



# CatTALK

*A Publication of the Cat Fanciers' Association*  
Volume 10 | Issue 1 | February 2020



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## A Decade of Cat Talk

*Teresa Keiger, Editor*

It's hard to believe that Cat Talk is ten years old with this issue, but here we are! I've been proud to watch this magazine grow, and proud of its staff who continue to deliver its diverse content every issue.

Jodell Raymond was the first managing editor, with Mary Kolencik and Monte Phillips as co-editors. Bob Mathas, Katherine Bock, and Cathy Scarbrough completed the original team. They began the preparations for the magazine in 2010 and produced the first issue in February 2011. I was not involved with the difficult task of the initial planning but was brought on board for design and article consultation, and also designed the logo. I was soon writing and creating artwork on a regular basis.

The early issues had their challenges. We were all finding our way and determining the magazine's voice. We tried various feature ideas. Some lasted for a while, several did not. Layout was initially done by an outside firm, then brought into Central Office, and given to me in September 2012. By the spring of 2013, "real life" was providing Mary with extra challenges, and she stepped away as editor. Monte was more involved with articles on show rules rather than the magazine and also moved away from editing. Later, the board decided that his show rules reports were more appropriate and would appear more quickly in the CFA Newsletter. After briefly serving as co-editor with Mary, I became editor.

It was at this time that the Cat Talk staff expanded, with several more writers

coming on board, as well as a dedicated copyediting staff. Cathy has remained with us from the beginning. Current writers Kathi Hoos and Ann Strople came aboard about this time as well. Laurie Coughlan, Barbara-Stone Newton, and Iris Zinck joined the staff in 2014. Candilee Jackson joined us in 2015. Many other talented writers and editors have contributed to Cat Talk along the way, including Ronna Colilla, Judy Gunby, Lauri Henry, Jane Ramey, and Lisa-Maria Padilla, who left us when "real life" had other plans for them. Jacqui Bennett has also had to step back from writing, but is still planning to occasionally contribute her witty pieces. We lost Shelly Ducharme and Kris Ballentine from the magazine and the cat fancy far too early.

I include this back history to honor those who helped to build this magazine early on, but also to demonstrate that Cat Talk has continued to grow and evolve with the help of its staff and of other contributors. Indeed, I am always astounded and pleased at the dedication of our all-volunteer staff, and the caliber of work that they do. For their commitment and professionalism, I thank every member of Cat Talk's staff.

What lies in the future for Cat Talk? Much of that depends on our readers. We are always open to suggestions for material and ideas. And of course, always looking for more writers! I still have Mary K emailing me now and again with good article ideas, and I invite all our readers to do the same. I would also invite you to help us grow by gifting a subscription or perhaps giving your vet your already-read issue.

Thank you for being a Cat Talk reader. Here's to our next ten years!

## On Our Cover

Front cover: British Shorthair GP Starbeam Tumford helps Cat Talk celebrate our Tenth Anniversary. Breeder: Erin-Dale Cutchen Owner: Mollie Shutt. Original photo: Mollie Shutt

# News

## CFA Presence at Pittsburgh Pet Expo



The Pittsburgh Pet Expo, held on November 15-17, featured the CFA Booth and the Great Lakes Region cat show. As spectators arrived at the CFA booth area, they were welcomed by staff members Allene Tartaglia, Amber Goodright, Desiree Bobby, and Jo Ann Miksa-Blackwell. Jim Flanik also assisted in welcoming the public and managed the process of keeping other animals out of the cat show area. The Pet Me Cats were very busy throughout the expo, and spectators patiently waited in lines to pet the cats. After spectators learned about CFA, they moved toward the Feline Agility Ring and the cat show. Special thanks to Jill Archibald and Niki Feniak for bringing CFA Feline Agility to the Pittsburgh Pet Expo.

## CFA Reaches New Heights

Fifty-three stories to be exact at a cat show in the Citic Plaza in Shanghai January 4-5. The Houg Kou district government helped to procure the location.

Exhibitors (and their cats) had a spectacular view of the Shanghai skyline all weekend.



## 2019 Breed Popularity by Region

Preliminary numbers on breed registrations show variations of breeds' popularity across CFA geographic regions, with the Exotic being the only breed in the top three in every region. The widespread popularity of the Ragdoll in China and the International Division pushed it to the top of all registrations.

Thank you, Dick Kallmeyer, for these figures.

Regions 1-7		Region 8		Region 9		China		International		Total	
Persian	22.83%	Exotic	22.83%	Exotic	33.90%	Ragdoll	62.78%	Maine Coon	26.98%	Ragdoll	42.68%
Maine Coon	14.61%	Maine Coon	13.98%	Persian	24.54%	British SH	12.11%	Exotic	17.21%	Exotic	12.18%
Exotic	9.39%	NFC	10.71%	Abyssinian	12.47%	Exotic	8.81%	Ragdoll	15.95%	British SH	8.63%

## CFA Has an App for That CFA CATS

CFA's very own app, CFA CATS, is finally here! Developed by Desiree Bobby, CFA's Director of Marketing, this tool benefits both spectators and exhibitors, while promoting CFA, pedigreed breeds, and cat shows. Clubs can use it to both help promote their show by mentioning it in their show advertisements and suggest at the show entrance that spectators download it so they can learn and enjoy the show more. "The CFA CATS App is designed as a tool for CFA exhibitors and spectators visiting our shows. Currently, the app provides easy access to our guides, show rules, breed descriptions, and standards, but stay tuned. With over 60% of our CFA family using mobile devices, it makes great sense for us to provide all the info they need into the palms of their hands. We hope to add some fun interactive features in the future as well," said Desiree.



Spectators can easily access photos and information about all of CFA's recognized breeds, making it the perfect tool to find out more about the breeds that they see at shows. There's also a list of FAQs for spectators, explaining how cat shows operate. The show guide benefits both spectator and exhibitors, as it lists all upcoming shows, locations, and judges.

Exhibitors will have ready access to both current CFA show rules and all breed standards. There's even a point calculator for determining both grand and national/regional points.

The app is available for both the iOS and Android systems as a free download in the Apple App Store and via Google Play. Simply search for "CFA CATS" to find it.



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# The Use of Melatonin as Birth Control in Female Cats

Lucy Drury

“My girl kept me up all night long! What can I do to stop the howling? I need some sleep!” says the newbie breeder.

“Have you tried giving her melatonin?” says the experienced breeder. “It really knocks mine out of heat in a hurry!”

Wander a show hall in the late winter to early spring and you are likely to overhear a similar conversation before very long. Most female cats are not bashful about announcing their availability during estrus (“heat”), and their continual howls can leave a new breeder—or even an experienced one—wondering why they ever though breeding cats was a good idea.

It’s not just the noise that makes frequent heat cycles without a pregnancy a bad idea; they can be detrimental to the prospective queen’s health. Repeated heat cycles can result in the formation of cysts in the lining of the uterus, known as cystic endometrial hyperplasia, which not only can be painful for the cat and reduce fertility, they are also prone to bacterial infection, particular while the cervix is open during the heat cycle and mating. This is known as pyometra, a severe uterine infection that is difficult to treat and can lead to infertility, spontaneous abortion, sterility, and even death in an afflicted queen. Queens with strong heat cycles in show halls can be problematic for both their handler and their neighbors. Their calls and their pheromones are stress-inducing for neighboring cats, particularly adult males, not to mention the girls themselves. At best, the cycling cat and her neighbors may become a little difficult to handle; at worst, someone could get bitten.

Breeders hold off mating females for a variety of reasons: the female is younger than desirable to become a mother; the owner would like to the title the girl before mating her; family or workplace demands dictate that it would be prudent to wait. Unfortunately, finding an FDA-approved temporary birth control solution for cats in the United States is not an easy task. It’s not such things don’t exist. they do, but there are challenges present in contraceptives that suppress the estrous cycle such as orally administered progestins (side effects) and Suprelorin, a long-term gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) agonist implant (unpredictability of return of estrous and limited availability)<sup>1</sup>. Because of this, many breeders have turned to the naturally occurring hormone, melatonin, to curb their female’s heat cycles.

## Melatonin and the Feline Reproductive Cycle

Melatonin is found in both plants and animals. In animals, it regulates the sleep-wake cycle, and the duration of melatonin secretion is proportional to the length of the night. Because cats are a long-day breeder species, meaning that ovarian activity starts during early springtime as the days lengthen, melatonin production decreases in cats as the day lengthens, which stimulates the increase of sexual steroid hormones.<sup>1</sup>



It has been known for decades that melatonin effectively inhibits ovarian activity in cats. In the 1980s, studies were conducted on injectable and oral melatonin. Researchers discovered that while impractical for the average cat owner, five-milligram injections of melatonin every other day effectively inhibited ovarian activity. However, four milligrams given orally daily had little effect. While higher doses of 30 milligrams per day did produce measurable changes in the queen’s estrus cycle, the response was not uniform and the length of suppression greatly varied.

More recently, melatonin implants in varying dosages have been studied, and in most cases, when timed properly, have proven to prolong the cat’s naturally occurring anestrus period. However, as with oral melatonin, individual responses varied greatly. It was also noted in one study that all eight test subjects demonstrated some level of uterine pathology, such as uterine thickening, endometrial hyperplasia, and cyst formation. While there was no direct evidence that the implants were responsible for these changes in the uterus, the possibility needs to be considered and the queens monitored.<sup>1</sup>

## Summary

The use of melatonin in queens, if timed and administered properly, can be an effective way to delay the onset of the estrus or “heat” cycle in queens. However, it should always be remembered that the use of melatonin disrupts the natural reproductive cycles of the queens, and the possibility of undesirable side effects, such as delayed return of the heat cycle or pathological changes to the uterus should be CAREFULLY considered. It should also be noted that use of melatonin to suppress estrus is an “off-label” use in cats in nearly every country. Given the relatively low demand for a temporary, non-surgical solution to preventing pregnancy in cats it is unlikely that a pharmaceutical company will make the significant effort required to gain approval for use in this manner anytime soon. As always, consult your veterinarian before using one of these protocols.

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# Playing Matchmaker



## *Picking the Right Pairs for Your Breeding Program*

Lucy Drury

**W**ant to make a veteran breeder wince? “Ooh” and “aah” over their beautiful cats, ask a lot of good questions about their breed, tell them how you’ve never seen this breed before, how much you love it, that you’ve only had rescue cats before now, and then follow up with the question, “Do you sell any kittens for breeding?” Even if you are the type of breeder who loves to get newbies off to a great start, your first response should be something along the lines of offering an altered kitten or cat to show so they can learn about the breed and a brief discussion of what goes into planning and building a quality breeding program—particularly how to pick the right sire and dam for their first litter.

### *A Breed Standard? What’s That?*

Where does one start, though, when deciding who the lucky feline couple will be? Studying the breed standard is a great place to start. A Breed Standard is a set of observable physical characteristics, i.e., the phenotype, that a group of experts have defined by a written standard. Both new and experienced breeders need to have a solid understanding of what that standard is for their chosen breed. For the most part, writing a breed standard is a somewhat arbitrary and artistic exercise, and standards between the various pedigreed cat registries can and do vary, even if they are calling a breed by the same name. Furthermore, standards can be changed by their governing body as circumstances dictate.

