

Ruff Drafts: The Voice of DWAA™



DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
FOUNDED 1935

**September
2009**

- Members Respond
- Join Our Web Site Team
- Dog Poems
- E-List Updates
- Computer-Use Poll Results
- New Dog Cartoon



This strong, handsome rear assembly belongs to September Morn's Rottweiler, Blue (Galory's Blue Moon Rising NJP, RAE, CGC). September Morn writes that, "Blue's favorite daily workout routine included a 20-minute deep-digging session. And no, Blue never once dug a hole in our back yard: he spent all his digging energy mining his approved dig pit. When I someday arrive at Rainbow Bridge, I expect to see a gigantically deep hole with Blue in it, bottoms-up, joyously digging away." Photo courtesy September Morn.

≡ DWAA LEADERSHIP ≡

DWAA Officers

President

Deb Eldredge, DVM
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Vice President

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Secretary

Liz Palika
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Treasurer

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Marion Lane

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Dr. Caroline Coile
Charlotte Reed

Class of 2012

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Terry Albert
Kim Thornton (special awards)

Annual Banquet

Marsha Pugh
Pat Santi

Archives

Pat Santi

By-laws

Susan McCullough

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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

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Bardi McLennan

Committee Members:

Terry Albert
Linda Rehkopf

Juniors

Kate Eldredge

List Moderation

Stephanie Smith

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Chris Walkowicz
Kim Thornton

Member Advisory Board

Linda Rehkopf

Member Survey

Dr. Mary Burch

Membership

Elaine Gewirtz
Liz Palika

Newsletter / Web Site

Matthew Schenker

Assistant Editors:

Cindy Read
Pat Steer

Web "News Hound":

Shelley Bueche

Publicity

Elaine Gewirtz

Committee Members:

Elizabeth Jarrell

Scholarship

Lea-Ann Germinder
Susan McCullough

Members Respond...

I've been an editor for a long time, and I often have similar reactions as Lexiann Grant when reading. I can't seem to read a book, newspaper, or magazine without becoming agitated at the misuse of the language.

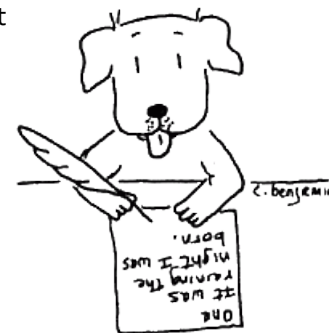
Recently I indulged in a course from The Teaching Company called "The History of the English Language," by Seth Lerer, an eminent professor of language and literature, currently the Dean of Arts and Humanities, University of California, San Diego. Professor Lerer points out that the English language is "mutable and transitory," and even Samuel Johnson could not fix or preserve the language as he thought it should be.

Also recently, I read an article in *The Chronicle Review*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 17, 2009): "50 Years of Stupid Grammar Advice," by Geoffrey K. Pullum, written the day after the 50th anniversary of *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White. This book has shaped writers' style for 50 years, and I'm sure that dog writers are no exception. However, Pullum, also a distinguished linguist and head of Linguistics and English Language at the University of Edinburgh, repudiates this hallowed volume, and in great detail. He says that "For the field of English grammar...both authors were grammatical incompetents." I recommend that writers read this article. See it online at www.chronicle.com/free/v55/i32/32b01501.htm. I think it will be a real eye-opener.

Lerer goes on to say that even today, writers may use interesting grammatical concepts and spelling for emphasis. I myself am very fond of the double negative, and indeed, Lerer points out that in Shakespeare's day, not just double, but triple and quadruple negatives were commonly used, even by the Bard himself, for emphasis.

That is not to say that Ms. Grant is wrong. I agree with everything she says. There is a time and a place for emphasis, and it definitely depends on what you are writing. Grammar and spelling are important, and it is important to know when it is appropriate to use them. But, as a writer, it is equally important to know how and where you can use less than perfect grammar and spelling.

Carole Presberg



Send your newsletter responses to mschenker@comcast.net.

≧ President's Message ≦

By Deb Eldredge, DVM, President

September is here, and my kids are heading back to school. For Kate this is a big move—heading off to Cornell as an English major. Fall is also a great time for reflections and coming up with new goals.

