

Awards Salute the Top Dogs in Writing, Publishing

Canine champions aren't the only ones winning awards during Westminster.

By Andrew DePrisco and Allan Reznik

Posted: February 17, 2010, 2 a.m. EST

Each year at Westminster the dog world gathers in New York City not only to crown its newest canine champions, but also to salute its top writers, photographers and publications.

On Valentine's morning the Alliance of Purebred Dog Writers (APDW) gathered at the fabled midtown eatery Sardi's, where the walls are festooned in brilliant caricatures by Al Hirschfeld. Now in their fifth year, APDW celebrates writers who focus on the world of purebred dogs.

Keynote speaker Patti Strand, founder and director of the National Animal Interest Alliance, delivered a stirring talk entitled "Preserve Purebreds to Save American Dog Ownership." Strand shared her beliefs about issues regarding animal rights vs. animal welfare, how these issues affect pet ownership and the purebred dog fancy, and how writers can use their skills and platforms to make an impact.

Strand later received the Stonehenge Award, which recognizes an individual who has contributed significantly to the sport of dogs.

Other award winners: The Arthur Frederick Jones Awards for Best Non-Fiction Book was won by "Dogs: The First 125 Years of the American Kennel Club," published by Kennel Club Books.

BowTie Publications' Editor-in-Chief Allan Reznik was the recipient of the inaugural Hot Digital Dog Award for Best Web Column for DogChannel's "Dog Show Expert Q&A."

The Captain Arthur J. Haggerty Award for Best Writing on Training was presented to freelancer Lisa Hanks for "Pit Bull Ambassadors," which appeared in Dog World magazine. The winning article profiled the community of dog lovers who fought for the rehabilitation of Michael Vick's dogs.

A few hours later and downtown a few blocks, a much larger crowd gathered for the 75th anniversary banquet of the Dog Writers Association of America, whose writing contest has long been the benchmark of excellence for authors and journalists in the dog sport. The Manhattan Affinia Hotel hosted the affair, and we're happy to say that the quality of this year's nominees far exceeded the service or the food served.

The evening began with the presentation of lifetime achievement awards presented to two of the great obedience trainers of our time and, not coincidentally, the founders of the two leading (and, appropriately, competing) obedience publications. Lorenz "Don" Arner, the founder of Off-Lead magazine, and Bob Self Sr., the founder of Front and Finish magazine, accepted their awards with heartfelt and sincere remarks.

Finalists in more than 75 award categories, plus special awards, vie for the coveted "Maxwell" medallions, named for Maxwell Riddle, an esteemed newspaperman, author and all-breed dog show judge. These award categories embrace every genre of dog writing, from local newspaper columns to all-breed magazines; from self-published newsletters and online blogs to glossy, full-length breed and reference books. In addition to the writing awards, DWAA recognizes photographers, illustrators, and videographers.

Due to a last-minute cancellation by a snowbound Steve Dale, DWAA officer and frequent Dog Fancy contributor, Eve Adamson was pressed into service to emcee the proceedings. Eve has won numerous awards in the past, and this evening would prove to be no different, as she took home the North Shore Animal League America Award for an excerpt from her most recent book "Pets Gone Green," published by BowTie Press.

The prize for best All-Breed Magazine was claimed by the AKC Gazette. DOG FANCY, the world's most widely read dog magazine, was also nominated in this category, which the magazine has won numerous times in the past.

In the Annual/Special Edition category, all four finalists were BowTie publications with Puppy Training Basics triumphing.



In separate categories for feature articles, Dr. Caroline Coile's "Socializing Sausages" and Susan McCullough's "The Dachsie Disposition" won awards. Both articles appeared in Popular Dogs: Dachshunds.

Other BowTie winners included Frank Bruynbroek (Photography), Thomas Kimball (Humorous Art), and Diane Morgan (Humorous Writing).

Sue Payne, author of "The Chihuahua" from Kennel Club Book's Classic series, was nominated for the Single Breed Book award, the second author in this series to receive this nomination. This year's winner was Brian Patrick Duggan's "Saluki" (McFarland & Co).

The Pet Sitters International First Canine Award was presented to Peter Gerstenzang for "Catch That Dog," which appeared in the January 2009 DOG FANCY.

The final award of the evening, the DWAA Distinguished Service Award, sponsored by the American Kennel Club, was presented to photographer Mary Bloom to the thunderous applause of the attendees. Mary Bloom has been a celebrated dog photographer for over 30 years, working for the AKC, Westminster Kennel Club and North Shore Animal League, as well as every major dog publication. She is a frequent contributor to Bowtie magazines, books and websites.

For a complete listing of the winners, visit www.dwaa.org.

Andrew DePrisco is the Editorial Director and Vice President of Kennel Club Books. Allan Reznik is the Editor-at-Large for Dog World and DOG FANCY magazines, and Editor-in-Chief for Dogs in Review magazine.