

Jan Jaeger, a member of the Cat Writer's Association (CWA) and weekly columnist for *The Nantucket Independent*, was honored with the Hartz Glamour-Puss Award at CWA's 14th national conference held in Foster City, Calif., earlier this month. Jaeger received the award for an article she wrote for her column, Pet Tracks.

The Hartz Glamour-Puss Award was for the best single entry on the topic of feline skin and coat care. Jaeger's article, "The Cat Bath, Part I" was originally published January 3, 2007, and described bathing her geriatric cat, Jezebel, in particular, and cat bathing in general. The article is republished here.

The Hartz Mountain Corporation contributed both a commemorative plaque and a monetary award.

CWA was founded in 1992 and is dedicated to providing news, information and education on all aspects of cat care and welfare, as well as improving the quality of writing about cats. This year, for its annual writing contest, CWA offered a record number of corporate-sponsored special awards and its own Muse Medallions to winners in approximately 35 writing and graphic arts categories.

THE CAT BATH PART 1

Many people start out the year with a new diet, a new look or a new resolve to accomplish an illusive goal. But this year, one of my goals for the New Year was practical and immediate. On New Year's Day, I resolved to give my geriatric cat, Jezebel, a bath. Maybe not breaking news, but none the less, a

worthy goal.

I know, this subject is ready-made for ridicule and levity. There are horror stories about how much cats hate getting wet. Tips abound. Like don't bathe a cat in a bathtub with a shower curtain unless you want it ripped to shreds. Or put the cat into a mesh bag or pillowcase before you start the procedure. Or wear gloves. Not to mention snide references to outcomes involving the Fire Department, the emergency room, or both.

My compulsion to complete this task came about in an unusual way. During the holidays, I got involved in a conversation about bathing cats and, quite frankly, it had never occurred to me that my own personal cats had never been bathed until confronted by the facts. It's not that I'm a stranger to cats and baths; I have given lots of baths to lots of cats: our shop kitties, to kitties up for adoption, and, when we had a grooming service in the shop, to kitties whose owners paid for the privilege.

In pondering why my own cats have never had a bath, one major reason is due to the fact that fleas, most fortunately, have not been an issue at my house (knock on wood). Also, like most cats, through the years, my cats have pretty well taken care of themselves and their coats look and feel clean. But the aforementioned Jezebel is quite up in years, now approaching 19 people years, which puts her at about 92 years in cat time. Not only has her coat lost its luster but it seems to clump up more readily because I think grooming has become difficult for her.

You don't need many supplies for bathing a cat, but one indispensable item is a cat claw clipper, a uniquely



designed little scissor, which you are well advised to use before the game starts. Snip all of kitty's nails, nipping off the clear sharp pointy end, including the dew claw on the inside of the front paw. The reasons for this are obvious.

Another preparatory task is to be sure all mats and clumps are removed before you wet kitty down. On our long-haired store kitty Mr. Fish, we use a short-tooth mat comb, which moves easily through his long hair, snagging any clumps of underhair that are present. If this step is omitted, then the mats will only get worse when wet, tightening and holding in moisture next to the skin.

Before you can settle down to the actual bathing, you will need to select an appropriate shampoo. Pet shampoos have a different Ph than people shampoos, so it is advisable to get a pet-specific product. Today there are many shampoos available on the market, with each type designed to perform a specific task.

Why are you giving your cat a bath? If there is a flea or tick problem, then shampoos with a botanical insecticide will eliminate live pests on your pet and give you a jump-start on a prevention program. If your pet is itchy, has dry or irritated skin, then a medicated shampoo might be the ticket. Taking a cue from the cosmetic industry, medicated pet shampoos and rinses can incorporate the alpha and beta-hydroxy acids which actually improve the skin rather than just temporarily improve its looks. There are cleansing shampoos, conditioning shampoos, tearless and color-enhancing shampoos.

Since Jezebel is my old lady, I have

elected to give her a spa treatment with a new line from Tropiclean, which also offers bubble bath, facial scrub, paw treatment, shampoos, conditioners and colognes. After much debate, I have selected the Comfort Bath Shampoo with lavender and oatmeal. According to the manufacturer, this shampoo offers a rich combination of nourishing body bath and vitamins along with the aromatherapeutic effects of the lavender and soothing effects of the hydrolyzed oatmeal to relieve stress and impart comfort. That's what I want.