You may have some trouble convincing a new—or even an experienced breeder—that following the breed standard is a necessary requirement. “I don’t care about show quality”, they might say, “so why do I have to worry about the breed standard? I’m just breeding them to sell as pets.”

The truth of the matter is, if they are not going to pay any attention to the breed standard, then they cannot claim they are breeding in the interest of breed preservation! They are just randomly breeding domestic cats. That doesn’t mean there isn’t room for individual interpretation, as standards are full of words that are more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Clearly, though, if a breed standard calls for a broad, rounded ear and the cat you are considering adding to your breeding program has a narrow, pointed ear, it is probably not the one you want, no matter how much you love its color and temperament. While there may be disagreements between experienced, knowledgeable breeders on what the ideal looks like, e.g., how round is too round and how broad is broad enough, few standards have measurably quantifiable characteristics. So, while there are often distinctive looks from cattery to cattery, they all still arguably meet the standard. This highlights the need to show your breed if you really want to learn about the standard. It is not enough to read the standard and have other people show the cats for you. As one veteran judge stated, you can read a standard all day and not

know how to interpret it correctly until someone who understands the breed goes over it with you with one or more live examples of the breed. Visiting other catteries of your breed is helpful, but the perspective is going to be narrower than one you would get by attending shows.

### *I’ve Learned the Breed Standard—Can I Go Buy That Kitten on Facebook Now?*

Not so fast. You have a few more critical things to consider. That kitten may look perfect and be a beautiful, sweet example of the breed—for now. What do you know about the parents? Do you know what they looked like as kittens?

Even more important, what do you know about the parents’ pedigrees and health screens? While it’s always a good idea to ask for those even if you are buying a kitten as a pet, it becomes vitally important to know about ancestry and inheritable health issues in the breeding lines when contemplating the purchase of a breeding animal. Ask to see veterinary records of the parents and test results for screens in breeds with known inheritable defects, such as Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM) and Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD). Having a parent genetically test as a carrier for an inheritable defect may not automatically disqualify a kitten for your breeding program, but you will want to test the kitten for the defect before you make any final decisions. If the kitten tests positive, then you have a difficult decision to make, particularly if everything else is “right” about the kitten. For example, that beautiful girl who would make a perfect match with your best boy tested as a carrier for pyruvate kinase deficiency (“PK def”). As a carrier only, the kitten will never develop this disease as it is a recessive gene - the kitten must inherit the defect from both parents to develop the disease itself. If the other parent is not a carrier, then none of the kittens will be develop the disease; however, statistically, half the kittens produced by the pair will also be carriers.

Why even consider the kitten, then? Why pass on an inheritable defect if you know it’s there?

### *Genetic Diversity*

That question leads us into our next point when selecting parents: genetic diversity. The more closely related the parents are, the more chance you have of producing a kitten with an inheritable health issue. In a prior issue of CatTalk, we discussed the Coefficient of Inbreeding (COI), how to calculate it, and how it can be useful in selecting parents, so we won’t rehash those issues here except to say that the lower the COI, the less closely related the pair. The difficulty with COI, however, is it doesn’t always tell the whole story,



particularly if it is only calculated from a four-generation pedigree. Go back a few more generations, and you might find a lot of the same names behind those great-grandparents. By its very nature, breeding pedigreed animals is a form of inbreeding. In most cases, a breed was determined by a group of humans getting together and segregating animals of the same species by observable characteristics long before genetic testing was “a thing”. Breeds and the written standard that goes with them are arbitrary, human-manufactured classifications. Breeders who are competing in exhibitions or simply striving to breed the “perfect” specimen of their breed, often deliberately select for recessive traits, such as dilute colors or classic tabby, or strive to have only homozygous forms of a dominant trait (both copies of the gene are dominant). These decisions greatly narrow the available animals for their breeding pool. Such a reduction of genetic variance in a population created by a reduction in the original number of animals available to reproduce is called a population or genetic bottleneck.

While this can fix desired traits in your lines, keep in mind that it also increases the risks of rare but deleterious mutations manifesting themselves in a population. The effects of population bottlenecks in dogs has been well studied and documented. Heart disease, blindness, cancers, hip dysplasia, cataracts and other genetic defects are a result of declining genetic diversity in a population.<sup>1,2</sup> New breeders who are choosing their foundation cats need to be particularly wary of this problem. It does not take long for a prolific and popular stud to leave his mark on a population, good and bad, so pedigrees need to be researched thoroughly beyond

the four-generation chart to determine whether a potential breeding pair might be more closely related than the COI as calculated from four generations might suggest. Genetic diversity is so important to a viable population that using carriers of certain defects as one parent may be acceptable if using that cat in your breeding program helps the genetic diversity overall.

If there's not a wealth of pedigree information beyond four generations, what then? Pick your pair and hope? Not necessarily, if you're willing to spend a few bucks. Given how costly it can be if you don't get a good match, genetic testing can be well worth the investment. At least one genetics lab offers comprehensive genetic trait, disease and diversity testing for less than \$100. The diversity testing will compare the diversity of your cat's genetic make to the average for their breed and the cat population at large. It will also do test comparisons of potential mates if the owners wish to participate. The more diverse the genetic makeup, the better the match, at least from a genetic health perspective.

### *What's Your Blood Type?*

An oft-overlooked trait when selecting breeding pairs is blood type. Just as in humans, incompatible blood types between mother and offspring can be deadly. One of the most dangerous scenarios occurs when a blood type “B” queen who is mated with a type “A” tom gives birth to type “A” kittens. “B” queens carry naturally occurring anti-A antibodies, which are present in the colostrum with all the other maternal antibodies. Unfortunately, the anti-A antibodies attack and destroy the kitten's “A” red

blood cells. If not immediately managed at birth, the condition is almost always fatal. It is best to avoid the scenario if possible and pick parents of compatible blood types.

### *Does Color Matter?*

When it comes to selecting your breeding pairs, except for your personal preference, probably not. Consult your breed standard. What does it say? What colors are allowed? What outcrosses are allowed? If the breed standard says it's okay, it's okay. If it's not, it's not. This goes for any trait. Remember what we discussed at the beginning of this article; a breed standard is a set of observable characteristics determined by a group of people knowledgeable about the species and breed being described. Yes, I know, your favorite breed may be one that allows most colors and patterns, but you could well discover that some breeders won't allow you to breed their cats of one color to a cat that expresses a different color, or even possibly carries certain colors and patterns based on their pedigree, because they believe cats of certain colors are not “pure” representatives of the breed, despite what the breed standard says.

Since the purpose of this article is to help the reader make quality decisions regarding breeding pairs and not prove or disprove the genetic ancestry of a breed, consider this: the more genetically diverse a population is, the genetically healthier it is. That means less structural issues, less cancer, less autoimmune diseases, healthier and more viable litters. The benefits of a genetically diverse population are well studied and documented. By breeding pedigreed cats, a breeder is already lowering the genetic diversity by excluding all other breeds from their breeding program. Add in the obvious reasons for exclusion—health defects, bad temperament, poor type—and you narrow it down even further. On top of that, a breeder wants to sell you a kitten using a contract that further restricts you on potential breeding partners for your kitten based on criteria that has nothing to do with the health of the future litters or maintaining the breed standard. Think carefully before putting yourself under this form of bondage, particularly if you are just starting your breeding program. Research the pedigrees of the cats in the cattery carefully—not just the kitten you are thinking about buying but relatives, too. Is there evidence of a lot of inbreeding? Are



I don't care what Tinder says,  
we still have to look at inbreeding coefficients.

you going to be able to easily find an unrelated mate that meets the restrictions? If the answer is yes to the first and no to the second, you may want to find a breeder who is less restrictive. Even if you are not a fan of a certain color, some of your kitten buyers might be, so just sell the ones you don't like rather than trying to purge the color from your pedigree.

These are just a few of the considerations a breeder should think about when selecting a breeding pair. A good mentor who will look at potential candidates, then frankly critique and discuss them with you is an invaluable resource. Producing healthy kittens should be the main factor in choosing parents, followed by good temperament and good type. Color and pattern should be the last thing to consider. As many breeders have put it, you have to build the house before you paint it.

## Just Not That Into Her

### Tales of Reluctant Males

Jacqui Bennett

It is said that “hell hath no fury like a woman scorned” ... or a lustful queen who is unable to get the desired attention from her chosen suitor. Yes, while a female cat is smart, insistent and sometimes downright violent when it comes to getting what she wants, a male cat can trump her determination with sheer obliviousness. As breeders, we do everything we can to set the mood for the perfect litter of future national winners, but every now and then the right chemistry just does not seem to be in the cards.

#### The Innocence of Youth

An old English saying (as in really old—think “Richard-the-Lion-Hearted-old”) tells us that two virgins in the bedroom is one too many. This is certainly true of cats. Some of the more brilliant activities we've heard about inexperienced toms' performances include:

- Attempted missionary style breeding, which just doesn't tend to work for cats
- A lack of spatial awareness resulting in the attempt to breed the middle of the queen's back
- “Hairdresser Syndrome”, which occurs when the male is more interested in styling her hair and watching “Say Yes to the Dress” than behaving like a normal teenage boy.

Throughout the years, breeders have attempted to remedy the “too many virgins” scenario with strategies such as:

- The hands-on approach, where human mom actually positions the two cats to breed in the hope they will figure it out from there
- Playing music by Barry White
- Big Screen Kitty Porn
- Oysters

These have met with mixed levels of success. But most agree that the best solution to this problem is— avoid it! A first breeding should, if possible, take place with a proven male or female.

#### The Dominatrix

Sometimes the queen is “just too much woman” for the boy to handle. This can be detected by observing the male cowering underneath the litter box while the girl prances around in thigh-high boots and a bustier, snapping her “cat-o-nine tails.” This situation is usually not salvageable and the boy will likely need therapy.

#### The Oedipus Complex

Sometimes a breeding is just “not to be.” There is one well known case of a national winning male who would only breed his mother. No girl could measure up to mama and even mama only gave birth to a single kitten.

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Another *Cat Talk* staffer tells the tale of a young male who was destined to be shipped overseas at the age of 14 weeks. Shipping was delayed two weeks because of a minor infection but did take place successfully. It was not until Junior was happily settled into his new home that it became apparent he had left his mom with a farewell gift. We'll draw a veil over the challenges of translating the details of this situation to the new owners and arranging to register the litter, but eventually all worked out well.

Breeding is a mixture of planning and luck which could put a Vegas poker champ to shame. The best advice is to select your breeding pairs carefully, ensure they are introduced slowly and pray to the kitty gods that the stars align! Because, sometimes, “He's just not that into you”.



# Pat Maddox

Candilee Jackson

As the staff of Cat Talk looks back on the one-hundred-and-thirteen year life of the Cat Fanciers' Association, a number of things stand out. First, of course, was the acceptance and recognition of a variety of cat breeds over the years, as well as the achievements of those breeds. Less obvious, but equally—if not more—important are the many people who have labored hard to win not only the hearts of judges, but the public as well. This writer has penned them as “CFA Classics,” diligent, hard-working folks who have been the backbone of our organization.

