Other Than Editing

continued

Other Than Editing
describing some of her most memorable experiences with a variety of animals.

Conway put her research skills to the test, selecting brood mares and stallions that would improve the local Tennessee walking horse bloodlines, she said. “I spend a lot of time developing a feel for the right horse”, she explained. Being actively involved in the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association and listening to the admittedly sometimes tall tales of new trainers and old-timers in Tennessee, as well as visiting the main breeding farms in the South, provide the bulk of the information she uses to select well-bred horses. Conway’s commitment to the breed is such that she is the current director for Maryland of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association.

“I have a staff that takes care of the horse farm; otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to travel”, she said. “But when I get to spend time with my horses, I am completely consumed and then recharged for work.”

Conway admits that there are parallels between the two businesses. Both require complex thinking. Each horse is like a journal in that each is an enterprise, she explained. “You have to be clear and calm”, she said, and you can’t allow your personal feelings to complicate either the horse or the client, since both require considerable research and patience. And there are times of crisis in both—when horses are sick, or journals are failing. “I could say that everything I know about business, I’ve learned from my horses, and it would be partially true. But the big difference is the emotional bond between horse and person. It’s strong, and it’s real. Journals don’t quite do that for me”, she said with a wry laugh.

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Letter

International Names

Sun and Zhou¹ present important information to help editors work with transliterated names of Chinese authors. Additionally, they recommend typesetting Chinese authors’ surnames in full capitals to reduce confusion about surnames and given names. They also note that many English-language publications insist on placing surnames after given names, which is contrary to Asian custom.

The suggestion is good and the criticism valid, but I suspect that most journal formats are set in concrete, especially in some of the larger publishing firms. Unfortunately, the issues Sun and Zhou raise are not peculiar to Chinese authors’ names. Many international writers probably have had their names mangled by English-language publications. (I would like to see articles about working with transliterated Arabic or Thai names, for example.)

Authors have every right to feel annoyed when their names appear incorrectly in journals or reference databases. But if an author’s surname is misprinted, scientists can usually find the correct reference by using key words, a range of years, a journal name, or coauthors’ names. The present systems are imperfect and are not the best we could have, but papers are found and research continues.

Although Sun and Zhou make reasonable suggestions, it may be a long time before English-language journals will be ready for the changes they propose. Meanwhile, editors can simply make a point of querying surnames, spelling, and use of hyphens. Asian and other international authors, for their part, can help editors and indexers by selecting English transliterations that appeal to them and using them consistently.

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