I achieved one of my lifetime goals on August 2, when my wonderful 10-year-old Belgian Tervuren, Dani, tracked her way to a passing VST (Variable Surface Track) and became a Champion Tracker. This is AKC's most elite and difficult championship, and we now have two in our household! Many celebrations have been held, and I suspect I will smile for months.

We need to look at future goals for DWAA, and for us each individually to look at our goals in our writing work. One goal is for DWAA to become more "green," so anyone who can switch to a digital newsletter, please do so. It is more economical for the organization too. If you have goals you feel DWAA should work towards, please let us know.

Matthew Schenker continues to expand our Web site (www.dwaa.org). You can find new materials and pages in the members-only sections. If you have suggestions or would like to contribute, please don't hesitate to contact him.

The forums have had some very good information on how to take advantage of Internet marketing and networking opportunities such as blogs, Web sites, and social media. You might want to add trying at least one of these new areas to your goals for the year. Reminder: the DWAA forum administrator position is available to a new volunteer.

Many thanks to the Nominating Committee of Sandy Mesmer, Susan Miccio, and Charlene LaBelle. We had two board slots up for renewal. The Committee has chosen to go with the incumbents for their slate: Elaine Gewirtz and Marion Lane.

Terry Albert has done a great job organizing the contest, and entries are coming in daily. Pat Santi and Marsha Pugh are hard at work on the banquet.

I plan to attend the CWA conference in White Plains, NY, and would love to have an unofficial DWAA meeting of any members who are also planning to attend. If you need to share a room, please post to the list and/or forum. Information on the conference is at www.catwriters.org. This is a fabulous opportunity to network!

I would like to establish a "Sunshine Committee," or person. This would be to make sure that when people in DWAA are undergoing a rough time we send out cards to let them know that DWAA is thinking of them. If anyone would like to volunteer, please contact me at debme15@hotmail.com. While DWAA is a professional organization, I also think of it as a family—a somewhat big and unwieldy family, but family nonetheless. For this to work, we also need people to pass on information, as Darlene Arden did about Patie Ventre's recent injury. Having an official Sunshine person should not stop anyone from feeling free to send their own cards or good feelings, too.

DWAA is *your* organization—committed to trying to do what is best for our members through networking and education.

PARTNERS

by Lee Netzler

Sometimes it's pretty clear what's in his head.
At other times he doesn't give a clue.
On certain days he knows just what to do.
On other days he's scatter-brained instead.
No mind; I'll see to my end of the line
responding as I always have before.
That's what a human helping hand is for.
I know he'll do his part if I do mine.

Sometimes I have a day of ups and downs
when things aren't going very well for me.
Precisely at those times is when he'll be
insisting that I make more smiles than frowns.
We make it day to day without much fuss,
and get along without a big to-do.
It's not important who is leading who,
but only that we both rely on us.

This poem originally appeared in *The Bagpiper*, the quarterly magazine of the Scottish Terrier Club of America.

≡ Secretary's Page ≡

By Liz Palika, Secretary

Dues Reminder

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

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Note: Check your directory listing online, and submit instant corrections or updates to your information at the DWAA member directory page:
www.dwaa.org/organization/member-directory.html

≧ Newsletter Notes ≦

By Matthew Schenker, Newsletter/Web Editor

We are always trying to make *Ruff Drafts* better reflect the diversity and creativity of the membership. The page count has been expanded to 10, up from the usual 8, allowing more room for photos, stories, updates, and other ideas.

Share Your Photos. As you can see from recent cover photos, we're trying to capture more colorful, humorous images of our canine companions in action (or at rest) with their human partners. Do you have a photo to share? Send it to me, along with a text description.

Call for Essays and Stories. Been part of an unusual or interesting situation recently? Something on your mind about dogs, dog people? Send it to me for possible publication in *Ruff Drafts*!

Other Ideas. Do you have sketches, cartoons, artwork, or something else worthy of wider visibility? Send it!

Go Digital!

Another reminder that *Ruff Drafts* is available in digital format, delivered straight to your e-mail in box. Digital editions arrive earlier, are in full color, and have activated hyperlinks. When you sign up for digital *Ruff Drafts*, you help the DWAA financially. Ready to go digital? Send me an e-mail request.