Once such “CFA Classic” is Patricia Maddox of Nashport, Ohio, and her Siamese cattery, Pattam. Pat had her start in cats back in 1984 when she and her husband, Bob, “rescued their first Siamese from a pet shop.” Pat remembers that the cat, whom they named Ming Lee, “was a birthday present from my husband, and he had paid \$250 for him. I never dreamed we would pay that much for a cat!” Unfortunately, the pet shop proved to be infested with fleas. After a hard-fought battle with Ming’s unwelcome companions, which included many flea baths and bombing the house, Pat decided to enter Ming in kitten class in her first show. It was hosted by the Ohio State Persian Club in Columbus, Ohio, in December 1985. She also registered her cattery, Pattam, at around the same time.

Little did Pat realize that this first show entry was opening a whole new chapter in her life journey: breeding and exhibiting Siamese cats. A childhood memory of attending a cat show at the Ohio State Fair in 1956 provided the impetus for this new hobby. “I was so impressed by the beautiful pedigreed cats there. I really loved looking at them. I think, in my head, I decided back then that someday I might show cats.”

She began touring the show circuit and meeting people, including Nancy Lince of Nanjolin Cattery, who sold Pat her first breeding female, a seal point. Nanjolin Sweet Sasha of Pattam gave Pattam Cattery four litters between 1986 and 1990. Out of Sasha came GP Pattam’s Special Edition (a seal point male, a.k.a “Christopher”) who earned them their first grand premiership title. “This was so much fun for us, and we were excited to be invited to the first CFA Invitational Show in Saint Louis in the fall of 1987.” Because cats had to be invited to attend this show, Pat was over the moon when her invitation arrived. This show opened many doors for Pat as she met Siamese breeders from all over the United States and Canada.

“Needless to say, I was hooked on the hobby of showing cats,” Pat remembered. “I enjoyed breeding and showing my home-bred Siamese. I bred my first grand champion about three years later, a beautiful blue point female named GC Pattam’s Blue Fantasy. She was so lovely and sweet, and I got many compliments on her from other Siamese breeders. Breeding and showing was definitely in my blood. Blue Fantasy



was Second Best Siamese in the Great Lakes Region that year,” she recalls.

Traveling to shows and visiting with prospective pet owners opened doors to kitten buyers with whom Pat continues to visit online. “It is always fun to meet pet buyers and to know they enjoy the kittens they obtain from us,” continued Pat.

In 1991, Pat joined the National Siamese Cat Club. Established in 1946, this club is one of the oldest clubs in CFA. The NSCC



near right: Luke Skywalker

at top: Pat and GC, RW Pattam’s Tom Jones  
far right: Pat at the Great Lakes Regional Banquet, receiving her regional award for GC, RW Pattam Luke Skywalker.



was another learning opportunity for Pat; she pored over the club's newsletter, which featured breed news, new grands and winning Siamese and was edited by Christine Fitch of North Carolina. When the time came for a new editor, Pat volunteered: "Since I had gotten good grades in English in high school, and I'd always liked to write, I offered to take over the newsletter." Twenty-seven years later, Pat is still producing a lovely multi-page publication, now in full color.

At the beginning of Pat's tenure as editor, she inherited a twelve-page, black and white newsletter. Using a manual typewriter, she pounded out three issues a year. Knowing a computer would make her publishing life a great deal easier, Pat acquired her first one in 1999. It was not long before Pat located a printing company who could print out her creative efforts in color and on slick paper. She now had a professional looking newsletter which went out to over sixty people. Betsy Arnold, NSCC president, and the club members honored Pat with an award for her dedication to producing the newsletter, another example of her love for her hobby.

In chatting with Pat, this writer enjoyed Pat's comment, "All of us breeders and cat show exhibitors are a special breed ourselves." She quickly honed in on our

responsibilities to be ethical and above-board as representatives of the Cat Fanciers' Association: raising healthy cats; keeping our catteries clean; visiting veterinarians regularly; vetting responsible cattery help; traveling to shows and devoting hours of time to our hobby on top of working full time. Pat was quick to thank her husband, her partner in her cattery operations, for not only his indulgence, but in helping in every aspect of their cattery and show lives.

"There is a camaraderie among the exhibitors at shows," Pat related. "We are all there on a quest to earn points and to reap the rewards at the end of the show season." She loves both the regional and national celebrations at the end of each show season where everyone is celebrated for their part of the hobby.

Pat is very proud of her accomplishments over the past thirty-four years. They include forty-two grand championships and three distinguished merit awards, as well as several regional awards in the Great Lakes Region. Producing and winning at this level takes time and effort, but "it has mainly been a labor of love," stated Pat. Although she has never achieved a national win, she is satisfied with her achievements thus far. As with most people in the hobby, "we are in our sixties and seventies, and we do not have the stamina or funds" to promote a national campaign.



GC, RW Patnam Singin' The Blues

"It has been a great ride, and I love the aspects of breeding and showing," related Pat. When asked what her most important "take-away" from her life in the fancy, Pat stated, "It is hard to fathom quitting a hobby we love so much. Helping our queens with birthing, and seeing new babies born and watching them grow is so wonderful. Watching the kittens develop into future show cats is compelling, but, in the end, it is not only about the cats, but about the people and the experiences along the way."

## Submissions

Cat Talk is always looking for stories and items of interest. Have an idea to contribute? A story that you think our readers might be interested in? A photo that we might be able to use?

We welcome all suggestions.

Please contact Teresa Keiger at  
[tkeiger@cfa.org](mailto:tkeiger@cfa.org)

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# My First Cat

coordinated by Laurie Coughlan

First Cats. We all have that special very first cat—the one that we had as a child, or perhaps the first one when we had a home of our own. Maybe one found us, and we hadn't realized that we needed a cat until then. Or perhaps this special cat was a first rescue, first pedigreed cat or first show cat. These are the stories of some of those special cats.



## Smoky Beginning a Family Legacy

Laurie Coughlan

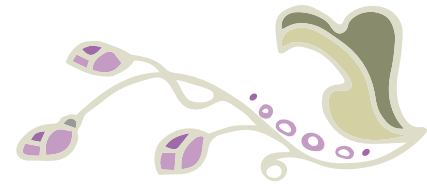
My very first memory is of my cat Smoky lofting herself into my crib to cuddle up next to me. She was my bed cat, friend and guardian for 18 years.

Smoky was born in a warehouse in Chicago. Shortly after my parents decided they could deal with a pet, my father found a friendly stray cat on the way home from work. He proudly presented this cat to my mother, who immediately demanded that he return the obviously nursing mother to her babies. Dad trekked back downtown and knocked on warehouse doors until he found her place and was rewarded with pick of the litter for his trouble.

Smoky was my confidante and a somewhat willing participant in many plays, some involving costumes. She was a faithful guardian, defending me from threats real (moths and mice) or imagined (bedroom monsters). On Halloween when I was three, I went to bed only to have invisible beings (ghosts!) pull down my covers. As I howled for my Mom, Smoky came to my rescue. She jumped on the bed and attacked the string tied to the corner of my sheet, a string that ran to my closet, where my seven-year-old brother was having giggle fits over scaring me.

When I was seven, we moved to the country, where Smoky proved to be an excellent mouser, adjusting well to country life and sometimes falling asleep on my pony's rump. She escorted me everywhere, even trying to follow me on trail rides. Every school day she would wait for my bus at the end of our very long drive. She would jump up to ride on my shoulder and when I reached for the front door, she would walk down my arm and jump into the house to escort me to the kitchen in hopes of receiving an extra meal.

Technically she was not supposed to be an indoor cat, although she spent a lot of time reading with me in the bedroom. In the evening my father would make a big show about putting out the cat. In fact, I often saw him stop and cuddle Smoky, telling her she was a good



kitty, before putting her out the back door. Unbeknownst to my parents, Smoky and I had an arrangement. Placed outside, she just ran around to jump up on the electrical meter next to my window and waited for me to let her back in. We did this regularly, but the jig was up one muddy day when my father noticed the paw prints going up the side of the house to the meter and across the windowsill. Somehow my parents "forgot" to check on the contraband cat every night.

Smoky was far from our only cat, because we lived on a country road that many people thought was a fine place to dump their unwanted cats, often pregnant cats. This was during the 1960s when cats were routinely outdoor pets and pet rescue was a private matter. Smoky had converted us all to dedicated cat people, and we developed a family tradition of taking in strays, spaying and neutering them and finding homes. We could be found on Saturday mornings outside of the grocery store with a box labeled "FREE KITTENS". No one could take a kitten until my mother interviewed and approved a responsible adult in the family. As we took in cats, my mother repeatedly admonished us "Don't name them. You are NOT keeping them!" So, for years we had cats named Grey Kitty and Black/White. Right after we took a school trip to a nuclear power plant, I did break the rules and named one favorite foundling Geiger Counter—because the closer she came to human contact, the louder she purred. She and Smoky became buddies and fellow bed cats.

When I was in junior high, we moved to Virginia, and of course Smoky came with us along with Geiger and Grey Kitty. She readjusted well to suburbia, and regularly helped me with my homework and reading through high school. She seemed in good health, although she had slowed down, when I went off to college. When she died in her sleep on my bed at age 18 it was the heartbreaking end of an era. Smoky left a legacy of a family of committed cat people who went on to rescue strays, trap neuter and release cats in Hawaii, donate to pet rescue, and breed and show in CFA.





When I was growing up, we lived in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio and had never had any stray animals in our neighborhood. My dad had been raised in Butler, Pennsylvania. The plan had always been to move back to Butler but it never materialized because he died on August 10, 1966 when I was only years old. He had promised me I could have my cat when we moved to Pennsylvania, him thinking barn cat, me thinking in-the-house cat. Two months after his death, a red tabby cat wandered into our yard from out of nowhere. My mom had always felt that my dad sent Tiger to me keep his promise to me. My love of cats had begun long before this, but Tiger was my first cat in a long line of cats sharing my life.

## *Cat Pasha Khepri of Eman, DM*

### **My First Pedigreed Cat**

*Melanie Morgan*

In The Beginning—or perhaps I should say, "Once upon a time"—a silver-haired, green-eyed monster came into our quiet home of three (my husband David, myself, and Tryst, a twelve year-old Devon/Oriental cross) and turned our lives upside down. I had had cats my entire life, David only for the past twelve years or so, but nothing in our experience had prepared us for the utterly captivating, infuriating wonder of our little silver Mau girl. She stole our hearts and never gave them back. Typical parents, we were convinced that she was the most incredible animal to grace this earth.

What to say about our beloved "Pasha K"? She was the one who got us all started. She took a piece of my heart from this earth, and to the day she left me she still made me catch my breath when I caught a glimpse of her out of the corner of my eye. She was dictatorial, stubborn, temperamental, manipulative, and incredibly sweet and affectionate. Intelligence just radiated out of her. She insisted on having her litters on our bed and wanted us to sleep on either side of her and her "brood". In the morning, she loved to wake me with a thorough face washing (her tongue HURT!) and she was the ultimate in a self-taught game of "fetch the tootsie roll."

She ruled our house, and all within it. She was, without question, the alpha female. She could quell even the most aggressive stud



boys with one icy green stare. We called it "the look" and it could make even us back down! She was what is called an "old style traditional" and her body was muscular and rather short coupled. What she lacked in elegance she more than made up for with her simply exquisite head, which she passed to her offspring. Khepri earned the coveted Distinguished Merit title with qualifying offspring from four different litters and three different studs. We are inordinately proud of our first love's accomplishments. She was the beginning of a chain of DM's that stretches to seven generations at this writing.

