

The Official Publication of the Maine Coon Breeders & Fanciers Association

The Scratch Sheet

Spring

March 1998



“Yup, I’m pretty!”

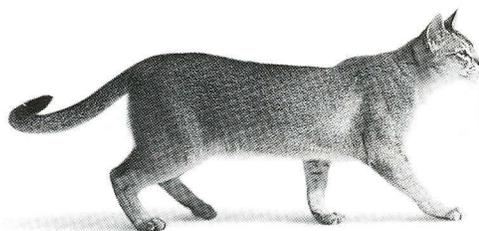
Sol-Katz Elsa-Belle Starr of Doranjo, a brown tabby with white girl owned by Ann Johnson and bred by Nancy and Richard Koch, showing off her style.

**HAPPY 30th BIRTHDAY,
MCBFA!**

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Handling & Grooming an Unneutered
Maine Coon Male
Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy: A Primer
and Update
Hip Dysplasia in Maine Coons
Having the OFA Check Your Cat's Hips
The Long Winter (A Discussion of
Polyps and Horner's Syndrome)

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Anyone may submit articles, pictures, and stories to *The Scratch Sheet*; however, only a Breeder, Provisional or Fancier member may submit "Grand Gallery" information.

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BREEDER MEMBERS: Please send dues (\$25.00/year) and address changes to the Breeder Member Secretary (address above). A copy of a current litter registration must be included to enable you to stay on the Active Breeder list.

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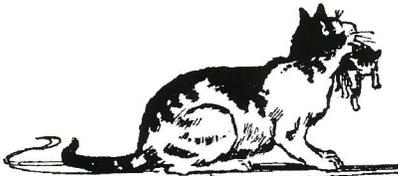
GENERAL INFORMATION

Make all checks payable to:
MCBFA, whether they be for dues, brochures, or books. Be sure to send your check to the appropriate secretary if it is for dues, or to Trish Simpson (Editor) if it is for our publications.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Scratch Sheet will publish letters and articles at the discretion of the Editor (no letters or articles defamatory to particular persons or catteries will be published), but reserves the right to edit letters and articles in the interest of clarity. Additionally, names and/or catteries mentioned in letters and/or articles may be withheld at the discretion of the Editor. Letters will be published with authors' names withheld if so requested, but letters must be signed in order to be published. Letters received anonymously will not be published. The opinions expressed in published letters and articles are not necessarily the opinions of MCBFA or the Editor.

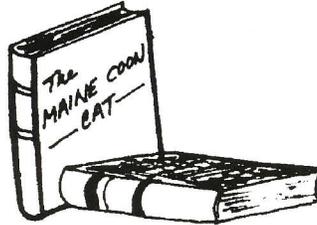
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There are several MCBFA publications available to help you promote our wonderful breed as well as our #1 organization. Some are free, others have a nominal charge. Please avail yourself of these resources.

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Give one of these booklets to anyone who inquires about a kitten, MCBFA, or buys a kitten from you. They make great promotools, and they're **FREE!** (except for postage). Send \$3.00 (within the U.S.); \$6.00 (overseas); for each bundle of 25 booklets, payable to MCBFA.

ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY!

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FROM THE EDITOR

please forgive me for any typos!

Speaking of *The Scratch Sheet*, I have agreed to do this issue and one more (if necessary), but that's all. This means that unless someone steps up and volunteers to take it over, we'll again have a gap in issues. Unfortunately, our By-Laws make it impossible for anyone but a full Breeder member to serve as Editor.

Although putting our magazine together is a big job, the Internet has made it much easier. A large amount of the content of this issue was typed by others and e-mailed to me; all I had to do was format, edit, and proofread. Some people even formatted pages and electronically sent me the camera-ready copy. A huge "Thank You!" to everybody who assisted me in this way!

I'd like to see the next issue be the 1996/97 Awards Issue. I need pictures of

the top five Maine Coons in ACA, ACFA, CFA, CFF, TICA, and whatever GCCF and FiFE can come up with. The deadline for pictures is May 15 (that's **firm**) I know it's late to be publishing these awards, but we'd all like to see the lovely cats. Either your MCBFA Regional Directors or your respective Breed Council Chairmen will be collection points for the photos, and you will be contacted with information on where to send them.

On another subject, MCBFA elections are coming up.

If you'd like to see MCBFA continue into the 21st century with effectiveness and strength, *please* vote!

And don't forget, this year MCBFA celebrates its 30th birthday! Let's make it a great one.

Welcome to Spring, everybody! I hope your holidays were happy, safe, and prosperous.

As you've all realized by now, *The Scratch Sheet* has not been published for quite some time. Two editors resigned for personal reasons before publishing an issue. I was asked to step in as interim editor in order to get out an issue while a permanent editor is being sought. This issue is being done as quickly as possible in order that more time won't elapse before MCBFA's membership receives it, so

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear MCBFA Members...

First and foremost let me wish each and everyone a Very Happy New Year! and hoping that you and yours had a very happy holiday season.

As most of you know MCBFA has had many problems this past year regarding our Scratch Sheet Magazine and keeping our Editors. For the moment, this problem has been solved, once again, by Trish Simpson who has volunteered her services for the next several issues.

There has been much discussion over the internet in the past few months regarding the software purchased for the last two editors, we only had Board ap-

proval to purchase the software, the Editors resigned before it was purchased.

This is an election year for MCBFA, please support the candidates of your choice. Many complain about the people that get into office, but most candidates run unopposed. If you feel that you can help MCBFA function better, please feel free to submit your Letter of Intent to the Recording Secretary, Greg Cada, by February 15, 1998. You must be a Breeder Member in good standing to hold office. MCBFA has grown very large since I have become a breeder member ten years ago.

Most of you don't know that I am NOT running for re-election. It has been

a very stressful two years in my life. I have a busy judging schedule, family life and managing my cattery; I don't wish any of these to suffer due to lack of time and energy, mostly energy. I would like to thank those of you that have stood by me through this term of office and hope that you will give your undivided support to the next President, whoever it may be.

I wish the candidates running for offices within MCBFA the best and hope they can bring forth the changes the membership wishes to make. Good luck to everyone in the election!!!! Looking forward to a very prosperous new year.

Judy Chappetta
MCBFA President

Mid-Atlantic Regional Report

Dear Mid-Atlantic Region Members,

Hello and Happy New Year to all the members of MCBFA. I wish each and every one of you a healthy, prosperous and great 1998! This past November I held a Mid-Atlantic regional meeting at the Southern Dixie Show in Richmond, VA. I talked to some of you in the show hall and to the 4 that attended the meeting.

It is my intent to schedule more meetings at different shows in the various associations, and hopefully plan it better for a larger turnout. Please feel free to contact me to discuss a future meeting or any other issues regarding MCBFA. I can be reached at 410-850-0574 or via e-mail at taelcat@aol.com.

Elections are just around the corner and I feel there are going to be some very

positive changes in MCBFA. Breeder members, please take the time to vote!

Sincerely,
JoAnn Genovese
MCBFA Mid-Atlantic Director

Western Regional Report

Last year I recruited several people to represent me in their particular area from various associations; I hope to reactivate the enthusiasm of my recruits in 1998.

One item for consideration is having better access to our wonderful Purple MCBFA Award Ribbons to pass out at Cat Shows. . . this is a great public relations item and needs to be promoted on a larger scale. Ribbons may be obtained from the MCBFA Vice-President (Liz Flynn).

In November, 1997, an informal get together of Maine Coon breeders was held in my home. This was well received; and Southern California breeders are starting to build trust with one another and sharing valuable, educational information. Tears were shed by those who stated they had lived through their

"crisis" alone; fearful of disclosing their "problems," because they would be "shunned and gossiped about by other breeders."

Hopefully the show ring will not be the prime focus for us as breeders and we will concentrate on promoting the health and welfare of our beautiful Maine Coon Cats. Let's share our tragedies as well as our triumphs.

The next "informal" meeting will be held Sunday, February 8th. Meetings will always have an "educational" component such as how to look at your pedigree, hip dysplasia, gum disease, HCM, genetics, etc.

Fellow breeders, I urge you to start holding "informal" meetings within your Maine Coon neighborhood. Get together and share; get to know one another on a

personal rather than a competitive level; this involves sacrificing time for your fellow breeders . . . in the end we all benefit.

I need you, you need me; we all need one another to care and share, to educate and to be there through good times and bad times.

On another note, don't forget this is MCBFA Election Year; you have until February 15th to file your letter of intent to run for any MCBFA Office.

Don't procrastinate; please VOTE; cast your ballot for those candidates who will truly make MCBFA "THE BEST."

*I wish you and your cats health
and happiness,*

Helen Johns

MCBFA Western Regional Director,

LETTERS

Dear MCBFA Members,

I have been noticing of late that some of you seem to feel that the Norwegian Forest Cat Fanciers Association is "stealing" ideas and wording from MCBFA. A little history lesson is in order!

First, NFCFA is a sister organization, performing for the Norwegian Forest Cat the same functions that MCBFA performs for the Maine Coon. Both associations have as their mission to promote, protect, and preserve a natural breed; to encourage selective breeding toward a standard of perfection; to promote and encourage harmony and exchange of information among breeders, fanciers, and owners.

