



THE WRITE DOG

DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

Founded 1935

December 2005



Bella, Phyllis DeGioia's Katrina foster, went to her *perfect* forever home over Thanksgiving weekend. Here's wishing a better, happier new year to all of the Katrina-displaced pets, former owners who never reunited with their pets, rescue people who worked themselves into exhaustion, and foster homes, all of whom lost a piece of their hearts in Katrina's wild winds.

President's Column

By Ranny Green

It's not too early to begin planning for our February bash in New York. For those of us who've been there before, you know the need to lock up airfares and hotel rooms before you have to pay dearly later.

And early preparations should include immediately mailing in the dinner reservation coupon in this newsletter. Thanks to the sponsorships of many organizations, we were able to keep the price to \$50 per person, a major accomplishment considering how hotel-room prices in the city have soared the past year.

While New York prices give new meaning to inflation for most of us, be prepared to have fun, make new friends and hopefully get a writing assignment or two out of the trip.

We've added a couple of new wrinkles to the banquet:

(1) The DWAA Hall of Fame which will induct William Stifel, Walter Fletcher and Maxwell Riddle, the latter being the namesake of the Maxwell medallions that will be handed out to the winners of our annual writing contest.

(2) We're still fine-tuning the particulars for an art auction which will feature the donated works of three talented professionals. A photo of each piece with a short feature of each artist will be included in the January issue of "The Write Dog," as will features about the three Hall of Fame inductees.

Preliminary indications are that the Westminster show will be a sellout both days, for the second consecutive year. In other words, it's one of the hottest tickets in town. By now, you should have submitted your name for press credentials to David Frei, Westminster Kennel Club media-relations director.

Our club will get a major boost the first evening of group judging when Stifel and members of Fletcher and Riddle families will be re-presented their Hall of Fame plaques on the floor at Madison Square Garden by Mordecai Siegal and myself.

CWA Conference Report from Darlene Arden

Writing Seminars

This year's writing seminars, which we co-sponsor with the Cat Writers Association, saw at least 35 DWAA members in attendance. There was also a DWAA mini-meeting Thursday evening run by Mordecai Siegal.

The seminars are a wonderful benefit of DWAA membership. Last month, they included everything from Shelters to Veterinary Issues, to Screenwriting, Networking for the Shy to Terrified, Writing for the Mainstream Media, Moving from Fiction to Non-fiction, Editors and Agents Panel. There were loads of opportunities for networking. Many came

away with new assignments (yes, for dog magazines, books, etc.). Everyone came away with lots of new friends, as well as great contacts.

And, yes, we also came home with amazing goodies. DWAA member Dr. Jill Richardson, who works for Hartz Mountain, brought a mountain of toys and other products including dog vitamins. SF/SPCA, which offered free tours to members who signed up, also sent everyone home from the writing seminars with a copy of the Maxwell winner, "Cinderella Dogs."

And that's only the tip of the iceberg. There was a table full of writers' guidelines and I brought along DWAA membership applications so we may be seeing some additions to our membership roster soon. Our own Maryjean Ballner took over door-prize duties when another individual became ill and was forced to cancel at the last minute. Maryjean did an amazing job and everyone went home with lots of great stuff for their four-legged companions and for themselves.

Also, DWAA members Christie Keith and Gina Spadafori did a terrific job with a seminar focusing on how to get maximum production out of your Web site. Plus, DWAA member Cheryl S. Smith gave a well-attended seminar on Screenwriting, for which she is amply qualified. She has written for such hit network television series as "M*A*S*H" and "Kate & Allie."

Those who are serious about writing are doing themselves a disservice if they don't take advantage of these annual seminars. The price is amazing and even cheaper for DWAA members. The networking is remarkably productive, and the chance to spend the weekend with colleagues is invaluable. It will be back in California again next year.

DWAA Book Signing Event

The DWAA book signing event will be held at the former Southgate (now called the Affinia Manhattan) at 371 7th Ave. on Sat. Feb. 11, 2006, from 1 to 6 PM. We still have space for two more authors. If anyone wants to sign up, they should email Amy Fernandez at Flappy666@aol.com or call her at (718) 544-6092.