Khepri had an amazing impact on the breed and on my life. She lived her life as part of the family to the fullest and left her breed a legacy like no other. Her offspring became the foundation for the breed in the U.K., Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and China, and they have contributed to Japan and Canada as well as the United States. I am honored to have shared the precious years we had together with such a special soul, and I remind myself to celebrate the glory and the beauty that I have because of that one little silver-haired, green-eyed monster who changed my life.

*More "first cat" memories to come in future issues of Cat Talk.*

*Have a special first cat memory to share? Please send it to Laurie Coughlan at [lecoughlan@aol.com](mailto:lecoughlan@aol.com)*

What You Don't Know About...

# Maine Coon Cats

## Behind the Gentle Giant

*Candilee Jackson*

Maine Coon Cats seem to WOW their audiences and human families by just being there; one look tells you this is no ORDINARY cat! They are clowns, they are interactive, they chirp like birds or baa like sheep, and are often referred to as the “Saint Bernards” of the cat world.

The official state cat of Maine, the Maine Coon Cat is a native American long-haired cat and is considered a National Treasure. (CFA) These gorgeous, fluffy goofballs have quirky personalities and fur everywhere. This author remembers speaking with exhibitor Wendy Brown as she was putting the final touches on her Maine Coon for the show ring: using a tiny toothed comb, she was carefully combing the tufts of fur between her cat's toes and stated, “Well, you pay for all this fur when you get an MC, so you have to comb out all of those little curls, not only between their legs, but between their toes!”



These beautiful felines come in practically all colors of the genetic rainbow, from solids to tabbies to calicoes, and everything in between. While all Maine Coons Cats have flowing, gorgeous fur which needs daily attention, it is the full, plumed tail and majestic ruff that give this cat a regal look. Maine Coon Cats can weigh-in anywhere from 10-15 pounds (females) to males as large as 30 pounds! As a newbie exhibitor some years back, this writer was amazed to see a huge male silver smoked Maine Coon Cat which was too big for the judge's cage and had to be “presented” to the judge. Following the exhibitor back to the benching area, the cat's owner had to lift the top of the wire enclosure to put the cat back in the show cage as it didn't fit through the door. Indeed, this was the “lord” of all Maine Coon Cats!!

### Interesting Facts

With their lush, shaggy fur, Maine Coon Cats are definitely dressed for the snowy Maine winters: They also have large, tufted paws which act as “snowshoes. Before careful breeding limited the trait, many Maine

Coons had six toes, another genetic mutation that aided traction through the snow. Thick, plumed tails help keep these cats warm when curled up for a nap. Although their coat is almost water repellant, Maine Coon Cats LOVE water, and will not shy away from the bathtub or shower. Many owners tell tales of their Maine Coon Cats taking baths with them! (Fawcett)

For Harry Potter fans, Pebbles, a British Maine Coon Cat, had a featured role in each of the eight J K Rowling films. Discovered in a cattery in southwest England, Pebbles played the role of Mrs Norris, the pet of Hogwart's custodian Argus Filch, and was purrfect in walking across the set and stopping on command. (Fawcett)

Facebook users are enamored of Maine Coon Cats and they are always posting pictures of the largest ones they can find. “Stewie, an eight-year-old Mane Coon Cat,





held the Guinness World Record for the world's longest domestic cat before his death from cancer in 2013." (Fawcett) Stewie measured a whopping 48.5 inches from the tip of his tail to his nose.

Among the more unusual items in the Maine Coon Cat resume is "Little Nicky," who was the first pet animal to be cloned commercially." (Fawcett) Following his passing at age seventeen, his owner "saved his tissue in a gene bank. She paid \$50,000 to have the California-based Genetic Savings and Clone, Inc, transplant Little Nicky's DNA into an egg cell. A surrogate mother cat carried the embryo, and gave birth to a kitten similar in appearance and temperament to the owner's prized kitty." (Fawcett)

## A Little History ...

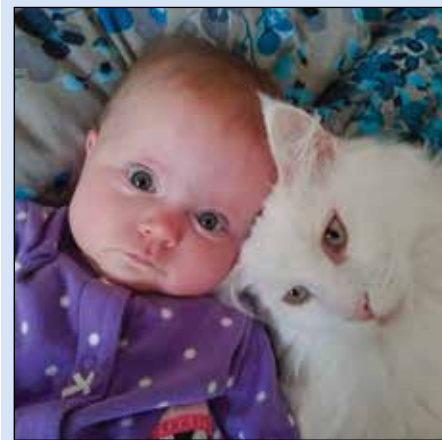
As one of the largest of domestic cats, the Maine Coon Cat is the oldest natural breed in North America, and "...is generally regarded as a native of the State of Maine." (MaineCoonsUSA) These felines "were recognized as a specific breed in 1861 with a twenty-two-pound male called Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines. Most breeders believe that the breed originated in matings between pre-existing short-haired domestic cats and overseas long-haired Angora types introduced by New England seamen, or perhaps long-haired cats brought to America by Vikings." (MaineCoonsUSA)

As America's first indigenous show cat, "a dozen of these down-east, working class heroes were listed in the program of a show held in Boston in January 1878. After years of local competitions and adoration, the Maine Coon Cat was chosen as Best Cat at the first major cat show ever held in

the United States. 'Cosey', a brown tabby female Maine Coon Cat, was awarded this distinction at the Madison Square Garden show held in NYC in May of 1895." The silver collar and medal awarded to Cosey is on display at the CFA Foundation Museum in Alliance, Ohio. (CFA Breeds)

## A History of Myths and Legends

Shrouded in both myths and mists, the lovable Maine Coon cat has many stories regarding its origins, determined by whomever is spinning the tale. The most fantastic of the many stories include the genetically impossible mating of a domestic longhair with raccoons! This fanciful tale appeared when many of the New England Maine Coon Cats at the time were brown tabbies with distinctive rings on their tails. "The Maine Coon Cat also converses occasionally with an endearing trill or chirp, somewhat like the cry of a young raccoon." (CFA Breeds) The most romantic story tells of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, and trusted ship captain, Samuel Clough, who had plotted to spirit the queen from the palace at Versailles, and smuggle her to the New World. Unfortunately, her capture foiled the escape, but not before Captain Clough had loaded his vessel with her personal belongings and six of her pet cats (which were Turkish Angoras). "Captain Clough had to make sail with all haste to escape repercussions for his part in the attempted rescue, and with him went the queen's possessions and the six long-haired cats still in his care. It is assumed that the queen's cats bred with the American cats and voila! the origin of the Maine Coon Cat." (CFA Breeds/Maine Coon Cat Nation)



## Living with Maine Coon Cats

"What do you mean, I'm not allowed on the table?" laughed Susan Norbury, of Nu-coonrzn Cattery in Booneville, Missouri. "Maine Coons of all ages have problems with boundaries. Your personal space is also theirs!" When asked about "all that fur," Susan stated that they vacuum at least every other day, but her favorite thing about breeding is having kittens. Her babies are born in her bedroom, and stay there until they are about thirty days old. "We love having babies and each expected litter is like waiting for Christmas!"

John and Susan Rzyzcki of Broadview Heights, Ohio, own JR Coons Cattery, and claim, "The Maine Coons are living, breathing teddy bears and dearly love their kids." Susan continued, "They have no sense of their size, and you can find several of the big guys sitting on our laps. John is usually sitting under forty pounds of cat every time he sits down." Vacuuming is a major consideration when owning a long-haired





cat, especially one with so much hair! “We do have to vacuum every day,” Susan related, “...and we have had all the carpeting replaced by wood floors, and bought leather furniture instead of upholstered furniture for easier maintenance. Brushing them a few minutes every day helps to mitigate the fur balls blowing around the floor, and they seem to like the attention.”

Their first two Maine Coon Cats enjoyed taking neighborhood walk-about: “People would slow down driving to smile at the sight of us with these two big cats on a harness going for a stroll!” Susan remembered. “We have a large pond in the back yard with quite a few geese in it. The Coons would stalk and leap in the air to catch a full-grown goose. I have no idea what they thought they would do if they caught one. Probably expect me to cook it for them!” laughed Susan.

Teri Matzkin of SaraJen Cattery in Arlington, Virginia, was eager to share a recent email from a new pet owner who had adopted a brown tabby kitten named Mabel. “As to being mis-named, when you look at the attached picture it seems Mayhem may have been a more appropriate (name) for her. She routinely makes a game of her Maine Coon dry food, and we find it under rugs throughout the downstairs. Mabel has more personality than many people we know, and we thoroughly enjoy having her.” Teri was particularly tickled about the kitten having more personality than many people they knew: “That made me chortle!”

Located in Lincoln, Nebraska, Debbie Northrop Hopkins has owned Coonhusker Cattery since 1989. Her Maine Coon Cat, Peggy Sue, engages in what Debbie calls, “Pity Peggy.” “She puts her lead on the table and stares at us like it’s terrible that we are eating, and not sharing with her. She knows our rules prohibit her from being on the table, so this is her compromise,” stated Debbie.

A part of the CFA family since she was just a toddler, Bethany Colilla, Columbus, Ohio, owns Believers Cattery. “I fell in love with the Maine Coon Cat while my dad was working on the judging program. When it came time for me to start my own breeding

program, I had no doubt it would be that breed I had fallen in love with so many years ago. I’ve had several kitties with different personalities. I had one boy who liked to soak his feet in the water bowl, walk to the litter box containing clumping litter and then go back to soaking his feet in the water. He frequently turned his water bowl into a concrete mixer,” remembered Bethany with a smile.

Winnie Owens, a loving pet owner in Cato, New York, is sister to Alexis Mitchell who owns Syracoon Cattery who has bred Maine Coon Cats for over thirty years. “My experience with them has been nothing but wonderful. Sometimes the bigger the cats are, the bigger “baby” they become. They are very dog-like in that they will fetch toys and run to meet you at the door when you come home. They love to lay on a lap or your head. Some like to climb and “ride” on your neck and shoulders. They are very intrusive and will not be ignored. Head butting, rubbing and chirping are typical ways to get you to pay attention and pet them. If you want alone time, you have to close the door behind you!”

“Very inquisitive and persistent, a Maine Coon will try to fit into anything smaller than him/herself. They know where the toy box is and will get a toy and bring it to me to play. They love to give kisses and they are sensitive to human feelings. If you’re crying, they will quietly approach your lap, lay down and give a gentle nudge to your hand. Truly a marvelous breed of cat and I can’t imagine life without one,” stated Winnie.

Moonglade Cattery, owned by Nicole Turk, is located in Cleveland, Ohio. Nicole states, “Maine Coons absolutely want to keep an eye on everything, even sometimes going so far as to getting involved themselves. When people come to my house, there are Maine Coons on the counter by the door waiting to greet them. They reach out with their paws, chirp and trill, to get the visitor’s attention. Typically you don’t get past them without giving them attention. You’ll see them in the front window when you pull up and bam! — they’re at the door when you get there.” Going back to the vacuuming thing, Nicole is one of the lucky ones who owns a Roomba!