One more comment about pre-bath preparations. You need to consider where this bath will take place. A glass-enclosed shower or tub will work quite well if you have a hand held or European-style shower and you can get in there with the cat, or if you have a cat accustomed to baths and you don't mind bending over. Personally, I prefer to work at waist level with a sprayer and there is only one place in my house that offers these amenities. That is the kitchen sink. For those of you who are squeamish about this particular function in that particular place, just make a note never to come to eat at my house. I figure that's why Soft Scrub with bleach was invented.

Now that we've gotten all our stuff, decided on the location and prepped the cat, next week I'll go over the nitty-gritty of how to give your cat a bath. ■

Jan Jaeger is owner of Geronimo's, Ltd., Nantucket's pet supply and gift shop, and is a member of DWAA and CWA (Dog and Cat Writer's Associations of America). Her pets at home are Junior, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, and three cats. At the shop are cats Messrs. Fish and Chips, Flower bunny, Millie guinea pig and two budgies. Send e-mail to jan@geronimos.com.

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Continued from page 21

second year in a row, considers the event "the best melding of Nantucket that you could possibly have. I think it's an interesting mix of Nantucket community and that's why I said I'd work on it for two years," she explained when asked about her dedication to the event. "You have the tree designers who are year-round business people and residents, and the wonderful summer people who come back that support all of Nantucket, and they are all together in the same venue. That's pretty unique because we are all together because we love Nantucket. That doesn't happen very often at some of the other summer events."

For the second year in a row, Peter and Linda Hoey are sharing their train village, creating a slice of late 1950s holiday cheer. The train, a Lionel, is a remnant of Linda's childhood, a gift from her father. "My dad was the big train person in our family," she explained. "There are five girls in the family and so he got us the Lionels when we were kids, so the trains are about 50 years old at least, probably more. He got them so we wouldn't mess with his real trains, with his HO scales. I luckily ended up with the trains."

The train circles around a typical New England village of thirty-five buildings filled with Christmas shoppers and a Salvation Army choir. Skaters glide gracefully over the ice pond, their friends looking on

as they roast marshmallows over the glowing fire. It is a collection that the Hoeyes have been cultivating for many years. "I started with the village," said Linda Hoey. "My first piece was the church, and I got that about 32 years ago. Then the houses got added here and there and it just sort of grew like topsy. It started on my little baby grand piano in our house in New Jersey with two buildings, first with the church, then the church and a house, and then it moved from room to room when it got bigger. I added them one by one. Some years if I was feeling in the spirit, I'd add two. This year I got the newspaper building, and Ms. Mae's Rooming House. My middle name is Mae so when I saw it I said, 'Hey, I have to have that!'"

The village also has its own farm complete with horses, cows, sheep, pigs and a windmill for ecological power. The local tree farm is Nick's Tree Farm, a nod to Linda's father Nick.

Linda Hoey designs the scene at home in the garage prior to bringing it to the NHA. "I start three weeks ahead, and I set the whole thing up in my garage. I design it and change it every year," she explained when recounting the time involved in bringing the village to life. "I cut all the roads, cut all the holes for all the lights because all the houses each have to have a hole underneath them for a light to come through. Then I pack it up again and bring it over here and put it all back together."

The village is resplendent with embellishments

like a tire swing in one yard, a police car with flashing lights, a garbage truck picking up Christmas wrapping castoffs and a tree house awaiting a club of mischievous boys. Peter Hoey prepares a list of items to find in the village each year, a test that will have you searching up and down the streets for mailboxes and flags. The longer you spend with the village the more you realize the extent of the scene. "It is the details, the little details," said Linda Honey. "It's really fun to watch people come to look at it because the older people usually had Lionel trains, and they love the trains. The women love the houses. The kids love it all. The neat thing is that so many people can see it and enjoy it. It's funny, when you blow the whistle on the train, kids come running from all over the museum."

Peter Greenhalgh says it best: "It's a nice way to sort of kick start the season, to provide the Christmas feeling without the shopping. It's not as commercialized. It's a wonderful venue, you're surrounded by history yet you have the festivity of trees and the excitement of Christmas." ■

— *The Festival of Trees takes place at the Whaling Museum, 13 Broad Street, until December 17. Hours are Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the Whaling Museum.*