

2025 Cat Writers' Association Communications Contest

*For Work Published or Produced
January 1, 2024 through
December 31, 2024*



Special awards are special because they come with **cash prizes** instead of Muse Medallions. Most are sponsored by companies or organizations other than the CWA, and some are named in honor of CWA members who have made a significant difference for cats in their lifetimes.

Special Award

Rules and Descriptions

Please read and abide by these rules. Any entries that do not abide by the rules will be disqualified, and the entry fees for them forfeited.

- Entrants must be the authors, producers (in the case of video or film), or creators (in the case of art) of the entered work. An editor may not be listed as an entrant in any special award category. An entry may be submitted by someone other than the author or creator, as long as the author or creator is listed as the entrant.
- **AI-generated content is ineligible for entry into the contest.** While it is accepted that most writers do use some AI tools, no work written or generated by an AI application will be accepted. [Read our full AI policy below.](#)
- Entries in the Special Awards must contain at least two-thirds cat-specific content. Applicability to cats IS NOT sufficient.
- All Entries must be newly published or broadcast (or, for Fine Arts, created) between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, and NOT previously published in any medium.
- No entry limits exist in the special award categories.
- All entry materials in the special award categories must be in a digital format.
- Entry fees for Special Award categories are:
 - \$30 for non-CWA members
 - \$15 for CWA members in good standing (renewed by February 28, 2025)
 - There is no entry fee to nominate someone for the Michael Brim Distinguished Service Award or the Shojai Mentor Award.
- You will receive an email confirmation of each entry form you complete. Entries are not completed until payment is made: you must keep a tally of the number of entries you are submitting for your payment. Only one payment platform is being used this year; you can pay by card via Stripe (you do not need a Stripe account to do this). Please note that the closing date for entries will not be extended past May 4, 2025 under any circumstances.

To contact the Contest Committee, please email contest@catwriters.com.



The Cat Writers' Association's A.I. Policy for the Annual Communications Contest

Work written or generated by computer software and/or artificial intelligence is ineligible for entry in the CWA's communications contest. Only human-created work is eligible.

Acceptable uses of AI include:

- Brainstorming ideas for stories or artwork
- Refining story ideas
- Finding correct information for citations of quotes
- Finding sources to be interviewed for a story
- Spellchecking or editing
- Assistive software for those with vision, hearing, or mobility impairment

If an AI assistant (e.g., ChatGPT, Perplexity AI, Jasper AI, Quillbot, Elicit, Ryter, etc.) was used to generate ideas or gather information for the entry, the participant must include that information in their reference list. In the art and photography categories, no generative AI content will be eligible to win an award.

We thank you in advance for abiding by this policy.



Cornell Feline Health Center Dr. Jim Richards Veterinary Issues Award

This award is presented for the highest-quality entry on the topic of technological advances, research, new medical developments, or innovations in feline veterinary medicine designed to educate the general cat-owning public about new developments.

The award is named in honor of **Dr. Jim Richards**, who was director of the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine's Feline Health Center and a well-known expert in cat care at the time of his passing in 2007. Known as the "kitty doctor" because he always referred to cats as kitties, Dr. Richards had also served as president of AAFP, the American Association of Feline Practitioners (now the Feline Veterinary Medical Association, FVMA) and authored the *ASPCA Complete Guide to Cats*, served as co-author and consulting editor for *The Cornell Book of Cats*, and was a columnist for Cornell's *CatWatch* newsletter, an advisor to Alley Cat Allies, and an avid supporter of the Cat Writers' Association.

Qualifying entries: Single newspaper, magazine, or newsletter articles; columns or series of articles (print or digital); books; videos; or radio/television broadcasts.

Award: \$500

About the Award Sponsor: Cornell Feline Health Center is a research institute in Ithaca, New York that supports cat health with both information and health studies. Through research, outreach, and education, they strive to improve the health and well-being of cats everywhere. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



GoodNewsForPets.com Human-Animal Bond Award

This award is presented for the entry written by a CWA member that best reflects and promotes the strengthening of the human-animal bond and highlights the bond between a cat and human. Entries will be judged for exceptional quality and ability to convey this concept and connect with the audience.

Only CWA members are eligible to win this award.

Qualifying entries: Qualified entries include single articles (print or digital), features, columns, short stories, books, and poetry.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative certificate. The winning entrant will also be featured on Goodnewsforpets.com and their social media.

About the Award Sponsor: GoodNewsForPets.com is a digital news platform that curates information for pet parents, the veterinary industry, and the pet industry. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



TICA Kari Winters Rescue and Rehabilitation Award

This award is presented for the best written work on rescuing and rehabilitating cats or kittens from shelters or rescue groups for the purpose of adoption to forever homes. Entries are judged on compelling personal accounts and the education of readers on the need for rescue.

This award is named in honor of **Kari Winters**, an award-winning author who was responsible for the Siamese Cat Rescue in Southern California and helped with rescue of Siamese cats throughout the United States. As a volunteer for the Amanda Foundation, she helped rehabilitate and home countless cats and dogs, with a special gift for rehabbing special needs animals. Even in retirement, Kari raised funds for the Mayor's Dog Ball in Albuquerque and volunteered with Kennel Kompadres.