Editor's Note: Loud applause and "thank you" goes to Bethany Colilla, Breed Council Secretary, (Believers Cattery), Becky Galloway (Purrtingers Cattery), Debbi Northrop Hopkins (Coonhuskers Cattery), Teri Matzkin (SaraJen Maine Coon Cattery), Susan Norbury, (Nucoonrizzn Cattery), Winnie Owens, Jim and Susan Rzyzyczki (JR Maine Coon Cattery), Nicole Turk (Moonglade Cattery)

*Citations:*

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## A Final Word

"**They. Get. Into. Everything.** I've had them in my painting. I've had them in my baking. I've had them in every box, or box-like object I've set on the floor. I once turned around to a Maine Coon in my fridge!" laughed Nicole Turk. And her take-away comment just about says it all: "How can you NOT love a cat that's bigger than some people's dogs? They play fetch, they snuggle, they kiss. What's not to love?"

## Why Do Cats Like Boxes?

*Cathy Scarbrough*

Probably the best holiday for a cat is Christmas. Not only are there yummy smells and new ribbon to play with, but it is a time when a plethora of boxes appear. Cats don't care what comes IN the box, but only the box itself. We have a joke going that an Amazon delivery equates with a "free cat toy". Amazon may be the cat's second best friend.

According to one source, seeking out confined spaces like boxes goes back to instinct. In the wild, these spaces let cats successfully hide and hunt while seeking safety and security.

When introducing empty boxes to our domesticated cats, they first carefully investigate the object. They become familiar with every square inch of their domain, so when something new enters, they are curious. Once their curiosity is satisfied, instinct kicks in and they hop inside.

Although it would seem that cats would



only like boxes that provide complete concealment, they enjoy time spent in boxes of any size, and even in representations of boxes. There was an experiment showing cats plopping themselves inside a circle of tape on the floor. The theory is that cats still felt secure and enclosed, even though the "box" had no sides or even a bottom.

Cardboard boxes are the most popular because they are readily available. Some say that cardboard might effectively retain the cat's body heat, creating a cozy environment. Some also note that the security of a box could mimic the snuggly warmth a kitten feels while cuddling her mother and littermates. As a result it's possible that while box-sitting, a cat's body releases pleasure-inducing endorphins. In a Dutch study,

researchers gave one group of shelter cats empty boxes to use as retreats. Those cats adapted to their environment and appeared more relaxed than the control group.

Domesticated cats aren't the only ones who enjoy a nice box. Big cats are also fans, although their boxes are larger.

Cat trees with high-up boxes and elevated hide holes are feline favorites, while some cats prefer hideaways closer to the ground.

Keep safety in mind by removing all hazards like staples, tape, handles, string and loose pieces that could be choking hazards or if ingested cause damage to her digestive tract. Also, make sure your cat cannot get trapped inside a box. Cats don't like to feel trapped and their anxiety produces feelings of insecurity, the opposite feeling they seek from the box.

The internet is rife with hilarious pictures of cats cramming themselves into all sizes of boxes (and other objects), so it is a one-size fits all. So feel less guilty about making that next Amazon order and you AND your cat will both get a new present.

# FIP Fighters

*Three Cats' Tales of Hope* Iris Zinck

In 2017, the feline world thrilled to the announcement that a cat had been successfully treated for one of the most fearsome diseases that can affect our beloved pets—feline infectious peritonitis (FIP). Dr. Niels Pedersen of UC Davis, who has devoted much of his life to finding a strategy to cure FIP, was able to treat Luna, a Savannah female, with an antiviral drug, one of two that have now been used to battle the disease.<sup>1,2</sup> Sadly, although they have now been proven effective, no FDA-approved versions are yet available. Nevertheless, many determined owners are working to gain access to the drugs. With or without the assistance of their vets, they are networking across the internet to support each other in the struggle to bring cats back from a diagnosis that is—miraculously—no longer considered an inevitable death sentence. Here are the stories of three cats whose owners fought back against FIP.

## First Signs of Trouble

When Ladybug, a five-year-old seal point Birman spay owned by Mary Myers, was taken to the vet in Simpsonville, South Carolina in June of 2019, she was a very sick kitty. Weight loss, one of the classic indicators of FIP, had taken 30% of her body weight. She was also suffering from severe anemia, ataxia, and a slight upper respiratory infection. Additionally, her dark facial markings were fading.

Paige, another, much younger Birman female owned by Sue Deladi of Bloomington, Minnesota, had markedly different symptoms. She was lethargic, refused to eat, had loose stools, pale gums and a fever. Like Ladybug, though, she was extremely anemic.

Bloodwork on both cats—which was reviewed by Dr. Pedersen—showed characteristics typical of dry FIP, with high levels of protein and neutrophils. Just a few years ago, the only available options for Ladybug and Paige would have been supportive care and eventual euthanasia. Fortunately, both appeared to be good candidates for antiviral treatment.



The diagnosis of Gus, a young Siberian male owned by Mikayla Mallett of Dover, New Hampshire, also involved bloodwork, but took much more time to evolve. When he was taken in to be neutered at six months of age, he showed no signs of illness. However, a routine pre-op blood panel revealed elevated globulin levels and slight anemia. It was clear that Gus's immune system was trying to fight something off. The possibility of FIP was raised and the surgery was postponed. Over the next month, the only other noticeable symptom to appear was a decline in energy which could also have been attributed to Gus becoming more of a young adult and less of a playful kitten. So, the neuter was rescheduled and additional bloodwork done. This time, the globulin levels were dramatically higher, and post-surgery, Gus's health began to decline. He became weak and lethargic, lost his appetite, and developed ocular symptoms. Following unsuccessful treatment with antibiotics, he was diagnosed with FIP.

## Reaching Out For Help

As a Birman breeder for many years, Sue was already knowledgeable about the disease. Her breed is one of many breeds with a high incidence of FIP, and she had engaged Dr. Pedersen in discussions about managing a breeding program to reduce the risk. She was also aware of the antiviral treatments; so, when told her kitten likely had only days to live, she was determined to obtain the medication and attempt the treatment. This was achieved with the help of the Facebook group, "FIP Warriors," which has grown from a few hundred to well over eleven thousand members in less than a year.

*The FIP Fighters in this story are: at left, Paige; above left: Ladybug; and above right: Gus.*







Since Mary and Sue are friends and fellow Birman breeders, Mary had heard about Paige's illness and treatment plans. She joined the "FIP Warriors" group months before her own cat became affected. When Ladybug was diagnosed, says Mary, "I felt compelled to see if we could obtain this medication for her, not just because she is a beloved member of our family, but because it provided me with the opportunity to learn about this new treatment firsthand." A group administrator connected Mary to a supplier in her area and she received her first supply of a drug known as Mutian within 72 hours. This was the same drug Sue was using for Paige.

Mikayla had begun researching FIP online when Gus's first blood test raised concerns and "stumbled" across the Warriors group's Facebook page. So, when his diagnosis took place, she also decided "to give Mutian a shot." She noted, "With this being one of the first brands and the most expensive, we felt it would be the safest option to go with."

### *The Challenges of Treatment*

As experienced breeders, Mary and Sue were able to give their cats the injectable form of the medications at home. That doesn't mean it was always easy. Mary says, "Injectable Mutian does sting going in because of its acidic pH, but the stinging stops quickly after the injection is finished. Mary was able to give most of the injections herself, only asking her husband to help restrain the cat twice. However, some pet owners, who are generally not accustomed to giving injections at home, need assistance with restraining the cats. Mary notes a common side effect of the injectable form; "some cats experience open sores if the solution comes in contact with their skin" so it's essential to take great care to avoid this.

Sue commented that at times she had to do "more than one stick as the cat jumped and I had to try again." Over the course of treatment (every 24 hours for 12 weeks), she learned which injection sites seemed less sensitive and which size and length of needle worked best. "It also helped to have a wet food that Paige really loved in front of her on a plate; once the injection started, she would attack the food and it would take her mind off the injection."

As a pet owner, Mikayla was not up to the challenge of administering the injections and decided the capsule form would be a better option. She notes that Gus has never been susceptible to vomiting and has tolerated the capsules well but "if your cat does have a sensitive stomach or you are nervous about whether it will be able to keep the capsules down, then the injections may be a safer option."

Another challenge faced by many of the owners who elect to treat their cats is the best way to work with their vets throughout the process. Mary never asked her vets to help with injections, only to do periodic exams and blood panels to monitor Ladybug's progress. "The vets I have worked with were a bit skeptical at first," she says, but they were willing to read the material she provided on Pedersen's studies and "were very impressed with the results when they actually saw them firsthand." Sue's vet clinic was also skeptical, "but as Paige showed improvement they quickly got on board." At the time this article was being written, Mikayla had not yet discussed the treatment with her vet but was planning to do so when she takes Gus in for follow-up blood tests.

### *Dramatic Results*

While Gus's treatment is still underway, Mikayla reports that within 24 hours of the first dose, "he was already improving and after the first four days of treatment, we were very confident it was helping." Although the ocular symptoms took a couple of weeks to dissipate, Gus's primary symptoms had disappeared after those first four days. Gus is a big boy; "before his symptoms, he weighed 9.2 pounds. Just before treatment his weight had dropped to 8.2 pounds and three weeks into the treatment, he is up to 9.6 pounds!"

Paige took a bit longer to respond. She was being syringe fed, but after three days, she ate for the first time on her own. Sue recalls, "I was crying and recording a video of Paige eating as I had hope that this might really work! I sent the video to other breeder friends and we all cried together." She continues, "30 days into the treatment, I brought Paige in for repeat bloodwork. The vet techs came out with her and the very positive test results and they were crying—they thought they had seen a miracle that no one thought possible."

Ladybug became more alert and less lethargic after a few days of treatment. Her eyes were clear and wide open and she looked much brighter. She was also being syringe fed but began eating on her own again after about a week. Mary and Sue had both been giving fluids and weekly injections of vitamin B-12 but were able to discontinue these once the cats

were eating completely on their own, gaining weight, and staying well hydrated.

As this article was being completed, Gus's treatment continued, but Paige and Ladybug were both more than three months post-treatment and still symptom-free. Ladybug no longer runs and hides for fear that an injection is forthcoming; she seems to have forgiven and forgotten. "If anything," says Mary, "we have a very special bond now because we both seem to know how lucky we are!" Remarkably, Paige has recovered to the point that she has now returned to the CFA show circuit, attending her first post-treatment show on September 28-29, 2019 and even achieving finals! Sue reports that "lots of tears were shed when people heard about Paige's story."

### *What Lies Ahead?*

There may now be light at the end of the tunnel for our FIP kitties, but many challenges remain. New and improved treatments are being researched but it appears that the major drug manufacturers are not yet convinced that supporting pet owners in this fight makes business sense for them. Unfortunately, that means that owners must resort to black-market drugs from overseas if they are determined to proceed with treating their cats and be prepared for major expenses—as much as several thousand dollars—to cover the costs. The larger the cat, the larger the needed dose, and the greater the expense.

Nevertheless, Mary, Sue and Mikayla urge those with affected cats to consider the treatment. Mikayla believes that "the earlier treatment is started, the better your chance of success," and even comments that there may be value in attempting it even with an uncertain diagnosis as cats begin to respond to the drugs so quickly. Typically, a rapid response will be seen if the cat has FIP and no adverse effects if it does not. Mary concurs with the necessity of starting treatment quickly, but also stresses the importance of providing supportive care before and during treatment (i.e. syringe feeding, fluids, etc.) and notes that you can't stop treatment, miss days, or reduce the dosage. Cats with neurological or ocular symptoms must be treated with higher doses.

