

DARE Newsletter

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Dictionary of American Regional English

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The News from *DARE*

George Goebel
Chief Editor

Despite our small staff and uncertain future—on which more below—we are proceeding steadily in our mission to update *DARE* with new and revised entries. Since the last *Newsletter* we have posted two more Quarterly Updates on the *DARE* website, the [fifth](#) in the series in early August and the [sixth](#) just this week (7 November). Some particularly interesting new entries are [bird's nest on the ground](#), [bird-thrashing](#), [blare-eye](#), [boo-hag](#), and [bullnozer](#). (The entry **boo-hag** shows that we mean what we say about making entries as up-to-date as possible; the latest quotation is from the 29 October *New York Times*!) There are a lot of interesting revised entries, but I'd like to highlight five: [black viper](#), [booby owl](#), [boot n² 1a](#), [bunk v²](#), and [bunking party](#). In all of these the original entry was based on only one or two quotations, mostly dating from the 1960s; the revised versions show how much the resources we now have available can add to understanding their history, origin, meaning, and regional distribution.

Two important milestones are coming up soon. First of all, the “bleeping” of the original *DARE* audio recordings—deleting personal data so that the recordings can be made publicly available—is now essentially finished, thanks in large part to Julie Schnebly's management and some extremely dedicated student interns. There is still some final cleaning up to be done, and some work on the index material to finish, but by the end of the year we will be handing everything over to the UW Digital Collections Center, where

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Angela Tung

DARE and Mental Floss

Julie Schnebly

In May 2016, New York-based writer Angela Tung began working with *DARE* to write popular interest articles for [mentalfloss.com](#). Mental Floss is an internationally known media website “that gives smart, curious knowledge junkies their fix with upbeat, witty explorations of everything from science to pop culture to tech to history.” The site has over twenty million unique visitors per month, is a three-time Webby Award winner, and has twice been a National Magazine Awards finalist.

To date, Angela has written nine articles using *DARE* words on such topics as ice cream idioms,

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the recordings—and the detailed index—will be both openly available and, especially now that UW Digital Collections is a member of the Digital Public Library of America, easily found. (Looking forward, we are exploring the idea of crowdsourcing the full transcriptions of the recordings, which would be another major step in making them even more useful for research of all kinds. A considerable number of transcriptions have already been made by students in the phonetics classes of UW–Madison English Professor Thomas Purnell, and he would like to partner with us not only in making these available, but also in encouraging other teachers to use the recordings in the same way and add the transcriptions to the collection.)

The second big milestone is that Harvard University Press is preparing to release the first update to the digital version of the whole *Dictionary* at daredictionary.com. We don't know exactly when this will go live, but we have already supplied the updated text and bibliography. This new version incorporates all the new material from the Quarterly Updates seamlessly into the full text, and includes many other less far-reaching, but still important, corrections, improvements, and updates elsewhere in the text. So far, the online version of *DARE* has been no more than a static, if somewhat improved, transcription of the printed volumes into the digital medium; this update will show that the Press is serious about making it what an online reference work should be—a continuously improved and updated resource.

But that can only happen if we can continue to find funding to keep the *DARE* project alive, and the prospects for this are uncertain. In July I submitted another proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities asking for funding for two years (May 2017–April 2019). If we get this—and we won't know until March—we will still need considerable additional funding to meet the matching requirements of the grant, but I am

confident that between the funds we already have and the generosity of our donors, we will be in good shape through the grant period. If we do not receive the grant, the funds we have now will not keep us going past the middle of next summer, and the prospects of the project's continuing even in a reduced form seem doubtful.

Your support is essential to keeping the *DARE* project going, and we hope you will help by making a tax-deductible year-end gift to *DARE* by visiting dare.wisc.edu/contact/donate or by using the coupon below. ♦

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Discount on Digital DARE

Wondering what to get the logophiles on your holiday gift list? Wishing you had full access to the soon-to-be-updated digital version of *DARE*, or planning to renew your current subscription? Once again, Harvard University Press will be offering a substantial holiday discount on individual subscriptions. It will be available by the end of November on the Press's website (<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/about/dare-digital-special-offer>). ♦

“You have labeled your product a dictionary but it is much more. It is a snapshot of American culture. One can't read the various meanings conveyed by the words without projecting an image of the speaker and the surrounding environment in which the words are spoken.”

James A. Leach
 Former Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities

dragonfly nicknames, and lumberjack lingo. One article ("[13 Regional Insults to Offend People Across the U.S.](#)") even trended on the "POPULAR ON mental_floss" section of the website. (We will reserve judgment on whether this is a good or a bad thing!)

The partnership with Angela has most certainly been a good thing. She has a knack for coming up with interesting ideas, finding hidden gems within the pages of *DARE*, and making the information contained within a *DARE* entry enticing to a mainstream readership. Before publication, Angela sends her articles to *DARE* for staff to review, fact-check, proofread, and offer suggestions. For example, when Angela sent us "[18 Spooky Halloween Sayings From Around the U.S.](#)," we were able to tell her about the new entry [false face](#) and the significantly revised entry [beggars' night](#) we had recently published in our Quarterly Updates. In turn, she was able to include these, along with links back to our website. Another benefit to the partnership is that we have been able to provide information or words from our database that haven't yet been published; this adds unique content that only *DARE* can provide. All this has resulted in a lot of publicity and web traffic in a very short period of time and has increased *DARE*'s exposure tremendously.

Angela's articles about *DARE* words can be found on our website (http://www.dare.wisc.edu/dare_in_the_media). Her work has also appeared in *The Week*, *The Huffington Post*, *Quartz*, *The Frisky*, and elsewhere. In addition, she blogs about words and language for *Wordnik*, including a post using *DARE* idioms titled "[Coffee Talk: Regional Idioms to Describe Coffee.](#)"

DARE is very appreciative of Angela's hard work, and we look forward to seeing which *DARE* words she will floss our minds with next! ♦

Want to Go Paperless?

If you would prefer to receive the *DARE Newsletter* in electronic form rather than by "snail mail," you can sign up easily; just send an e-mail to egardner@wisc.edu with "Paperless" in the subject line. If you want to get both forms, say so in the body of the e-mail; otherwise, we'll assume that you don't want to continue receiving the paper version. ♦

Members of the *DARE* staff and Board of Visitors deeply regret the loss of Board member Donald Oresman. With his trademark cowboy hat, crooked grin, and incisive mind, he added both collegiality and keen observations to our discussions. A newspaperman before becoming a lawyer, Donald gravitated toward word-related ventures all his life. In addition to serving on the *DARE* Board, he was also on the boards of the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Morgan Library, the Library of America, the Grolier Club, and the Yale Edition of the Boswell Papers, among many other organizations. In recent years, he found pleasure in collecting twentieth-century images (prints, oils, watercolors, sculptures, and photographs) of people reading. The *DARE* community sends condolences to Don's wife, Patricia, and their family. His obituary may be seen at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/nytimes/obituary.aspx?pid=180264811>. ♦



Donald Oresman at the Fall 2008 Board of Visitors meeting in Washington, DC



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