



Ethiopia (2005 - 36 x 44 inch pigment print)

Courtesy of William Wegman Studio - www.wegmanworld.com

DWAA: More than Dog Shows

Although DWAA began in the dog show world, today members write about every aspect of living with and loving dogs, whether the topic is show dogs, performance dogs, mutts, or heroes who save people. DWAA members write books and articles about health, training, traveling, tricks, breed bans, adoption, rescue, sports, housetraining, pet sitting, therapy, the human-animal bond, grooming, and the traditional and not-so-traditional breed books. Many members have published fiction or poetry that is either about dogs, “by” dogs, or involves dogs. Some members produce videos, calendars, illustrations, radio and television broadcasts, breed selection, or books of photography. Many members are nationally known, while others are just beginning their careers.

If the subject is dogs, DWAA members have written about it. Every aspect of interacting with dogs is covered by members, who regularly continue to educate the public about the joys and responsibilities of living with dogs.

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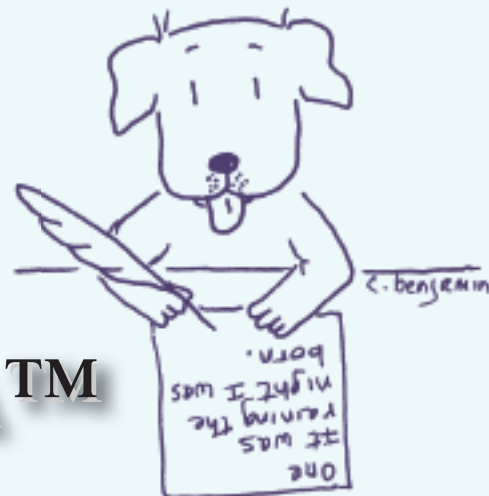
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SPECIAL
WESTMINSTER ISSUE

JANUARY 2008

Ruff Drafts: The Voice of the DWAA™



DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
FOUNDED 1935

Molly looks at her own photo in Jean Fogle's book of photography, "Salty Dogs," a lovely look at dogs enjoying the beach and ocean. Fogle's captivating Jack Russell Terrier is often the focus of Fogle's lens. Molly may yet set the supermodel world on fire, but she would prefer that the fire be at the beach. (Photo reprinted with permission of Jean Fogle, www.jeanmfogle.com)



For DWAA's 73rd anniversary, three new members are inducted into our Hall of Fame



In 1938, Dr. M. Josephine Deubler was the first woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine. She was the first woman appointed to the Penn faculty in 1941, a position she held until 1987. Dr. Deubler has devoted 70 years to genetic research while simultaneously educating generations of veterinary students. She served as head of the school's clinical pathology laboratory. She has been a breeder of the Dandie Dinmont Terrier, a respected exhibitor, and AKC show judge. In 1998 she was Best in Show judge for the Westminster Kennel Club show at Madison Square Garden. She has been a valued member of DWAA since 1970.



Lois Meistrell's career in dogs began before World War II training dogs at Mitchell Field, Long Island, prior to America's entry into the war. Her training techniques were advanced for the time. She taught various forms of tracking, communications, and bird dog techniques to spot parachutists. After the war began, there was an immediate shortage of dog trainers, especially at the Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey. She was the first woman trainer selected for this work. She and her husband Harland became professional AKC dog handlers and joined the Professional Handlers Association at the end of the war. Over the years, she wrote about dogs for several New York newspapers and magazines, including Newsday and the Newark News. She is the author of several dog books and joined DWAA in 1939, and served as secretary for many years.



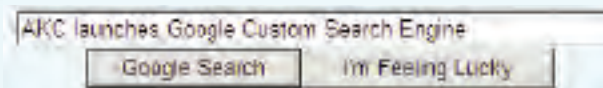
Forty years of dog writing have made Mordecai Siegal one of the most prolific and best-known figures among his peers and dog owners everywhere. His body of work consists of 34 published books and hundreds of magazine articles and columns in general interest newspapers and dog publications. Several of his books are best sellers and many have remained in print for decades. He hosted a radio interview program, Vets and Pets, in New York City. As a member of the United States Air Force, he wrote for a Strategic Air Command newspaper. He was attached to the Armed Forces Radio Services in Japan as a broadcast journalist and announcer. He joined DWAA in 1974 and served as president for seven years. He is President Emeritus of DWAA and an honorary member of the Board of Governors.