"It is wonderful that FIP can now be considered a curable disease, but that doesn't change the fact that far too many cats still develop it in the first place," concludes Mary. "While the nature of FIP is such that it often develops in isolation, breeders need to be conscientious about removing cats who show a pattern of producing affected offspring from their programs because of the genetic component of the disease." Interestingly, Ladybug's father had produced other cases and was consequently neutered, while Gus had a brother who succumbed—although both his parents had previously produced healthy kittens in other litters and continue to do so. Paige's father was an outcross import so we have no information about other cases in his line and investigation is ongoing. "Additionally," says Mary,

"breeders must still be vigilant about minimizing the environmental stress components that can trigger the mutation that causes the FIP virus. Surgeries and vaccinations can have this effect, as well as the stress of going to a new home. Spacing out possible triggering events to reduce the impact on the immune system is important and puts time on your side."

Finally, it is CRITICAL that cat lovers continue to support FIP research—ideally, through the Winn Foundation's Bria Fund—so that we can not only learn more about how to fight FIP, but perhaps even develop a vaccine to prevent it in the first place! If you have found this article valuable, please consider sending a donation. To learn more about the Bria Fund, go to <https://www.facebook.com/briafundsupporters/> or the Winn Foundation's home page link, <https://winnfelinefoundation.salsalabs.org/briafund/index.html>.

*The author sends heartfelt thanks to Mary, Sue, and Mikayla for sharing their cat's stories in such detail and providing so much help with the article.*

Sources:

1. <https://pethelpful.com/cats/Hope-for-Feline-Infectious-Peritonitis-aka-FIP-Lunas-Story>
2. <http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/feline-infectious-peritonitis-fatal-treatable>

### *Check Your Subscription Notices*

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We encourage subscribers to renew their combination subscriptions when they receive the first notice in either publication. This will save some worry and ensure service is uninterrupted.



# PURRsuing FIP and WINNING

Lucy Drury



This past November, the Winn Feline Foundation brought experts on feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) from around the world to the campus of the University of California–Davis School of Veterinary Medicine for a two-day symposium. Their goal was to discuss the latest advances in the detection, treatment, and prevention of FIP. In a series of short lectures and round-table discussions, leading clinicians, researchers, and advocates shared information with in person and online participants, covering a wide range of topics that included the pathogenesis of the FIP virus, diagnosing FIP, breakthroughs in the treatment of FIP, and the prevention of FIP through future vaccines and environmental management.

## FIP Pathogenesis

The symposium kicked off with a presentation by Dr. Niels Pedersen, who is arguably the leading authority today on the topic of FIP, and on FIP pathogenesis. (Pathogenesis is the origin and biological processes that lead to the diseased state). Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Pedersen and other researchers around the world, the pathogenesis of FIP is now well understood.

Dr. Pedersen explained that FIP is a relatively new disease and that there were no documented cases before the 1950s. It is a double-stranded RNA virus, and currently the largest RNA virus known to science. There are two viruses involved in the pathogenesis of FIP: the feline enteric corona virus (FECV), and feline infectious peritonitis virus (FIPV).

Corona viruses are ubiquitous in the environment, extremely adaptable, and can infect multiple species of animals. Examples

of corona virus that can cause disease in humans are the Middle East respiratory syndrome virus (MERS) and the severe acute respiratory syndrome virus (SARS). While human corona viruses attack the respiratory system, FECV is strictly a virus inhabiting the digestive tract. It is shed in the feces of an estimated 40–60% of healthy cats, particularly in multi-cat environments where cats share litter boxes. The FECV virus has a very narrow tropism (type of tissue that supports the growth and replication of the virus), infecting only a very specific type of epithelial cell primarily located in the large intestine and colon. It may cause a mild diarrhea in cats, but for the most part it enters its host through a fecal–oral route and resolves itself without causing disease of any kind. Healthy cats typically can raise an immune response to the virus, but the immunity is not permanent, and a cat can become re-infected when antibodies to the virus drop off.

Kittens receive FECV antibodies from their mother's colostrum, which are absorbed into their system and provide protection for approximately the first 11 weeks of their lives. They also receive antibodies in their mother's milk. These are not absorbed into their system, but provide a passive immunity by coating the oral pharynx of the kitten—the entry point of the enteric corona virus—thereby providing an additional layer of immunity as long as the kitten is nursing. At approximately 12 weeks, the kittens begin to produce their own antibodies. It is important to understand this timeline, as it is the reasoning behind early weaning and separation of new kittens from their mother and other adults in some catteries. It also provides a rationale for separating non-nursing kittens less than 12 weeks old

from other adults in shelters. Additionally, it provides some insights as to why bottle-fed kittens are more susceptible to FIP than kittens who nurse normally.

Dr. Pedersen also explained that since antibodies in a cat or kitten drop off as the virus levels drop, multi-cat households or shelters are in a constant state of reinfection, passing the virus back and forth to one another through shared litter pans. Typically, this does not cause any issues in the cattery; at most, there could be mild diarrhea from time to time.

So, how does a corona virus infection progress to FIP? Dr. Pedersen emphasized that FIP is not a rare form of a corona virus infection, as was once thought. FECV produces a mild enteric infection, FIPV causes FIP. Researchers discovered that FECV was mutating into a new virus that was structurally 99% the same as the FECV, but instead of merely residing inside the large intestine, the mutated virus attacked



Dr. Niels Pedersen

macrophages, a type of white blood cell that is the most primitive and basic level of the body's immune response. Macrophages lining the walls of the large intestine clean up the FECV as the cat's immune system fights the foreign invaders. If the virus happens to mutate inside the macrophage, the macrophage now becomes infected. Macrophages can travel through the body, spreading the virus throughout the host. Worse, the virus interferes with the cell's ability to self-destruct when infected with a virus. Typically, cytokines (a type of protein) inside a cell will rapidly trigger a self-destruct message to the macrophage when it becomes infected with a virus, but in the case of FIPV, the self-destruct response is delayed until the macrophage is filled with pockets of virus, giving it a characteristic foamy appearance under a microscope. Fluid drained from the abdomen of a cat with FIP will typically contain these foamy macrophages. Eventually the cytokines do trigger, but too late, and the virus is spread and infects other macrophages, attacking other parts of the body.

Dr. Pedersen also discussed the epizootiology, which is the study of disease patterns in a population, of FIP. He noted that FIP is primarily a problem of multi-cat environments, and that foster rescues were suffering the most. He noted some possible contributing factors; e.g., lack of milk immunity from early weaning or possibly stress from early spay-neuter. He said the environments need to be further studied as they may provide answers. He also stated that the incubation period for FIPV is unknown as yet, and that some kittens or cats are infected immediately, while others exhibit a sub-clinical stage then exhibit disease due to

some stress factor. Males seem slightly more susceptible than females.

The presentation closed with a brief discussion on FIP incidence rates. According to Dr. Pedersen, 100% of cats are exposed to FECV—there isn't much you can do about it. At least 10% of cats will develop a mutant form of the virus capable of producing FIP. Out of those cats, only one in ten will develop actual FIP, meaning most cats are able to develop an immunity to it. Why some are unable to do so is not yet known.

## FIP Diagnosis

Dr. Emi Barker and Dr. Katrin Hartmann discussed the importance of getting the diagnosis of FIP correct and some of the tools available to the veterinary clinician to obtain a diagnosis. FIP can mimic many types of disease states, and the diagnosis is not certain unless virus can be recovered from tissues, which is extremely difficult in the dry form of FIP. Now that promising treatments are becoming available, it is more important than ever to get the diagnosis right. A false negative diagnosis, and the disease can progress rapidly before therapy can be initiated. A false positive diagnosis, and the patient many spend thousands of dollars on an ineffective treatment.

Following their remarks, they participated in a roundtable discussion with other clinicians, moderated by Dr. Leslie Lyons. The focus was the challenge of diagnosing FIP. There was general agreement that the Rivalta test, a quick and easy test vets can do in their office, should be the first step in cases where there is an accumulation of

abdominal fluid and wet FIP is suspected. Acetic acid is mixed in a test tube with water, and a drop of the fluid exudate is carefully dropped on the surface. If the drop disappears and is dissolved into the solution, the test is negative, and if a milky white precipitate forms, the test is positive. A positive test does not mean the cat has FIP—other diseases can cause the milky precipitate, which is produced by an abnormal increase in certain proteins in the abdominal fluid. However, a negative test means that it is very unlikely the cat has FIP and other diagnoses should be considered. This simple test can save a client thousands of dollars on unnecessary testing and ineffective treatments.

If the test is positive, then additional laboratory testing usually needs to be done to attempt to confirm a diagnosis of FIP. With effective but expensive treatments now available to those who choose to pay for them, it is critical to try and confirm the diagnosis. No matter how competent a veterinarian is, it was also thought a good idea to get a second opinion on complex cases, given the difficulty in making an accurate diagnosis. Some veterinarians rarely see a case of FIP, so the second opinion by one who does see them more frequently can be helpful.

## Treatment of FIP

Considerable time was dedicated to emerging treatments. Most people in the cat fancy have heard whispers of "black market" cures. Are they real, do they work, can we really call them a "cure?" Why aren't these drugs available to U.S. veterinarians legally? Dr. David Bruyette pointed out that while FDA processes are somewhat slow and cumber-

Speakers Dr. Katrin Hartmann (left) and Dr. Emi Barker (right)







some, “they aren’t always the bad guy.” There are pharmaceuticals in human clinical trials that could be effective in fighting FIP, but the patent owners will not license for animal trials. If toxicity is discovered in animal trials, it could cause the human trials to fail. He also explained that cost is a factor; the costs involved in researching and manufacturing a new drug could make the cost of the drug to consumers prohibitively high.

Dr. Pedersen offered some insights into treatment strategies, stating that there are only two approaches: boosting the immunity of the host so that the host fights off the virus, or attacking the virus itself. Until recently, the only treatments available were those that boosted the immune system of the host, and while they could make the patient more comfortable and sometimes prolong the inevitable, most patients were dead in less than a year.

Two drugs are now in clinical trials: GC 376 at Kansas State University and GS 441524 at UC-Davis. While most researchers involved stop short of calling these drugs “cures,” the majority of cats treated in the trials have recovered and remain disease-free. As of the date of the symposium (November 16, 2019) Dr. Pedersen noted that more than 3000 cats had been treated—95% successfully—across the world. The long-term toxicity of the drugs is unknown, as is their long-term effectiveness. However, multiple attendees stood up and shared stories of

their now healthy cats after treatment with the new drugs. Dr. Pedersen predicted the rise of many new drugs which he believed necessary to prevent the virus from becoming resistant. He also hoped that clinicians would never treat for corona virus, as that could hasten drug resistance challenges.

Also discussed at length was the ability of desperate U.S. pet owners to get a form of the new drugs overseas, and why researchers and clinicians were unable to help obtain or administer the drugs, citing U.S. law as the main barrier. Veterinarians who obtain unlicensed drugs for clients risk sanctions and the loss of their licenses. However, the panelists encouraged those cat owners who chose to obtain the drug overseas and administer it themselves to find a veterinarian who would help monitor their cat, even if he or she cannot help with the actual treatment.

