



Hi, my name is Randi Bildner. I've always been passionate about animals...doing my share here and there, but my introduction as a full-fledged animal activist seemed to have been something akin to a whirlwind guided by a higher force. Several years ago, I was one of those people still searching to fulfill my dream. I knew that animals would be involved but not quite sure how, or to what degree. I had been an elementary school teacher in New York City with a focus on Humane Education. There I co-authored a curriculum currently utilized by the NYC Humane Education Department. I continued as a classroom teacher, but schedule and monetary constraints did not allow for the important work that needed to be done in this area.

No Turning Back

The moment that changed my life was the day I met an Angel. This was the day I had my first face-to-face up close and personal encounter with a pit bull. While this first encounter was not exactly a planned occurrence, it was one that I will always be grateful for. The day was met with a series of chaotic events and serendipitous meetings with other kindred spirits. Angel, as she rightfully came to be named, immediately led me to another female pit bull, this one was pregnant, fearful, and in dire need of help. The stars continued to be aligned just right that day—by the grace of good fortune something nearing the impossible happened—two pit bulls, found their way and were placed into the loving arms of a local rescue.

In the interim I read everything I possibly could about these dogs. Enthralled and both fascinated I read through an emotional rollercoaster of information. At this point I decided that I was going to adopt one of the new puppies born at the wonderful rescue that saved Angel and her

Writer Randi Bildner Joins Animal World USA

friend in need. Several weeks passed and I went home with my pit bull, a red-nosed, fawn and white bundle of joy; L'I Teddy Lew—and life would never be the same.

Life with Teddy-Lew led me into a new world, one of joy as I got to know this wonderful new dog and his never ending antics, it also led me into frightening and unfamiliar territory. Life with a pit bull took me directly into a world that the uninformed feared—a world of extreme prejudice. As fate would have it, my little dog also led me toward a purpose; he gave direction to my life. It became important to me for the world to get to know and understand this poorly maligned "breed" and the atrocities they faced. It became my mission to learn everything I could about pit bulls and to share this information with others. I managed to get the word out wherever I could but it wasn't until another life changing event occurred that it would be evident as to exactly how I could best help the animal kingdom.

The Winds of Change

Hurricane Katrina was the dynamic force that guided me directly toward my calling to help animals. In 2005, while residing in South Florida, I read about Hurricane Katrina victim William Morgan in a local newspaper. The article stated that Mr. Morgan was taken by helicopter to The Veterans Administration Hospital in Miami but was forced to leave his dog behind. It was mentioned that the dog was Mr. Morgan's only companion and that Mr. Morgan was quite distressed about his situation. A phone call, filled with silent wishes of hope that all was well and the two had been reunited, was short lived upon my conversation with this eloquent man.

Saddened by this news, I started an intensive internet and telephone search to find the missing animal. Incredibly, my efforts paid off when Best Friends Animal Society located Mr. Morgan's dog, Morgan Lafayette; a joyful reunion was arranged between the two. The story captured the interest of Animal Planet where it was featured on their special, Animal Planet Heroes: Hurricane Reunions, broadcast in November 2005. This event was also the impetus to my new career as a writer for Best Friends Animal Society.

I created several websites though Best Friend's Animal Society's Network. The most popular, "The Pit Stop," became a vehicle where I could write about the many challenges pit bulls faced. There I penned articles on Breed Specific Legislation and why it doesn't work and co-created and co-wrote a series about fatal dog attacks with forensic and animal aggression expert Jim Crosby, entitled CSI: Dogs.

And now, I am very proud and pleased to announce that my experience has led me here to Animal World USA. I am very thankful and excited to join this progressive magazine where I am honored to be able to continue my work for animals with a focus on pit bulls and other misunderstood breeds. I am also happy to announce the continuation of the series CSI:Dogs!

Randi currently lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico with her three dogs, where she is a freelance writer and creator of the bullybeat.org. She also is an events volunteer for Kindred Spirits Animal Society, an elder-care, hospice and rest home for dogs, horses and fowl.