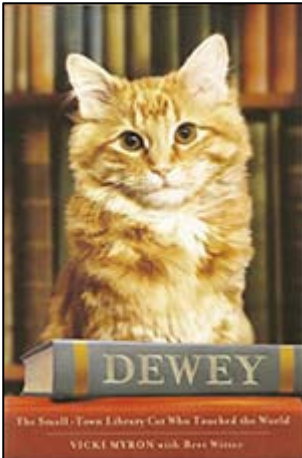


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- January 2009



My word, writing “2009” for the first time makes me want to gasp. The new year can’t be here this soon. But it is. Time marches on, so the saying goes and if we don’t march with it, well, there’s another saying, the hurrier I go; the behinder I get. Ah well, I no longer make a New Year’s resolution to keep up.

Generally, I review books about personal development, financial growth, or something along those lines for January, but this year I am bringing to your attention a wonderful, feel good, warm and furry book. Warm and furry because the hero of this biography (that’s right this is a true story) is a cat named Dewey Readmore Books, the official library cat of Spencer, a small town in Iowa. The author, Vicki Myron, was head of the library for all the years that Dewey reigned. She felt that telling his amazing story would bring joy and delight not only to the people who knew him, but to the rest of us, cat lovers or no.

Making a difference in people’s lives is a worthy aspiration for all of us, and Dewey did just that. The patrons of the library were his family and he took good care of them, by snuggling up with a needy child or comforting an oldster in a time of loss. Dewey lived a long and successful life from the time they found him, a tiny kitten, dumped in the book return box and nearly frozen until he died after nineteen years of service to the people of Spencer.

I picked up the book, because the orange cat on the cover had eyes that look right into you. Dewey has been all over the bestseller lists, and rightfully so. Everyone needs a

feel-good story right about now. Some of the words reviewers used: “charming”, “heartwarming”, “lovely”, “true feline Hall of Famer”. I agree.

Which brings me to the writing lesson. Or should I say writing suggestion? Writing plea? You take your pick. While I know that everyone doesn't want to or feel the need to write, my goal for this column is to share encouragement, introduce you to books you might not have found otherwise, maybe offer a chuckle or two, and, for those who do want to write, some guidelines or bits of knowledge to ease you along on the road.

True stories of animals are at a publishing high right now, and have been for some time. The pet business, meaning food and supplies, is a huge industry in the United States. Let's face it, as people grow more isolated due to the economy and computer usage, many turn to pets for love and attention. After all, animals are nonjudgmental, dogs than cats, but what can you say?

So, to prime the pump, do you have memories of animals that were part of your life? Write their stories. More magazines and anthologies like the Chicken Soup books are including pet stories. If you want a story just for your family, you can print your own using your own words and photos.

As the publishing world changes, there are perks for people who want to do small print runs. There are now book production software programs for both pc's and Macs.

Writing these stories down is good for your family but also good for you. The more you stretch your brain, the younger you will remain. Swapping tall tale pet stories is great fun. I've seen some wonderful Basset tales put out as fundraisers for rescues, both with

artwork illustrations and photos. Head on down to your local bookstore and browse the gift book section. Think how often you have purchased one for a friend. There's no reason why you couldn't create something similar.

I hope that some kind of writing is on your goal list for this year. And that reading more books is on your list, too. You can start with *Dewey* or even one of mine. I'll be sharing more ideas with you next month.

May 2009 bring joy, laughter and adventure your way.

Until next time,

Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine