



THE WRITE DOG

DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

Founded 1935

September 2005



DWAA welcomes the return of Carol Lea Benjamin, a mystery writer. She is seen here with her blog assistants, Dexter and Flash (see her article on blogging in this issue).

**Writing Contest Entries Due
at the End of September!**

President's Column

Ranny Green

The dog days of summer have been far from it.

Seeking out means of putting the Dog Writers Association of America on positive fast track, a committee of five – Mordecai Siegal, Liz Palika, Pat Santi, David Frei and myself – constructed the framework for a Dog Writers Hall of Fame last month.

This award, to be presented annually at our awards banquet in New York City in February, has the potential to become the most coveted within our midst. It won't happen overnight, however. The reputation and class of winners will gradually dictate its standing.

Establishing criteria wasn't easy. There were differences among us on several items. Convincing arguments were built by committee members for variances on several of the guidelines below before the committee voted to submit the package to the Board of Governors.

Here is a look at the guidelines that were approved by the board, but not unanimously:

No more than two nominees shall be honored each year after 2005-06. .

While it would be preferred, DWAA membership shall not be a mandate for being inducted.

Each nomination and eventual induction shall be based on the individual's contribution to the welfare of the dog through his/her writing, broadcasting, photography or art plus his/her encouragement, assistance and mentoring to others within the dog-writing profession.

A five-member Hall of Fame selection committee will be named by the president each year to accept nominations from the general membership and committee members. That committee will trim the field to two.

The DWAA Hall of Fame committee will make its recommendations of nominees to the board of directors, which will then be asked to vote. A two-thirds plurality will be needed by each nominee to be inducted.

The award presentation will be made annually at the Dog Writers Association of America annual banquet in New York City in February.

The recipient or recipients will be presented with an engraved plaque. The recipient and his/her significant other will receive free banquet tickets.

One Hall of Fame committee member will be designated each year as a media liaison. That individual will be responsible for interviewing the inductee or inductees and writing a press release for the media, which will be made available following the awards banquet and in the Press Room at Madison Square Garden during the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

A permanent spot will be established on the DWAA Web site for the Hall of Fame, listing a profile and photo of each new inductee.

Because of the potential for outside influence or the image thereof, only the Dog Writers Association of America shall sponsor this award.

Historically, DWAA members have a tendency to be apathetic toward involvement in association activities. For instance, you could count the number of members on one hand – outside the board of directors and officers – who attended the annual meeting last February in New York City.

Sure, there is plenty to see and do in the Big Apple and time is limited. But this is your club and asking you to attend one meeting a year shouldn't be considered demanding.

I want to challenge you to get involved. There is not a better way of getting to know other members, build friendships or help establish priorities for DWAA than your willingness to serve. If you're willing to serve on a 2006 committee, please e-mail me – rannygreen@hotmail.com - and let me know of your interest.

Taking that a step further, I'd like to know:

- Is DWAA serving your needs? If not, what can it do to accomplish that?
- Are you utilizing the DWAA Pro List on Yahoo?
- Will you be attending the writing seminars co-sponsored by DWAA and the Cat Writers Association in the Bay Area in November?
- Would you like to be mentored – i.e. have another well-regarded member help you improve your writing skills?

Some of you joined simply because of the media awards contest. But DWAA goes far beyond those boundaries. Writing assignments, editing tips and professional contacts are just a few of the perks this 70-year-old-plus organization has to offer you. And it needn't be limited to three or four days a year in New York City.



The Care and Feeding of the DWAA-Pro List

By Cheryl S. Smith, One of the List Dams

You might be wondering, if you think about it at all, why a relatively quiet little list with a restricted membership requires four people – the List Dams – to run it. Simple. As busy professionals, we all travel – Chris Walkowicz to judging assignments all over the world, Deb Eldredge to a myriad of dog events with her talented kids, and Darlene Arden and myself to dog seminars and writers conferences. We wanted to be sure someone was always at home to tend the list. Also, it happens that two of us live on the East Coast, one in the Midwest, and one on the West Coast, so we enjoy some regional diversity.

The list was launched in January 2004, with the DWAA board's approval, as an additional service to members. Writers, even dog writers, lead a somewhat solitary existence, and we felt the list offered a convenient way to share tips, markets, requests for sources or interviews. We chose Yahoo because it offers the ability for the photographers among us to post sample photos, and for members to put up sample contracts and other written mater in an archive.

List members receive a posting when they join and each month thereafter with the “rules of the road,” detailing what is and isn't appropriate for the list. Because we're all busy, and suspect all of you are as well, we try to avoid jokes, streams of congratulations, and topics not applicable to writing about dogs.

