

2018 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

The annual meeting of the Cat Writers' Association (CWA) was called to order by CWA President Marci Kladnik at 8:30 a.m. CDT on Saturday, June 9, 2018. The meeting took place in the Veranda room at the CWA Conference that was held at the Hyatt Regency Houston Intercontinental Airport Hotel, Houston, TX.

According to the attendance sheet and notes between Conference Chair, Rachel Phelps, and CWA V.P., Deb Barnes, 25 CWA members and 4 guests were in attendance.

Deb Barnes took the minutes and the meeting began with Marci thanking everyone for standing by her during her tenure as president. She also thanked Rachel Phelps for her fantastic job as Conference Chair, and Deb Barnes and the Council for their assistance.

Marci also thanked the sponsors, because without them, CWA conferences would not be possible. She thanked Dr. Marty Becker for his inspiring Keynote speech as well as for his Fear-Free Pet Emerald Level sponsorship and contribution of two Special Awards.

She thanked Platinum Level sponsors – Germinder & Associates/Goodnewsforpets and PetSafe and she also thanked Gold sponsors, the Cat Fanciers' Association, CEVA Animal Health, Hartz, Petco, Pioneer Pet Products, the International Cat Association, and Feline Fix by Five for their contributions. During this time, Lea-Ann Germinder of Germinder and Associates passed a hat around for a random drawing for people to drop off their business card for a chance to win an Amazon gift card at the end of the meeting.

Marci also thanked all the sponsors who donated swag for the swag bags, as well as Brad Phelps who coordinated the efforts. Rachel Phelps let everyone know a list of sponsors was included in the swag bags for members to send a thank you and Marci also indicated a digital list of sponsors would be made available to all CWA members.

Marci continued on by thanking all the speakers who attended the conference and she gave special thanks to Janiss Garza, Wendy Christensen, Weems, Dusty Rainbolt, and Amy Shojai for all their efforts on the CWA website.

Sharon Melynk was thanked for taking the initiative to open an Instagram account for the CWA to increase our social presence and further thanks were given to Wendy Christensen for all the work she did chairing the contest and taking care of the Muse Medallion awards and printed programs.

Contest Chair Report by Arden Moore

Arden Moore, on behalf of Contest Chair, Wendy Christensen, reported that there were 180 Regular Category entries from the U.S. and abroad. Of all the Regular Categories available, 11 received no entries and 4 categories had no certificate winners. Of the entries, 126 entries earned a certificate – 43 from CWA members and 8 non-members.

There were 16 Special Awards available and we only received 81 entries. Arden recommends we do a better job promoting ourselves and our friends – the contest is a great way to “paw it forward!”

PR Report by Lea-Ann Germinder

Lea-Ann agreed with Arden that we need to share, share, and share! For this year's pre-conference, Germinder & Associates did several PR pieces, including the announcement of our conference and contest, announcing the Muse Medallion Finalists, Networking and the Speaker Line-up, and interviews with Amy Shojai and Janiss Garza.

She reiterates that the CWA needs to conform to the times to be relevant. Instagram is what the brands want to see and we need to determine how to be "newsworthy." Sharon Melynk is working on growing our visibility and reminds us our account is catwriters_com and to use the #catwriters and #catwritersassociation. There was some conversation between Susan Willett, Lynn Maria Thompson, and Sharon Melynk on how we can use programs to manage social media, such as Tailwind or Hoot Suite.

Lea-Ann also wanted to let us know that due to a spamming issue, if people would like to continue receiving the goodnewsforpets newsletter, they will need to opt back in.

Treasurer's Report to come.

Secretary's Report from Wendy Christensen (in absentia)

We currently have 243 members with 20 new members in 2017 and 11 in 2018. We have 2 applications in process and reinstated one membership. Two members upgraded from associate to professional and in 2018, 12 declined membership and 25 never reinstated, despite numerous attempts to reach out.

New Business

Marci brought Nominations Chair, Janiss Garza, up to the podium for the Election of Officers. Janiss announced the retirement of council members Paul Glassner and Susan Willett and offered the following slate for consideration:

Officers:

Deb Barnes (President)
Paula Gregg (Vice President)
Dawn White (Treasurer)
Wendy Christensen (Secretary)

Council members:

Julie McAlee and Sharon Melynk to replace Paula Gregg who is under consideration for VP.
New 2019 Council – Alana Grelyak and Janiss Garza

Motion to accept new officers approved. First motion – Arden Moore. Second motion – Amy Shojai.

(Marci returned to the podium.)

Wrapping up the meeting

Marci thanked Rachel again for all her efforts coordinating the conference and also shared a special story about how Rachel and Brad adopted Lori Houston's cat Dillion after her unexpected death in 2014.

Dusty Rainbolt and Marci worked hard to get Lori's cats adopted and Rachel said it must have been fate, because she and Brad had been in Key West looking at polydactyl cats and Dillion was a polydactyl!

A general comment was made by Peter Miller that we need more men in the CWA and most of the ladies indicated the men were home taking care of the cats!

It was also discussed that we are a mentoring organization and we need to express that better with our members and potential new members. There was also a discussion about our Prolist sometimes being difficult to follow, so Deb Barnes suggested we share information via both emails and our private Facebook page to reach a larger audience for communications.

Lea-Ann Germinder told everyone to update their LinkedIn pages, as that's where the professionals are looking for people. She is concerned with Facebook, other than the benefits of joining specific Facebook groups. We also need to start tweeting more on our Twitter page.

Amy Shojai shared that giveaways are an excellent way to drive traffic on blogs and social media and she uses King Sumo for entries.

Lea-Ann drew for her Amazon gift card and Deb Barnes was selected as the winner.

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.