Qualifying entries: Entries include written work, including articles (published in a print or digital newspaper, magazine, newsletter, or professional blog/website, or single radio or television broadcast), books, columns, and videos.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: The International Cat Association, TICA, is the world's foremost genetic registry of both pedigreed cats and household pet cats. Their inclusive environment allows pet cats to compete alongside pedigreed cats for titles and honors. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



Catit Kitten Care and Rescue/Adoption Award

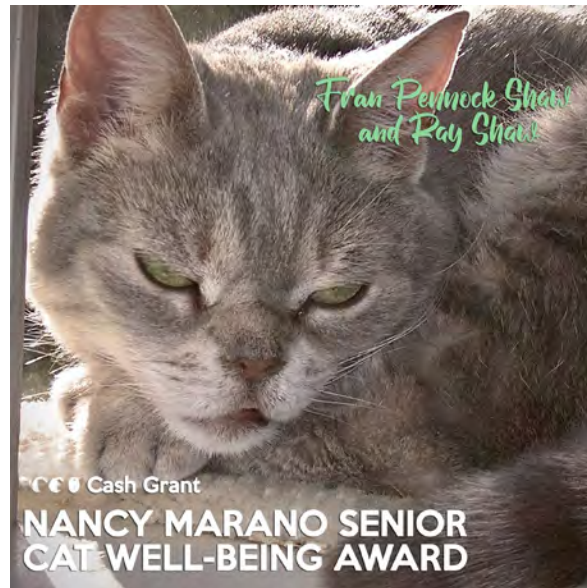
This award is presented for the best entry promoting kitten care, rescue, and adoption. Qualifying entries include, but are not limited to, “how-to’s,” feral kitten rescue, early spay and neuter, orphaned kittens, and kitten adoption.

Qualifying entries: Written and pictorial works in all media are acceptable, including articles (digital or print), books, columns, and video broadcasts.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: Catit offers a wide array of thoughtfully designed and carefully tested products for cats, from foods, treats, and food toppers to feeding and watering supplies, litter boxes and accessories, toys and elaborate toy systems, cameras, scratchers, carriers, and grooming supplies. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



Nancy Marano Senior Cat Well-Being Award

Sponsored by Fran Pennock Shaw and Ray Shaw, this award is presented for the highest-quality entry on the topic of older, aging, and senior cats. Topics can include but are not limited to adoption, health, innovative and compassionate care, and senior-for-senior programs.

This award is named in honor of longtime CWA member **Nancy Marano**, who served in many leadership roles with the organization during her lifetime. Nancy was the award-winning editor of the *PETroglyphs* regional animal welfare magazine in New Mexico and a journalist who joined the CWA in 1997 and was a recipient of both the Shojai Mentor Award and the Michael Brim Distinguished Service Award.

Qualifying entries: Written and pictorial pieces from all media (print or digital) are acceptable, including articles, books, columns, and video broadcasts.

Award: \$750 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsors: A past president and treasurer of the Cat Writers' Association, Fran Pennock Shaw is a retired journalist. Her husband is a retired newspaper editor. Nancy Marano was a special friend of theirs, and they sponsor this award in her honor.

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



Pioneer Pet Behavioral Training Award

This award is presented for the best entry on cat training techniques. Entries should have a “how-to” focus on topics such as (but not limited to) litter box training, tips and techniques for teaching cats not to scratch on furniture or other inappropriate places (focusing on providing them with alternative options to scratch), leash training, callback training, trick training, or training cats to stay off countertops, tables, or other forbidden places.

Qualifying entries: Appropriate entries are series or single articles (print or digital media) published from columns, blogs, websites, magazines, or newsletters; books with a singular focus on a particular training topic; or television, radio broadcast, or video presentations.

Award: \$1000, a commemorative certificate, and three 20-lb bags of SmartCat All Natural Litter.

About the Award Sponsor: Founded in the 1990s, Pioneer Pet makes SmartCat Litter, the best selection of healthier clumping cat litter. They also make fountains, feeders, toys, scratchers, and Sticky Paws, to train your cats not to scratch furniture. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



Sleepypod[®] Cat Safety Award

This award is presented for the best entry on cat safety. The entry should take a positive approach to inform and educate the readership about feline safety issues, including, but not limited to, safety in the home (such as foods and plants poisonous to cats), preparedness and training for natural disasters, moving, safe travel with cats, and general cat safety.

Qualifying entries: Written, audio, and pictorial works in all media, such as from print or digital columns or blogs, newsletter articles, books, photographs, radio/TV broadcasts, and videos, will be accepted.