Ruff Drafts

The Voice of the DWAA™

By Phyllis DeGioia

This month we unveil our new newsletter: new name, new design, new logo, same wonderful contributors. The winner of the membership-wide contest to select a new name goes to Arnold Levine, who receives a free membership for the year. Carol Lea Benjamin drew the perfect logo to go paw in hand with the new name. The new design, which has actually been out for a few months, is the hard work of Kim Townsend, whose professional layouts bring joy to my heart. The content is, as always, from many contributors within the organization. As editor, AKA your Newsletter Goddess, I remain most appreciative for all the contributions. I realize that as writers we all have a compulsion to fill empty pages, but the realities of a 8-page newsletter published ten times a year require content assistance from membership, and people have been just terrific.



The American Kennel Club® is pleased to announce that millions of visitors to its web site – AKC.org – can now search its contents using the newly installed Google™ custom search function. Thanks to Google, AKC.ORG's search functions are greatly expanded, making it the ultimate "Bowser Browser." This tool can greatly assist dog writers.

In addition, a graphic redesign of the main tool bars and the My AKC account log-in box complement the versatile search tool. Once a topic is typed into the search box, the search results will be listed in descending order based on Google's proven web search methods of determining the most relevant web pages on AKC.ORG.

"With the new Google search capabilities and enhanced home page design, navigating around AKC.ORG is better than ever, enabling users to find the information they need quicker," said AKC Vice President / Chief Information Officer Charles K. Kneifel. "Even the menus with cleaner, larger lettering make the web site more visually pleasing and easier to read." The main tool bar, which includes Breeds, Events, Breeders, Dog Owners, Future Dog Owners, Clubs, Registration and Kids/Juniors sections, stands alone while the secondary tool bar featuring the Press Center, Store, Customer Service, About, and Online Services is now centrally located above the search box in a more prominent position for easier access.

An annual highlight for many dog writers, the Westminster Kennel Club show was established in 1877 and is America's oldest organization dedicated to the sport of purebred dogs. Westminster pre-dates the invention of the light bulb and the automobile, the building of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Washington Monument, the invention of basketball, and the establishment of the World Series. Since it began, 24 men have been elected president and 12 states joined the Union. It's an American institution.

Last year, Westminster was the only dog show in America to have entries in every AKC-recognized breed, and once again this year, Westminster has entries in every breed. This year the show is held February 11th and 12th.

This year four newly-recognized breeds will make their live television debut at Westminster: the Plott (Hound Group), the Tibetan Mastiff (Working), the Beauceron (Herding) and Swedish Vallhund (Herding). That makes a total of 169 different breeds and varieties in competition. It's the only dog show in the world that has its Groups and Best in Show televised live in America, thanks to the USA Network, which has been broadcasting the show since 1948.

In addition to attracting millions of viewers on the live USA Network telecast, Westminster 2007 proved to be a big hit online as well, as the Web site exceeded several of the previous year's highs. Unique visits increased 14% and the average length of each visit rose from 6:08 to 10:13. Nearly 1.5 million streams of

Westminster: There's only One!

Photo reprinted with permission of Mary Bloom
<http://www.marybloom.com>



Living Radio (ch 112), and the radio will pick up the television audio. ESPN.com included the show as one of The 101 Things Every Fan Must Experience Before They Die in a listing of world-wide sporting events.

Last year, for the first time in the 131-year history of the Westminster Kennel Club, one of the casino sports books listed odds for the show. Wynn Las Vegas posted odds "for entertainment purposes only," meaning that bets were not actually taken, and odds were for breeds, not individual dogs. They plan to post odds again this year.

The Empire State Building first honored Westminster by lighting its tower in the Westminster colors of purple and gold in 2004 and will do so again in 2008. Given that the show sold out the past two years, there will be a lot of people who see those colors this year.

In an attempt to limit duplicate entries, last year Westminster kept all fees from duplicate entries received before the show reached its 2,500-dog limit and donated the proceeds to Take The Lead, a charitable organization that provides direct services, support and care for people in the sport of purebred dogs who suffer life-threatening or terminal illness. For the 2007 show, this resulted in a total donation of \$38,000. Who knows how much money will be earned for Take the Lead this year.

