

Crying at the Networking Dinner

Talking about cat issues is a sure way to become emotional.

By Susan Logan

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Here I am speaking at the conference dinner. I've heard it said that pet people are sensitive. I certainly fit that stereotype and so do many of my friends and colleagues. Let's face it, sometimes the inability to hold back the tears can be pretty embarrassing. I've cried in some awkward situations before, but never while giving a speech ... that is, until this year's annual Cat Writers' Association conference networking dinner.

I talked about Kari Winters and Kathryn Hopper, two cat rescuers and CWA members who passed away this year. I told the group what a great organization they were part of and that it would be interesting to figure out how many cats have been saved by all the people in the room. I mentioned one member, Dusty Rainbolt, who was sitting at a table right in front of me and who alone saved more than 200 cats through fostering. I looked at her and she started to cry. I had to look away and move on to the rest of my speech.

So I shared with the group my dreams for a better future for cats: First, that the United States will become a no-kill nation, meaning that healthy pets will not be euthanized just because they're homeless; second, that animal cruelty will end; and third, that the status of cats will be raised in our culture.

As I looked around the room, I saw other eyes tearing up. I suddenly felt so overwhelmed with gratitude to work among such compassionate people, that I started crying too. I managed to keep talking, but I knew I had to end my speech quickly. Afterward I noticed other people wiping their eyes. When the dinner was over, people were sticking around and communicating a little more openly. Isn't that what networking is all about?