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- [pet gear](#)
- [links](#)
- [contact](#)



Books! Books! Prepare for your winter reading

October 11, 2007

Why is summer reading such a big deal? Winter is when I get all my big reading done.

When the weather is warm and the days are long, there's always something great to do, usually with the dogs. Like hike along the river, work in the garden — all the animals help with that — visit with friends on the patio over pizza. Who wants to sit still when the weather's nice?



But come fall, I stack up the reading and clean the pet hair off the big cozy chair. The weather is starting to cool (well, not that much — this *is* California), and I've already started reading. And in this, I'm not alone.

Christie and I have already weighed in on "[Redemption: The Myth of Pet Overpopulation and the No Kill Revolution in America](#)." Nathan Winograd's call for the end to "business as usual" in the nation's animal shelters. I keep bringing this book up because I truly cannot remember anything that has so dramatically altered my point of view on anything — nor another book that me so excited to think of what *real reform* can do to save the lives of pets. We've written about the book [here on the blog](#), for an upcoming Pet Connection page for [our newspaper clients through our syndicator](#), [Universal Press](#), and Christie has written about it for [her column](#) for the San Francisco Chronicle's SFGate.com Web site.

It gets ugly real quick when you start talking about the no-kill revolution, since it threatens the fund-raising machines that are many national animal-advocacy groups, and will make even the most dedicated and caring shelters directors and staffers look at their hands and see blood on them. No wonder they're lashing out, and who can blame them for it? Group think is powerful stuff. Christie and I both have had lots of mud flung on us — during the pet food recall we sure got used to it — but I can't even imagine what Nathan Winograd's e-mail inbox looks like. Hate mail out the wazoo, no doubt.

In the last couple of days, two of my favorite, most thought-provoking bloggers have picked up on "[Redemption](#)." On [Terrierman](#), Patrick takes a [point by point look](#) at the issues and Winograd's arguments on how and why things must change. It's long, but good to the last word. Luisa on [Lassie Get Help](#) takes just the aspect of "Redemption" that deals with [the particular challenges of pit bulls](#). Read 'em both, but don't settle for the short takes, no matter how worthy. But the book. *Buy. The. Book.*

The other great read of the season (so far) is "[The Dog Wars](#)," Donald McCaig's splendidly written and utterly fascinating look at the fight of working border collie owners to get the American Kennel Club to leave their breed alone. The working BC crowd lost, and so now we have working stock dogs and what the working stock dog folks call "Barbie Collies." (They're gorgeous and still smarter than the average dog, but they are not working dogs.) [Luisa](#) and [Patrick](#) have written about the book, as has Christopher at [Border Wars](#) (his take is a bit different, and he and Patrick curled lips at one another earlier in the week). Christie says she has already finished it and promises to blog about it soon. I'm three-quarters through and loving every word.

And, um, folks, please don't forget that Dr. Marty Becker and I have [three new books out](#), too. I think they're pretty darn wonderful, too, but I may be a little bit biased. They're in the "light read" category, but they are jam-packed with the results of months and months of research and interviewing the top experts in every field.

Plus, they're a fun read, and we'll [give you a free bookmark](#) if you just send us an envelope.

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Filed under: [No Kill](#), [Books](#), [animals: pit bull](#), [animals:general](#), [animals: pets](#) — Gina Spadafori @ 4:10 pm

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1. I highly recommend "Merle's Door – Lessons from a Free Thinking Dog" by Ted Keracote (sp?)

It is non fiction describing the life of a dog he found (or maybe found him) on a rafting trip out west. The author relates

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