Second, the founders and early members of NFCFA were to an amazing degree already breeders of Maine Coons and members of MCBFA. Having experienced the benefits of MCBFA for the Maine Coon, people like Sheila Gira, Sue Shaw, Mary Buckmaster, Steve and Louise Clair, Fran Lloyd, and Vicki Shipp, to name only a few, desired the same benefits for the Forest Cat. It was with the informed consent of MCBFA that these breeders based their Constitution, By-Laws, and Code of Ethics upon those of MCBFA. Some wording differences do

exist, but the ideology and general thrust are identical.

Subsequently, when NFCFA made some amendments for the better, MCBFA soon followed suit; after all, membership in both organizations has long been characteristic.

I can speak to this fact with some authority, as I served on the Committee charged with revising the Codes of Ethics for *both* MCBFA and NFCFA. In this particular instance, changes made by NFCFA were brought over when the MCBFA Code was revised. I have also served in both organizations as an officer and have proposed and presented amendments to the By-Laws for each group.

When members of both associations see the possibilities for avoiding future problems or the need to cover situations not previously encountered, it is customary to present the ideas to both groups simultaneously. The language, in order to be precise, will obviously be similar.

We have borrowed back and forth from our friendly neighbor to the extent that no one knows for sure who is "ahead." We really should not care.

In the future, before you leap to the conclusion that MCBFA is somehow being sabotaged by another group, I urge

that you check out the matter with one of the older breeders, your Regional Director, or an officer. What your inexperience perceives as grievous insult may in fact be just another evidence of a long, close, and mutually beneficial relationship.

Liz Flynn

MCBFA Vice-President

NFCFA Breeder Division Secretary

Dear Editor,

The letter in the Winter 1996 Scratch Sheet, "KNOCK KNOCK Anybody Out There?" signed by name withheld, truly hit home with us (they had carefully chosen several U.S. Maine Coon breeders and never heard back from them). We, too, have had this problem.

Granted, UK quarantine requirements, poor encounter previously, family problems, or not having what was wanted may be involved. But common courtesy *should* have been there. A letter or phone call *should* have been in order.

A very dear friend in the midwest (an MCBFA Breeder Member) from whom we acquired our Maines, was in the market for a new stud. She contacted a number of breeders. Only a few responded. She tried several in Washington State; The Tribe and Solkatz were very helpful although they didn't have what she

needed. They did suggest some other Maine Coon breeders in the state. Not one responded.

We tried calling four of them; none of them returned our calls. Weeks went by. We wrote to them, enclosing self-addressed, stamped envelopes for their convenience and included the breeder's business card. Still no answers. We tried calling again; even drove over to the catteries - never anyone home. All to no avail. Many months went by.

Our friend finally did hear back from a breeder in Nebraska, nearly a year later, but she had what our friend was looking for. She is very pleased with this stud.

On April 5 and 6, 1997, there was a TICA show in Seattle. Never having been to one, we decided to see what TICA is all about. There were several friendly breeders willing to talk about their cats and show them off (Somali, Wegie, Russian Blue, and Nebelunt).

But **not one** Maine Coon breeder!

We were frankly appalled at the attitudes, unfriendliness, rudeness, and "Don't come around our area" looks we received. When we tried to congratulate one of them on a final, we were scowled at. Turns out that three of the Maine Coon breeders we encountered at this show were ones we had tried unsuccessfully to contact.

The Maine Coon breeders we saw were very, very poor representatives for the Maines!

If anyone would be looking for a nice Maine Coon in the future, we would highly recommend The Tribe or Solkats, and warn people to stay away from these other breeders.

Sincerely,

*(Names provided and withheld
by request)*

Dear Editor,
Hi All,

As some may know, the MCBFA internet web site maintains a list of full breeder members. This breeder listing is able to be accessed by anyone on the internet, and many of our "visitors" may be looking for breeders in their area. We currently, out of respect for the privacy of our members, list only name, e-mail address and link to cattery homepage (if applicable), and state of residence. For those breeder members of MCBFA that

are not on-line, there is no contact information listed other than state of residence.

You can see that it would be quite difficult for a person searching the internet for Maine Coon breeders in their area to contact someone who does not have e-mail.

I have volunteered to update this list as time permits, to include other contact information: mailing address and/or city of residence, and phone number.

So...Breeder Members, if you would like to include this additional contact information on the MCBFA web site, please drop me a line requesting an update of your listing. I can be reached at:

Paul Huntley
264 Kenbrook Circle
San Jose, CA 95111-3262
or via e-mail at either:
paulh@lunarcoons.com or
webmaster@mcdfa.org

*Best Regards,
Paul Huntley
LunarCoons Cattery*

Dear Editor,

In regard to the discussions regarding MCBFA on e-mail the last few months, I am uncertain as to where some things stand with the association.

Is it currently acceptable to put MCBFA Fancier Member on business cards and in magazine ads, including classified ads? OR are MCBFA Breeder Members the only ones who are "permitted" to do this? If so, why?

Let me make a few points:

It has become obvious that there are some Fancier members and some breeders who don't even belong to MCBFA that may actually be more conscientious breeders than some Breeder members.

Some of these breeders do not deem it necessary to go through the "initiation" to become Breeder members. Some have had bad experiences with Breeder members and don't WANT to belong to the Breeder member club. Some have had years of experience in breeding/raising/working with other types of animals. There are probably as many reasons as there are people in this category.

Thus, it does not seem reasonable to ostracize them from the benefits of the association simply because they do not go through the initiation procedures.

MCBFA should be for ALL members. I agree that MAYBE not all MCBFA members should vote on ALL issues. That is not the point of this letter.

I'm asking for a simple "allowance" to let ALL members use MCBFA in advertising - regardless of their "status" AS LONG AS they stipulate what part of MCBFA they belong to - IF this is a huge issue to the MCBFA breeder members., consider this: some of the long-time Breeder members have retired from breeding and/or active Breeder member status. Have they been replaced with an equal number of new Breeder members? In other words, might you not NEED all MCBFA members to help promote MCBFA through personal advertising?

Even if you deem that your Breeder members are sufficiently "advertising" MCBFA, wouldn't it be nice if ALL members could contribute?

*Thank you.
Sharon Rosema*

Dear Editor,

I am writing this in praise of *The Scratch Sheet*. Every quarter (and I wish it were published even more often!) when it arrives I quickly set aside a block of time to read it cover-to-cover. *The Scratch Sheet*, in my opinion, contains a good mix of useful information and "fluff." I am frequently moved to tears through the tributes and poems, but my heart soars when I read a story or letter in praise of these wonderful cats.

I am proud and lucky to be owned by a big, handsome Maine Coon named Amadeus. I delight in his chirps, head-butts, and incredible intelligence, and I appreciate that there is a publication where all Maine Coon lovers can sign the praises of these wonderful cats.

*Sincerely,
Dawn L. Aldridg*

Dear Editor,

Butterworth-Heinemann Publishers (UK) have commissioned four co-authors to update and expand "Genetics For Cat Breeders - Third Edition" (1990), written by the late Roy Robinson, F.I.Biol. The authors who will be working on this are Carolyn Vella, Lorraine Shelton, John McGonagle, and T.W. Stanglein, VMD. The new work is tentatively titled

"Genetics For Cat Breeders and Veterinarians."

I am writing you to seek your assistance. We are looking for *published* information on your breed. Specifically we are looking for any articles which your breed club publication has published dealing with the genetics of your breed, *excluding color genetics*.

Overall, we are interested in those genetic issues which would impact either the breeder or the veterinarian. As for the breeder, this might deal with genetics problems which have (or have not) been virtually eliminated by careful breeding (and how?). As for veterinarians, we are interested in pieces dealing with genetics as they impact a practicing veterinarian.

For example, let us presume that your breed has had a history of, say, polycystic kidney disease. And further, that problem has been virtually eliminated by careful breeding. We would like articles on how it was discovered, what it was, how your breed eliminated it, etc. Even though *you* may have eliminated it from your lines, not every breeder may have done so. That means we might like to alert practicing veterinarians that this practice did exist in the past, so when they see a pet of your breed with problems, they should consider the possibility of this particular disease.

To give another example, if your breed has a known sensitivity to a particular anesthesia, antibiotic or inoculation, that would also be important to document, for both the breeder and the veterinarian.

In general, we are only looking for articles back through 1990. It is our hope to

bring the vast, untouched breed club literature to the attention of veterinarians and feline geneticists, as well as to tap that ourselves. Not only will any important pieces be fully cited, your club's cooperation will be acknowledged in the preface.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at 610-916-2079; Fax: 610-916-2078; E-mail: helicon@mail.enter.net.

Sincerely,
John McGonagle

Dear Editor,

Last year I was in denial; read all the info on Hip dysplasia on the internet; received a stack of info from Helen Dohrman (Firerose Maine Coons) on HD (she was open, honest, and helpful); discussed it with my vet and thought to myself, why spend all this money when it's like playing Russian roulette as one cat can carry the HD gene yet not manifest HD.

