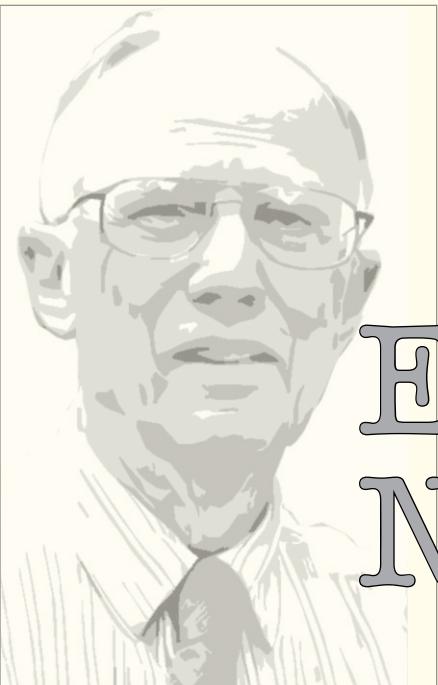


Author's  
**BAZAAR**  
ONLINE

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*Spring!*



# Editor's Note

By Dean Rea

Manuscripts written by three of my former students appear in this issue of *Author's Bazaar*, an on-line hobby journal.

Bob Welch, a University of Oregon grad who specializes in non-fiction, recently retired as a columnist after a distinguished newspaper career and continues to write and publish books, to speak at conferences and to conduct writing conferences. Welch, who resides in Eugene, Ore., reminds writers that active verbs, which he calls "quiet heroes," often are overlooked.

Les Gapay, a University of Montana graduate who

spends his retirement in Southern California, pays homage to his trusty steed, a 1998 Toyota truck that he refers to in a poem as a masterpiece.

Laurel Hilts, a Biola University graduate, returned to her home in Alaska after working with a missionary organization and preparing to teach. She taught school in Yakutat, Alaska, before returning home to Seldovia, where she is the prevention program coordinator for the village tribe. In this issue of *Author's Bazaar* she introduces readers to her home across the bay from Homer.

George Chapman describes how he has walked the equivalent of once around the earth during the past 25 years. Chapman, who turned 80 on March 11, offers advice that readers might take seriously in keeping physically fit.

Readers travel with Sheryl L. Nelms and Lee Kirk in poems, and Wrinkle the dog entertains us as he faces another formidable obstacle: a rat.



ON WRITING WELL

# In praise of active verbs

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By Bob Welch / [info@bobwelch.net](mailto:info@bobwelch.net)

For years, I have emphasized what I call “painting with words,” often with a strong emphasis on metaphors and similes. While these are powerful literary devices, in showcasing them I realize I sometimes overlook a quiet hero: the active verb.

Using active, not passive, verbs can pump new life into your prose.

An active verb expresses action. It shows something that a person, animal or process in nature can do. In “the

couple lingered over dinner,” “ lingered” is an active verb. In “the dinner was being lingered over by the couple,” the phrase “was being lingered over” is a passive verb phrase.

Yuck.

Notice the lack of energy in the following passive-verb construction: There was a fight. By simply using an active verb, everything changes: A fight broke out. A fight erupted. A fight shattered the quiet. With an economy of words, an active verb helps the reader see, feel, hear, smell or taste what's happening.

Among the world's great active-verb users is my former 1972 Corvallis (Oregon) High classmate, Jon Krakauer. In saying that, I used passive construction. Better: Jon Krakauer, my former 1972 Corvallis High classmate, rocks the socks off the English language with his splendid use of active verbs.

I've mined Krakauer's book, “Into the Wild,” for active verbs. In each of the following comparisons, the first example is passive construction, a sentence of Jon's that I've deliberately pacified. The second is how Jon actually wrote it:

There was a seagull overhead.

Gulls wheeled overhead.

We went through a pod of seven orcas.  
The boat split a pod of seven orcas.

It got very choppy.

The boat pitched and rolled on a twelve-foot west-  
erly swell.