For Members Only

The DWAA's website offers many benefits to our members to help promote their work and their area of expertise. Our new server provides monthly statistics that keep us informed about what draws visitors to our site. These statistics are posted to our new forums periodically.

Members can increase our organization's visibility on the Internet, as well as increase their own rankings on search engines, by taking advantage of features on our website.

1. The Expert Forum is designed to draw the media to the DWAA. If you were a mainstream reporter assigned to do a story on dogs, where would you begin? Likely by typing "expert on dogs" in a search engine. A reporter doing just that would land squarely on the DWAA's website, as we come up #1 on Google with that search phrase. Whatever your area of expertise, a posting in the Expert Forum will increase your visibility and lead those in need of accurate information directly to your fingertips.

2. The DWAA Works Forum area is where members are free to post information about their books, as well as upload cover photos or previews. As with the Expert Forum, the DWAA Works Forum is regularly visited by all of the major search engines, so careful wording on your part will lead to high rankings on the search engines.

3. The DWAA Gallery is where our artistic members have a place to showcase their artwork and photographs. Visitors to DWAA can choose to send E-Postcards, customized with their own message and the DWAA logo as a "stamp."

4. The DWAA calendar of events allows you to post upcoming book tours and/or signings.

If you have any questions or problems on our website, feel free to contact Kim Townsend at kimtowntsend@hughes.net. She's always willing to help!

Last fall, I spent several months researching the beginnings of the AKC. Although it wasn't the original concept for my story, I quickly discovered an underlying pattern to most of the important developments: dog writers. Fanciers on every level obsessively documented their experiences but that was the tip of the iceberg. Most of the principles we now take for granted in the dog world were devised or driven into existence by furious journalistic debate. Forget about reasonable, level-headed discussions and Roberts Rules of Order, this was guerilla warfare with a printing press.

It helped that some of the most prominent early fanciers were also successful journalists. Foremost among these was James Watson, who trained as a journalist in his native Edinburgh before relocating to America in 1870. Watson wrote for several New York-based publications including The Herald Tribune and Country Life in America. In 1883 he took over as editor of the New York-based newspaper Forest and Stream and immediately commandeered most of its pages for dog news. This soon spawned a sister publication, the American Kennel Register, devoted solely to purebred dogs.

As editor, Watson was a perpetual nightmare to AKC's founders. They may have hated him but they listened. Week after week, he led a one-man crusade against incompetent judges, clueless kennel club officials, and dishonest breeders. Fraudulent pedigrees made headline news in Watson's papers but he didn't stop there. The American Kennel Register reflected his fascination with every aspect of the dog world. It published some of the earliest research on the development of vaccines for rabies and distemper. His editorial opinions led to the popularization of imported breeds like Cocker Spaniels and Collies, the creation of America's first specialty clubs, and produced the earliest workable outline of kennel club regulations.

Watson was industrious but he was not alone. Literary dog lovers bought failing publications and started new ones to create their own canine media empire. Along with reporting news and spotting trends, editors and staff writers demanded reforms and fanned the flames of readers' disputes that frequently ended up in court.

"Crown Prince's Paternity...The Stock Keeper is now publishing the evidence presented by Messers. Hugh Dalziel and J. Evans, who may be called by the prosecution in the case. The first installment

presented the evidence of Mr. Evans" (American Kennel Register 1885).

Circulation soared and dog lovers came to depend on these publications. Tabloid journalism was irresistible but this was not their only selling point. Weekly or monthly these courts of public opinion rendered verdicts on an astounding range of issues. Pedigrees were verified and breed standards formulated in their editorial columns both before and after the AKC came into existence.

The AKC Gazette did not commence publication until 1889. August Belmont, AKC's fourth president, and favorite target of the canine paparazzi, realized that AKC needed a voice within this journalistic fray. Due to their shoestring budget, Belmont underwrote the venture to get it off the ground. More like a garagezine, the early Gazette ran about twenty pages. "We shall withhold no news from the gazette. It will be a dry bones compilation of information." This strictly business format was definitely factual, but somehow lacked the allure of its headline-grabbing competitors. By 1898 this policy was revised and AKC's arch nemesis, James Watson was appointed as its first editor.