In June of 1997 I took one of my queens (who was small in comparison to most of my queens) for an x-ray to see if she needed a C-section and accidentally discovered that she had one hip out of the socket. This queen had shown no outward signs of HD. My vet reduced his price on x-rays (he's a board certified surgeon). After x-raying seven cats and discovering that three didn't pass muster, my vet was as astonished as I was. OFA certification is \$25.00 extra. The cat must be at least two years old before OFA will certify the hips. I am having preliminary x-rays done on all breeding cats now, and will have

them re-done at two years of age so they can be OFA certified.

We are dealing with educational matters here; we all need to "listen up" and "wake up" (this includes myself) to the various problems within our breed. Not only do we need to listen, we need to act. So you can't afford to run out and spend money on all these tests right now? Start saving up; do one at a time (or however many you can). Get started! I can't afford to do all the testing I want at once, but I have a plan to get there eventually.

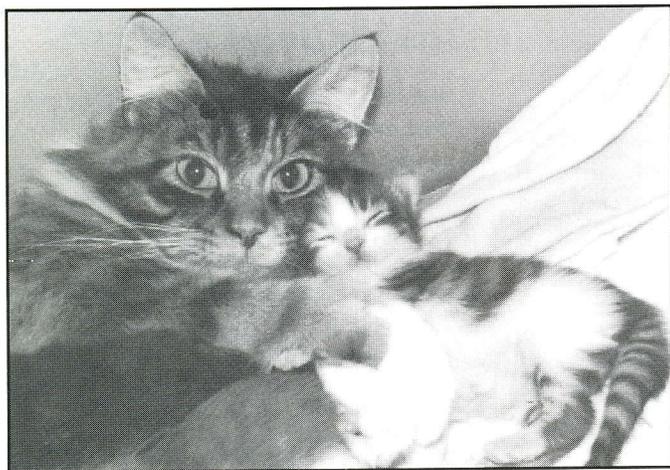
If you can't afford to be a responsible breeder, then don't breed. Don't buy breeding cats from anyone unless they are testing their breeding stock.

Another area we need to be watchful of is gingivitis. Our Maine Coons seem to have a propensity for gum disease and we can't all afford laser gum surgery.

Echocardiograms vary in price, but average \$261 in my area.

Start sharing your information with other breeders via home meetings; get together at cat shows; communicate on the Maine Coon list on the internet; correspond via e-mail. Let's work together for the protection and health of our wonderful Maine Coon Cats.

Sincerely,
Helen Johns
Pedropurrs Maine Coon Cats
Los Angeles, CA



Love, Peace, and Happiness

(Editor's note: Unfortunately, this adorable picture isn't identified, but I couldn't resist sharing it with all of you!)



Handling and Grooming an Unneutered (Whole) Maine Coon Male

By Karen Crooke, Terrificats Maine Coons

Unneutered (whole) male Maine Coon Cats are wonderful animals. They will seek and delight in your attention and approval. They love to cuddle, snuggle, knead, and bump heads when they are happy. They are true gentle giants. A bond can develop between them and you that is incredible. You can really begin to believe that they are just little boys in fur coats. But they also get to be BIG and STRONG.

Never forget that, unfortunately, they are animals -- animals that are affected by male hormones. Those hormones can, at a moment's notice, change the most docile, sweet, loving animal into a furious, wild, savage beast which does not know his owners or friends. These hormones can kick in at the slightest provocation which may or may not be obvious to humans. Always wash your hands and be sure no trace of urine or body odor of a male is on your clothes when you touch or work with one male after another, including cleaning their cages or litter boxes. This is true even in your own house or cattery unless you know the cats very well and are CERTAIN they will not react. And always be aware that they could change their reactions at any time.

Never, never trust two whole males together who have not grown up together, unless they have been introduced very slowly over a period of months. The slightest scent of another male (unfamiliar or even a "roommate") can upset a male cat to the point of fury. This is why some cats who are perfect sweethearts at home become hard to handle and aggressive at a show... particularly males which live alone as a pampered pet and are not regularly exposed to the scent of other males. Disposition is a product of genes AND environment. Male cats who live as the only male in a cattery should be shown frequently (at least once, preferably twice a month) to keep them used to the show scene and scents until they are retired from the show ring. If they are to be shown again after a long absence from the show hall, be very cautious and careful about letting them get close to other males.

A few exceptional male cats are able to control their instincts and tolerate other males in very close proximity; but even they can be pushed beyond a point where they react aggressively. Once the hormones have taken over the brain processes of a male cat, he does not recognize his human friends as humans, and may not recognize cats with which he is normally friendly. He may attack, sometimes viciously, whoever or whatever is close by, animal, object,

or even his favorite human. However, if two males grow up together, or are put together when one is quite young, they probably will be able to live together most if not all of their lives, as long as they are not separated for a lengthy period of time (more than a couple of days, as when it's time to go to a show or breed a female) and are cautiously reintroduced after each separation.

Speaking of females, remember that a male kitten is capable of breeding and siring a litter as early as 5 months of age. He should not be allowed to run with or play with or be left alone with an unsprayed female above the age of 3 1/2 months - EVER - unless extremely diligent, adult human supervision is provided. Females as young as 3 months can come into heat, real heat and/or kitten heat. They CAN GET PREGNANT at that age. If you simply cannot bear for them not to play together, be constantly alert for the slightest sign of heat in the female. Trust me, the male will know instantly! It only takes ONE time to sire a litter of 6 or more. It is best simply never to let them play together unless you are prepared for the female to become pregnant. They can get to know each other through the wire door to his living area.

It is not the end of the world if a young female gets pregnant but it is frowned upon greatly by reputable breeders. NEVER, NEVER GIVE OR LET ANYONE ELSE GIVE A PREGNANCY TERMINATION SHOT TO ANY FEMALE YOU HOPE TO BREED AGAIN AT A LATER DATE...OR EVEN ANY FEMALE YOU HOPE WILL BE ALIVE AFTER THE SHOT! They are dangerous and unproven for use in cats. No matter what anybody says, other breeders, vets, etc., DO NOT GIVE THIS SHOT! If a cat gets pregnant that should not (too young, recently had a litter, even recently had a C-section), the safest thing to do is to allow the pregnancy to progress normally.

Speaking of sexual maturation -- a whole male can begin to spray at any time for any reason! Some males, however, do not spray until they are well over a year old, sometimes not until age 2 or 3 if they do not live with cycling females and other male cats. But going to a cat show can trigger spraying. Sometimes they only spray at shows for a few months, but eventually they decide to mark their territory at home.

The concentration of male odor varies a lot from cat to cat. Some have a very strong odor and some have a relatively mild odor. There is no way to predict which cat will

have the mild odor. Some spray all the time once they have started and others only very occasionally under circumstances known only to them. But they will spray....and nothing except Clorox bleach can remove the smell.

The best product other than bleach for removing male urine smell from cloth, carpet, etc., is "OUTRIGHT." You must soak the area with the product and keep it wet for 48 hours before allowing it to dry out. That way the enzymes really get to work. Sometimes the process has to be repeated. It does not totally remove the odor, but it is among the best products around. A newer product available at cat shows is called "ODOR OUT." It works very well, almost as well as bleach. This is not the "ODOR OUT" found at SAM'S CLUB (Membership Superstores). SAM's Odor Out has a strong, almost annoying floral scent. The "ODOR OUT" sold at cat shows is odorless. If you can possibly use bleach or diluted bleach, do so because it will work.

HANDLING

For the above reasons, a whole male cat of any age past about 7 or 8 months should be handled with great respect and caution, yet he should be handled firmly, confidently, and lovingly. And of course he should be loved a lot! Do not be afraid of him -- just be sure to avoid situations which might cause him to forget who he and you are. Never say "Oh, my cat would never bite me!" because he would, under the right circumstances. (This is also true of females, but they usually are not quite as strong and therefore are somewhat less of a threat.) Any cat, male or female, that threatens, hisses aggressively, swishes his tail forcefully, is very tense, or "behaves in a recalcitrant manner" should be handled very carefully with the idea of calming the cat and protecting the handler from harm.

This is one of the best reasons why no one other than the owner should ever attempt to catch a cat or kitten in a "cat loose" situation in the show hall. The animal that is "out" is frightened, aware of all sorts of unfamiliar scents, and knows of only one way to protect itself...to lash out. You must decide if you are willing to be bitten (and cat bites can be extremely serious, causing one to miss weeks of work and possibly be hospitalized and have plastic surgery) by someone else's cat before you reach for a strange cat who is loose in a show hall. Of course you will be willing to take such a risk for your own cat! But never hold on to a biting cat unless he is about to get outdoors or into an extremely dangerous situation. The cat will eventually calm down and be caught...but your wounds could be extremely serious. An extremely upset animal should be caught by herding it into a carrier or cage and/or throwing a thick towel over it.

Be extra careful when handling a male cat's genitals and areas near the genitals. Don't suddenly touch him there without warning! But train him to accept handling there because the judges are going to check to see that both testicles are descended. Some males are also very sensitive to their rear feet being handled as well.

