



THE WRITE DOG

DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

Founded 1935

October 2005



Oslo is a Norwegian Elkhound who was a puppy mill rescue now registered as Swaggerin' Independence. Lexiann Grant says Oslo, her soul mate, has hip dysplasia and is hypothyroid but doesn't know anything is wrong with him. Lexi says Oslo is just as set on getting his way as she is, so they are emotional Siamese twins. Thankfully he believes as much as she does in order in the pack. "He is one very special dog," says Lexi.

President's Column

If ever a case could be built for establishing the worth of our Yahoo Pro List, it's been Hurricane Katrina. And did it ever prove invaluable. Thanks to our dedicated and creative members who continued to post and research the validity of new Web sites to which donations could be directed, the Pro List was an unsung DWAA hero. It helped keep us all connected and very updated into the needs of organizations heading for the Big Easy and its nearby surroundings.

Thanks to Cheryl Smith, Darlene Arden, Chris Walkowicz and Deb Eldredge – the List Dams – for all of their hard work, continued oversight, maintenance of standards and establishment of new rules when needed.

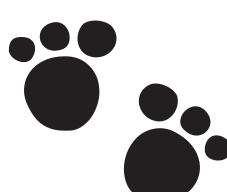
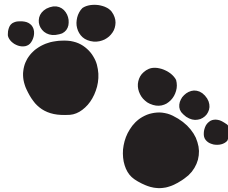
Your brainchild kept everyone in the loop and as a result undoubtedly encouraged many writers to get involved, get the word out to their readers and consequently be key links in fund-raising by creating a public awareness of where to send funds to deserving organizations.

Several days after Katrina unleashed her powerful forces of devastation on the Gulf Coast, the DWAA board of directors voted to send \$1,000 to the AKC CAR Canine Support & Relief Fund, where 100 percent of the donated dollars goes to the dogs. "No donated funds pay for any administrative costs," according to the AKC Web site. The Web site reports the permanent charitable fund is designed to provide resources, support, funds and other assistance to:

Search and rescue animals and handlers participating in rescue and recovery efforts in connection with natural or civil disasters.
The veterinary units providing support to the canine rescue teams.
Not-for-profit animal shelters and similar not-for-profit organizations providing care for domestic animals orphaned or displaced as a result of natural or civil disasters.

Oversight Last Month

While detailing the specifics of the DWAA Hall of Fame in this column last month, I failed to credit this as the brainchild of our esteemed president emeritus Mordecai Siegal. My deep apologies, Uncle Morty, for this oversight. I hope you see it here first: I want you to be the presenter of the plaques to William Stifel, and the relatives of Walter Fletcher and Maxwell Riddle, the first three recipients of what hopefully will be recognized as the most prestigious awards in dog writing.



New Nominating Committee Approved

The Board Approved the Nominating Committee of David Frei, Mordecai Siegal and Pat Santi by the end of July 2005. They have met by e-mail and have nominated Liz Palika and Dr. Carmen Battaglia to continue to serve on the Board as they only had a one year term due to the President and Vice President change the early part of this year.

According to our By Laws, Article V, Section 5:

Nominating Committee: The board shall elect a Nominating Committee consisting of (3) three members to prepare and submit a slate of Governors for the ensuing year. *(This year we only need to elect 2 board members)*

(a) The nominating Committee shall be named before August 1.

(b) The Report of the Nominating Committee shall be received by the Secretary in time to be published in the October Newsletter.

(c) Any Member in good standing may petition to run for a specific office if he sends to the Secretary, before November 1, a petition signed by ten (10) members in good standing. *(This year we only are electing 2 Board Members and to be in good standing your dues must be paid)*

(d) On or about December 1, the Secretary will mail a ballot to each member in good standing. If feasible, the Newsletter can be used to contain the ballot. *(This only happens if we have someone other than the nominees running for the Board positions)*

(e) All Ballots received by the Secretary before December 31 will be delivered unopened to the Annual Meeting where three (3) tellers appointed by the President will count them

(f) Those nominees, receiving the highest number of votes will be declared elected.