This gave AKC unparalleled editorial leverage but it didn't stem the continuous problems created by gossip and misinformation. Most major newspapers devoted space in their sports columns to dog shows but the public's interest in dogs seemed insatiable. Topics from care to training to advances in veterinary medicine were regularly reported in major publications but the quality of information often left much to be desired. "There is an old saying that fools step in where angels fear to tread, and when some of the lay stuff written about dogs and their points, in some of the metropolitan and provincial newspapers, is perused, really one doesn't know what to do- cry in pity or blush with shame!" (Dogdom Monthly, 1920).

In 1932, the subject of a dog writers' organization came up at an AKC board meeting. It was hoped that an official organization of professional journalists would have the authority to implement and sustain much needed standards and practices. AKC actually offered to host an inaugural meeting for the journalists covering Westminster that year. It took a couple more years for this idea to get off the ground but the DWAA finally rolled off the production line in February, 1935. And we have been going strong ever since.

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When your address changes, or if you did not receive your newsletter or roster, PLEASE NOTIFY Pat Santi for a copy. (contact information above)

DWWA's Long History of Writing about Dogs

By Mordecai Siegal

Before 1935 there was no such thing as a dog writer, much less an association. There were newsmen and newswomen and magazine writers. Some reporters were referred to as “kennel editors,” but most of the papers assigned sportswriters, reporters, and even copyboys to cover dog shows. Still, these were the ones who made the dog world an indelible part of our popular culture by writing about dogs on the sports pages of most newspapers.

There were, of course, many dog publications of national and regional stature, and their writers were dog writers, but there was no such designation at the time. Few made a career of it despite their enormous contribution to the national love affair with dogs. Among those dog publications that survived in the thirties were Dog World, Popular Dogs, Hounds and Hunting, The Dog News, Dog Fancier, Kennel Review, Dogdom, Western Kennel World, Kennel and Beach (Canada), American Greyhound, and, of course, Bloodlines (U.K.C.) and the AKC Gazette.

Front Matter

The idea for the Dog Writer's Association was first expressed in a casual letter written by Milton Danziger, Dog Editor of Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, dated December 11, 1934, to George Foley, president of the Foley Dog Show Organization, which was then the most important dog show organization in North America. Danziger's notion became a reality two months later with the help and enthusiasm of George Foley, “Mr. Dog Show” himself. Danziger became the first president of the infant association in 1935. The Dog Writers Association was born on February 13, 1935, in the Westminster Kennel Club's meeting room at the old Madison Square Garden.

Maxwell Riddle, formerly of the Cleveland Press and past president of DWAA, said “The original intention of the DWAA was to improve the quality of the writing on dogs and to get more dog writing into general newspapers and magazines....I think that we have made writers better than they were and attracted many more who have studied to be experts in their field. I'm damn proud of the work the do.”

How DWAA serves members worldwide

Over the years, DWAA and its members have been a major influence for good for the dog sport, dog breeding, and responsible dog ownership by providing news, information, and education. From its very beginning DWAA has been able to secure for dog writers the courtesies and amenities at dog shows so necessary for doing their jobs properly. Press facilities, show results, catalogs, judging programs are now the established rule for large, professionally accomplished shows around the country.

The Writing Competition

The best-known aspect of DWAA is their annual writing competition that encourages quality writing about dogs, their rearing, training, care, and all aspects of companionship, plus the dog sport. Some awards are cash but most are the highly prized first place “Maxwell” medallions. Categories include newspapers, magazines, canine newspapers, club publications, books, photography, electronic media, fiction, humor, and poetry. The competition is open to all writers, photographers, editors, and publishers. Entries must have been published within the contest period from September 1 to August 31 of the contest year. The winners are announced at the annual awards dinner.

The Awards Dinner

The annual dinner, held in New York the night before the Westminster Kennel Club Show, is a highlight for DWAA members. For many people it is the only time friends get to see each other. Although the dinner is held to present the awards from the writing competition, it is a social event enjoyed by members and guests who come from all over North America and abroad to meet in good fellowship and renew old friendships.

The Scholarship Program

Although DWAA is not a charitable organization, it does have an important public service aspect. Young men and women who have been active in the dog world or in exhibiting or breeding may apply to our scholarship chair for consideration of financial aid. Preference will be given to those who have written about dogs. Information and guidelines are listed on our website at www.DWAA.org.

The Monthly Newsletter

A newsletter goes out 10 months a year to members. It is the slender thread that ties the members together and networks the diversity of their far-flung activities. From Los Angeles to Montreal, Germany to Kailua, Ruff Drafts: The Voice of the DWAA™ is eagerly awaited by most members.

