

'Clarice and Friends' is rock DJ's ode to long lost pets and supporting fans

BY Amy Sacks

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Saturday, June 18th 2011, 4:00 AM

Veteran classic rock deejay [Maria Milito](#) was devastated when her 16-year-old pug, Clarice, passed away in 2006, but it wasn't surprising that many of her devoted Q104.3 listeners were there to mend her broken heart.

After all, the "Wonder Dog" had been a regular topic of Milito's on-air chat since Clarice was a spunky young pup.

"The outpouring of support I received from my listeners through their emails helped me so much, so in return, I want to help others in their time of need," said Milito, who is now offering her animal-loving listeners words of comfort and inspiration.

Her new book, "Clarice and Friends," is a collection of the dozens of letters and emails she received from her fans, many of which described their own personal experiences with the loss of a pet.

Their comforting words helped Milito move forward to adopt her 90-pound boxer, Carmine, "the Big Ragu" from the Animal Care & Control shelter.

"Clarice and Friends," available at [Facebook.com/ClariceandFriends](https://www.facebook.com/ClariceandFriends), is among a roster of new animal-themed tomes by local authors or with a local NYC twist.

"The Dogs of [Central Park](#)" is a beautiful book of photographs that capture dogs of all stripes frolicking in the city's crown jewel. Among the candid images are a Jack Russell terrier by the Alice in Wonderland sculpture, a German shepherd catching a snowball and Broadway songstress [Bernadette Peters](#)' sweet rescued pit bull mix, Gertrude, standing in a field of daffodils. Author [Fran Reisner](#) hails from [Texas](#), but said she spent weeks in the park observing the dogs.

"Chasing Bocker's Tale" is a memoir penned by local shaggy canine star Bocker Labradoodle. With nearly 5,000 friends on his personal Facebook page and a starring film role opposite [Julia Roberts](#), among other credits, it's fitting that the 7-year-old mutt has his own book. Bocker's memoir tells his amazing journey from rambunctious puppy to stardom and his life as a certified therapy dog. For info,

go to facebook.com/ChasingBockersTale

In "Hooper Finds a Family, A Hurricane Katrina Dog's Survival Tale," (HarperCollins), Manhattanite Jane Paley - and her yellow lab Hooper - explain the horror, loss and recovery of pet abandonment to young kids. Written in Hooper's voice, it tells the story of his experience surviving Katrina and moving to New York City. Proceeds from the book go to Labs4rescue.

"Jilli Dog: The Little Dog That Made Mr. Kranby Smile" (Team Jilli Dog) is a sweet illustrated story about a little boy and his Yorkie who reach out to comfort an old man. The story is based on author Rick Caran's own real-life experience with his therapy dog - and world-class trick dog - Jilli, a 5-pound Yorkie he rescued from the streets of New York.

Pet lifestyle guru, animal advocate and Animal Fair editor Wendy Diamond penned the forward on two books for summer inspiration: "Chicken Soup for the Soul: What I Learned from the Cat" and "Chicken Soup for the Soul: What I Learned from the Dog." Match them with her go-to lifestyle guide, "It's a Dog's World: The Savvy Guide to Four-Legged Living" for perfect beach reading."

Today, instead of reading about birds, fly over to a fund-raiser for the city's first wildlife rehabilitation center. The Wild Bird Fund has signed a lease for a space in Manhattan and now it needs funds for supplies and medical expenses. The Wild Bird Fund Takes Flight fund-raiser will be held today from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Boat Basin Café, W. 79 St. in Manhattan. Tickets are \$20, kids get in free.