



THE WRITE DOG

DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

Founded 1935

November 2006



Terry Albert, DWAA Writing Competition Chair, calls the room where she stores contest entries “The mess” because it filled an entire bedroom. Terry’s cats loved playing in all the boxes. Terry hopes none of the judges are allergic to cat hair (but if they are...oh well!)

Good luck to everyone who entered the contest!

President's Column

By Ranny Green

By the time you receive this newsletter, your immediate thoughts will be on turkey, holiday shopping, Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year's. The busiest, most stressful and yet fun times of the year, all wrapped into one giant package.

But that means the clock is ticking on the annual Dog Writers Association of America awards banquet and dinner in New York City Sunday, Feb. 11 and the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show the following two nights. Nonstop action for most of us.

I want to fill you in on a couple new scenarios and warn you about a couple more. In the past few years several of our members have participated in a book signing at the Southgate Hotel, now Affinia Manhattan on the Saturday before the show.

That meant a sacrifice to these authors – i.e. arrive a day earlier than some might have planned, hence pay an extra night's lodging; give up a good portion of Saturday (the only day for some to play tourist in the Big Apple) to man their tables and hopefully autograph books for buyers. Not only that, but they must lug the books to New York and take the unsold ones back home. As we all know, books aren't light.

Next February's signing is still uncertain at this point because a posting on the DWAA Pro List site attracted very few authors. We would need seven to eight firm commitments to give the event credibility, and at this writing in late October we do not have that many. So stay tuned for an update, which will first be noted on the Pro List site.

Sunday is a full day for most of us. Your board of directors will meet at 10 a.m. in the Affinia Manhattan and the general membership meeting is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. We need a big turnout for the membership gathering, not only to collect your input on DWAA policy but your ideas for new events or projects in the next year. The meeting is a great site for new members to be introduced and make new friends. That is difficult to do at Sunday night's banquet, since friends often choose to sit together at the same table.

The past several years the American Kennel Club has hosted a media cocktail reception at the hotel beginning at 5 p.m. Because of skyrocketing costs, AKC will be holding the event at its New York headquarters, 260 Madison Ave., fourth floor, from 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. for all DWAA members. You must RSVP by Jan. 26 to Lara Minch-Klass, 212-696-8228, or lmk@akc.org.

For those who might find it difficult to attend the AKC function, the Affinia Manhattan will be offering a no-host bar 5-6 p.m. near the entry to the banquet hall.

Now this brings me to the aforementioned warnings: If you plan to attend, make your reservations NOW for hotel rooms and airlines. Rooms for hotels within walking distance of Madison Square Garden fill up quickly. In fact, many people make their next year's reservation when checking out the previous year. But obviously, it's difficult for most of us to know whether we will be attending the following year.

Your second warning: If you plan to attend the AKC cocktail event, you will need to be back to the Affinia Manhattan to check in for dinner and a name tag by at least 5:45. And if you are nominated for an award, you must realize that the banquet ceremonies will begin at 6 p.m. sharp whether you are there or not. That's because it's a long evening with the presentation of more than five dozen awards, and the hotel staff is assigned to begin putting all entrees out at a specific time. So please leave ample time for catching a cab and getting back to hotel from AKC headquarters.

And here's the third and final warning: In early January or before, finalists in each category and special-awards winners will be notified. If you are one of them and plan to attend the banquet and cover the Westminster show the next two days, make your banquet reservations by then or before. Chances are likely it will be a sellout again. The room holds a maximum of 250 guests; the last two years have been sold out and several unhappy people would not have been able to gain admittance last year, had it not been for the record 26-inch snowstorm Sunday that kept many from reaching New York.

Should you purchase banquet reservations and be confronted with an emergency of some sort in January, notify Secretary Pat Santi and your money will be refunded. She must give the hotel a firm number for meals by Jan. 30 for which DWAA is charged; hence thereafter no refunds can be given. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!

Meet the Authors at AKC/Eukanuba Show

The AKC "Meet the Authors" event will take place during the Sixth Annual AKC/Eukanuba National Championship on December 2 through 3 in Long Beach, CA. Tens of thousands of spectators attended the last such event in Tampa in January. At this event, books will be available for purchase and that all-important author signature. More information on the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship can be found at <http://www.akc.org/invitational/2006/dec/index.cfm>.