Award: \$750

About the Award Sponsor: Sleepypod offers a line of thoughtfully designed products to keep your cats safe and happy at home, while traveling, or even while out for a walk. Their carriers, harnesses, and leashes are all tested for tensile strength and durability in a vehicle crash. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



Zymox Feline Skin and Ear Care Award

This award honors the best single entry on the topic of feline skin and ear care. Qualifying topics include, but are not limited to, coverage of home and professional grooming, hairballs, parasite control, nail care, bone and joint care, teeth and ear care, promotion of healthy skin, coat, and ears, and feline skin/coat disorders.

Qualifying entries: Written, video, and audio works in all media are acceptable, including articles (online or in print), books, online magazines, online newsletters, and online columns.

Award: \$750 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: Since 1998, Zymox has provided antibiotic-free solutions to common skin and ear conditions in animals. Their natural enzyme-based products include a line specifically labeled for cats, so you know they're safe for use on your kitty. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



World's Best[®] Cat Litter-ary Award

This award is presented for an outstanding work of fiction portraying cats and cat ownership in a positive way. The highest consideration goes to those entries that include cats as an intrinsic part of the plot. Works will be judged for the exceptional, individual quality (“voice” or “vision”) of the writer/creator.

Qualifying entries: Eligible books, short stories, poems, or radio/ television dramatic scripts may be published in print or electronic media; any scripts or videos must also provide proof of production. All fiction genres are eligible.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: The #1-selling brand of natural cat litter, World's Best uses a patented process to compress corn into super-absorbent granules that trap odor and form tight clumps on contact. Available in several formulas to suit every cat, they also have litter additives for attracting cats, fighting odor, or monitoring your kitty's health. [Visit them here.](#)

[Submit My Entry Now!](#)



Michael Brim Distinguished Service Award

The Michael Brim Distinguished Service Award, sponsored by the Cat Writers' Association, honors extraordinary achievement and communications excellence. It recognizes the person who, by word, deed, public communication, and professional excellence, best promotes the ideals, mission, and best interest of the Cat Writers' Association. The Submitter must explain his or her reasons for nominating the person, i.e., explain how the Nominee has published and/or performed in some extraordinary fashion to benefit cats and/or cat writers. This should include a detailed description of what the Nominee has done, whether a one-time accomplishment or a listing of publications and activities over time. Referral to specific publications, articles, websites, etc., is not required but can help the judges in making their decision. The CWA Council reviews nominations and selects a recipient.

There is no entry fee to nominate someone for the Michael Brim Distinguished Service Award.

Qualifying nominees: Both CWA members and non-members are eligible to win this award. Nominations may be made by a CWA member in good standing. You may not nominate yourself. Nominees can include (but are not limited to) writers, editors, or publicists whose published work or actions have had a significant impact on improving the quality of life of cats, educating the public, promoting responsible cat breeding and ownership, and/or facilitating the professional growth of cat writers.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: This is us! Founded in 1992, the Cat Writers' Association is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization of communications professionals whose work focuses on cats. Our mission is to foster and recognize excellence in feline-focused communications in written, visual, and audio media. We have 200+ members worldwide. [For information on becoming a member, visit us here.](#) [For information on spotlighting your brand to our members, visit us here.](#)

Nominate Someone Now!



Shojai Mentor Award

Sponsored by the Cat Writers' Association in honor of CWA Co-founder and Past President, Amy Shojai, this Award recognizes the CWA member who has offered guidance, encouraging counsel, support, or other help that has had a direct and positive influence on another's professional success. The recipient shall exemplify the highest ideals of the CWA vision, promoting communal support, networking, and mutual respect between colleagues. Nominations may be submitted by any individual (member or nonmember). The "Submitter" must be the direct beneficiary in the mentor relationship. The "Nominee" contribution must go beyond that individual's required duties as defined by his/her employment — in other words, the mentoring must reach above and beyond the "normal or routine" business relationship one would expect the agent, book doctor, editor, or other professional to extend to any of his/her other clients. The CWA Council reviews nominations and selects a recipient.

There is no entry fee to nominate someone for the Shojai Mentor Award.

Qualifying nominees: Only CWA members in good standing are eligible for this award. You may not nominate yourself. It should be noted that the award is for activities that promote another's success in their *career*, not in their volunteer capacity with the CWA.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: This is us! Founded in 1992, the Cat Writers' Association is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization of communications professionals whose work focuses on cats. Our mission is to foster and recognize excellence in feline-focused communications in written, visual, and audio media. We have 200+ members worldwide. [For information on becoming a member, visit us](#)

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Nominate Someone Now!



President's Award

Sponsored by Cat Fanciers' Association, this overall top award is presented to the best entry among all Muse Medallion winners in the regular contest categories. Chosen by the Cat Writers' Association President, it recognizes the "Best of the Best."

Qualifying entries: All Muse Medallion winners are automatically entered and considered for the President's Award. Other than by submitting an entry in a Regular Category, there is no separate entry process for this award.

Award: \$500 and a commemorative item.

About the Award Sponsor: Founded in 1906, the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) promotes the welfare of all cats, while maintaining a focus on the quality of its breed standards and supporting its 600+ member clubs worldwide. With more than 400 CFA cat shows each year, there's probably one near you! [Visit them here.](#)