Teach him to let you "pill" him early on with vitamins so that if he is ever ill, giving medication will be simple. You can also "pill" him with bits of meat to pique his appetite. This also makes it easy to give supplements for conditioning the coat and to put weight on him.

Always carry a male cat firmly, giving him the idea that you are the one in control. A stretched position held in front of you or over your head is good for a very relaxed cat. Also, an over-the-shoulder perch is good. A cat new to the handler or a cat that seems nervous or easily startled is better carried with one arm under his body with the other hand laid firmly over his shoulders or neck, ready to grasp the neck hard should he startle. Sometimes it's better to hide his eyes by letting him snuggle his face in your hand if he startles easily.

GROOMING/BATHING

Clip the nails, clean the ears, and comb and remove all mats from the coat BEFORE THE BATH.

Clip all claws on ALL FEET, INCLUDING THE REAR ONES. Not clipping all the claws can cause your cat to lose a win . . . judges are adamant about the claws being clipped (blunted). Even if your cat behaves well and never attempts to use them, the judge may check to see if they have been clipped. Claws being clipped is a hot topic among the judges right now.

Clean the ears with a dry Q-tip. Clean down into the ear and remove any and all brown ear wax and oily secretions. If your cat is one of the Maine Coons who have "dirty ears," dip a clean Q-tip into a boric acid solution (purchased at the drugstore). Swoosh it around in the ear and it will change the pH of the ear so that the wax will not be produced as much. Do this every day or every other day for about two weeks, then once a week.

The Maine Coon male's coat is usually a "harder" or coarser coat than most female coats, and it is usually quite oily, especially **behind the ears and over the top of the back and the tail**. These areas require special attention in the show bath.

1. Always, always, always (**never** skip it) use **GOJO** or **GOOP** or **FAST ORANGE** on these areas at the very beginning of the bath. Work a tablespoon or more into each area, into a dry coat. Rub the hairs together until the creamy GOJO or GOOP liquefies. Then add dishwashing detergent (**AJAX** antibacterial) or **ORVUS** soap and work

that into the areas with the GOJO or GOOP until it lathers lightly. Then rinse for several minutes with very warm water.

2. Next should come a regular soaping up with dish-washing detergent (**AJAX ANTIBACTERIAL & SUN-SHINE** are my first choices - some people use **DAWN - EXPERIMENT**: your choice really depends upon the hardness of your water). Lather, rub in, scrub with your fingers all over the cat, with special attention to the tail and behind the ears, and the underside of the cat.

Rinse and Rinse with slightly cooler water.

3. Now use a good lathering of **Fantasia 100% TEA SHAMPOO**. Same procedure as #2 but let it sit a minute or two. Work it into a really full lather - it's very concentrated so you don't need much. Use some of the soapy suds to massage into the ear furnishings and outer ear to remove the light coating of oil there. Rinse and Rinse again. And still rinse some more. If the coat is really oily or hasn't been washed in a couple of months, do a second lathering of the TEA Shampoo and rinse and rinse.

4. I sometimes use another deep cleaning shampoo here, such as "**Aussi Citrifier Shampoo**" or **Jhirmack's "Fabulously Clean."** "**Bold Hold**" also has a good deep cleaning shampoo. Of course, rinse and rinse after scrubbing a minute or two.

5. **SEBULEX Dandruff Shampoo** is next. Once more, put a little extra behind the ears, on the ruff, and on the top side of the base of the tail. Wash the ears again with the extra suds. If the tail still feels oily, rinse the tail only and soap it up again while the original lathering is soaking the rest of the coat. Then rinse and rinse again. And again.

5. Now use a "clean" conditioning shampoo such as the **Kelko Color shampoos** or **Kelko Filthy Animal Shampoo** or **Aussi Moist Shampoo** or **CitriShine Revitalizing Shampoo**. This puts back a little "condition" without adding too heavy a conditioner or any oil. If the coat has become really dry due to hormonal problems or diet, this is where (after using a shampoo named in the first sentence) I would use a little bit of **Aussi "Hair Salad"** - a light conditioner -- work it into the coat and let it sit a minute or two. Never put it behind the ears or over the base of the tail or on the ruff -- only apply it on the back (saddle area) and very lightly on the last half of the tail, upper side only. Another light conditioner I use occasionally is the **Aussi "Curing Muddy."** It actually adds body as well as conditions the coat. I use more of it and leave it in a little longer than the Hair Salad. You can use it all over the tail except the top of the base of the tail. The "Muddy" is not as greasy as the "Salad." However, it must be removed completely after doing its job. (Rinse and

Rinse and Rinse with warm water, then a light sudsing of **AJAX** followed by more rinsing.) You can use the "Salad" every week if you want (only a teaspoon or so, though). Only use the "Muddy" once or twice a month, if needed. Always be sure to **Rinse, rinse, rinse, and rinse some more** with warm water.

6. Sometimes I stop here and sometimes I do another very light lathering of **AJAX** depending on how the coat feels to me! **If you have used the Hair Salad or Curing Muddy conditioners, you MUST do another very light lathering of AJAX.** Then rinse and rinse and rinse and rinse and rinse and rinse. The most important thing to a show bath is to rinse forever...until the coat is squeaky clean and not a single soap bubble is seen on the cat or in the rinse water.

7. I like to add coat bodifiers at this time just prior to its being blown dry. **CINDRA SuperCoat** or **RAVE Volumizing Mousse/Gel** and **RAVE Volumizing Spray** are good products. But you can only use those on cats that will let you blow them really dry by hand, not in the carrier. The coat must be brushed out and dried at the same time if you use these additives.

Blow the cat dry with a hand held dryer. Especially blow dry the tail, behind the ears, and the ruff. Comb and brush the hair against the direction it grows at the same time you are forcing warm air through it. If the cat won't tolerate the dryer, place him in a carrier and point the dryer at him there. Be sure something absorbent is in the bottom of the carrier.

8. **AT THE SHOW**, only use the **CINDRA Super-Coat** or **CINDRA MAXICARE** which promotes a thick undercoat). Do not use cat coat gloss - it is too greasy. You can spray **Static Guard** on the comb and brush just before you comb him before each ring if static is a problem.

Bay Rum is an emergency deodorizer (but it doesn't smell that good) and coat degreaser (but it doesn't work that well)...everything should be done at home in the bath. A "No Rinse" Shampoo made for cats is good to have at the show in case of emergency. Put some in a small spray bottle to use if the cat soils his britches or feet.

MENNEN Shave Talc (neutral tint) is good powder to use if you need to freshen the tabby colored part of the cat (brown or cream colored tabby coloring). The powder is a light beige color.

Plain **Corn Starch** (Yellow box at the grocery store - I think the brand name is Argos) is the best powder to absorb oils or stains or other nasty things from the white parts (or colored parts if really messy). At a show, if the hair clumps behind the ears or on the ruff, lightly rub in some corn starch, let it sit a minute or two, and brush out (and determine to do better on the pre-show bath next

time). If the cat has an extremely oily coat, between shows, "pack" his coat with cornstarch on Monday morning and don't brush it out until just before the bath. Put him in the bathtub and rub handfuls of corn starch into the coat until he is almost white. Pat him gently to puff out the excess and keep him confined until he has shaken out most of it. Brush him very well before his next bath.

To take away male odor on a cat just about to be placed in the judging ring, spray a light cologne (I use **Love's Baby Soft**) over your hands and run your hands over his coat on the sides, britches, and tail. You can also

sprinkle some of the Love's Baby Soft powder on your hands and "pouf" him underneath. It is a light pink powder, so don't use too much.

Always line a male cat's traveling carrier with DEPENDS absorbent pads - several of them, folded over. If he wets one, you can just pull it out and he still has a dry one or two in the carrier. Or better yet, give him a very large carrier with a litter box. (VariKennel #200)

GOOD LUCK AT THE SHOW!

Tiglat Pilaser and The Colde Boxx

Author Unknown

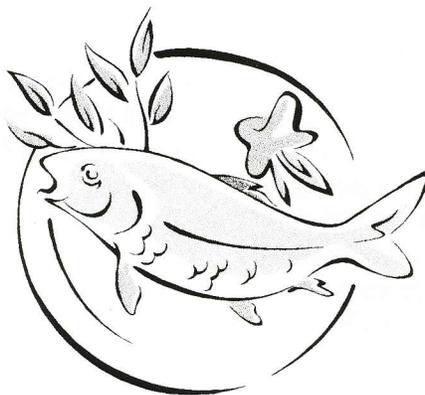
I, Tiglat Pilaser, having determined that the Big Feet keep their most precious comestibles in the Colde Boxx, endeavored to open same by inserting my paw beneath the door of the Colde Boxx and, having seized the rubber gasket thereof, would have drawn the door open except that my strength sufficed not. Whereupon I sent mental instructions to the Dog of this Abode, said Dog's name being "Kanyak", with the command "Open the door of the Colde Boxx." And the aforementioned Kanyak did rise from his

ensconcement and proceed post-haste to the door of the Colde Boxx and with his snout he did pry open its door. Whereupon I gazed on the contents thereof and my heart was gladdened. For there was meat and there was fowl and there was fish and there was cheese and there was butter and there was milk and there was cream. Whereupon I summoned my brethren saying "Hasten hither for there is much to eat and the Big Feet are not about." And whilst we feasted upon the contents of the Colde Boxx we suf-

fered the Dog to gnaw upon the meager remnants of the carcass of a bird sacrificed to the Big Feet's demon of the new year.