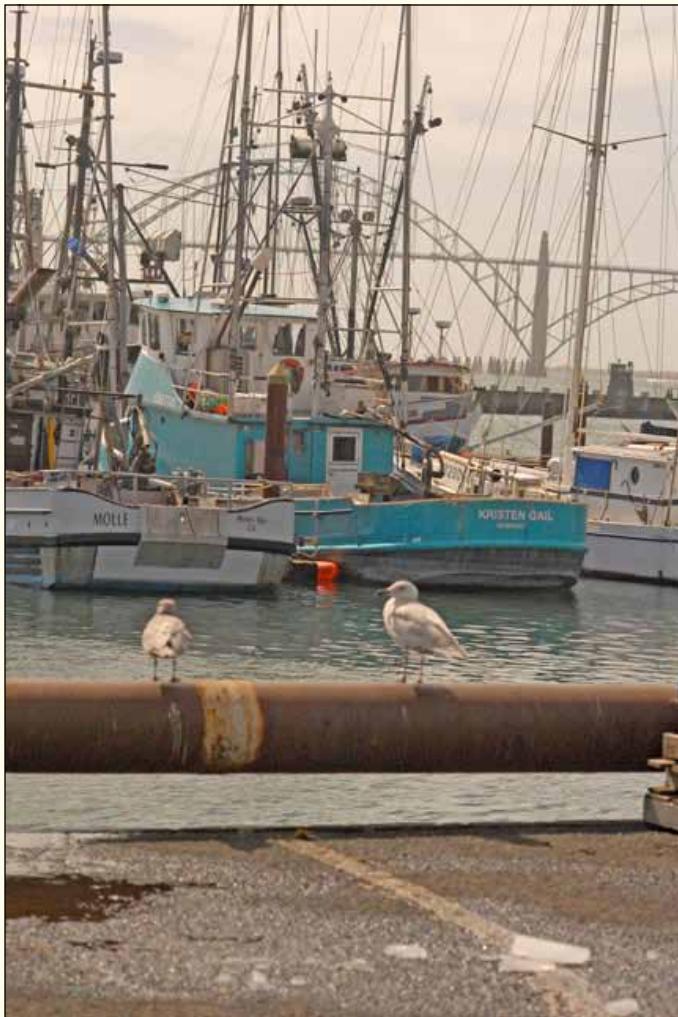
The canals had been made less wild.

Emasculated by dams and diversion canals, the lower  
Colorado bubbles.

There were sneakers in the maw of the combine.

Muddy sneakers protrude from the maw of the com-  
bine.

Do you get the drift? Active verbs make our stories more  
vivid — and inject a subtle “fun” to the reading. So, dare to  
get active with your verbs.



Seagulls bask in the sun among fishing boats docked in Newport, Oregon, in late March. The bridge in the background carries north-south traffic on Highway 101. Dean Rea photo

# California Dreaming

By Sheryl L. Nelms  
[snelms@aol.com](mailto:snelms@aol.com)



*Mom sits  
in the front  
seat  
beside  
my brother  
with his white  
Cutlass convertible top  
down  
she  
ties on her  
cheetah spotted  
scarf  
I lounge  
in back  
as we  
circle north  
up the ridge  
above  
LA  
towards  
the vineyards  
of Grapevine Canyon*

At the top of the world

## STORYTIME IN SELDOVIA

By Laurel Hilts / [lhilts@svt.org](mailto:lhilts@svt.org)

Sitting around the dinner table at my parents' house, guests are guaranteed to be regaled with stories of their life in Alaska. Dog mushing north of the Arctic Circle, hunting, fishing, earthquakes, storms and more. Stories of their migration from the north of Alaska, to the interior and then finally to Seldovia.

"We wanted to move out of the interior because it was terribly cold, so Rod applied for a few teaching positions on the Kenai Peninsula. First we went to Homer, where he was interviewed. Then we took the ferry across Kachemak Bay. As we rounded the corner into Seldovia Bay, we knew we were home."

And home they were. Moving to town with their five children, ages 12 to 1 (the youngest being me), they drove around the small waterfront community in their green milk van. Finally a home was found and they settled in.

Forty-three years later (oops, guess the cat's out of the bag about my age), my parents still reside in the lovely community of Seldovia. Come for a visit and my dad will take

you for a ride around the area and give you a narrated tour.

Why don't you follow along on today's tour?

Seldovia comes from a Russian word that means Herring Bay, so named by the sailors who came to the area and saw the water boiling with the tiny fish. It boasts the furthest north ice free port in Alaska, thus this was the largest community in South Central Alaska for many years. Commercial fishing was prolific, and it brought a thriving seafood processing industry.

