

Gazette article for March 2006

Dear Gazette Readers: I've been doing this column for quite a few years and I usually have no problem coming up with a topic I am enthusiastic about. But the original deadline for this issue was just one that I could not make on-time, and had no heart for, knowing this article would publish just prior to the Christmas season.

Everything I would normally write about seemed so unimportant in my mind after the devastation left behind by "Katrina" and the subsequent storms and results.

I am fortunate to live in an area where nature does not inflict us with floods, fires, earthquakes, mud-slides, tornadoes or hurricanes. Yes, we get some snow, but when it melts we are still here and at most we only get shut down for a short time until the plows do their job. So we snuggle down and do some baking and watch movies until the streets are clear and it is back to life as normal. And we complain about our heating bills.

So on Labor Day weekend last year, as I sat with a friend waiting for our dogs to go into the group ring we were having a typical conversation. Would the judge be able to look past the coated dogs to find our Min Pin and Toy Fox Terrier? The price of gas had skyrocketed so much in the past few days that it cost me as much for gas to come and watch my dog show for two days at a local show, as it did to pay my handler for one day. And if it continued to climb, we bemoaned the fact that handler fees would go up etc. etc., and we may have to cut back on some of our shows. Then we both looked at each other and at the same time said, "Who are we to complain?" And we both felt shallow and petty.

Our homes, families and dogs were safe. We were at a dog show, with nothing more to complain about besides getting a ribbon. And right then and there, I lost my spark. To my credit I will say that I scoured my closets for clothes to donate and sent crates and other miscellaneous supplies to my local SPCA, who was going down to do rescues. Grateful for my habit of buying crates at yard sales and hoarding them. But this has not been enough to re-light my fire.

I watched the news one night and saw a story about a woman from Louisiana who was reunited with her little dog that had been transported out-of-state. The newscaster described the dog as a little Chihuahua, when it was clearly an Italian Greyhound. I wonder how many people will never find their beloved animals, because they are not properly identified? To say nothing of the people who lost loved ones, and have no homes or jobs to go back to.

I am sure many of those people who were already financially challenged did not think about having their pet's microchipped and registered with an appropriate recovery agency.

I know that "the shows will go on", but I will take advantage of this opportunity to ask those of you who are fortunate enough to sit and read this magazine to please dig a little deeper. If everyone who shows dogs made the contribution of one entry fee to the organization of their choice, you will help a baby, an old person, a displaced family, or a rescue organization. Personally, I am looking around me and counting my blessings and hope that I always remember not to take for granted what life has given me, and to remember that it's not always about getting a ribbon. I made a request to my friends and family and email acquaintances this year to please NOT send me Christmas cards. But to take the cost of the card and postage and

make a donation to rescue. Any rescue, human or animal. Most people spend at least fifty dollars on cards and postage, for something the recipients throw away within a few days. A hungry family or animal rescue would benefit so much from that donation. A lot of people doing a little are so much more effective than one person doing a lot.

I hope that 2006 brings everyone Good Health and keeps everyone safe. The Min Pin world is preparing for the MPCA Nationals to be held in Louisville, KY this month (March 12-15). If you are in the area this is the show to come and be a spectator at. For more information on Miniature Pinschers or to view the show schedule for the Nationals, visit the MPCA webpage at: www.minpin.org

Faith K. Gordon, 15 Elkhart St., Lackawanna, NY 14218 maudminpin@aol.com