Amy will also need everyone's book titles.

Each author will be responsible for his/her own sales. Call the hotel if you want to arrange to ship your books ahead. Don't ship them to Amy. Authors are welcome to bring business cards, bookmarks, promotional items related to their book sales. We will be conducting an hourly raffle and each author will be asked to donate one copy of each title they plan to sell at the book signing.

Authors should confirm with Amy that they are still planning to attend. Space is limited, so please let Amy know if your plans have changed. Please send your list of titles to Amy by December 20. DWAA is trying to do better job on publicity this year, which is more easily accomplished if we have everyone's information.

DWAA 2006 Banquet at Westminster

Sunday, February 12, 2006

Affinia Manhattan Hotel (formerly Southgate Tower)

371 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001

Cocktails and Hors d' oeuvres

Hosted by the American Kennel Club from 5 PM to 6 PM

6 PM to 7:30 PM Awards Ceremony

7:30 PM Buffet Banquet

Red and white wine at each table

Antipasto with Fresh Mozzarella and Grilled Vegetables

Beef Carpaccio with Arugula and Peccorino Romano Cheese

Sun dried Tomato Ricotta Gnocchi with Grilled Shrimp

Eggplant and Portobello Mushrooms in a Pomodoro Basil Sauce

Veal Milanese with Radicchio

Endive and Fennel

Chicken Contadina with Peppers, Onions, and Mushrooms

Roasted Potatoes and Sausage

Tiramisu

Starbucks Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, Tea, and Assorted Snapple Beverages

Reservations: \$50 per person

Checks made to: DWAA (American dollars)

Send to:

Pat Santi, Secretary

173 Union Road

Coatesville, PA 1932-1326

Phone 610-384-2436

Fax: 610-384-2471

E-mail: rhydowen@aol.com

We do not like to sell tickets at the door.

Reservation for DWAA Banquet on February 12, 2006

Affinia Manhattan, New York, NY

Send to: Pat Santi, Secretary
173 Union Road
Coatesville, PA 1932-1326

Name(s) of attendees: _____

Address _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

Amount enclosed at \$50.00 per person

\$ _____

Do you have food allergies or need a special diet? If so, please contact Pat with the details.

**(this page intentionally left blank so you can mail the Reservation form to Pat Santi
without losing a precious word of your newsletter)**

The 2005 DWAA Writing Competition

Nominees will be notified by mail in late December. Names of nominees will be published in *The Write Dog* and on the DWAA Web site in January (names were not available as this December issue went to press). Winners will be announced at the Awards Banquet on February 12th, 2006, at the DWAA banquet held in conjunction with Westminster. Congratulations go to everyone who submitted an entry. Good luck!

Time to Order the 2007 Sunnybank Calendar



by Marilyn R. Horowitz

That's right, it's not a typo- the **2007** Sunnybank Calendar is in production and I'm taking advance orders now to enable me to meet production costs (once costs are met, payments will be processed). Those of you who purchased my DWAA award-nominated 2005 Sunnybank Calendar know what a wonderful - and usable - collectible this will be, filled with information about and pictures of Anice and Albert Payson Terhune, the Sunnybank Collies, and lots of pictures never seen before. A portion of the profits from the sale of this calendar will aid in the continuing efforts to restore Sunnybank. Checks and money orders should be made payable to me, Marilyn R. Horowitz, and sent to 70-F Charlesbank Way, Waltham, MA 02453-2514. The price is \$20.00, which includes postage. Questions? Write to me at marilynrh@aol.com or my home address. This calendar will be limited to 500 copies - order yours now before they sell out. You won't be disappointed.

Martha Stewart Selects Dr. Shawn Messonnier as Pet Care Expert

Martha Stewart Omnimedia selected veterinarian Dr. Shawn Messonnier, a DWAA member, as the pet-care expert for her new radio network. *"The Natural Vet"* show premiered on November 15, 2005. Dr. Messonnier writes a weekly pet-care column for the Dallas Morning News and a regular column for Body and Soul Magazine. "I am honored to be selected to share my experiences with alternative medicine on this new format," said Dr. Messonnier. "I look forward to helping my national audience improve their pets' health, prevent disease, and learn to say "NO" to drugs for their pets whenever possible." *The Natural Vet* airs live each Tuesday at 7 PM CST on Martha Stewart Radio Sirius Channel 112.