The town was built nestled between the mountains and the ocean on an extensive boardwalk. The boardwalk weaved



A small, picturesque section of the Old Historic Boardwalk remains today in Seldovia, which has a population of more than 250.

through the heart of the community with folks meeting along the railings to catch up on the events of the day.

Five canneries lined the boardwalk and all the supporting businesses that provided the infrastructure for the thriving community bustled with activity. For today's elders, they'll tell you that at the time they were living the dream.

The tides played an incredibly important role in the life of Seldovians. Being on the great Cook Inlet, the region also boasts one of the top four extreme tides in the world. When the tide went out, the harvest was rich with clams, seaweed, sea urchins and much more.

On March 16, 1964, the unique setting of Seldovia was changed forever. On that date 50 years ago, there was a massive earthquake (the second largest earthquake ever recorded – a 9.2 magnitude). The small community was located at the end of the Kenai Peninsula. The top of the peninsula rose six feet, causing the tip to dip in the opposite direction. Children – now adults – tell of the quake lasting more than five minutes.

The waves of destruction from the earthquake tore through Anchorage, Valdez, Seward and beyond. Streets were ripped in two, with giant crevasses remaining, and a killer tsunami traveled the coast from north to south.

In Seldovia, the waters drained out of the bay (leaving

boats dry), and while people ran to high ground for safety, the waters rushed back in. When the ground stopped shaking, people returned to their homes to survey the damage.



This LaurieDoodle was created by Laurel Hilts in pen and marker and captures the quaintness of life on the boardwalk.

The biggest damage wasn't revealed, though, until a few months later when extreme tides revealed that the boardwalk was no longer high enough. Water rolled into homes every six hours, leaving residents needing to be creative. My friend's grandma said her husband crawled beneath the boardwalk and under the house to hand-drill holes in floor. That way, after the high tide had come and then started to recede, the water would drain back out the floors.

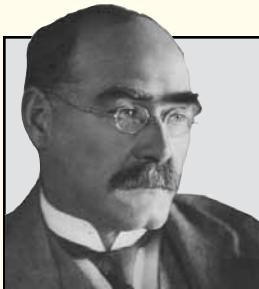
A decision needed to be made. The Civil Corps of Engineers gave residents the choice to rebuild the boardwalk or to blast out the hillside and build on the land. A contentious battle ensued (fishing had begun to decline and the cannery owners wanted to take their money and run). A vote was held, and the decision was made to rebuild on the land.

Cap's Hill was blasted and a new waterfront was created. Streets were mapped out, lots were assigned and building started again.

A short time later our family moved to town.

Well, it looks like I've run out of time for now. Guess I'll need to continue the tour at another time.

We send our greetings from Seldovia and hope that one day you will be sitting across the table from my parents listening to their stories in person.



# Caught Kipling

By Lee Kirk / [theprintsandthepaper@comcast.net](mailto:theprintsandthepaper@comcast.net)

When I need a story, a real story,  
need a best kind of story in the worst kind of way,  
I turn to Kipling. Oh, I know  
bloody zero about Empire and India,  
have no comprehension of Colonial days.  
I'm merely ensorcelled by a magical tale.  
I hang on these words  
as a fly clings to molasses:  
feasting. Enchanted. Lost in the spell.

Who was this man, who as a child  
was abandoned at Southsea,  
a Victorian hell? Burdened with bullies and  
diminishing vision,  
and no way to tell?  
An adult in his photos,  
self-important and mild

as a ripened Rotarian:  
seeming wholly pastel.

Yet, this was the man who described  
Gurkhas and Hussars,  
and battles and bullets and drums;  
Baloo, Rikki-tikki and Mowgli,  
Bagheera and Kaa and young Kim:  
some from experience and some from his fancy  
and some, it is said, described him.  
His light did not sputter in caverns of bitterness,  
for his child's magic heart never dimmed.

(stanza break)

From an alphabet fashioned of carp's tail and egg  
comes a Cat who walks by his lone;  
but not so alone I can't travel beside him,  
denting earth with my paws  
as I lay down my track.  
My upper lip quivers as whiskers send messages;  
weeds slap my shoulders and dew falls on my  
back.  
And Rudyard is with us, maintaining the pace,  
with new incarnations in each age and race.