Matthew Schenker (mschenker@comcast.net)

≧ What's Happening on the DWAA-List ≦

By Chris Walkowicz, E-list Committee

The DWAA-list is a fount of information and ideas. We learn about the newest gimmicks that help (or hinder) writers. We read and rejoice in the passion of Debra White's assistance to shelter animals balanced by the wry humor of Caroline Coile's Salukis on the hunt. This month, it was a gang of armadillos that were bound and determined to whip Caroline's dogs to a frenzy or to drive her off the edge, a short drive to be sure. (Check out the armadillo chronicles in our archives.)

We cheered for Prez Deb's Champion tracking title on Dani, her 10-year-old Belgian Tervuren (whoohooo!), following closely on the heels of her daughter Kate's. With all the moisture this year, we had advice on those pesky yard mushrooms. We were informed of member Patie Ventre's broken hip (ow!), and we received notification of the loss of member Arnold Woolf.

Canine venery continued. Here are a few:

- ✱ A bounce of Beardies
- ✱ A bang of Boxers
- ✱ A rabble of Ridgebacks
- ✱ A blessing of Berners

Someone suggested that the DWAA do a book of these with illustrations as a fundraiser. Any volunteers? We also need a talented illustrator! A member asked about publishing a brochure and several members had advice. I keep people up on current anti-canine legislation. We discussed symptoms of a dog in pain (many) debarking, and more.

Come join us at dwaa.org/mailman/listinfo/dwaa-group_dwaa.org.

≧ Contest Update ≦

By Terry Albert, 2009 Contest Chair

The contest entry deadline (September 1) has passed, and I am busy sorting and stacking the piles of entries to send out to the judges. Thank you to all the volunteer judges; you will have some great entries to review.

It is inspiring to read the letters that come in with the entries. You can tell how proud writers are of their work, and how they've poured their souls into these projects. And some of the Special Award categories are so full I can barely lift the box! By next month I'll be able to give you some statistics about the number of entries.

Good luck everyone!

≡ DWAA Forum Spotlight ≡

By Pat Steer, Forum Administrator

Welcome to Jenny Drastura, Martin Deeley and Tracy Libby who registered in August. Martin joins the members who have created a Dog Expert post. Forum registrations are now at 151, slightly more than 40% of the total membership.

The **DWAA Members Computer Use/Internet Access Poll** remains open, but has been moved to *DWAA Business* (members-only area): www.dwaa.org/forum/showthread.php?t=1479

This poll was an open ballot in order to filter responses to exclude non-members and spambots. Prior to the July 1 - August 15 voting period, a link to the poll in the public-access area of the forum was published in *Ruff Drafts*. While the poll was active, all registered forum members were emailed three links to the poll. Members not registered on the forum could vote by replying to the poll thread, or by e-mail. Users without Internet access could vote by telephone (no calls were received.)

The poll thread was viewed 494 times before the thread was moved on August 15, 2009. Thread views are cumulative: if one person views it three times, that is recorded as three views. Open forum threads can be viewed by non-registered members, search engines, and other non-member visitors.

46 registered members viewed the thread, and 37 members voted.

The poll asked members to record two choices: first, what best described their computer/Internet access. All 37 members who voted recorded a choice in this section:

- ☒ 33, full computer access & unrestricted HI-SPEED internet access
- ☒ 2, full computer access & unrestricted DIAL-UP internet access
- ☒ 2, full computer access but restricted internet access (any speed)

No members voted for the choices "limited access to a computer which has unrestricted internet access" or "limited access to a computer which has limited internet access (e.g., e-mail only.)"

Second, members were asked to pick what described their use of DWAA Web "tools" (DWAA Web site, e-list, and forum). 35 of the 37 members who voted answered the question as follows:

- ☒ 18, I regularly use a computer & internet, but rarely visit DWAA Web tools (1x month or less)
- ☒ 12, I regularly use a computer & internet, & visit DWAA web tools 2-5x/month (~weekly)
- ☒ 5, I regularly use a computer & internet, & visit DWAA web tools often (~daily)

No members selected "seldom use a computer, the internet or DWAA web tools (1x/month or less)" or "Other – please explain below." Replies to the thread included a request for login help.

Thanks to everyone who participated.

For most polls, and all of the discussions in the members-only area, members need to register (visit dwaa.org/forum/index.php and click the register link in the welcome message).

If you have questions, contact me at gaelen2@yahoo.com.

THE MAGIC SPOT

By Lee Netzler

I found that without fail
there's a secret magic spot
which all of them have got:
It's right next to their tail.