Holiday Warnings for Your Dog

Even though we all know this, it bears repeating at the onset of every holiday season. Any food your pet doesn't get regularly can cause some serious GI upset, and with elderly Aunt Sally's ore-existing distaste of dogs you want to avoid "dire rears." Although diarrhea is annoying, it's not life-threatening as is pancreatitis is, so avoid giving your pets table scraps and excess treats. On Thanksgiving, particularly avoid poultry skin; cooked poultry bones can splinter, possibly causing deadly peritonitis, or create foreign bodies that need to be removed surgically on an emergency basis, giving you a holiday gift that you have to pay off. If you put up a Christmas tree, remember that tinsel is just a tad too appealing, particularly to cats and puppies, and can twist up the intestines (see that emergency surgery you have to pay off). Ditto for ribbons. The much-maligned poinsettia is actually not harmful to your pets, but mistletoe and amaryllis bulbs really are toxic. With poinsettias, the real concern is that it can be irritating to the mouth and skin; toxicity isn't the problem.

A little forethought can prevent a lot of holiday angst!

AKC's Cocktail Reception!!!!

By Lisa Peterson, AKC

The American Kennel Club cordially invites you to a Dog Writers & Metro Media Cocktail Reception on

Sunday, February 11, 2007
4:30 pm to 5:30 pm

at: The American Kennel Club
260 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY

Enjoy tasty treats and cool cocktails while comparing notes with fellow dog writers, local media personalities, and the AKC Communications Team. The AKC Library, the country's largest canine research collection, will be open for viewing.

Please RSVP by January 26 to Lara Minch-Klass at 212-696-8228 or lmk@akc.org. We look forward to seeing you in New York!

(Editor's note: this reception is the Sunday prior to the Westminster Kennel Show)

DWAA-Pro List

Join the DWAA-Pro Internet list! The volume isn't high, the information is applicable and the networking is of great use. To join our e-list for writing questions, advice and conversation, send a blank e-mail to DWAA-Pro-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Advertising Opportunities in DWAA Banquet Program

This year, DWAA will for the first time accept advertising for the banquet program, which is distributed at our DWAA Awards Banquet the night before the Westminster Kennel Club Show in New York City. Over 250 programs are printed. The funds raised will offset the costs of printing the program. Prices are very inexpensive and start at \$25.00 for a quarter page. Please consider purchasing an ad or passing this information to a friend or supplier who might be. This is a chance to get their business in front of writers, editors and publishers from all over the United States and Canada.

The advertising contract is listed on the next page.



DWAA Banquet Program February 11, 2007

Ad Space Reservation & Contract

**Contract and ad must be received no later than
January 1, 2007**

_____ **FULL PAGE \$60.00**
6.5" x 9" (image size, no bleed)
_____ DWAA builds your ad (optional) 25.00

_____ **HALF PAGE \$45.00**
6.5" x 4.25"
_____ DWAA builds your ad (optional) \$15.00

_____ **QUARTER PAGE \$25.00**
3.25" x 4.5"
_____ DWAA builds your ad (optional) \$10.00

_____ **TOTAL**

Ad material submission requirements:

E-mail your ad in **.pdf, .tif, or .jpeg** format to **terryalbert@cox.net**, or mail your ad on a CD in one of these formats. Sorry, no Quark files. I prefer 150 dpi resolution.

We can scan photos or logos and build your ad for you. Please include art, photos and copy with your ad order form. Please note additional charges above.

Questions? Contact Terry at **terryalbert@cox.net** or 858-748-9863, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Pacific time zone).