And having denuded the aforementioned Colde Boxx of its contents we Masters of the Universe did set to cleaning and preening ourselves in our contentment until the sound of a Big Foot implement being inserted into the door of the Abode did cause us all to Beat It.

The best part is that the Dog got blamed for it all.



Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy: A Primer and Update

By Jody A. Chinitz, Marcia J. Munro, and Mark D. Kittleson DVM Ph.D

What is hypertrophic cardiomyopathy?

The heart is the pump that maintains blood circulation throughout the body. It is, in fact, a dual pump, circulating blood through the right side of the heart and into the lungs, then back through the left side of the heart and out to the body. The feline heart, like a human's heart, has four chambers: the right atrium, right ventricle, left atrium and left ventricle.

The right atrium receives blood from various large veins (the venae cavae) and propels it down through the tricuspid valve to fill the right ventricle during diastole (ventricular relaxation). A right ventricle contraction pumps the blood into the pulmonary artery, which leads to the lungs. As the blood flows through the lungs, carbon dioxide is exchanged for oxygen. The oxygenated blood is returned from the lungs to the heart through the pulmonary veins, which lead into the left atrium. From the left atrium, the blood is propelled down through the mitral valve and fills the left ventricle (the largest and most muscular pumping chamber). A left ventricle contraction pumps the blood into the aorta, and from there it flows throughout the body's circulatory system – to return again through the venae cavae to the heart.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is a heart disease characterized in cats by thickening (hypertrophy) of the muscles that comprise the walls of the left ventricle. This hypertrophy increases the stiffness of the left ventricle, preventing it from filling efficiently. The hypertrophy also usually reduces the size of the left ventricular chamber so that it cannot fill with as much blood. Increased stiffness resulting from the thickened left ventricular walls can cause an increase in pressure in the left ventricle during the time that it is relaxed (diastole). This pressure backs up into the lungs to cause leakage of fluid from capillaries into the lungs (pulmonary edema) or the space surrounding the lungs (pleural effusion). It also results in enlargement of the left atrium. This may place the cat at increased risk for blood clot formation. An enlarged left atrium allows blood flow to slow down to the point that red cells can start to clump together, eventually forming a clot. Clots that dislodge from the left atrium are propelled into the circulatory system causing systemic thromboembolism.

The hypertrophied left ventricular wall can also affect the function of the mitral valve by distorting the position of the valve. The valve is pulled forward (anterior) by the enlarged muscle; this is called systolic anterior motion (SAM) of the mitral valve. The distortion in the valve may

allow blood to leak back, or regurgitate, from the left ventricle to the left atrium; the distortion in the valve's position can also prevent blood from flowing freely out to the aorta during contraction. Either of these abnormalities may cause a systolic heart murmur.

The gallop rhythm so often heard in cats with HCM is caused by low frequency vibrations in the walls of the heart, primarily those of the left ventricle. These vibrations occur when the heart muscle is stiff, as with HCM, or when a large amount of blood is suddenly dumped into the left ventricle during diastole, most commonly as a consequence of mitral valve regurgitation.

What causes HCM?

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is diagnosed when the cardiac hypertrophy is not caused by another disease. Hypertrophy similar to HCM may also develop secondary to (as the result of) another illness, such as aortic stenosis, systemic hypertension, hyperthyroidism, or acromegaly.

Primary HCM most commonly occurs in cats younger than five years old. In Maine Coon cats, this disease has been observed in cats as young as six months of age, though it appears to begin development more often in cats that are one to two years old. The absence of HCM in a three-year-old does not, however, guarantee that the cat is "safe" from the disease.

In man, HCM is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait with variable expression and incomplete penetrance. At least half of all human HCM is known, thus far, to be inherited. Mutations that cause human HCM have been localized to date on six genes. For example, more than three dozen mutations in the gene that encodes for the beta-myosin heavy chain protein (one of the contractile proteins in cardiac muscle) can cause HCM, and one study reports that in more than 90% of these cases, other family members were found to have the defective gene.

HCM is often called a disease of the sarcomere. Sarcomeres, comprised of bundles of filaments, provide the structure in heart muscle that causes the heart muscle to contract. The filaments are built of various proteins. Any of the many mutations in a gene that encodes for a protein such as myosin can result in abnormalities in the heart muscle and its functioning. In an autosomal dominant disease inherited from one parent, one-half the protein produced by the genes is abnormal and one-half is normal. Sarcomeres that contain abnormal protein do not function normally. The heart muscle compensates by producing

additional sarcomeres. There is a 50:50 chance that each new sarcomere will be abnormal. If it is abnormal another one must be created. This results in the wall thickness increasing, often to twice its normal thickness.

In 1993, researchers reported their observations of HCM in a family of Maine Coon cats, though a mode of inheritance could not be identified due to the interrelatedness of the cats. Continuing research has substantiated that affected cats can produce affected offspring in a pattern highly indicative of autosomal dominant inheritance. A family of American Shorthairs (27 cats over eight generations) has also been studied, and early in 1997 researchers reported that this family of cats appears to exhibit a familial form of HCM and/or SAM (systolic anterior motion of the mitral valve). The pattern of inheritance in the American Shorthairs appears to be autosomal dominant also.

No dietary causes of HCM have been noted to date in human or veterinary medical literature. Feline HCM should not be confused with taurine-deficient dilated cardiomyopathy; the two diseases are very different. (And, not all feline dilated cardiomyopathy is due to inadequate dietary taurine; idiopathic [cause unknown] cases occur. In humans, there are many causes of dilated cardiomyopathy, including genetic causes.)

What are the clinical signs of HCM?

A cat may show no clinical signs at all, or the clinical signs may be so subtle (e.g., a mild increase in the respiratory rate) that they go unnoticed. The very first symptom may even be sudden death. This is common in humans, where the classic example is that of a high school student who collapses and dies during football practice. Hank Gathers, who died while playing a nationally televised basketball game, was a victim of HCM. An arrhythmia, or abnormal heart rhythm, is usually the cause of such deaths, and is quite likely the reason for sudden deaths in cats with HCM.

Some cats with significant HCM exhibit breathing difficulties caused by congestive heart failure. Others fall victim to systemic thromboembolism and suddenly develop lameness or paralysis in their rear legs, or even a front leg, due to a blood clot. (A blood clot that affects the rear legs is called a "saddle thrombus.")

Many cats with HCM develop a fast heart rate (tachycardia), and/or a heart murmur, and/or a gallop rhythm. These clinical signs, however, cannot be counted upon to signal disease before it advances to heart failure, thromboembolism, or even death.

How is HCM diagnosed?

Echocardiography (cardiac ultrasound) is the most definitive method for diagnosing HCM. Periodic echocardiograms may also be used to monitor the cardiac status of a

cat felt to be at risk for HCM. Since the early stages of HCM can be subtle, it is strongly recommended that a veterinary cardiologist be consulted for this sort of screening.

Prior to the availability of ultrasound in veterinary practice, angiocardiology was the procedure used to diagnose HCM. Angiocardiology requires that a dye be injected into the heart via a catheter threaded through an artery. This dye, opaque to X-rays, allows features of the heart to be seen on X-ray. This procedure posed some risk to the cat. Echocardiography, on the other hand, is non-invasive, painless, and essentially free of risk. It has the added advantage of revealing the heart's structure and circulatory dynamics in greater detail and in full motion.

Electrocardiograms ("EKG" or "ECG") and thoracic X-rays may be used to provide additional information about the heart. An ECG can be particularly helpful to monitor a cat with HCM during surgery. ECGs and X-rays cannot, however, be used to obtain an unequivocal diagnosis of HCM.

HCM can also be diagnosed at necropsy (a veterinary autopsy). Since the heart may contract after death, the clinician should consider the overall size and weight of the heart, as well as the wall thickness, when making a determination. In Maine Coon cats, the whole heart should usually weigh less than 15 gm. Hearts that weigh between 15 and 20 grams may be too large, especially in a small female. Any heart that weighs more than 20 grams weighs too much. Other diseases can increase the heart weight so an increased weight by itself is not diagnostic of HCM. Most cats that die from HCM will also have an enlarged left atrium.

How is HCM treated?

Treatment of HCM will vary depending on the cat's clinical signs. A cat that is suffering from severe congestive heart failure requires urgent treatment, which may include intravenous administration of a diuretic, removal of fluid from the pleural space (the space around the lungs), and oxygen. When the heart failure is brought under control, a diuretic is likely to be prescribed on an ongoing basis. Treatment does not guarantee that congestive heart failure can be controlled and the heart failure often becomes refractory to treatment over time.

