

The Lilian Jackson Braun Newsletter

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Hello, friends! This is the first issue of The Lilian Jackson Braun Newsletter which, we hope, will become an ongoing means of communication between Lilian and her many friends and readers. Are you already a fan of Qwilleran, Koko and Yum Yum who has enjoyed each of THE CAT WHO adventures? Or are you just discovering the world of our favorite newspaperman and his precocious feline sleuths?

We hope to publish the Newsletter several times a year, as often as there are newsworthy items, comments, etc. to print. Please make copies of this first issue for your friends and thus expand our initial distribution. The Newsletter will be sent free to anyone who requests to be put on the mailing list. If you wish to be helpful you may send unused stamps to help me with mailing costs.

Your ideas and comments are critical to the success of our Newsletter. How did you happen to discover THE CAT WHO mysteries? Are you a cat-lover as well as a mystery fan? What suggestions do you have for the Newsletter? I'm looking forward to hearing from all of you soon. Write to me, Helen McCarthy, at the above address.

OUR LOGO

The lovely portrait of Koko was sketched by the many-talented Christine Fitch of Landrum, SC, who is not only an artist and an actress of note but also breeder of the prize-winning Chanthara Siamese.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

A special guest appearance will be made by Lilian at the 2nd Annual Foothills Felines CRUISE OF CATS Cat Show to be held March 4th and 5th, 1989, at the Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium, Spartanburg, SC. LJB will be present from 3 to 5 p. m. on Saturday, the 4th, and from 1 to 3 p. m. on Sunday, the 5th.

LILIAN JACKSON BRAUN

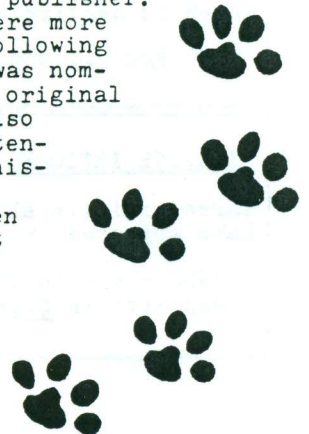
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Although she considers Springfield, MA, to be her hometown, Lilian has spent all of her adult life in Michigan. Her early childhood was spent in New England and New York, but during her teens she and her family moved to Michigan. During high school she wrote "spoems", sports poems about baseball, which she sold to a Detroit newspaper and to national magazines. Thoughts of a college education to become a teacher were put aside during the Depression. She sought work writing advertising poems for a Detroit department store, but was hired instead as an advertising copywriter. She was later made public relations director for the Ernst Kern Co., a position she held for many years. She then entered the field of journalism where her career as an interior design writer and home editor for the Detroit Free Press spanned 29 years. She had had no previous newspaper experience, but her column had a very great impact on the home decorating field in the Detroit area.

After writing and selling several short stories and mysteries, Lilian accepted the request of the Dutton Publishing Co. to write a full-length mystery with a cat in it. Her first three books, THE CAT WHO COULD READ BACKWARDS, THE CAT WHO ATE DANISH MODERN and THE CAT WHO TURNED ON AND OFF were published in the late 1960's and received hearty critical acclaim. But in 1968 Dutton decided not to publish any more mysteries with feline sleuths. As Lilian says, cats were out and sex and violence were in. At about the same time, her husband, Paul Braun, died and along with having to adjust to living alone, Lilian became more deeply involved in her newspaper career which demanded a lot of socializing and travel. Writing mysteries was put aside for 18 years.

After retiring from the Detroit Free Press in 1979, Lilian married Earl Bettinger, an actor and long-time friend of the Brauns. A voracious reader, Earl discovered Lilian's forgotten manuscript of THE CAT WHO ORDERED CAVIAR, re-named it THE CAT WHO SAW RED, and encouraged her to seek a publisher. It was the 1980's and cats were more popular than ever before. Following its publication by Jove, it was nominated for an Edgar for best original paperback mystery. Lilian also spent several years doing extensive volunteer work for the historical society in Bad Axe, Michigan, and has also written one-man plays about the Great Fire of 1881 and the Great Storm of 1913, in which Earl has performed.