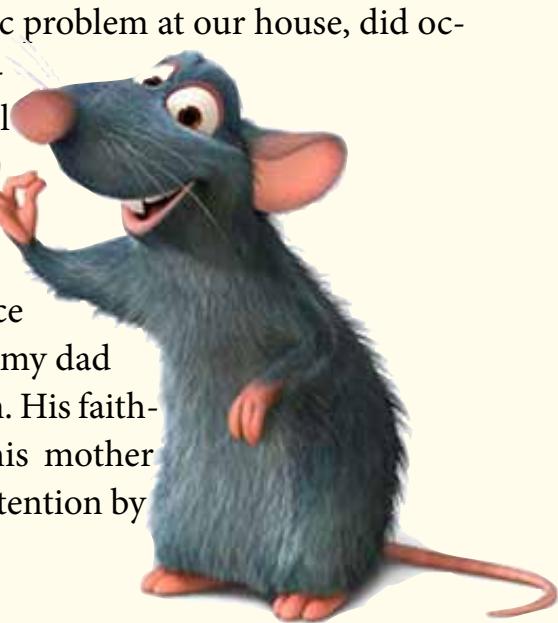
This poem appeared previously in Calapooya Collage 14,  
1990

# Rat Catch

By Louise Fusfeld / [lfusfeld@pacbell.net](mailto:lfusfeld@pacbell.net)

For those of you who don't know, Wrinkie was a dog. Not one of those big, macho leader-of-the-pack types. He was more of a beaglish momma's boy, but he had his share of adventure during the seventeen years he spent on this earth.

Rats, while not a chronic problem at our house, did occasionally invade the attic territories. One fateful day an illegal tenant was spotted, crouching arrogantly on the edge of the roof. Like William Wallace battling the English scum, my dad brandished his shop broom. His faithful troupes, Wrinkie and his mother Terry the Terrier were at attention by



his ankles. Ears pricked, tails twitched and tongues flicked.

The rat made a movemt, and the broom swung with Swiss precision. The sharp-faced squatter arced through the air toward the slathering canine jaws below.

This was Wrinkie's chance to fulfill his ancestral duty. He tracked its path with a samurai's focus and caught it on the fly in his pearly whites. This was no Milk Bone or piece of moldy cheese. The rat was big and wiggly. Its bristly fur tickled his gums, and it smelled like a musty, rat-filled attic. His rodent-killing instincts, diluted with beagle blood and dulled by a life of Kal Kan-induced leisure, didn't kick in. He gave the rat a couple of half-hearted shakes and then spat out the disgusting catch. He stood back as the Reaper's broom descended, sending the rat's soul slithering to the great beyond.

He looked at his mother, and she panted with pride. De-ratting a house was a collaborative effort, and Wrinkie had proven himself a rat catcher extraordinaire.



# Toyota's Masterpiece

By Les Gapay / [lesgapay@gmail.com](mailto:lesgapay@gmail.com)

You have heard the story of the one-horse shay  
that was built in such a wonderful, logical way  
that it fell apart all at once one day.  
A wonderful famous poem, I must say.

My truck was built the Toyota way  
back in 1997 one fine day.  
The '98 Tacoma was built to last.  
Driving it 16 years has been a blast.

In '97 Bill Clinton began a second term  
and Princess Diana was laid in a berm.  
I bought my Toyota New Year's Eve  
and from the beginning had not one peeve.

For more than a decade it ran just fine.  
Changed the oil and it stayed in its prime.

With minor repairs and maintenance  
there was no change in its countenance.

A few years ago, I started having to replace parts.  
And I found myself frequenting the marts.  
A radiator and then a catalytic converter.  
Brake lines and parts for the air conditioner.

A rear end part and a new door lock.  
Then the valves started to knock.  
I kept putting money into the old thing  
because a new truck would cost a pretty farthing.

By 2014 I aged 16 years and was retired,  
but the truck stayed good and never expired.  
In March the Toyota turned 415,000 miles,  
and I and the mechanics were all smiles.

I know it won't fall to pieces all at once one day  
like happened in the poem to the one-hoss shay.  
Because the truck was built in Toyota's heyday  
and not in the horse carriage's logical way.  
Today, my reliable old truck still runs fine  
although it won't turn anymore on a dime.  
It won't last a hundred years like the one-hoss shay.  
But I know it won't disintegrate all at once one fateful  
day.

End of a wonderful story, I must say,  
that my truck won't go the way of the one-hoss shay.  
I got my money's worth that's for sure

from this truck that's gotten, like me, mature.