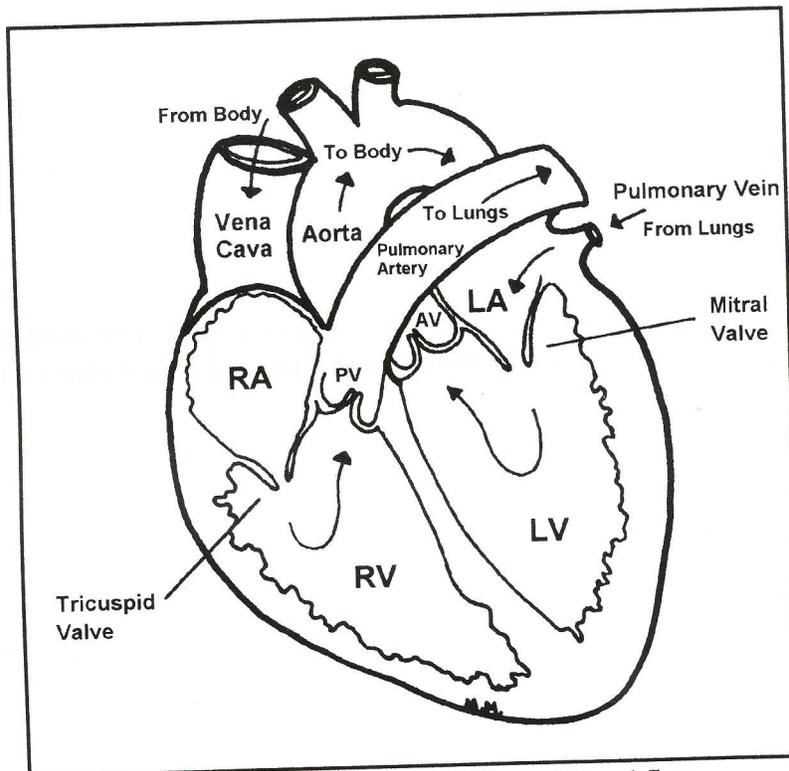
An effort to reduce the risk of serious heart failure is the primary goal in treating the cat. A heart medication is often prescribed to moderate the functional defect contributing to the congestive heart failure or the risk of a blood clot. A calcium channel blocker (diltiazem) and beta adrenergic blockers (e.g., propranolol and atenolol) are commonly used to treat feline HCM. Medical opinions vary regarding the efficacy of the available treatments and at what stage a particular therapy is warranted. The treatment of choice will depend on the cat's clinical signs, the

severity of the HCM, and the functional problems most in need of addressing.

A cat that survives a thromboembolism, or who is felt to be at risk for blood clot formation, may be treated with drugs that reduce the ability of the blood to clot. Aspirin is most commonly used for this purpose. Certain drugs used for this purpose (e.g., coumadin or warfarin) require close monitoring to insure the cat is not placed at risk for hemorrhage. Treatment does not guarantee that a clot will not form.

What is the prognosis for a cat diagnosed with HCM?

At present no cure for HCM exists; treatments are prescribed with the goal of alleviating clinical signs. A cat that has experienced severe heart failure or a blood clot may live but a few weeks or months more. An asymptomatic cat, or one with mild disease, may enjoy a good quality of life for some years. Survival times vary depending on the degree and consequences of hypertrophy, the status of heart failure, and the potential for clot formation. The risk of sudden death is an ever-present possibility in any patient with HCM.



Feline heart: major structures and blood flow.

Blood returns from the body to the heart through the venae cavae into the right atrium (RA), which propels it through the tricuspid valve into the right ventricle (RV). An RV contraction pumps the blood through the pulmonic valve (PV) into the pulmonary artery, which carries it to the lungs. The pulmonary veins return oxygenated blood from the lungs to the left atrium (LA). The LA propels the blood through the mitral valve into the left ventricle (LV). An LV contraction pumps the blood through the aortic valve (AV) into the aorta, where arteries carry it out to the body.

Glossary:

acromegaly: a condition caused when the pituitary gland secretes excessive amounts of growth hormone

aortic stenosis: a physical anomaly that obstructs the path for blood flow from the left ventricle to the aorta

autosomal dominant: a trait is dominant if it can be inherited from only one parent, and autosomal if it is not sex-linked (on a sex chromosome).

AV: aortic valve

cardiomyopathy: a disease of the heart muscle

congestive heart failure (CHF): an accumulation of fluid (e.g., pulmonary edema, pleural effusion) caused by the heart's inability to maintain proper circulation. In the case of HCM this is frequently due to the left ventricle's failure to fill properly. This causes blood returning from the lungs to back up into the pulmonary veins; fluid eventually seeps from the capillaries into the surrounding tissue.

diastole: the phase of the cardiac cycle when the heart is relaxed (filling with blood)

great vessels: the large veins and arteries that carry blood into and out of the heart. These include the venae cavae, the pulmonary arteries and veins, and the aorta.

hyperthyroidism: a condition caused when the thyroid gland secretes excessive amounts of thyroid hormones

hypertrophy; hypertrophic: enlarged tissue due to increased cell size

incomplete penetrance: when a gene is inherited, but not expressed in all individuals who inherit it

LA: left atrium

LV: left ventricle

mitral valve regurgitation: when the mitral valve allows blood to leak backward from the left ventricle into the left atrium

murmur, heart: an anomalous sound caused by circulatory turbulence in the heart or great vessels. A murmur can be innocent, or it can indicate disease.

pleural effusion: fluid that has accumulated in the pleural space around the lungs

pulmonary edema: fluid from the vascular system that has accumulated in the lungs

PV: pulmonic valve

RA: right atrium

RV: right ventricle

systemic hypertension: high blood pressure. Renal (kidney) disease/renal failure is the most common cause of hypertension in cats.

systemic thromboembolism (STE): damage resulting from one or more blood clots. In the case of HCM, these clots frequently form in the left atrium and may travel to other parts of the body. Rear leg paralysis, a classic sign of feline HCM, is caused by a blood clot that blocks circulation in the artery that branches to the rear legs.

systole: the phase of the cardiac cycle when the heart contracts (pumps blood)

systolic anterior motion (SAM): an abnormality where the front leaflet of the mitral valve is in a forward position ("partially open") during systole. This obstructs the outflow of blood from the left ventricle to the aorta, and also allows blood to backflow from the left ventricle to the left atrium (mitral regurgitation).

tachycardia: a rapid heart rate

variable expression: when an inherited trait does not affect all individuals with that trait to the same degree; for example, one individual with the gene may be more severely affected than another.

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<http://www.neuro.wustl.edu/neuromuscular/msys/cardiac2.htm>

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Before Cats I . . .
Could wear navy blue



Hip Dysplasia in Maine Coons

By Jane Cargill

(First printed in the Scratch Sheet, Spring 1991 issue)

Are you hearing a lot about hip dysplasia (HD) these days? Have you found it among your own cats? If not, you've been lucky!

Formerly thought to be an insignificant problem among cats, HD is now known to be common among Siamese and Persians, and has been found in our beloved Maine Coon cats as well. As MCBFA's archivist, I've come into contact with breeders working with many different, apparently unrelated bloodlines which are producing HD. We've found some HD in our cattery too, and decided that we couldn't live with that.

This article isn't intended to scare anyone. HD in cats hasn't really been studied by scientists, so there's very little "hard" information about it. At this point, we aren't aware of great numbers of Maine Coons with HD; we're aware of even fewer Maine Coons in which HD has caused a problem; and we have no certain knowledge that HD in cats is genetic. We do know that the progeny from some specific matings have a much higher incidence of HD than the progeny of the breed in general or the progeny of either parent, bred to a different mate. We also know that in our own cattery, one bloodline produced a much higher percentage of HD than did other bloodlines in our breeding program.

Some people say it doesn't matter if a cat has HD, because the cats seldom show symptoms of pain. However, more and more cat owners are becoming aware of HD as a disease which can cause pain...sometimes so severe that a young adult must be destroyed. We've even been told of a 4-month-old kitten from an accidental brother-sister breeding that had to be put down because it could no longer walk.

Diagnosis

How do you know if your cat has HD? There are symptoms which point to it. These signs don't always mean hip dysplasia, but if you observe several of them in a kitten or cat over a period of time, perhaps you should consider having the animal's hips x-rayed:

1. a wobbly rear end in a kitten two or three months old. Viewed from the rear, some kitten's bottoms sway excessively from side to side as they walk, seemingly always on the verge of falling over.
2. a kitten who is much less active than his littermates. Perhaps he doesn't jump or falls when he attempts to jump.
3. a kitten or cat who is cowhocked;
4. an older kitten or cat whose hips are noticeably narrower than his shoulders.
5. lameness in the rear.
6. a kitten or young adult who protests against being handled or otherwise shows sensitivity in its hindquarters, even if the pain seems to disappear later on. There appears to be some substance to the theory that a 3- or 4-month old animal may show signs of pains which disappear when the kitten is about 1 year old.
7. patellar luxation, which causes a bow-legged or knock-kneed stance.

Treatment

If you're a fancier member of MCBFA rather than a breeder, you may not have encountered HD. In fact, even a veterinarian may not have seen HD in cats. When they do, they assume that the cat is in as much pain as a dog with a similar condition would be, and may recommend surgery to alleviate what s/he sees as the animal's misery.