(g) If the election is uncontested, no ballots need be mailed.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Santi, Secretary

Reflections on Hurricane Katrina and the Aftermath

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So much has been said about the horrors visited upon the Gulf Coast cities and towns it seems almost useless to add to it. Of course, it is always useful to express your feelings. When I was a very young man in the U.S. Air Force in the early 50s, I was stationed for almost a year at Keesler Air Force Base just outside of Biloxi and as a result became familiar with the area including Biloxi, Gulfport, Pascagoula and, of course, New Orleans. In those years, the blight of segregation was still an ugliness that took the edge off the beauty and excitement of the region, especially New Orleans, where we went to hear the best Dixieland Jazz and cut loose from the tedium of the military life. It came as a shock to a young man of nineteen to see signs that said so blatantly "White Only" and "Colored Only." Watching the news of the shelters in New Orleans looked like a throw-back to that shameful time. When I looked at the devastation on the news, it was with grief and profound sadness I recalled the city's past glory, having to do with the birthplace of the country's original art form, jazz music. It is only fitting and proper for those wise southern heads to name their airport after Louis Armstrong.

Then, there were the wrenching stories of people, ordinary people, forced to leave their beloved dogs and cats behind or be denied rescue, which torments me to this day. As I understand it, no one was permitted to bring an animal into the major rescue centers and, of course, the same was true for those being rescued by helicopter. If you ever saw the film "Sophie's Choice," you know the most painful moment is when a mother must choose which of her children will live. This is what came to mind when I learned about the Gulf Coast victims who were faced with such a horrible choice concerning their pets.

I grieve for the people and the pets that have either perished or been left behind. What was allowed to happen hardly seemed like America. Not since the attack on Pearl Harbor have I felt so vulnerable and insecure. In truth, we are all just a hurricane away from chaos and disaster.

Remember that as you try to decide what to do and how to feel about this ongoing nightmare. Never forget that life is a dangerous thing and requires courage and generosity of spirit in order to go on each day, to prevail and enjoy all that is attainable. We all recently witnessed on the news a reasonable man reunited with his gray cat. He searched, and searched, and searched around many communities in several states. Some good people from Friends of Animals got the two of them back together. I cannot think of the moment without my throat drying up and my eyes blurring up again with their own little hurricane. It was so hopeful and reassuring that enough of us understand what those little creatures mean to us. God bless us, everyone.

The Snowball Effect:

Ask the Red Cross to Update Shelter and Evacuation Transportation

By your Newsletter Goddess, Phyllis DeGioia

I have written an open letter asking the American Red Cross to consider altering its policy regarding pets in shelters and evacuation transportation, and I am asking you to join this grass roots campaign. Look up your local chapter at the link below, and either copy and paste this letter into an e-mail or send a hard copy of this letter to the director of a local chapter and/or to Marsha J. Evans, President and CEO, American Red Cross National Headquarters, 2025 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006. The Red Cross says decisions about pets in shelters are left to the individual chapters. Sign your letter. If you prefer, just tell your chapter to "please find a way to allow pets to be sheltered and transported during natural disasters so that people will not have to choose between their own safety and that of their pets." If you wish, add "I will no longer donate to the Red Cross unless this policy is changed."

<http://www.redcross.org/where/chapts.asp>

Subject: The Snowball Effect

Dear President Evans:

I'm hoping that the American Red Cross will consider updating the policy regarding animals in shelters and evacuation transportation. Many Americans watching the televised coverage of Hurricane Katrina were upset to see that young boy on a shelter-bound bus separated from his dog, Snowball. Knowing that scenario was multiplied thousands of times over makes me wonder what we can do to improve it.

More and more Americans are willing to risk their lives to assure the safety of their pets. As pets are not usually welcome at shelters, many people choose to remain with their pets. Unfortunately, their refusal to leave without pets snowballs into more problems, increasing the workload of the S&R and healthcare personnel and causing preventable deaths.

Given the attachment Americans have for their pets, I hope you will reconsider your policy about animals and allow pets on evacuee transportation and in some shelters. Perhaps people and pets could be rescued together, and then the animals taken to the local animal rescue effort or shelter. Red Cross and FEMA personnel could be trained to deal with sheltering animals as part of their regular training.

I understand that the original policy is based on factors such as allergies, potential bites, and fear of animals. People who don't want to be near animals shouldn't have to be, but people whose pets mean everything to them should not have their pets taken away. I am not suggesting animals be in all shelters, but if some shelters allowed pets, or a portion of each shelter, it would speed up the rescue process by eliminating the lengthy discussions rescuers have with people who refuse to be rescued without their pets. If separated, they may not be reunited. For people who have lost absolutely everything, their pet may be the only comfort they have left.

In Milwaukee, bus loads of people displaced from Katrina were allowed to bring their pets and were housed together at the State Fair grounds. In Florida the shelters that accept pets filled up first. A volunteer for Emergency Response in Britain says one of their first plans of action is to make sure that pets are kept with their owners.

I am so grateful that you offer this type of assistance, but please understand that I would no sooner leave my pets behind than I would a child. Surely we can work to find a way to accommodate the needs of all evacuees.