Koko, The Cat Who



Lilian and Earl spend their summers in Caseville, Michigan on the shore of Lake Huron in a log cabin designed by Lilian. While other cottagers name their summer homes The Oaks or Five Oaks, Lilian and Earl call their hideaway "No Oaks" for the simple reason that it has no oak trees. There Lilian has a small studio overlooking the lake with a couch which she calls her "think tank" where she resolves writer's block with the help of Koko III and Pitti Sing. They spend winters in North Carolina in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Their home on Chocolate Drop Mountain is called "Cat-n-Dogwood", a most appropriate name for a home with cats inside and dogwood trees outside.

Lilian is now a full-time mystery writer, creating those wonderful adventures of Qwilleran, Koko and Yum Yum in which we fans delight.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Since most of us have questions that we'd like to ask our favorite author, we're hoping to develop a lively Question & Answer column in the Newsletter. If all of you will send your questions for Lilian to me, Helen McCarthy, at the address on the front page, I'll compile them, send them to Lilian and then print them in the next issue.

QUESTION: Is there a real Koko?

Once upon a time there was a truly remarkable Siamese named Koko. He lived to be 18 and inspired THE CAT WHO books, although he never had the opportunity to solve any bloody mysteries. He did, however, tell my guests to go home when the clock struck eleven.

QUESTION: Do you have cats of your own?

Only two. I'd like to have 17, but feeding them, brushing them, petting them, opening doors for them, etc. would be too big a chore. Especially the et cetera. Currently I live with Pitti Sing, a soft and cuddly 5-year-old blue point Siamese, and Koko III, a year-old sealpoint Siamese who is more inclined to crime than law enforcement.

QUESTION: How did Qwilleran get his name?

When I invented him, I wanted an unusual name with an uncommon spelling and a nice sound. I started with Q. Then I met a man from Denmark who spelled his name Qwillen. The extra syllable was added to give it a lilt. Confession: the connection with "quill pen" was purely coincidental.

QUESTION: Exactly where is "Down Below"?

I wish I knew. It's somewhere in northeast central United States in a heavily populated region. If you recognize it, that's where it is.

QUESTION: Is there really a Pickax?

Unfortunately, no. It's a composite of many small towns I have known--half imagination and half wishful thinking. I'd like to live there, especially if I could have dinner with Qwilleran at the Old Stone Mill once in a while.

BOOKS IN PRINT

All of the following are available in paperback published by Berkley/Jove (a division of G. P. Putnam's Sons). They should be in stock at your local bookstore. If a particular title is out of stock they should be able to order it for you. If you want to read the series in sequence, read them in the following order:

1. THE CAT WHO COULD READ BACKWARDS (1966)
2. THE CAT WHO ATE DANISH MODERN (1967)
3. THE CAT WHO TURNED ON AND OFF (1968)
4. THE CAT WHO SAW RED (1986)
5. THE CAT WHO PLAYED BRAHMS (1987)
6. THE CAT WHO PLAYED POST OFFICE (1987)
7. THE CAT WHO KNEW SHAKESPEARE (1988)

Currently available in hardback from G. P. Putnam's Sons but which will be printed in Jove paperback in March, 1989:

8. THE CAT WHO SNIFFED GLUE (1988)

New book to be printed March 22, 1989 in hardback by G. P. Putnam's Sons:

9. THE CAT WHO WENT UNDERGROUND (1989)

The following is a collection of short stories which is available in Jove paperback:

- THE CAT WHO HAD 14 TALES (1988)

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Three articles about Lilian and her books that have appeared in recent magazines:

"Who's Who in THE CAT WHO Books" by Phil Maggitti in Cats Magazine, September, 1988.

Murder Ad Lib - Interview: Lilian Jackson Braun by Ellen Nehr, Mystery Scene, Issue No. 17, September/October, 1988.

"Cats and Capers" by Judy Wertheimer in Cat Fancy, May, 1987.