Don't let yourself be rushed into a hasty conclusion. Probably your cat isn't in pain. Observe him/her around home for a while before concluding that there's pain. If symptoms occur, consider treating the cat with medication (such as steroids) rather than major surgery.

Is Canine Hip Dysplasia Relevant to Cats?

Probably you've heard veterinarians say that "there've been no studies on HD in cats, so don't worry about it." If you've talked to breeders who've been around for a while, you've heard that we can't use canine studies, because dogs and cats are different. Well...so if we can't do anything about HD in cats because nothing's been done yet, what can we do about HD in cats? Lacking studies on felines, we planned to find out what was known about HD in general, and try to extrapolate from that, the goal being to eliminate HD from our cattery.

Surprisingly, we found that HD turns up in cats, dogs, horses and people. Dr. Al Corley, Project Director of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), describes CHD (canine HD) as "...an inherited problem with the mode of inheritance being polygenic" and recessive. He says that heritability varies between different populations, depending on the amount of inbreeding and various envi-

ronmental factors. In other words, if an animal has HD, both its parents must be either affected or carriers. If you line breed on an animal who's affected or a carrier, a higher percentage of the progeny in each generation will have HD (this was borne out by the 8 generation genetic pedigree which we created for our own cats) - and it may become more severe in succeeding generations. No environmental factor has been known to cause CHD, but some may exacerbate progression of the radiographic findings.

According to Dr. Corley, "selective breeding for normal hips is the only method of reducing the frequency of CHD, and this...requires a standard evaluation of the hip status." Recognition of the need for standardization in the evaluation of radiographs resulted in the formation of dysplasia control registries in many countries, which have reported "significant progress in reducing the frequency of CHD" [in dogs].

Are Other Orthopedic Problems Associated with HD?

Sometimes patellar luxation is associated with HD. Some veterinarians routinely position an animal having a hip x-ray so that the patella may be seen too. It is thought that a dysplastic animal may walk in a way that helps compensate for his HD, but which puts enough strain on his hindquarters to cause patellar luxation.

Radiologists disagree about whether the presence of arthritis in an otherwise normal-appearing hip joint indicates HD. Some have called HD "a collection of several or many diseases appearing as one." Disagreement about whether HD is present also stems from the fact that individual radiologists, lacking a standard for evaluation, interpret x-rays differently. As a result, an animal may be radiographically diagnosed as dysplastic by one person and as normal by another. HD may be not be apparent on an x-ray, but be found on necropsy. Perhaps these factors account for the common belief that "...normal animals may produce HD, or animals with HD may produce normals." Because of this, we decided that for us, the bottom line would be "Does this cat produce hip dysplasia? If so, it's gone!"

What Factors are Involved in HD?

Fred Lanting discusses dogs' body type in his book, *Canine Hip Dysplasia and Other Orthopedic Problems*. In dogs, studies have shown that early rapid growth and excessive weight gain are associated with HD. Another factor is the relative width of the pelvis, pelvic muscle mass and the related width of the acetabula (sockets). Mr. Lasting also mentions the role of joint instability: "...a result of the failure of the muscle to mature at the same rate as the skeleton and hold the femoral head in the socket." The resulting wear on the bones causes degeneration

and/or remodeling (abnormal change in shape) of the bone.

Our experience with HD in Maine Coons supports the hypothesis that lack of pelvic muscle mass is somehow linked with feline HD. We x-rayed all our present Maine Coons and as many as possible of their ancestors, and developed genetic pedigrees going all the way back to our starter cats. These showed that:

1. One particular bloodline showed a high percentage of HD, which came down from parent to kitten in each succeeding generation. These cats, without exception, were neutered or spayed.
2. A much higher percentage of cats with lean, narrow bodies had HD than did those with broad, sturdy bodies. This correlates positively with our observations that cats who are substantially narrower in the hips than in the shoulders are more apt to have HD than those who are sturdy and in balance. In our cats, we haven't seen any other link between HD and size or body type.

How Can Breeders Reduce the Incidence of HD?

To prevent HD in dogs, the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals recommends:

1. Breeding only animals with bloodlines free of dysplasia for at least two generations;
2. That the animal not be bred unless 75% of its siblings are free of dysplasia;
3. Using a sire whose production of normal progeny exceeds the breed average; and
4. Replacing a dam with another whose hip conformation is superior to her parents and to the breed average.

In saying "breed average", Dr. Corley refers to the fact that the OFA has a "data bank" of x-rays for each breed of dog. Their definition of "normalcy" is a little different for each breed...to accommodate differences in normal hip conformation from breed to breed. We who work with Maine Coons are in a different position. The question of "what is normal for our breed" is still open.

However, we feel that OFA is an impartial, scientific body of people with great experience and consistent standards regarding HD. For this reason, we decided that our cat's x-rays would be interpreted solely by OFA. In time, we hope that OFA will develop a collection of x-rays on Maine Coons large enough to allow them to develop an HD standard that's specific to our breed.

Mr. Lanting recommends four procedures which help control genetic disease:

1. find out what the mode of inheritance is;
2. diagnose accurately;
3. identify carriers; and
4. breed only non-carriers or those with the best genetic bank.

Outcrossing is likely to hide bad hip genes and pass them along to future generations; linebreeding brings them out in the open so that the problem can be dealt with, and linebreeding on good hips improves the breed.

Lanting's "keys to a good breeding program" include:

1. Choose the type and bloodline which appeal to you.
2. Determine which animals have the best gene pool. Get as much information as possible about the animals in your breeding program, along with their siblings, parents, and grandparents.
3. Breed only animals with good hips, as determined by x-rays. If this isn't feasible in the first generation, breed those of your cats which have the best hips. If you have an outstanding, affected animal which carries a valuable trait that you cannot get from an unaffected cat, use it sparingly in your breeding program. In either case, cull rigorously in successive generations. (OFA will not certify an animal's hips as normal until it's 2 years old, but will evaluate and rate them as early as 6 months old. This enables you to cull your kittens early, while it's easy to sell them as pets. The animals which look normal on these x-rays should be re-evaluated at the age of two.)
4. Feed normally, but don't try to "force" an unnaturally rapid growth in your animals (as you might force a hot-house flower to bloom) by feeding a very rich diet or lots of supplements. The animals with genetic potential for large size will achieve it on a normal diet.
5. Stick to it! Always keep your goal in mind and resist the temptation to stray from your course.

In our own breeding program, we adopted Mr. Lanting's guidelines and decided that the sire and dam of any cat with HD would be altered, whether it had HD itself. To provide consistent interpretation of x-rays, we decided to send our cat's films to OFA, which sent each x-ray to 3 radiologists in various parts of the country. A concurring report was returned to us and to our veterinarians.

In an attempt to establish how many generations of normal or affected cats were behind our present breeding stock, we x-rayed all the cats and kittens now in the program, as well as the available cats who had retired from the program. We found that the source of our problem in one of our starter cats, who was the product of an outcross breeding! As our x-ray program continued, the cats who had HD or who produced HD were altered. We kept only one affected cat - a female whom we considered outstanding. She will be bred only to studs who have been certified normal by OFA and who have not produced HD. Her kittens will be x-rayed, but even if they are normal, they won't be allowed to enter another breeder's breeding program. We'll breed them to clean mates and evaluate the progeny. When we have two to three generations of "clean" ancestors behind our cats, we'll consider their kittens as possible breeding stock.

In summary, we think that it's reasonable and prudent to x-ray our cats, their progeny and their ancestors; to refuse to sell breeding stock coming from animals with ancestors who were dysplastic or whose pedigrees show a strong probability that they carry HD; and to cull all cats who are affected or who produce affected kittens. We expect to continue our HD control program for years to come, because we have no desire to produce even one potentially crippled animal whose life may be filled with misery and pain.

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2. Lanting, Fred. Canine Hip Dysplasia and Other Orthopedic Problems; contributions by Dr. Sten-Erik Olsson and Dr. Wayne H. Riser. Loveland, CO, Alpine Publications, Inc. [c1980] Mr. Lanting has raised German Shepherds since 1976. Working with the Eye Dog Foundation and International Guiding Eyes, he utilized his scientific studies to develop a protocol which lowered the incidence of HD to less than 10%. He has researched and worked with leading canine orthopedic specialists, and dealt with HD in his own breeding stock. His articles have appeared in various magazines. Illustrations; extensive bibliography.

Editor's Note:

Dr. G. G. Keller, DVM is the new Executive Director of OFA. Dr. Corley retired recently. OFA's website, where

one can look up cats (approved only), is:
<http://www.offa.org>

Having the OFA Check Your Cat's Hips

By Helen Dohrmann, Firerose Maine Coons

The following information should help clarify any misconceptions about having cats' hips evaluated for Hip Dysplasia by OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals). To make a long story short, you do not have to send the cats anywhere to have them evaluated, and the x-rays are the pricey part.

First of all, find a vet whose practice includes a substantial amount of OFA hip submittals. You can do this in two ways:

a) Call around to the vets, find out if they are skilled in OFA hip x-rays. You need to ask them how much of their practice consists of taking x-rays for OFA submittal.

b) Call dog breeders to find out who they recommend for having hips x-rayed. I had placed several kittens with dog breeders, who all recommended the same vet -- obviously, I went with Option B to find the vet who currently does all my hip x-rays. This is probably the quickest and best route to finding a vet with good technique.

