on the name of the forum to which you'd like to subscribe.
- Open the "Forum Tools" drop-down menu, and select "Subscribe to this Forum."
- In the window that opens, choose the delivery frequency for e-mail notification: instant, daily, weekly, or no notification.
- Click on the "Add Subscription" button.

From this point, until you change or cancel your subscription, you'll receive e-mail updates every time a new thread is added to the forum or a new reply is posted to an existing thread. The e-mail will include a link to the new or updated thread, and a description of the subject.

Subscribe to an individual thread (receive e-mail notifications when there is new conversation in only that thread). Subscribing to an individual thread delivers a link to the thread. Subscribing to a thread in a sub-forum delivers the entire text of the new post to your in-box.

- From the list of threads in the forum, click on the subject line of the thread to which you'd like to subscribe.
- Open the "Thread Tools" drop-down menu, and select "Subscribe to this Thread."
- In the window that opens, choose the delivery frequency for e-mail notification: instant, daily, weekly or no notification.
- Click on the "Add Subscription" button.

From this point, until you change or cancel your subscription, you'll receive e-mail updates every time a new reply is posted to the subscribed thread. The e-mail will include a link to the new or updated thread, and depending on the notification you select, full text of the reply.

You must register as a DWAA member to have forum updates delivered to your e-mail in-box.

To register, visit [www.dwaa.org/forum/index.php](http://www.dwaa.org/forum/index.php) and click the register link in the welcome message.

Questions about forum registration? Contact Pat Steer, forum administrator, at [gaelen2@yahoo.com](mailto:gaelen2@yahoo.com).

### **CWA Conference an Opportunity for DWAA Members**

From November 19-21, pet writers will converge on White Plains, NY, for the annual Cat Writers Association writing conference and awards banquet. The fee is amazingly low and includes most of your meals. Topics are relevant for *all* pet writers (whatever species). This is a wonderful chance to network, set up editor appointments, and participate in a book signing. White Plains is easy to reach via car, plane, or train. Post on the DWAA e-list or forum to arrange roommates for lower hotel costs. I have always gotten lots of work from these conferences and can highly recommend it!

Check it out at [www.catwriters.org](http://www.catwriters.org).

*Deb Eldredge.*



## ≡ Bashir and the Gander ≡

By Liz Palika



My husband, Paul, and I have shared our home with Australian Shepherds for more than 25 years. Although we cannot keep sheep where we live, we always do herding instinct tests with our dogs, and we enjoy seeing their instincts blossom. Their instincts came into practical use when my dog-training business, Kindred Spirits, moved into our present location. Although we didn't realize it until we moved in, the land came with a pair of ancient geese who were left over from the former tenants who had run a petting zoo. We called the gander Grandpa and the goose Grandma, in respect for their ages.

Unfortunately, shortly after we moved in, a coyote killed Grandma. Grandpa began grieving horribly, to the point of refusing to eat. He also searched for his long-time mate and called for her. It was heartbreaking.

Now I knew that geese often mated for life, and these two had been together for (according to the neighbors) more than 20 years. So, to try and save Grandpa, I got several goslings for him to care for. They were exactly the right decision; Grandpa immediately perked up and began shepherding the goslings. However, now that we had a flock of geese, I also needed to be able to control them. Geese are fearsome watch "dogs," and if Grandpa had his way he would chase off all our training students. So I asked Bashir to help me.

Now, geese are also not easy to herd. If the dog is too soft, the geese will take advantage. If the dog is too hard, the geese will fight back and when geese fight back, they grab the dog's coat or skin in their beak, hold on, and then beat the dog with their incredibly strong wings. I had no idea how to teach Bashir; I'd never had any exposure to geese before. Bashir already knew left, right, slow, and easy so I just taught him, "Put them in their pen." And I let him do the rest.

Within a few weeks, Bashir and Grandpa had an understanding. Grandpa could make all the noise he wanted as long as when Bashir walked up to him nicely, Grandpa would lead the goslings away from the dog. Bashir could then balance himself behind the geese to guide them. I would have Bashir pen the geese before our training classes and every evening to protect them from coyotes. The rest of the time, Grandpa was allowed to be in charge.

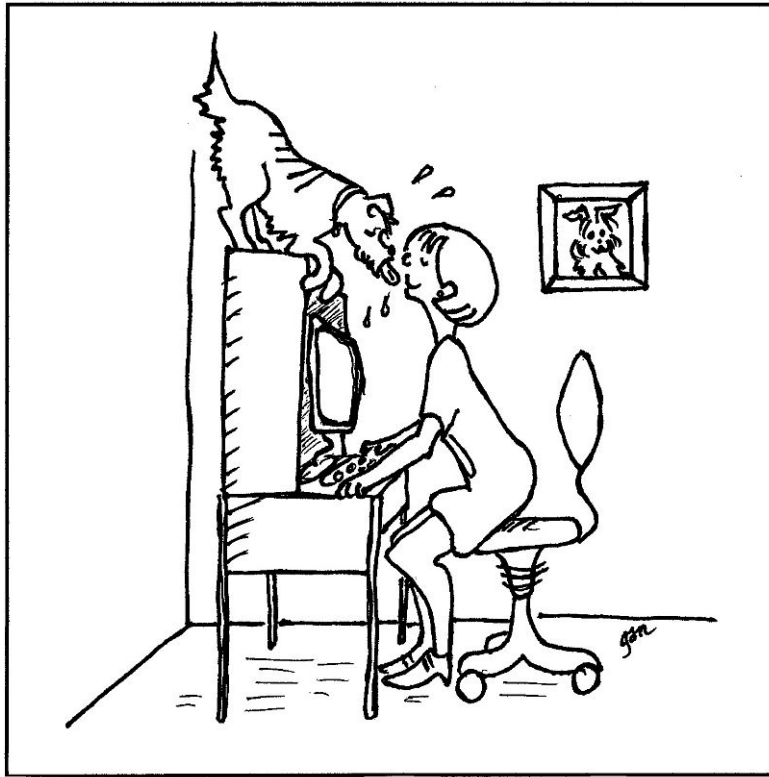
Most of the time this worked quite well. However, sometimes Bashir would push too hard and Grandpa would get mad. Other times Grandpa would just decide it wasn't time to go back to the pen. In these instances Bashir had his work cut out for him. An angry gander is not bashful about letting the world know he's mad. He will hiss and lower his head before charging, and it's amazing how quickly Bashir figured this out. However, Bashir also learned that he couldn't back down because if he did, Grandpa would chase him and bite his butt!

In more than a few of their fights, Grandpa would beat Bashir with his wings until Bashir grabbed the old gander by the neck. Then Grandpa would stop beating the dog and Bashir would let go. It was very hard for me to watch but I figured they had to work it out. After all, I couldn't control Grandpa. I tried, and it didn't work. I nursed a two-inch hemotoma on the inside upper thigh for weeks after I tried.

By the time Grandpa died of extreme old age, I do believe the two animals—of two different species—had an understanding and respectful working relationship. It was actually quite nice to see.

# Roxie

By Janice Biniok



*I always have the perfect cure for writer's block.*

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