I set about to find
what makes each of them feel
that spot's such a big deal
on top of their behind.

I found that itchy patch;
It helped me figure out
what it was all about:
They hanker for a scratch.

That special little clump
of coat atop their duff
just never gets enough
of scratches on their rump.

So now I know just what
it takes to make new friends:
You need to find rear ends
and simply scratch a butt.

This poem originally appeared in *The Scottie Scamper*, the quarterly newsletter of the Canadian Scottish Terrier Club.

≧ **Ruff Drafts Column: Thinking Outside the eX-Pen** ≦

By Lexiann Grant, DWAA Member

Vocabulous Fabulosum

As wordsmiths, we've read that there are at least 100,000, maybe even a quarter million, words in the English language. If you count slang and words used as common parlance from other languages, some sources raise that count to nearly one million. That's a lot of verbiage.

But according to more authorities (who are these people that sit around and count words?), the average person uses as few as 20,000 words in his or her vocabulary. And, depending on education—and reading habits—people only recognize between 35,000 and 75,000 of these words.

Words, as we writers know, are crafty little devils. We thrive on using, controlling, and manipulating them. When they flee from our forceful tactics and hide in our brains beyond the tip of our tongues and typing fingers we resent them. Which one of us hasn't paced the floor, flung a thesaurus, or cursed in Latin, Greek or Old High English, searching for the perfect word?

I digress...

Despite their duplicitous nature, I love words—big words, complicated words, difficult-to-spell, impossible-to-pronounce, colorful words. It's a great pleasure to use such a word as flummox, or a sniglet[®] like pupcous, and get away with it.

While some editors prefer us to write for an audience with a 7th-grade comprehension level, it's far more satisfying to educate our readers with words that gently compel them to learn. Writing that sends a reader scrambling for a dictionary throughout an article won't sell in most markets but content spiced with "wow" words can bring readers back, asking for more.

Let's ponder word forms for a moment. English linguistics are not musical to the ear like the Romance languages. Our words are often harsh, guttural, and make you want to spit them out.

In an attempt to standardize convoluted grammatical rules, formerly lyrical words have been converted (by the Inquisition?) into insipid aggregates of letters that have the power to turn readers into uninspired automatons.

Lovely, perfectly good words such as lit, wove, and proven have been discarded in favor of lighted, weaved, and proved. Ugh. Yes, now they all consistently end with the same easy-to-remember suffix. But now they're all consistently dull, boring to the readers we work so hard to retain.

And how logical are these words? If it's considered proper to say dived instead of dove, why is it incorrect to say driven instead of drove? or sitted instead of sat?!!

Refuse to abandon well-aged words that still read well (think fine wine). Infuse your work with a few grandiose words, not just for the sake of using them but because they are the most suitable words. Grab with zest the rare opportunity to write with words like atrabillious, boondoggle, or crapulous and cockalorum.

Can you honestly say you don't thoroughly relish the scintillating read of "The Jabberwocky?" It's impossible to forget Lewis Carroll and his

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

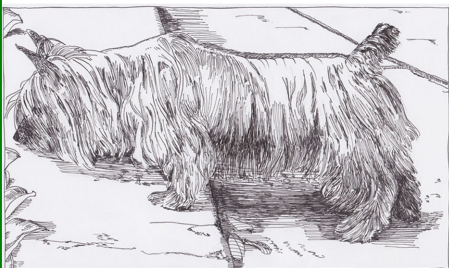
Be a word rebel: be bold and brazen with your vocabulary, and be remembered.

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CRAZY HUMANS-- Dog Wisdom - If You Can't....

Sandy Bergstrom Mesmer

July 15, 2009



If you can't sniff at it,



Sit on it -- or even bark at it --



Then pee on it....



And walk away.

≡ In Memory of Arnold L. Woolf ≡

1928 - 2009

By Dr. Mary Burch, Member Survey Committee



Longtime DWAA member Arnold Woolf of Lewiston, Maine, died on August 2, 2009. Born in New York City in 1928, Arnold was raised and educated in Westchester County, New York. He worked as an office manager and controller and he owned Woolf Business Services. Arnold's wife, Crystal, died in February 2009.