Furthermore

The DWAA is more than a writers' lobby, a writing contest, an educational trust, or a newsletter. Since inception, it has given shape and form to a genre of writing expertise that might have passed from the scene unrealized and without recognition. DWAA has always consisted of people from all walks of life who write passionately about dogs. For some it is a way to make a living; for others it is an avocation. But for all it is the total writing experience with gains and losses, victories and defeats, and the heady event of making it into print.

Susan Conant

I did not decide to write about dogs. Rather, my vocation was forced on me by

my first Alaskan Malamute, Natasha, who, at the age of eight weeks, entered my life, assessed it, found it wanting, and embarked on a campaign of radical transformation. (Yes, embarked. Natasha had a habit of putting canine puns in my mouth.) Having seized the helm, Natasha steered me dogward. Although she accompanied me to my office, my work bored her. One night at a dog training class, she directed my attention to a trivial incident that gave me a new career. A handler put his dog on a long down, left the hall, and failed to return. He eventually showed up, but in his absence, I felt almost as if a voice had spoken to me: "Go forth," it might have cried. "Go forth and write dog lover's mysteries!" In seconds, my improbable new calling flashed before my eyes. I wanted to hold up a mirror to all of us who made fools of ourselves over dogs. I wanted us to laugh at ourselves and at our foibles. I wanted to share my passionate love of Natasha, and I wanted to offer comfort and validation to every heartbroken person who'd ever had to hear the phrase only a dog. The next morning, I began writing about Holly Winter and her Malamute, Rowdy. I haven't stopped yet.

Susan McCullough

I was working at home as a freelance editorial consultant for agri-cultural trade associations. I had a fax machine that made a loud noise when cutting the paper. My Sheltie Cory didn't care for the noise. Whenever he heard it, he would charge at the fax, grab the paper and shred it. I'd then have to contact my client and ask for the fax to be re-sent (shades of "my dog ate my homework"). I wondered how other people coped with the dogs in their offices, and from that question fashioned a query that I pitched to PetLife. The editor liked it, assigned me the piece, and kept assigning me more articles after that. Eventually, my work became exclusively pet writing. I don't miss writing about agricultural trade one iota.

Kathryn Monroe

I always wanted to be a writer (got lots of praise for it when in school--amazing how that works, isn't it), and was first published when I was 11 years old. Most of my jobs involved some use of my writing skills. When I turned to free lance and independent work, it was just natural to write about dogs which are such an important part of my life.

Lexiann Grant

Even when my decided plan was to go to medical school, I wanted to write. I got squeamish and changed my major and was pre-seminary (lots of philosophy, sociology, etc.), but I still wanted to write as part of my work. I do other work in the writing/editing fields, but dogs and cats and their health are my first love.

Why I Chose to Become a Dog Writer

Some of DWAA's nearly 600 members share why they write about dogs for a living rather than getting a corporate job with benefits.

Pam Dennison

I had no ambition to be a writer whatsoever. I have a BA degree in Fine Arts and worked in the

printing industry for 20 years. Then Shadow came along! I was keeping a training journal and Ted Turner told me I should make it into a bunch of articles. I wrote one article and then turned it into a book. Writing then became rapidly addicting and I have now written five books and tons of articles. Apparently I have a lot to say!

Charlene G. LaBelle

I wrote about hiking for my local newspaper. I felt it helped some to think about joining us or trying hiking on their own. The idea of a book never came to my mind. Sure I had written a short article, but a book? When I was climbing Mt. Whitney with three dogs, someone asked me about a book on packing with dogs. I said there isn't one, I haven't written it yet. That evening I used the back of my food planner for the chapter list.

Chris Walkowicz

I was born loving to listen to stories. When school meant learning to read, it was like a new world was opened to me, so the progression to writing was a natural step. What could be better than entertaining or educating others? Dare to dream! When dogs came into my life, after a deprived childhood, I learned what could be better: writing about dogs. First, I edited a club newsletter. Then I proposed a dog column to a local newspaper. I felt like dancing down the street when I came out of that successful interview. Another step up was being published in national canine magazines, a column in the Gazette, followed by books -- one still in print since 1985! My goal has always remained the same: If I can save just one dog's life through my writing, my life will be worthwhile.