As first-time list owners, we were naïve enough to think that was sufficient. In a learn-as-you-go experience, we discovered we had to do a little more. Some individuals tried to disrupt the list for a time, and no one enjoyed the temporary rancor, but we ultimately got things ironed out and quieted down. Mostly, we enjoy (and hope you do as well) the informative postings on where you can find a new scientific study on some aspect of dogs or the opportunity to share expertise in requested interviews. Occasionally there's even a post about some new dog publication. And it's fun to delve into the Yahoo files and check out the photographs posted by members or read *The Write Dog* days before it arrives in the mail.

We're still conquering a few growing pains. Recently, we learned that we need to counsel people not to post messages supporting one side or another of some political issue. Providing a Web site on the subject is fine – members can choose to go and take a look or not. But pasting the actual content into the list offends some people and wastes the time of others. With about 120 list members, obviously we aren't all going to have the same interests and viewpoints.

With a membership composed of editors, writers, photographers, publicists, and others connected with dogs, we intentionally try to keep list traffic low and pertinent. We hope you enjoy this new member benefit, and are certainly open to suggestions for improvement.

You *Can* Teach an Old Dog New Tricks

By Carol Lea Benjamin, who has been writing about dogs for a long time. She hopes colleagues will join her on Tuesday, September 13th, 2005, at 7 p.m., at Partners & Crime, 44 Greenwich Avenue, at Charles Street in New York City for a reading of "Without a Word," her latest Rachel Alexander mystery.

Believe it or not, this old dog has started a blog. When it was first suggested, by my son-in-law and trusty web master, I said, *No, absolutely not. Me blog? Never.* He tried treats to convince me – cooking me dinner from his favorite Emeril cookbook. That didn't work. He tried a voice correction. I stood firm. He stopped short of putting a prong collar around my neck. After all, my grandchildren were watching.

And then a funny happened. It was months later and I was walking one of my border collies around Greenwich Village, where I live, and not coincidentally where my mystery series takes place, and while my dog read the notes posted on signs and trees and stoops by other dogs, I began to look at the neighborhood I love in a new way. I noticed the warm and welcoming flower boxes along Jane Street, the bright blue door on Horatio. I passed the houses I used in "*Fall Guy*," the place where the victim lived and died, a secret garden out back, not visible from the street. I walked along the river with my dog, as Rachel, the detective in my stories, does with her dog and gazed at the Statue of Liberty, and then downtown, where the Twin Towers used to be but are no more. I had my camera with me and began to shoot and when I got home, I called my son-in-law. *Can I do a photo blog?* I asked. *Pictures and writing?*

And so I began a blog. Or is it *to blog*? And like everything else, it has begun to grow and change and take on a life of its own. I thought I'd write about the Village. I thought I'd talk about some of the places that appear in the mystery series I write. And I figured I'd write about dogs, too, because when do I ever not do that? And then, the first week, a stranger wrote and asked where to eat in the Village. So I blogged about my favorite restaurant. And then the South Koreans cloned a dog. Of course, I'd cloned one first – true, mine's fictional, but still. So of course I blogged about that. (The book is called *The Wrong Dog* and happily, it just came out in paperback.) And so it goes.

It's great fun taking pictures for the blog. It's great fun writing it, too. And people tell me it's fun to read. I hope you'll take a look (www.CarolLeaBenjamin.com Click on Carol's blog) because when January rolls around, I'll be thinking *Westminster* and I'll be writing about places to see and go and shop and eat for those of you coming to New York.

And I hope you'll look for another reason. Perhaps *your* son-in-law has suggested that *you* start a blog. Perhaps you answered, *Me blog? Never!* Perhaps, in that case, you'll be inspired. Blogs are a great showcase for your writing – bloggers, I have read, have been offered book contracts. Blogs are a great way of keeping in touch – a neighbor of mine who is in Copenhagen now reads my blog every morning to stay connected to home. Blogs can bring attention to your work in print, too. If someone likes the writing in your blog, they may thirst, we hope, for more. And as you write, your blog will take on a flavor of its own, one readers will want a taste of every morning, to keep in touch with you.

2005 DWAA Writing Competition

In the July issue, Terry Albert outlined this year's writing competition, the rules, the timing, the categories and the special awards. Remember, the work must have been published between September 1, 2004 and August 31, 2005. **Entries must be postmarked by September 30 – that's the end of this month.**

Either refer to the July issue for specific details, or go to www.dwaa.org for details. If you have questions, e-mail the contest chair Terry Albert at terryalbert@cox.net.

You can't win if you don't submit!



Book Signing at Eukanuba in January

In conjunction with the American Kennel Club/Eukanuba National Championship Jan. 14-15, the AKC and Iams are considering a "Meet Authors" booth for dog writers at the Tampa Convention Center.