Arnold was a former Vice President of the Dog Writer's Association of America. He wrote three books and was an award winning columnist with Gannet Newspapers. Arnold's most recent book, ATTU, was published in 2008. ATTU is a story about a Siberian Husky who comes into the lives of a family and changes their every day life. Although there were quotes applauding ATTU from well-known writers, Arnold's favorite quote and the one he used the most often for the book's publicity came from a young boy who wrote, "Once you start to read ATTU, it will be hard to put him down."

With more than 60 years in breeding, exhibiting, and writing about dogs, Arnold was a Best In Show AKC judge and he had judging assignments scheduled for the fall. He served on the executive committee of the Collie Club of America and he was the president of the Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club.

He had a rich and full life outside of dogs, and he contributed to his community by volunteering for the Democratic Party; serving on Boards for the housing commission and the Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee, as well as the Auburn Post Office Customer Advisory board; and serving as president of the local Kiwanis Club. Arnold also received the Air Force Commendation Medal for his service during the Korean War.

Asked in an interview to comment on his life, he simply said, "Dogs are my life."

Cat Writers' Association, Inc., 16th Annual Conference

By Amy Shojai, DWAA Member

The CWA conference scheduled for November 19-21, 2009, will be held in White Plains, New York, in conjunction with the Westchester Cat Show, a 30-minute train ride from Manhattan. All writers—but especially DWAA members—are welcome!

The conference offers a unique opportunity to network, pitch to editors and agents, participate in a book signing, and learn during informational seminars and panels that include writing, publishing, and veterinary topics.

You'll see standup comedian Kevin Fitzgerald, DVM, from *Emergency Vets*; genetics researcher Leslie Lyons, PhD; book editors from Barrons, BowTie, TFH, Globe-Pequot Press, Epstein Literary Agency, and Folio Literary Management—plus magazine editors, and other publishing and veterinary professionals including David Frei and Peter Shankman.

See the program, a list of to-date speakers, hotel, and registration information at www.catwriters.org/annual-info.html

Full registration (priced \$100 before October 1st) covers all seminars, two receptions, two evening banquets, a breakfast, speaker-luncheon, and more. COME-SIT-STAY at the CWA conference for a howl of a good time!

≡ **Web Site Update** ≡

By Matthew Schenker, Newsletter/Web Editor

The DWAA Web site continues to grow, adding new and better materials each week.

Member Directory

The site now contains an easy-to-use member directory, with activated links to members' Web sites, blogs, and e-mail addresses. *I urge everyone to log onto the Web site and check your directory entry for accuracy:* www.dwaa.org/organization/member-directory.html



From this page, you will see the directory correction form, which makes it easy to submit changes to your information. I respond to all directory correction requests, updating your information within two days.

Join the Web Site News Team

A prominent feature of the DWAA Web site is the news section. It's time to expand this concept to include more stories from around the country—unusual situations, memorable people and their dogs, local happenings, and more.

To make this happen, we need volunteer “news hounds.” As a news hound, you will have opportunities to write stories, with photos, and publish them on the Web site with your byline.

I'm happy to welcome *Shelley Bueche* as our first news hound. Now we need more members to join Shelley and form a DWAA Web site news team! If you are interested, send me a quick e-mail and let's get you started.

Assistant Web Editors Needed

As our Web site grows, it is important to have people who can review the articles, photos, and basic design ideas early on, before the material is released to the wider membership.

Cindy Read's eagle eyes have been invaluable when it comes to editing Web materials. But she can't do it alone! We need two more people to volunteer as assistant Web editors. Assistant Web editors browse the DWAA Web when new features or materials are posted, then share their opinions about what works, what doesn't, and anything else they see. It's simple, but important!

If you are interested in becoming an assistant Web editor, send me a quick e-mail.

New “Featured Members”

Check out the new set of featured members on the home page. Every couple of months, I will introduce new featured member sketches, letting members' words and images show off the diversity of the DWAA. Previous sketches remain accessible in an expanding archive.

Register

Remember, a lot of material available on the DWAA Web site is for *members only*—one of the many benefits of being a member. To see this material, you need to log in. To obtain log-in information, send me an e-mail to request a user name and password.

With the contributions and involvement of more members, I look forward to continued innovations on the DWAA Web site.

Contact me any time at mschenker@comcast.net to get involved.

Roxie

By Janice Biniok



Apparently, she doesn't appreciate my editing.

Liz Palika
250 Flame Tree Place
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