Bash Dibra Highlighted

Bash Dibra, pet behaviorist, is one of the people highlighted in E.D. Hills' *"Going Places: How America's Best and Brightest Got Started Down The Road of Life."*

Mordecai Wins Big at CWA

Mordecai Siegal is the recipient of the Cat Writers' Association (CWA) Muse Medallion™ Award for his book, "The Cat Fanciers' Association Complete Cat Book" published by HarperCollins. The book is the official publication of the CFA, the world's largest registry of pedigreed cats and was written by the associates of the CFA with the guidance and editorial skill of Siegal. Congratulations to Mordecai and all other CWA winners!

Best Friends Petitions to Save Pets Displaced by Katrina

Three months after Hurricane Katrina, thousands of homeless pets still cling to life on the streets, waiting to be rescued, according to an assessment revealed by Best Friends Animal Society in Kanab, Utah. The organization, which runs the nation's largest companion animal sanctuary, is launching a petition drive on behalf of these pets and their displaced families.

"Compassionate citizens have already given their money to this cause. Now we're asking them to give their voices, too, by signing a petition to ensure that these dogs and cats in the Gulf Coast region are not abandoned and that donated money be spent for what it was intended," said Paul Berry, Best Friends' director of operations.

Most national organizations suspended rescue operations over a month ago. But three months after the hurricane, independent rescuers report that thousands of displaced pets, belonging to people who have lost their homes, are still clinging to life, and that their situation is critical.

Many of these pets are in destroyed and abandoned areas where food sources such as garbage cans are not available, and many of the structures these pets are using for shelter

will soon be bulldozed. "We've been working on the frontlines of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts since late August, and have not given up," said Berry. "Our emergency rescue shelter outside of New Orleans still has up to 600 animals on any given day and brings in up to 40 animals a day from volunteer rescuers who continue to work in the field." Berry said the Best Friends assessment, which was conducted last week, has confirmed some urgent and disturbing facts about the ongoing need for rescue efforts.

The report -- <http://www.bestfriends.org> -- cites interviews with local animal-control officials, veterinarians, rescue agencies, and volunteers across the region. "People all over the country donated tens of millions of dollars to rescue these animals," said Berry. "All it takes now is a commitment from the animal-welfare organizations to finish the job they undertook." That commitment includes:

- Providing volunteers to continue rescuing displaced pets still alive on the streets, encouraging volunteers to continue rescuing pets still alive on the streets, and providing staging areas to get them to safety
- Conducting a national adoption drive for all pets not reclaimed by their families

"Working together, we can do better than simply allowing these pets who have clung to life for so long to become the next generation of strays who will reproduce and ultimately be euthanized," said Berry. Best Friends is asking everyone who donated money to the rescue effort to sign a petition urging national animal welfare organizations to continue the rescue work as long as these traumatized family pets are still alive.

"We are inspired by Mayor Nagin's plan to rebuild a better New Orleans," said Berry, who is a native New Orleanian. "If funds remain after the rescue efforts are complete, they should be used to build a better New Orleans for companion animals. Once the remaining pets are safe, we can join together to invest in programs that will radically improve the quality of life for animals in the Gulf Coast region."

These programs would include:

- Low-cost, high-volume spay/neuter facilities
- Neighborhood no-kill sheltering and adoption capabilities
- Affordable health care for pets of low-income families
- Model legislation to end dog fighting and related animal abuse

"This was an unprecedented tragedy for people and their pets," said Berry. "But for local humane groups, once the rescue efforts are complete it can now be a unique opportunity to create a new reality for companion animals. "So many people have given their time, effort, and money to the cause. Now they all need to add their voice to how the remaining money should be spent. That's why we're launching a petition drive to support this vision for the animals."

For a copy of the report and to join the petition drive, go to <http://www.bestfriends.org>.