Your name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Total Enclosed: _____
(Make checks payable to DWAA)

Signature _____

Mail to:

Terry Albert
DWAA Writing Competition Chair
14021 Earie Lane
Poway, CA 92064

Membership Roster

New Members:

Bonita M. Bergin
Freelance/P
5401 Alta Monte Drive
Santa Rosa, CA, 95404
707-396-7672
fax: 707-545-0800
bonnie@assistancedog.org
Sponsors: Mordecai Siegal/ Pat Santi

805-258-1193
Furkids@wavecable.com
Sponsors: Darlene Arden &
Cheryl Smith

Changes:

Trisha Adelena Howell
1724 3rd Street
Marysville, WA, 98270-5006

Lee Harrington
Freelance/P
27 Summers Lane
Woodstock, NY, 12498
845-679-5906
leeharrington@hotmail.com
Sponsors: Mordecai Siegal/ Pat Santi

Betty McKinney
P.O. Box 120
Crawford, CO, 81415

Harold Sundstrom
1 Wadsworth Court
Greer, SC, 29651-2109

Jean D. Starr
Freelance/P
2442 Idaho Street
Chesterton, IN, 46304
219-926-3603
jeanstarr@comcast.net
Sponsors: Pat Santi/ Mordecai Siegal

Josephine Campbell
84 Peralta Avenue
San Francisco, CA, 94110

Gary DeGeronimo, Sr.
9125 E. Smoki Trail
Dewey, AZ, 86327-6927

Sarah Bressler West
Freelance/P
5310 Larkspur Drive
Ventura, CA, 93001

Barb McNinch
1130 Stonegate Rd.
Algonquin, IL, 60102

Flaim Wins Writing Award

“Blog scores big!”

In September, Newsday’s Denise Flaim was a winner of the 68th annual Front Page Awards sponsored by the Newswomen's Club of New York. Our own Flaim won for her “Animal House” blog, which appears on newsday.com/animalhouse. Congratulations, Denise!

NYC Pet Guide

Just in time for Westminster, an entrepreneurial woman has created The City Pet Guide for New York. Do you know whom to call in to order a pet cell phone? How about where to go to book a "doggie and me" vacation? Hail a pet taxi? Schedule a pup aqua therapy

session? Where to locate a party caterer for your cat? According to publisher Maria Coder, you would if you had *The City Pet Guide*. *The City Pet Guide - New York City* edition - launches its first annual printed and online local directory for pet lovers and their parents. Now Fido can find his custom-made Murphy bed; Goldie can have her premium, submersible, aquarium castle; and Camilla can rest her head in a luxurious, linen-lined, cat condo.

The directory, much like the yellow pages of a phone book, will circulate among 50,000 pet lovers. Its release is just in time for the holiday season and for the famed Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden this February. Directories will be made available at pet stores, veterinarians, pet boutiques, and other pet-friendly establishments all year; with a revised and expanded version produced annually. Articles of interest to pet-lovers will be sprinkled throughout the issue. This December pet lovers can learn how to make their pooch into a star from a celebrity pet trainer, how to prepare their pet for a snowstorm, updated air travel regulations, and how to get their pet iguana on a postal stamp, among others things.

For more information on City Pet Guide, visit www.CityPetGuide.com or call (212) 807-5515.

The Writing of Paws & Reflect

By Sharon Sakson

Neil Placky and I have been reading and editing each other's work for 20 years. He uses one of my short stories to teach his Creative Writing class at Broward Community College. I've encouraged him through the writing and publication of his "Mahu" series of gay detective novels.

He invited me to give a lecture to his class, which went very well, so we relaxed with margaritas at a restaurant on the Intercoastal Waterway. It was one of those warm, winter Florida afternoons when good ideas float like gardenia petals on the wind.

"We should do a project together," Neil said. "What could we do?"

"You're a gay mystery writer and I'm a dog expert," I mused.

At the same moment, we both said, "Gay men and dogs." It immediately seemed to us a great idea and a natural combination of our talents. We hashed out a proposal for a book that would contain stories about men and their dogs that Neil would solicit from his contacts among gay writers; and interviews with gay dog owners that I knew from my many years as a breeder, exhibitor, judge, and dog writer.

Alyson Books publisher Dale Cunningham signed the book after we convinced her that a combination of writers' stories plus journalist interviews would meld seamlessly together into one book. The only thing we couldn't agree on was what to call this two-headed monster; to me, it was a non-fiction book, to Neil, an anthology. Dale had a third idea; it was a 'collection.' Her idea is the one that went into the publishing catalogues; Neil and I are still arguing about it.

