

SUNDAY PIONEER PRESS

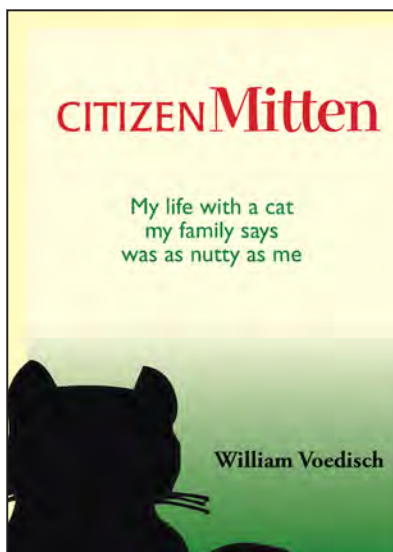
Sunday, September 13, 2009

Books this week } **Bill Voedisch**

Any book that includes “The Rainbow Bridge” is worth reading. And Bill Voedisch, bless his animal-loving heart, includes this anonymous poem about the reuniting of deceased animals and owners in his debut book, “Citizen Mitten,” a chatty remembrance of a cat who had a special place in his life (and bed).

Voedisch, a Marine on St. Croix resident who’s retired from West Publishing, learned to love cats because his dad had one named Buttons. So, when Bill’s future wife found a little orange ball of a kitten in the laundry room of her apartment, Mitten and Voedisch bonded for life. For a while, the family lived in the Laurel Apartments across from the Commodore Hotel in St. Paul. Their family eventually included other cats, as well as dogs, and Voedisch sort of meanders around in their lives without a whole lot of linear thinking. He recalls the time Mitten got caught in the freezer going after a fish and how the little cat hated

winter. There are asides about humans, too, like his recollection of those old X-ray machines in children’s shoe departments where you could see the bones of your foot.



Reading “Citizen Mitten” (East Wind Ink, \$14.95) is like having a cup of coffee with the author, who would probably keep filling your cup. If you want to see what he and Mitten look like, there’s a whole section of color photos of the Voedisches and their animal companions.

Voedisch and his wife, Laurie, are active in We Can Ride, a therapy program through which they teach horseback riding to kids and adults with disabilities at their farm, East Wind.

The author will sign copies of his book about Mitten, who died in 2000, from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday at Valley Bookseller, 217 N. Main St., Stillwater.

– Mary Ann Grossman