AKC will promote the booth in conjunction with the show by including a mention of it in appropriate press and marketing materials, as well as publish a schedule of author appearances and signings in the show catalog. Last year, more than 15,000 people per day passed through the convention center.

If you are interested in participating in this book selling and signing opportunity, please immediately contact Lisa Peterson at the AKC, 212-696-8360 or lxp@akc.org.

If there is an overwhelming response and we have more authors than we have time or space for, AKC reserves the right to choose which authors and books will be featured. Be advised that authors will be responsible for shipping books to the convention center, selling their books and collecting money at the booth.

The upside of that is you get to keep 100 percent of the profit.



Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press and that can not be limited without being lost.

- Thomas Jefferson

2005 CWA Conference Co-Sponsored by DWAA Come and Leave Your Heart in San Francisco

The Cat Writers Association Inc.'s 12th Annual Conference will be held in Foster City, California (just south of San Francisco) Friday November 18 to Sunday November 20. Please see last month's issue for details, or go to www.catwriters.org. Highlights will include writing seminars, editor/agent appointments; an autograph party for attending authors, the Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show, and a field trip to the world famous San Francisco SPCA. Of course, there will be sequins and splash at the banquet, which is always a highlight of the occasion.

Don't forget the **DWAA meeting** Thursday, November 17, at 7 p.m.



AKC and Bonhams Auction House to Hold Charity Brunch

On Sunday, February 12, 2006 Bonhams and the AKC will host *Barkfest at Bonhams*, a charity brunch and private pre-auction viewing of Bonhams' prestigious collection of dog art. All proceeds of Barkfest will be donated to AKC's charitable public art program DOGNY – America's Tribute to Search and Rescue Dogs. Dog lovers, art aficionados and their canine companions will have the exclusive opportunity to view artwork featuring dogs and other sporting themes at Bonham's newest gallery in New York City. Admission to the brunch is a \$50 donation to DOGNY. For reservations, contact Maggie Brown in Bonhams Painting Department at 212-644-9001.



Haggertys Offer Seminar

Dog Trainers' Connection is offering a seminar called *How to Improve Your Dog Business in Three Short Days* from Captain Haggerty and Babette Haggerty-Brennan. Dates are September 23 – 25, 2005 at the Center for Animal Behavior & Canine Training, Elmsford, New York 10523. They are presenting four workshops:

Building Your Dog Business & Making it More Profitable
Trick Training and How to Get Your Dog into Show Business
Breeds and Breed Temperament
Aggression and How to Safely Handle Aggressive Dogs

To register and for detailed information see: www.dogtrainersconnection.com; Call (212) 787-8522 or e-mail info@dogtrainersconnection.com.

DWAA Juniors Educational Award

DWAA will be offering a Junior Educational Award annually. This is separate from the Junior Award given as part of the Writing Contest. Amounts of \$500 to \$1000 will be awarded directly to recipients. Applicants will be from 18 to 22 years of age at the time of application. Applicants may apply more than once during that time frame and may be given awards more than once. One to three applicants will be chosen yearly by a committee of 3 to 5 DWAA members.

Criteria: Grades: Applicants must submit a copy of their most recent high school or college transcript (applicants may submit their own copies and do not have to pay for an official transcript). Applicants are expected to have a B average or better.

Dog Experience: Applicants are expected to have and document their experience with dogs. This will include a listing of experience and two letters of recommendation from nonfamily members. Writing: Applicants will submit three samples of dog related writing. These samples must be published but not necessarily paid for.

Weighting Of Criteria: 25% Grades, 25% Dog Experience, 50% Writing.

DWAA JUNIOR EDUCATION AWARD APPLICATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

Please attach a copy of your most recent school transcript (unofficial copies are sufficient) with three samples of your dog related writing. Also list your dog experience and include two letters of recommendation from nonfamily members.

Applications are due by October 1 and applicants will be informed of their status by December 15. Send all of the above to:

Deb M. Eldredge, DVM
4753 Deans Hwy
Vernon, NY 13476/

Tips for Freelancers - Addendum

By Phyllis DeGioia

Your Newsletter Goddess has one more thought to add to August's Tips for Freelancers. The incident that prompted this addendum occurred too late to add to the article. If you are joking around and write a note in jest to yourself or some colleague, and this note is meant to release stress internally, be absolutely positive that your client will never set eyes on it. My wonderful supervisor, Patricia, is a workaholic; in order to get the elementary school textbooks out on time, she worked straight through weekends and every weeknight until the late hours. (I personally think your productivity level decreases when you don't take breaks, but that's me.) Anyway, Patricia requested that the composition folks make changes to shorten the contents of a page so it would all fit.