Amazingly, Neil's invitations to 15 writers were all answered. Lev Raphael wrote about the Lhasa Apso who grew up with him in Philadelphia, teaching him to deal with grief and loss. Hal Campbell wrote about the Beagles who have given him stoic inspiration to battle his AIDS infection, showing him bravery unto death. Michael Wallerstein wrote about the piebald Dachshund who seemed so stubborn – until he discovered she was deaf. Jeffrey Ricker wrote about how his love for his dog proved to be the connection he needed to find a human life partner.

In the meantime, my interviews weren't going very well. What does a writer in this age do when searching for interview subjects? Turn to the Internet, of course. The two breed lists in which I participate cover Whippets and Brussels Griffons, but my quest for gay men with dogs ended up on every breed list imaginable. Immediately, responses poured in, from Boxer and Rottweiler and Beagle owners who would love to be interviewed.

Sifting through the possibilities took months. Along the way, my editor at Alyson, Richard Fumosa, kept coming up with ideas. From his contacts, we brought in Charles Busch, playwright of "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife;" Jonathan Caouette, acclaimed documentary filmmaker of "Tarnation;" and Ron Nyswaner, screenwriter of the Oscar-nominated film "Philadelphia" that starred Tom Hanks. An Alyson editorial assistant, Anthony LoSasso, introduced me to David Mizejewski, host of "Backyard Habitat" on Animal Planet. I got back in touch with Edward Albee, who I'd interviewed 20 years ago for *Sighthound Review* about his Irish Wolfhounds. He was curmudgeonly but cooperative.

From the fifteen stories Neil had collected, we argued back and forth among ourselves. One writer had written about himself, "gay, gay, gay, gay," which Neil felt was over the top, but I loved. Another writer's style veered into sexual allusions, which Neil loved and I wanted changed. With compromise, argument, and gnashing of teeth, we worked on the book till we had a manuscript good enough to submit.

We were contracted for 80,000 words. Throughout the months, Neil kept an ongoing word count, and the fear we both had was, "Will we have enough?" So naturally, when we went to turn it in, it ran to over 100,000 words. What to cut? That job fell to our editor. Our 30-story book is now a 25-story book. And here's the good news: I love every one of them. Each story enlightens another corner of the canine-human bond. Each story highlights a different facet of how a dog's unconditional love enriches a human's spirit.

Neil and I both worked on the introduction. The first sentence is mine: "Thousands of years ago, small wolves pulled up beside the campfires of a newly-emerged species, man, and forged a friendship." But the last sentence is Neil's, and I give him "Best Sentence in the Book Award:" *Paws & Reflect* is a celebration of all the dogs we have loved in the past, the dogs we love now, and the dogs of our future, who even now are just waiting for the right moment for us to invite them to join in our lives."

Westminster Dinner Banquet Information

For those who cannot make it to the cocktail party at the AKC, there will be a cash bar at the Affinia Hotel by the Grand Ballroom.

Dinner Buffet

Price \$65.00

Date: February 11, 2007

Place: Affinia Manhattan Hotel

Awards Presentation begins at 6:00 PM sharp

371 Seventh Avenue

New York, NY 10001

The banquet will follow the Awards Presentation.

Menu

Antipasto

Fresh Mozzarella, Grilled Vegetables

Sun dried tomato Gnocchi

Grilled Shrimp, Portobello Mushrooms

Pomodoro Basil Sauce

Veal Milanese

Radicchio, Endive, Fennel

Chicken Contadina

Mushrooms, Peppers, Onions

Roasted Potato, Sausage

Tiramisu

Assorted Sodas

Freshly Brewed Starbucks coffee

Decaffeinated Coffee, Tazo Teas

Please make checks payable in US funds to: DWAA

% Pat Santi

173 Union Road

Coatesville, PA 19320-1326

610-384-2436

Fax reservations held pending payment: 610-384-2471

e-mail: your reservations will be held pending payment: rhydowen@aol.com

If you have food allergies or special diets please advise me on your reservation so I can try to accommodate you with the hotel staff.

We regret that we cannot give refunds up to two weeks prior to the date of the banquet. When we reserve the number of meals, then we must pay for that number of reservations.

Reservation for DWAA Banquet on February 11, 2007

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 for your convenience in mailing your dinner reservation. Just rip it out, fill it out, and mail it to Pat Santi with your check before your puppy chews it all up in a Westminster-fueled dream of greatness.)

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DWAA Web Site: www.DWAA.org

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