

Behind the Name

CAT FANCY Editor Susan Logan blogs about the importance of a cat's name.

By Susan Logan

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Susan Logan's cats Sophie and Madison What do I write about when I could write about almost anything relating to cats? That is the dilemma I face each month when I have to write my CAT FANCY Editor's Note.

Sometimes my Editor's Notes come so easily, they practically write themselves. For example, when I had jury duty a year ago and served on a sexual assault case. Of course, on all our breaks the jurors were not allowed to discuss the disturbing things we heard in court. What did we talk about? Our pets! I was so inspired by how important pets are to people from all walks of life, that when it came time to write my Editor's Note for the issue we were working on (October 2008), it only took me 20 minutes. All I had to do was retell some of the poignant pet conversations we had.

Other times when I hear about a horrific case of animal cruelty, I'm so angry that I can shoot off a blog in 10 minutes, such as my blog titled, "What Punishment Fits?" I could easily write about this sad topic all day, but I don't want all my editorials to be so heavy that people become afraid to read them. Some of our readers who have written to me in response to some of my more sobering editorials complained that they already suffer from depression and learning about something disturbing like animal abuse only gave them nightmares. So I refrain from writing about it too frequently.

My last Editor's Note in the October 2009 issue of CAT FANCY didn't come so easily. I faced the day before deadline not even knowing what to write about. Because I don't want to waste time looking at a blank screen, especially on deadline, I had to read final layouts first. As I read each story, I looked for things in it that inspired me. Then I would go to my blank Word document and write a paragraph about that story. Gradually, throughout the day more words appeared on the page. But by the end of the day, I just had words on a page that weren't connected by a theme. I only had one more chance to sleep on it and then finalize it on deadline morning.

That morning before work, my daredevil cat Sophie tried to climb onto a fan. The spinning blade posed an obvious danger to her and the fan could have fallen on top of her. I shouted her name, "Sophie!" She stopped what she was about to do and ran to me. I was so thankful that, No. 1, she knew her name, and No. 2, that she came when I called. The incident gave me the editorial thread I was looking for to finish that issue's Editor's Note: the importance of a cat name.

It hadn't occurred to me until I reviewed the final layouts that it actually turned out to be thematic throughout the October issue. Home Life columnist Sandy Robins talked about her friend's unusual cat names. Book Club columnist Stacy Hackett talked about the author's clever names for the feline characters in her book. And in our Q&A with Joe Mantegna, the actor talked about his first cats' names. Believe me, we didn't plan it that way, but I have to admit that I love it when it looks like we did.

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