Sincerely,
Phyllis DeGioia

Roster Changes

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Book Reviews

By your Newsletter Goddess

“Without a Word,” Carol Lea Benjamin, William Morrow, \$23.95

Another terrific mystery from Benjamin in her Rachel Alexander and Dash series, this novel keeps you guessing with a tightly woven plot and rich characters. Rachel is a private investigator who used to be a dog trainer. Benjamin, a former detective, showcases the darker side of some residents and parts of New York City that tourists don't go to. Rachel's compassion towards a little girl who hasn't spoken since the disappearance of her mother goes a long way towards figuring out whether or not the girl murdered the doctor whose treatment with Botox for her tics causes an unpleasant change in her face. The girl's father, a man who tries to parent on his own but who neglects his traumatized daughter, forgetting to shop for clothes for her or get her a haircut, hires Rachel to find the girl's missing mother so that the girl will speak and be able to clear herself of the murder charge. Dash is an exceptionally well trained pit bull who is a joy to have around, and helps alleviate prejudice against the breed. What is particularly wonderful about “Without a Word” is that there is no easy, pat ending; it's a slice of real life dished up with spice.

“Complete Idiot's Guide to Dog Tricks,” Liz Palika, Alpha Books, \$14.95

What a fun book! Full of common sense, she breaks all the steps down so that even novice trainers can teach their dog some tricks. Palika starts with basic obedience commands, which are the building blocks necessary to teach a dog some fun tricks; after all, you can't go immediately from “sit” to “weaving through your legs” (although “bobbing for biscuits” might come naturally to some dogs). Learn which tricks to start with in order to learn an eventual goal; to have your dog weave between your legs, start with going through weave poles and then weaving through hoops before moving on to weaving between your legs. Some of these learned behaviors are not tricks so much as useful, such as learning to ring bells instead of barking to come back in; some are excellent bad weather exercises to keep everyone stimulated, such as “naming your things,” learning to search, and then combining naming and searching so that you can ask the dog to go get a specific toy. The photographs in this easy-to-follow book are terrific.

Cocker Spaniel Leader Ceased Publication

The publisher of the monthly breed magazine *Cocker Spaniel Leader*, Shirley Estel, ceased publication with the September issue. It will not be sold, just ended. The mid-August death of Gene Estel, owner and publisher, makes it difficult for his wife, Shirley to continue, she said. And because it was a creative project from both of them, she felt she could not sell it. Godspeed to Gene, and thanks to Shirley for all her work on the publication.

CWA/DWAA Book Signing

The CWA Book Signing/ Autograph Party will be held at the CWA booth at the CFA International Cat Show at the San Mateo Expo Center. The book-selling booth will be open all three days of the CWA Annual Conference, and CWA and DWAA authors can sign any time. As in previous years, we're going to publicize a big author signing party on Saturday afternoon, November 19, from 1 to 5 p.m. It looks like there will be 90-minute shifts to allow everyone elbow room during this signing party, but that does mean we have room for more authors. We will also be publicizing Friday and Sunday signings, and encourage drop bys too.

These signing opportunities are *only* for attending CWA and DWAA-member authors. If you haven't already signed up, please contact Clea Simon, the CWA 2005 Autograph Party Chairperson, to let her know if you have signed up for the conference and would like to sign. She can no longer guarantee that she'll honor people's time requests, but if you want in on the big Saturday afternoon signing, you will be included. Clea is at cleas@earthlink.net and 64 Highland Ave. Apt.#2, Cambridge, MA 02139 (make sure you put "CWA Autograph Party on it).

CWA will also offer conference-registered authors additional hours at the book signing booth at San Mateo Expo Center, any of the three days Friday November 18 through Sunday, November 20. Times must be scheduled in advance, but the booth will be staffed by the book store all three days. E-mail Clea at if you haven't already) about the schedule.

But first: If you are an attending author, make sure your book will be at the booth. E-mail your book titles, your byline, ISBN's and publishers to Clea as soon as possible (see address in above). In early September Clea will be sending a partial list to the bookstore partner, San Mateo's *M is for Mystery* to allow time for the inevitable mishaps. However, Clea can take your information up until Oct.14, 2005, which should be in plenty of time for our bookstore partner to order titles.

Remember: It is your responsibility as the author to provide ordering information on time. Late requests may not be able to be filled in time, meaning those authors won't have any books for sale. If you have audio and video books, self-published books and remaindered books, these will also be ordered but the details must be worked out in advance. So don't delay -- register today so that your book(s) will be received in time and you get the signing times you prefer.

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Class of 2006 – Carmen Battaglia and Liz Palika

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