Book Reviews

By your Newsletter Goddess, Phyllis DeGioia

Cancer and Your Pet: The Complete Guide to the Latest Research, Treatments, and Options, by Debra Eldredge, DVM and Margaret H. Bonham, Capital Books, \$18.95, paperback

Disclaimer from your Newsletter Goddess: my beloved dog Fred is profiled in this book as a case history. His photos are adorable; I had one taken by a professional for use in this book. So, yeah, I'm a bit biased. Just so you know.

Highlighted with case histories, the book offers easy-to-understand information on cancers that our dogs and cats typically get. The foreword is by Amy Shojai. The information covers caring for your pet, diagnosis, treatment, new techniques, holistic medicine, decision making (a critical component), and euthanasia. The glossary is quite helpful. What I found most useful was the section on caring for your pet; what symptoms should be reported to the oncologist, getting your pet to eat, checking for dehydration, giving meds, and the eminently practical suggestion of getting a pet with no appetite to eat anything, even if it's kibble with Hagen Daz ice cream. While the other chapters are really informative, I feel the most important information is in this chapter. The authors provide a list of Internet sites with cancer information, sites offering different types of memorials, and more. The veterinary information is given in terms that anyone can understand; the accessibility of this book is particularly useful because dog owners who hear a cancer diagnosis need to be able to quickly grasp the basics. This book would make a thoughtful gift for anyone whose pet has just been diagnosed with cancer; it's a useful tool for those who must make some decisions.

Complete Idiot's Guide to Dog Tricks, by Liz Palika, \$14.95, Alpha

Dog tricks can range from show-stopper stunts such as a freestyle dancer routine, but they can also serve a useful purpose: you can teach your dog to get the cordless or cell phone for you while you laze away on the couch. That "trick" is something service dogs learn, but you don't have to need a service dog to benefit from it. It's also fun to have your dog "deliver" something from you to a person in a different part of the house. Tricks aren't just shaking paws and giving high fives, although certainly a dog needs to learn some basic tricks first. Palika, who has been a professional dog trainer for 25 years, points out that the primary point of teaching your dogs tricks is to increase the bond between the two of you. Clearly written and easily understood, Palika outdoes herself – again – with this fun book. Palika wisely mentions that each dog trainer should set realistic goals; size and breed heritage need to be taken into account. Foreword by Deb Eldredge, DVM.

PuppyPerfect: The User-Friendly Guide to Puppy Parenting, by Sarah Hodgson, \$16.99, Howell

Dog trainer Hodgson also wrote *Puppies for Dummies*®, and has lots of experience in training puppies and their people. Puppies are so darn cute that most people forget in-between puppies how much time they can take, how frustrating they can be when they chew your shoes and door moulding, and pee and poop everywhere, and how hard it can be to communicate with your wee one. Dogs aren't born knowing English, so Hodgson points out that it's up to the new puppy owner to learn "Doglish." She defines Doglish as eye contact, body language and tone of voice. Her take is that you can prevent bad behavior habits by focusing on building a mutually respectful bond during the early formative stage. Hodgson offers a personality quiz for puppies and how to interpret the results (this is a useful tool that makes the book worthwhile just by itself). Hodgson also has a great sense of humor and style, making this read not only useful but also enjoyable. I love her descriptions of breed groups: "Motion Detectors – Sigh Hounds," with such wonderful points as "There may not be any boar in your back yard, but a grey squirrel will satisfy their urge." "You Talking to *Me*? Fighting Breeds" – "Passive they're not!" Hodgson has a terrific take on the art and skills needed to raise a puppy.

Sherry Carpenter Wins Media Award

Sherry Carpenter, of Bloomsburg, PA, was awarded the Dr. A. Wayne Mountain Memorial Media Award for her weekly column in The Daily Item. The award is named for a former Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association president and American Veterinary Medical Association delegate. The award is presented annually for excellence in communicating veterinary medical contributions to animal and public health. Sherry has also won writing awards from DWAA. Congratulations, Sherry!

**Do give books - religious or otherwise - for
Christmas. They're never fattening, seldom sinful,
and permanently personal.**

– Lenore Hershey

**Wishing you and your two-footed and four-footed family a happy, safe
holiday filled with treats, visits, and unlimited joy**

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