### **FIP Prevention**

While Dr. Pedersen stated that there was little that could be done to prevent exposure to FECV or prevent the mutation of the virus in a host, there was considerable discussion around preventing the mutated virus from becoming FIP disease. While a cure is a wonderful achievement, even better is preventing the disease through vaccination. Researchers were hopeful that a vaccine would be come available in the next

few years—ideally, one that would remain effective despite virus mutations.

Stress was also discussed as a risk factor for FIP. While no direct connection has yet been proven, cats in what might be considered stressful situations had a higher incidence of FIP (as noted earlier) but why this is so is not understood. It is hard to ignore stress as a factor, though, as shelters that worked to reduce the stressful conditions in their facility noted reduced incidence of FIP and other diseases in the general population.

While trying to maintain a corona virus-free cattery may seem like one way to avoid FIP, one researcher who had made multiple cattery visits over the years noted that there was not a clear connection between a clean cattery and what he classified as a dirty cattery. He saw healthy, robust kittens running around the dirty cattery and weak, sickly kittens running around the clean cattery.

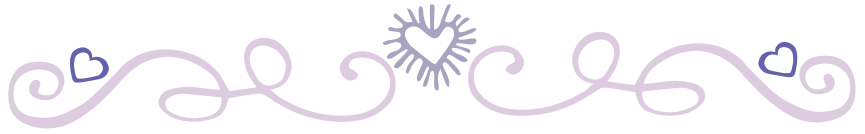
While the participants stopped short of saying there was a cure for FIP, they repeatedly called the disease “curable.” And thanks to the efforts of the Winn Foundation, the Bria Fund, research facilities such as the UC-Davis and Kansas State University Veterinary Schools, and the countless brave pet parents who fight to save their fur-babies from this awful disease, we can now look forward to the day when no cat or kitten need ever die from FIP again.

# Decorating on a Shoestring

Candilee Jackson

As with nearly everything in our hustle-bustle lives today, banquets, parties, and shows can be expensive. Costs, combined with “ooh, I HAVE to use this!” items, can add up quickly. What colors or textures to use? What items can be driven to the venue as opposed to flying them in for the event? Overwhelming? It may sound that way, but working with a limited budget is not insurmountable. *Shush!!!! There IS a secret!*

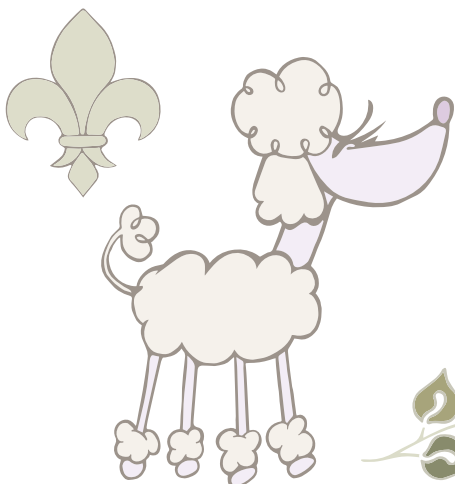
*Cat Talk* did some research and came up with tips for decorating on a budget. Keep these points in mind to create a regional awards dinner, party, or show hall design without designer prices.



## Plan Before You Begin

While proper planning is essential for any project, the necessity increases tenfold when working on a tight budget. After all, no one wants to find themselves in a situation where they've found the perfect table decoration only to discover it's not affordable, or where the nonrefundable centerpiece ordered online won't fit into the space. Doing a little legwork beforehand will drastically cut down on the likelihood of encountering an unpleasant surprise along the way.

Among the first steps in planning should be determining a theme, design, and colors. Next, know what funds, however limited, are available for use. Make sure there have been adequate fundraising activities well in advance of the event. Check with the venue to make sure everything needed for the show, party, or banquet is available (electricity, tables, tableware in the colors chosen, mirror tiles, audio-visual requirements, microphones, etc.).



## Repurpose What's on Hand

It's time to THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX! Someone in almost every CFA club or region is “the gatekeeper” for all past décor, and this stuff is usually packed away in plastic bins in someone's garage. Check to see what's on hand from past “dos”. It probably wouldn't hurt to make an inventory to be kept by the club or region secretary. Sometimes a can of spray paint can refurbish a centerpiece easily rather than wasting gas hunting for parts for a new one, or wasting time online when the cat really needs a bath! This saves money for “must-have” purchases down the line.

## Anchor the Project With a Theme

Getting the most “bang out of the buck” is the goal in decorating on a shoestring. Select a theme which involves several ways to create the desired effect. For example, a Parisian theme can encompass not only the Eiffel Tower, but a stroll down the Seine, a stop at Notre Dame, an art walk, and a wander through a French bakery. A Disney theme is always fun, and there is no shortage of characters from which to choose. In other words, every table centerpiece does not have to be the same, and show rings can project a variety of visual items that fit the theme.

Okay, the committee is drawing a blank: Where does one find a theme? It's time to pull out the catalogues!

**Theatre House** ([www.theatrehouse.com](http://www.theatrehouse.com)) This company specializes in costuming, makeup, properties, materials, and trims for all things theatre. If what is needed is costly, this is a great place to go for ideas OR purchases. If using the site for ideas, use Google to locate the item at a better price elsewhere on the Internet.

**Stump's Prom and Homecoming Book** ([www.stumpsparty.com](http://www.stumpsparty.com)) This is a teacher/class sponsor's “go-to bible” in high school! Although expensive, Stump's gives terrific ideas on the parts and pieces for decorating for both show halls and banquets which can be purchased elsewhere or created by hand.

**Oriental Trading Company** ([www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)) The online store, as well as the catalogue, contains tons of goodies at low prices to help create the theme and look desired. The site specializes in purchasing in bulk, and the catalogue has several sections devoted to themed party or banquet items.

## Shop Second Hand

Retail therapy! This is where the rubber hits the road and the best use of committee time and energy comes into play. Send out com-





mittee members and friends on “search-and-rescue missions” to find things secondhand which will meet the needs of the project.

Check out thrift stores, dollar stores, Big Lots, and yard sales. Remember, someone’s trash can be your project’s treasure! While searching, ask what days new inventory is brought out and get there early to scope out every inch of the store, yard sale, or flea market. Watch out for going-out-of-business sales. Pay close attention to the curbs in the neighborhood on trash day. Don’t be afraid to search out items which serve a dual purpose—can this item be reused at a later date? Collect wine bottles over the various shows in the region and use them to hold flowers on the banquet table or show ring later.

## Go Bold With Color

*Shush! Another secret revealed!* One the biggest secrets of creating nearly anything is the use of COLOR! Paint costs pennies on the dollar and discount big-box home decorating stores have paint, especially spray paint, under \$2 a can. Before plunging into the paint pool, pick up some free color palettes from a home improvement store. Look for complementary colors to make the venue exciting and alive with color when people enter.

## Cultivate a Minimalist Design Style

Sometimes, especially when money is tight, choosing a minimalist style for the chosen theme will keep costs down, at least when compared to more ornate schools of thought. And, to be truthful, minimalist IS the trend. “Minimalism is defined by neutral colors, especially monochromatic ones, the use of natural materials and clean lines.” (Décor Mag) In other words, less is more.

Choose a simple item for the centerpiece, and use mirror tiles and color to carry

through the theme. Going back to Paris as described above, a minimalist centerpiece might be a wine bottle of fresh or silk flowers, and a cutout of the Eiffel Tower tied with a colorful ribbon, placed on a mirror tile. To add just a little more excitement to the simplicity, add a string or two of colorful beads strewn on the mirror, and VOILA! A minimalist centerpiece with a Parisian flavor!

## Get Everyone Involved!

To quote from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, “the more the merrier,” and that’s not just in the planning stages! Go through your club or region’s roster and look for the “quiet, unassuming” exhibitors who are not usually involved. Ask them to troll yard sales, dollar stores or thrift shops for the committee. Take a survey of just who in your region has a degree in art (the MWR has several!!) or who does those outstanding crafty things for all the holidays. These are the people to enlist for design, color, and preparation advice.

When the event is just a few weeks away, gather a different group of people to put the decorations together. Make sure to have coffee, tea, wine, and some chocolate to make the work party fun, and of course TAKE PICTURES!

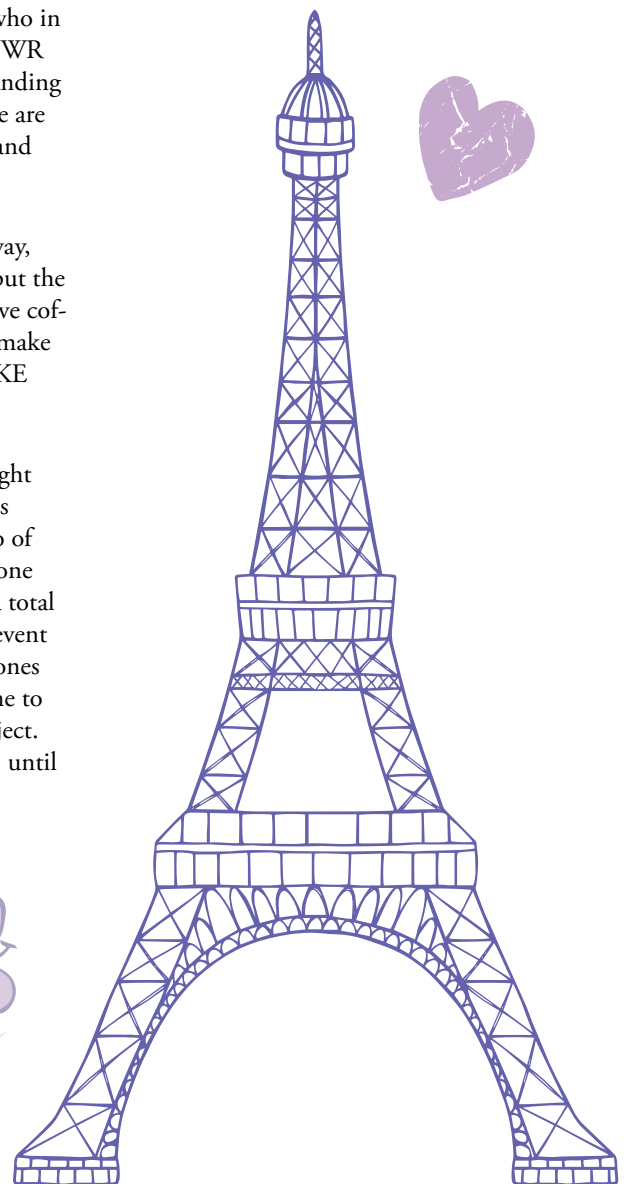
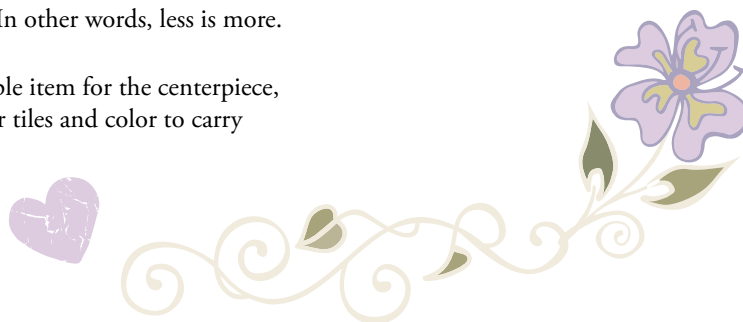
On Set-Up Day, gather everyone in sight to help create the magic. “Many hands make light work” should be the motto of the event. What could be tedious for one or two overworked persons could be a total blast if ten people were involved. An event planner should be aware of the quiet ones who might just be waiting for someone to ask their help in a show or region project. (Remember, the answer is always “no” until someone asks!)