The page came back from comp with a small sticky note attached to it that said, in all caps, "What crack are they smokin' that they think this will all fit?" Thankfully, Patricia has an excellent sense of humor. She e-mailed the comp house and said that we'd received a note that was obviously not intended to be shared with the client, and didn't mention what it was. The client phoned anxiously and said they had a freelancer with a rather caustic sense of humor and apologized profusely.

We took the tiny post it note and enlarged it on the copier and taped it to her office door. We kept joking for the rest of the project that it didn't matter what Patricia said because she was just smokin' crack when she said it.

Online Scammers

One of Charlene LaBelle's friends was selling a puppy and a scammer contacted her. The one puppy turned into five puppies and the price got too good to be true for each pup. The check arrived. The account was real. but the check was a fake. Because Charlene's friend alerted the account owner, four fake checks were stopped, and the bank is going after the scammer. The scammer was a yacht seller with large amounts of money in the account. The breeder has kept a running total of all the fake checks and the amount it has cost to have them sent to her.

After that incident, LaBelle was selling software online. "I had a software package for sale. Two scammers replied. I sold it to a real party for cash, but I kept one of the scammers going. The check (that looked 100% real) did arrive. I called and verified the check was a fake. The software package I sold for \$200 was worth approx \$250. I received a check for \$3750 and I was to keep \$350. They wanted me to send the balance to their 'shipper' so the shipper could pick up the software package. The interesting thing was it was a single CD (disk) that I could have mailed in a standard envelope. These scams started with cars and were so profitable that anything is target. Even small items like the single disk I had, which would not need a shipper." LaBelle notes that online scamming is a serious issue and warns folks who are selling dog-related or other items online to be aware of the issue.

LaBelle called her local police to ask when she could drop off the fake check. They sent an officer over to collect the fake check and copies of the email. They wish more people would, so if this happens to you, contact the police.

Roster Changes

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813-654-3412
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nriggsbee@aol.com
Sponsors: Chris Walkowicz/ Caroline Coile

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Sponsors: Maryann Mott/ Chris Walkowicz

Changes

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Book Reviews

By your Newsletter Goddess

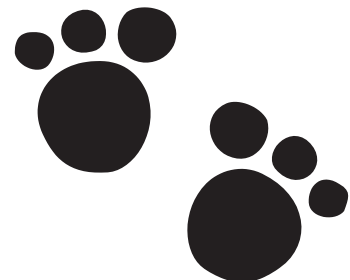
“Scratch the Surface,” by Susan Conant, Penguin Group, \$22.95

Absolutely wonderful! This new protagonist, Felicity Pride, is a significant departure from Holly Winter. Felicity is not nearly as likeable as she does not view pets with the fervor of religious passion like Holly does – like we do. But she is capable of learning, and does so, and will undoubtedly continue to do so in the series. I thought the whole premise was just hilarious: a woman who writes mysteries about cats, but doesn't own any cats because she doesn't really like them but can't let her adoring public know that. For years she mourns the loss of “Morris,” a cat she pretended to have but who never existed. Then a real cat is dumped in her vestibule along with a body. Felicity is always comparing this real life mystery to how the protagonist of her series would handle it.

Felicity's thoughts on the world of publishing (most of which applies to fiction or nonfiction) is quite valuable to DWAA members interested in publishing books. Don't miss this new direction for Conant. Kudos to Conant for trying a new series, a new character, and having a nice stretch out of the comfort zone.

“Petiquette: Solving Behavior Problems in Your Multi-Pet Household,” by Amy Shojai, M. Evans and Company, \$15.95

A thorough guide to understanding the behavior of the dogs and cats who share your home, “Petiquette” looks at some typical concerns and possible causes and solutions. Specific moments in your pets' lives, such as introduction to one another, disagreements over food and litter-box fanciers who raid the box for tasty snacks, can be difficult. Sometimes these concerns are so difficult they lead to inability of the household to get along. Shojai refers often to what she calls the P.E.T. Test – *Physical Health, Emotional Well-Being, and Traits of Instinct* that can help you figure out why a behavior problem is occurring. If you know what triggers the problem, you can make plans to address it. Shojai says “Proper introductions are the single most important step you can take to ensure your pets will get along...” The most classic line in the book is a quotation from a vet: “Cats don't do submission.” Shojai discusses situations involving multiple dogs only, multiple cats only and for both dogs and cats. Relatively short and sweet and in a nice readable font size, this book is packed with useful information that could make your life, and those of all your pets, a lot happier.



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DWAA Web Site: www.DWAA.org

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