

Ruh's Muse of the Month
As told to Chris Mandeville

Ruh (pronounced "Roo") is a service dog and PPW/C mascot. He likes stories of all kinds, especially those involving squirrels. His favorite things are writers, children, his cat Loki, and Wisconsin cheddar.

JANUARY 2008 – Susan Goldstein (Mitchell)

Cold, blustery January. You might be thinking "brrr." You might want to cuddle up in front of the fire with a good book and a cuppa hot cocoa. But not me. No, I like to romp in the snow, play with the icy disk-toy that materialized in my water dish, and bark at the silly squirrels who'd rather taunt me from the fence than hole up for the winter. Where *you* might look outside and see a chilly white blanket that makes your socks wet, your floors muddy and prevents you from driving to the bookstore, *I* see an enormous, white snow-cone. I see a pristine white canvas that I can't wait to make my marks on. *I* see the positive. The bright side. The puppy in the dog-days of winter. You might think I'm much too young to have such a mature perspective, but I'll tell you, my positive outlook is entirely the result of a good role model: Susan Goldstein. Yes, you've guessed it--Sue is my muse for January.

Sue is one of those humans who, if she had feathers, they'd be tough to ruffle. If she wears knickers, I'm sure they are rarely in a twist. When she takes a drink of water, her glass (or Nalgene bottle) is *never* half empty. But she's not a Pollyanna, no Sir. She just has a knack for seeing through all the clutter, figuring out the heart of the problem, and formulating a positive plan of action faster than snow melts on my tongue. I tell ya, she knows how to take care of business. Everyone likes it when Sue runs a meeting because she's punctual, gets the job done correctly and quickly, and never, *never* goes over the time allotted. Sometimes when I'm hanging back on the leash, meandering along, I think about Sue. I think "I wanna be a go-getter like Sue," and I kick a little pep in my step. (Not so much as you'd probably notice, but when you're a big galoot like I am, it takes more than a little *oomph* to actually look peppy.)

Did you know that Sue isn't just a warm, friendly writer type? She is that, of course, but she's also a *television producer and director*. Isn't that cool? On top of that she writes tv and radio commercials, plus incredible short stories and literary fiction. For PPW she uses her media savvy and her masterful way with words to write our press releases, marketing plan, promotional materials, and sponsorship packages. She advises our Board about marketing and publicity, plus she handles armloads of releases and notifications that spread the word about Pikes Peak Writers to folks all around the globe. I'm not exaggerating.

So this winter when it's cold and dreary out and all you want to do is mope, or watch a movie, or take a nap, I hope you'll think of Sue and be inspired to hold your tail (or your head, for those of you without a tail) up a little higher. Toss out that cup of ultra-soothing-herbal-sleepy tea and have a super-grandiose-triple-caffeinated mug of java and get that tail in gear. Write something. Build a snowman. Paint a picture. Bake a cake

(or some dog biscuits--yum). Look at that water dish as "half-full" or even as a magical frozen play-toy. Keep your meetings short and be positive. That's what it's all about. Thanks, Sue, for keeping my happy glass running over. I hope others gain inspiration from your awesome *paws-i-tivity*, too.