Steve Dale

I've written about animals for as long as I can remember. After one radio station changed format for a fourth time, I knew this time I was out the door. All our names appeared in the paper, and way back in the mid-1980s I was offered an entertainment column at the Chicago Tribune. I took it, but also asked if I could cover the pet and the zoo beats on the feature side. The editor replied "The what beat?" But I did that for many years. It was like going to school for me, learning so much more about pets because I was always speaking with experts. Simultaneously, I was writing for People magazine, and my editor there commented on most of my page files were about a celebrity's pet. She finally said, "Why don't you just write about pets?" My chance came when there was an opening at Tribune Media Services for a syndicated columnist. I haven't looked back since. In all that time I've only authored one story that wasn't pet related.

Gail Parker

Writing was always something I wanted to do but didn't have anything to write about in my opinion. "Things" just got in the way—you know how that is. I was about to attend my first dog show and wrote to the editors/owners of The Setter Quarterly. I had some questions about show etiquette. They invited me to write an article about my experience afterward; I did and kept on writing. That was in the 70s.

Marion Lane

Animals and writing are the only two career possibilities that ever interested me. With a liberal arts degree in literature, I headed to the Big Apple to offer my talents to NYC's million-and-one publishers. I decided to focus on animal angles. That led me to the AKC, where I was hired to work in the obedience department. As I learned more about obedience, I offered to write about different aspects of the sport for the Gazette. The magazine tried to provide regular coverage of obedience, but no one on staff knew anything about it, so the editor was thrilled to have my offerings, especially free of charge. After a year or two of this arrangement, she invited me to join the Gazette staff.

Caroline Coile, PhD

Marion Lane published my first article for pay. I was a graduate student and I sent an article into the Gazette about the role of Dogs in Research. They said they would publish it as two articles, and pay me. Pay me? At the lab we all looked at it in utter amazement. None of us could comprehend the notion of getting paid for an article. The article won a DWAA award and the Denlinger Award, and Mr. Denlinger of Denlinger Books asked if I'd like to write a dog book. I said sure and promptly forgot about it because I was looking for a post-doc position. Two years later at a dog show, I heard Barron's was looking for authors. I did one book, collected my advance, did another book, and figured if I could write five books in a year, I could parlay my advances into my goal of poverty-level income. Unbeknownst to me, there was a glitch in the royalty department and they never sent royalties. I redoubled my efforts to reach that five book a year poverty level income goal based on the advances. That taught me to write a lot. One day I opened a thick envelope from Barron's with a check for two years and about six books worth of back royalties. That day, I spoke with my acquisitions editor about this windfall, and her words were, "Don't quit your day job!" I'd quit it earlier that day.

Gina Spadafori

My first steps were with the help of our family dog, and my first word was his name. Our family cat endured endless games of make-believe, complete with costumes. By the age of 12, I had a neighborhood business as a pet-sitter and dog-walker -- or would have, if I'd charged for my services. When I was in high school, my parents gave me a copy of Carol Lea Benjamin's "Dog Training for Kids." I realized then I could write about pets for others and did, starting with mimeographed newsletters my mom, a teacher, ran off at her school. Years later when I was hired at the Sacramento Bee I

Augustus McCrae Brown and Sadie Joy Brown (Gus and Sadie) don't write about dogs for a living, but they have a lot to say.

Photo Courtesy Lois Brown via Jill Kessler



was asked to write a pet-care column because I was the staff "animal nut." That was almost a quarter-century ago (I just turned 50) and I haven't stopped writing about -- or caring for -- animals since.

Carol Lea Benjamin

The Refugee of the Rain

He was born in a box in the rain,
A little ways off the sandy lane,
Wanted by none was this ball of fur,
To others he was a filthy cur.
But not to me, a boy in the rain,
Walking upon this sandy, wet lane.
I came across Steve, as I called him:
To take him home was my greatest whim.
But I left Steve there, 'cause mother hates dogs,
And I walked alone through the dark, gray fogs.
I shall always remember that day,
For at a dog show in the month of May,
A champion won the blue ribbon;
Believe me, I'm not kiddin',
I recognized this ball of brown fluff,
Now full-grown, and called "Champion Ruff."
Yes it was Steve, others' pet peeve,
The refugee of the rain.

Since I'd made every conceivable mistake at age 10 when this poem was published in the PS 188 PTA newsletter, what harm was there in going on with my budding career? So that's what I did.