## Have Fun!!!

Putting together an event is more than selecting the venue or choosing the meal items. Planning and preparing is also a fun aspect of a show or banquet. Look to this meet, search, prep, and setup time as a time to get to know each other, welcome newbies (or quiet, shy ones) to the worker bee group, and create an atmosphere of fellowship and the sharing of talents to create something magical for our cat public and ourselves!!!

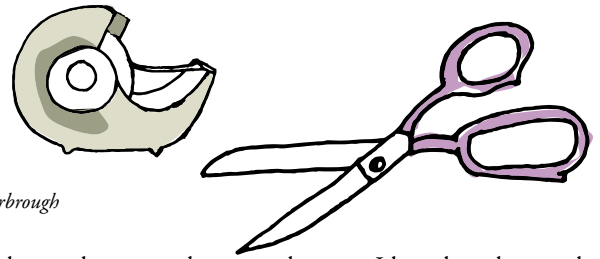
Citations:

“Minimalism.” Design Mag. Internet. 20 Oct 2019.  
<<https://www.decoraid.com/blog/interior-design-style/minimalist-interior-design.>>.



# FREE CAT TOYS

## FRESH FROM THE JOHN!



Cathy Scarbrough

I don't know about you, but over the years I have bought—and my cats have “misplaced”—hundreds of cat toys. Unless they are tied down or are very large, all the toys seem to have simply disappeared. Balls, mice, bells, toys, catnip or not, whatever they once were, they have now gone into never-never land.

I don't know if my cats (collectively or just one hoarder cat) have a stash somewhere, or if the toys are themselves trapped somewhere, but I do look for them. And when one appears, I always wonder where it has been, only to have it disappear again.

My cats just don't seem to be appreciative of my offerings. Perhaps they consider these toys one-time use items, with their own planned obsolescence or something like it.

So instead of buying more toys, I finally decided to make my own. This way, it does not matter if they disappear; I am using something I would just put in the recycle bin and something I always seem to have an abundance of—toilet paper rolls! Since other cats' toys may well have met the same fate as mine, I thought I would share this idea with other cat owners.



*Samples of toys which the author made, although she notes that several somehow went missing prior to the shot*

So far, I have come up with three models for my home-made toys. All can be cut to size.

1. The “**Original**,” which can be large, medium or small
2. The “**Frayed-edge Spider**” – the original roll with frayed or saw-toothed edges
3. The “**Rings**” – the original roll cut horizontally into circles

The “Original” is just an empty toilet paper roll. Cut it in half and you have two! You can get two or three “spiders” out of every roll. I can get up to a dozen “rings” out of one roll. Or be adventurous and get a spider and six rings; the possibilities are endless! And the only tool needed is a mediocre pair of scissors. (Hey, I could even make them fresh in the bathroom!)



It does not matter whether the empty rolls are designer/expensive brands or of dollar store issue. But if I wanted to customize, I'm sure I could put designs on them, tie on some yarn or ribbon, infuse them in some catnip. However, I don't think my cats would even appreciate the effort.

Maybe I can put my creations on eBay or Etsy and make some money. Maybe I could give them a fancy name like “Cat Commode Commandos” or have them given as a freebie with cat litter. Maybe I could branch out into paper towel rolls! Or even go big with wrapping paper rolls!

Seriously, though, the idea was a win-win. My cats seem to enjoy these toys just as much as store-bought toys. For the few minutes the toys are visible, they are free, safe and I get to be creative. And I don't really care where they go! When and if they do resurface, they can still be recycled, albeit a little worse for wear.



# Grandstand

## GrandStand Submissions

For \$15 per submission, you can take advantage of an opportunity to see your cat's name and image in print! Send your photo submissions to SBorawski@cfa.org. Payment must be made at <http://catalog.cfa.org/photos.html> prior to photo submission to make it into the next issue! Cat Talk also includes Household Pet photos in a Household Pet Parade for the same fee. You can send a photo and payment by U.S. Mail to: Cat Talk Photos, 260 East Main Street, Alliance, OH, 44601. Photos are subject to approval from the Editorial Board.



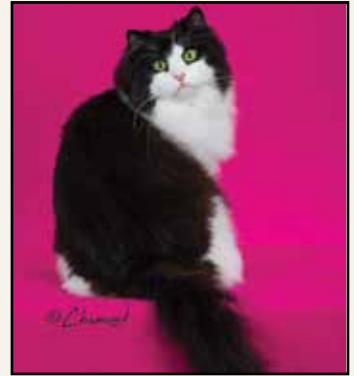
**CH, GP BLUE ISLES WINDWARD**  
Lilac Point Siamese Spay  
S: CH I Musici Amadeus of Blue Isles  
D: Blue Isles Barbados  
Br/Ow: Linda Alex



**GH GINGER**  
Seal Tortie Point-White Companion Cat Spay  
Ow: Susan Wittich



**GC HARTWEB OLIVER OF CATVOCAL**  
Bombay Male  
S: GC, RW Lac Hong Napoleon Solo of Hartweb  
D: CH Dreamabout Moonshine of Hartweb  
Br: Pamela R. Hartley  
Ow: Zoe Durkin & Carley Durkin



**GP KENDER'S DIAMOND JIM OF CRYSTALSTAR**  
Black-White Siberian Neuter  
S: CH Rockaran Rex Luchezarovich  
D: Kender's Treorum Satis Dee  
Br: Alice Wright  
Ow: Paula Haren



**GC LALIMA MIO ROMEO**  
Ruddy Abyssinian Male  
S: CH Ataraxia Valentino  
D: Lalima Julia Migenes  
Br/Ow: Tina Grumme



**GP MANI DOLLS JASTRO**  
Silver Mac Tabby-White Norwegian Forest Cat Neuter  
S: GC Rondmont Kaka of Mani Dolls  
D: Diamond Dust Sovie of Wenxin Sweet  
Br: Huang Pei-Wen  
Ow: Lu Yen-Ling



**GC PREMIUM'S PINK LACE OF PATTAM**  
Lilac Point Siamese Female  
S: CH Su-Su Silver Bullet of Premium  
D: CH Premium's Pixie Dust of Lunabelle  
Br: Tanyia L. Miller & Dawn Gibson  
Ow: Patricia Maddox



**GH SNICKER DOODLE**  
Seal Point-Whitee Companion Cat Neuter  
Ow: Susan Wittich

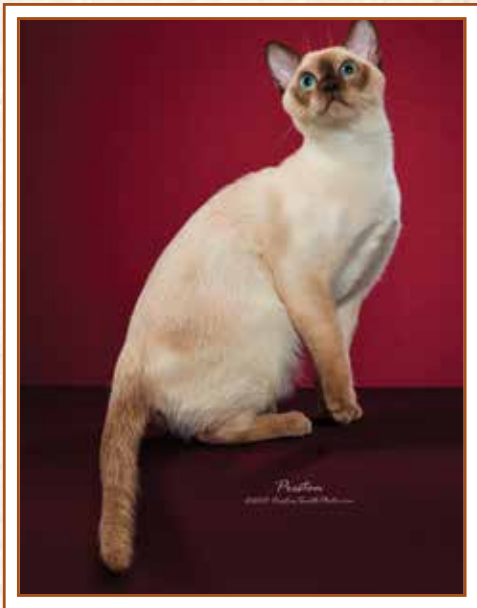


**GCD, RW ACATAMIWARD BLING IT ON!**  
Blue Point Siamese Male  
Sire: GC, RW Acatamiward Rock-Of-Ages  
Dam: GC Acatamiward Ceremony  
Br: Sibyl Zaden  
Owner: Sibyl Zaden, L & C. Doe & M. & V. Franks

## Grands of Distinction

# FUR NAMES

From the files of: Mollie Shutt



Names. Oh what an important choice in the life of a cat! It is how a cat will be known both in the show ring and in daily life. A name can alternate between words of delight or new forms of cursing. Each name tells a story, and this is the story of CH Angelsheart Thelonius Monk of Pawdancer.

It was an unforgettable arrival. As Candilee and Kirk Jackson arrived at the cargo desk at the airport, they had no idea what to expect. They had waited all day for the arrival of their new kitten, intended to be their Tonkinese foundation stud. Although they had not wanted to ship him, they could find no other way to get the three-month-old boy from Washington to Missouri. Breeder Peggy Schuetz had done everything possible to prepare the kitten for the journey and ensure his safe arrival. But had he made it safely? A cargo employee greeted them at the counter. She called attention to the broken zip tie on the carrier. Oh no!

Fear not, the kitten had arrived safely, but in unexpected style. The whole first-class section of the flight had been empty. A flight attendant had decided to bring the kitten into the empty first class cabin, where his

**Full name:** CH Angelsheart Thelonius Monk of Pawdancer

**Nicknames:** Theo, Studman

**Likes:** Welcoming house guests, men

**Dislikes:** Litter boxes

**Special Talents:** Pooping in the toilet, knowing when it is 8:30 PM

carrier was strapped into a seat. The crew played with him as they flew through the air. With added flair, reminiscent of his namesake, Thelonius Monk was home.

When Candilee first learned she was to get Theo, she knew exactly what his name would be. The Jacksons had a deep love of the performing arts, be it music, acting or dancing. All of their future cats' names would have something to do with the arts. It was only fitting that her foundation male should begin the naming trend. One day Candilee had been listening to a story on a radio show which brought the name of the great jazz pianist, Thelonius Monk, to mind. That's it! She knew her first boy would be named Thelonius Monk and now the champagne mink kitten, freshly arrived from Seattle, brought the idea to fruition.

Theo immediately took over the house. He was not afraid of anybody or any cat. He was the alpha male and that was the end of it. Theo hit the show ring, showing beautifully as a kitten and Candilee had high hopes for his future. However, once puberty arrived it was all over. The smells of the show hall overwhelmed him, and it was clear that Theo would show no more.

Retiring to stud life, Theo went on to sire many beautiful Tonkinese kittens. With his large personality, he continued to leave his mark on the Jackson household. And mark he did, but not in the expected way. Candilee was getting out of the shower one day, when into the bathroom ran Thelonius Monk. He jumped up on the toilet seat and proceeded to pee in the toilet. Unbeknownst to the Jacksons, who had been accusing each other of not flushing, Theo had toilet trained himself! His toilet antics even caught the attention of the local NBC news station, gaining him quite a following.

Theo lived life to the fullest, but always remained a gentleman. He joyfully greeted all who visited the house. He also learned to walk on a leash. And each night at 8:30 PM, he let Candilee know that it was time for a chicken treat.

Just as cats retire, so too must breeders retire. As the Jacksons began wrapping up their breeding program, it was time for Theo to move on to a new home. He was neutered and Candilee began to consider his future. One day a family who already had several Pawdancer cats came to pick up a kitten. Theo made it apparent that he loved the dad of the family, and Candilee knew Theo needed to go home with them.

Thelonius Monk is flourishing in his new home. He is dearly loved and continues with his life-loving antics. Theo lets his new family know that at 8:30 PM, it is time for a treat, proving that each day he lives up to the story behind his name

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