My body's wearing out more than the Toyota.  
But whether I outlive it, I don't want to bore ya.  
Some day like the shay I will go all at once,  
but in the meantime, like the truck, I do my maintenance.

With apologies to "The Deacon's Masterpiece" by Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. in 1858.

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Deacon%27s\\_Masterpiece](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Deacon%27s_Masterpiece)

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**IN 9,111 DAYS**

By George Chapman / [gachap@gmail.com](mailto:gachap@gmail.com)

In early 1989 when I signed up for a walking program being promoted by then Colorado Governor Roy Romer, I did not realize how far it would carry me. Twenty-five years later I had circumnavigated the earth.

Not really, of course, but on Feb. 25 I completed 24,902 miles of walking for exercise. That figure (actually 24,901.55 miles) is given as the circumference of the earth at the equator. I am proud to say I did not take the shortcut via the poles, which would have cut off almost 50 miles.

Romer's program was designed to get senior citizens moving and included the modest goal of 500 miles. When

I knocked that off after about six months, I decided to continue. The governor sent me a nice certificate, which is buried around here somewhere.

The year-to-year goal has been 1,000 miles. I have not always come in on the money but always make up any deficiency shortly into the new “walking year,” which starts on March 11 and was determined by the fact that for Romer’s program you had to be 55 years old. On those years where I do more than 1,000 miles, it just counts toward the next year. I will not make 25,000 miles by March 11 of 2014, mainly due to the extremely cold weather we have had here in Eastern Iowa and my refusal to take advantage of a couple of indoor walking options. I will easily catch up by mid-March.

The greatest number of these miles were walked in Kentucky where we lived for more than 13 years. There I was fortunate to be employed about two miles from home so that by making a round trip walk everyday, I rested on weekends. Second was Colorado, where at over 9,000 feet in elevation, the value of walking seemed, at least, to be more beneficial. Now after almost four years in Iowa, it becomes the next in line in terms of number of miles. It is very flat here, but I arrange my route to take advantage of what little bumps are available (there is no mountain in Mount Pleasant).

Other states where I have walked include Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, Kansas, Utah, Wyoming and probably a few I am forgetting. In addition some miles have been added in Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica.



April walk in Hillside Cemetery, Silverton, Colorado.

By far, the most scenic walks I have taken were those daily jaunts in Silverton, Colorado. While I varied the route, no matter what direction I was walking, the scenery was spectacular at any time of the day or the year.

Of the non-routine walks (hikes) my favorite was on May 27, 2002, when my wife Karen, our daughter Jill, and I climbed Mount Monadnock (3,166 feet) in Southern New Hampshire. It added four miles or so to the total — pretty insignificant. However, the mountain was a familiar sight over the years when I was growing up in New Hampshire. It was near where my grandparents lived in Rindge, New Hampshire, and I trace several generations of my family in that town. My grandfather told stories of driving a stage to the Halfway House on the mountain in the early 20th century. I had always wanted to climb it but had never previously had the opportunity.

The mountain has been a popular climb for at least two centuries and was a favorite of Thoreau and Emerson, among others. It is by reputation the most climbed mountain in North America with over 120,000 climbers a year. There are more than thirty miles of trails on the mountain. So, the options of reaching the summit are many and varied. We chose the Halfway House White Cross Trail simply because of the connection with my grandfather. Because it

was Memorial Day, there were many climbers.

One climber scaled the mountain 16 times in one day and another every day for 2,850 consecutive days. I am happy to have climbed it once.

Other memorable hikes were taken in Yellowstone, Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon and Glacier National Parks.

Wildlife sightings are another joy for me. In Colorado, where people routinely see bears, I never saw one. Elk, fox, coyote and the ever-present marmot were frequently sighted in town, but only bear scat, never the perpetrator. In Yellowstone, we about tripped over a bison hiding in the woods, but no bears were encountered there either. Here in Iowa, depending on the season, I can see deer, fox, wild turkeys, eagles and on one lucky day about 30 roosting turkey buzzards.

There is one big difference that I have noted over the 25 years. At the outset, four miles an hour was the norm. Today, three is about the limit. When I started this routine, I speculated that for the hour each day I walked, I should be able to add more than an hour to the end of my life. One of my non-walking friends immediately responded “sure, probably more time in a nursing home.”

That prediction has not come true yet and I sincerely hope that it does not.