Why have OFA perform the evaluations? Why can't my vet make the determination?

OFA has a PANEL OF EXPERTS trained to read hip x-rays for abnormalities. The resulting evaluation is a CONSENSUS of their opinions, and hence, more valuable. A single opinion is just that -- a single opinion. I have heard of cases where the breeder's vet said, "Not to worry, this cat has good hips". The x-ray was sent to OFA by the breeder's request -- and the resulting evaluation was MILD -- in some cases worse -- meaning the cat was affected by dysplasia. That is why it is important to have OFA evaluate the x-rays. Your vet could be wrong, simply because he's not trained to see all the minute deformities.

Misconception #1: "All animals have to be anesthetized for x-rays or you can't get good x-rays."

No, they don't. My vet does not anesthetize any of my cats for their x-rays, and gets very clear x-rays. Very rarely does she anesthetize the dogs. The reason she doesn't put the animals under is because she believes the resulting muscle laxity from being anesthetized can cause the vet to over-extend the hips -- causing poor looking hips, therefore, not passing OFA evaluations. She much prefers to

work with the animal's muscle tension. Patience and allowing the cat to feel secure are key to this approach.

Misconception #2: "You can't get an OFA evaluation before 2 years of age."

OFA will perform preliminary evaluations on animals as young as 6 months of age. I have found that early detection of HD is very valuable. It is better to cull a potential breeder from program than to remove it from your breeding program after producing offspring. My normal age range for checking youngsters is 8-11 months; occasionally I will check as early as six months of age. I then again have the cat re-evaluated at 2 years of age.

Misconception #3: "If a cat is approved by OFA, it is "clean" for HD."

A cat can have approved hips; but still CARRY the gene(s). Only checking offspring from the various matings will tell you if the cat is a carrier -- if you get a dysplastic kitten, then you must assume that both parents are carriers, EVEN IF the hips of both parents were approved. Remember, the x-ray evaluation is only a visual interpretation of that cat's hips - not its genes.

Costs:

The pricey part of the evaluation process is having the x-rays done. I found that without the anesthesia, the cost was cut in approximately half. Charges may be as follows:

An office call (some vets charge per appointment without regard to the number of cats being x-rayed and some charge a per cat office call fee).

the x-ray fee (this may range from approximately \$35 w/o anesthesia to \$80 or more per cat --check around)
the OFA fee (which is a separate fee from the vet clinic, and a check you write to OFA).

OFA charges (subject to change):

\$20 for preliminary evaluations (6 months to 23 months of age) per cat;

\$30 TOTAL, for 3 OR MORE LITTERMATES for preliminary evaluations only;

\$25 for FINAL evaluations (24 months minimum age for finals) PER CAT. There is no "group rate for littermates" on final evaluations.

Information you need to provide on the OFA submittal card for each cat while at the clinic:

The CORRECT Registered Name, Registration Number & Association, Breed, Color, Sex & Date of Birth, Registration numbers of Sire & Dam, Your name, address, phone number AND signature on the card.

Each cat's x-rays are identified by the CORRECT REGISTERED NAME OF THE CAT, and/or Registration number, name of clinic, and date of x-ray -- via x-ray tape -- while the x-ray is taken. For instance, if I put "Dohrmann cat" as the identifier on the x-ray tag, OFA would reject it very quickly. Be sure you take copies of the registrations with you to the clinic so you have all the required information for the OFA submittal cards. It takes anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 weeks to get the evaluations back.

My advice to you, as responsible, ethical breeders:

1) If you are just beginning your breeding program, have your cats checked before breeding. Cull any affected cats from the program - substantiate your claim of HD in each cat with OFA's evaluation - send a copy to the breeder (if a purchase) of each cat that is affected. THE BREEDERS NEED TO KNOW.

2) If you are an established breeder, and still have your foundation cats or access to them, check them! Next, check your current breeding stock. Then check any potential breeding stock -- before you breed it. Alter any cats that are affected. Tell breeder purchasers of any affected cats' offspring that the parent(s) or relatives were affected. BE HONEST!!

3) Give potential breeder purchasers the opportunity to make an informed decision: NOTATE YOUR PEDIGREES. For instance, under the Registration num-

ber, I add: OFA: and add the OFA number, or notate the hips' quality if the cat didn't pass. If the number has a (P) after it if it is a preliminary evaluation. If it begins with "MCC", it indicates an approved final evaluation. If the cat did not pass, the rating is noted (borderline, mild, moderate, severe) on the pedigree. If a cat is a carrier, you can also make that notation -- although most people can figure that if a cat is dysplastic, both parents are carriers.

4) **SHARE PEDIGREES OF DYSPLASTIC CATS.** By doing this, we enhance our ability to minimize the number of affected offspring. By not sharing this information, the breed may be hurt so much there is no recovery. The cattery that isn't honest about its breeding stock hurts itself, and the breed.

5) Use a written hip guarantee when you place breeders. Mine is reprinted below, feel free to use it or base yours upon it:

HIPS: Purchaser agrees to have this cat x-rayed by a licensed veterinarian, and evaluated by Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) for presence of Hip Dysplasia prior to breeding. If this cat has developed Hip Dysplasia as determined by OFA evaluation (Borderline, Mild, Moderate or Severe), Purchaser agrees to submit a copy of the OFA evaluation as notification to Breeder, and alter cat immediately. Under no circumstance is this cat to be bred if dysplastic. Purchaser agrees that Breeder is not obligated to offer or provide a replacement if the preliminary OFA evaluation is not obtained prior to the first breeding. Purchaser agrees to repeat x-rays for a Final OFA Evaluation within 30 days of the cat turning two years of age, and will submit a copy of the final OFA evaluation to Breeder. X-ray and evaluation fees are Purchaser's responsibility.

REPLACEMENT LIMITATIONS: Replacement is limited to the cat only, and does not include requested tests, carrier or shipping fees, which must be prepaid via electronic wire transfer

OFA now has a website, listing the Maine Coons who have OFA approved hips. It can be viewed at: www.offa.org.

The Long Winter

By Traci Jones

(Writer's note: Some time ago, a story I'd written was published in The Scratch Sheet regarding a cat I cared for who was euthanized due to diabetes. I have since learned that there is great hope for cats with this disorder and that I was given poor advice by my (now) former veterinarian. I don't know that I will ever put my guilt over Leftie's death behind me and I certainly hope that nobody else made the same mistake I did based on what I said. The following story was written with veterinary supervision and I hope that it may offer hope to anyone faced with this somewhat rare problem.)

My son and I had just gotten settled into my room at the show hotel on January 18th, 1997, when I got the phone call that we all dread while away at a show. You know the one - the caretaker for the remaining animals at home with an emergency.

My husband, Virgil, had discovered one of the 5 month olds, Jedi, in our bedroom, in a terrible state. What he described was decidedly neurological, and acute. Unable to stand, uneven pupil dilation, nystagmus (eyes dashing back and forth from side to side), ataxia (lack of control of limbs), and a severe head tilt. A filter to one of the litterpans lay nearby, and had been chewed on. He had rushed the kitten to a local emergency clinic, thinking he'd been poisoned. The clinic had asked for information that Virgil did not know, and he had left them with cart blanche orders to do what they would, including testing for diseases he'd already been tested for. Virgil hadn't thought to pull the file on Jedi and take it along with him. I then had to call the clinic myself and go through a health history with them long distance, and see what was going on. They had called poison control, and had ruled out toxicity from the filter. They had also pulled a blood panel, which was normal. The only thing that they could discover was an inner ear infection on the left side. We had not noticed any signs of illness whatsoever, prior to this. Treatment was initiated with Otomax and Cholremphenochol, and he remained at the clinic until I returned home from the show.

When I retrieved Jedi from the emergency clinic, he no longer was exhibiting signs of nystagmus, but his balance was very poor, he had Horner's syndrome, and his head was still tilted to the left. Virgil remarked that he was greatly improved, which was very frightening for me as Jedi looked awful! The records from the emergency clinic were faxed to my regular vet, we were to continue treating him for 10 days and return to my regular vet for a follow up.

This evolved into weekly follow-up visits for six weeks, in which his medication was changed several times, and he would get a little better, then a little worse. My vet was stumped. Each visit she would remark about the amount of fluid in the ear, and that the eardrum was

extremely red and thickened. Upon the 4th visit, Jedi's eardrum had ruptured. By the 6th visit, it was decided that he needed testing that was not available at her clinic. Amazingly, throughout this time Jedi seemed not to be in distress. He ate, drank, and played normally, and even began to discover that he was a boy. His incredible disposition and upbeat personality gave me the determination to do whatever it took to find the answer, and make him well.

Much to our luck, there is a new, state of the art, 24 hour emergency clinic opening very soon in our area. As construction goes, the opening had been delayed, but the board certified Doctors were nomadically working in the area. Jedi was taken to a local clinic to see a surgeon on March 6th, 1997, and an endoscope procedure was performed. The surgeon discovered a polyp growing in Jedi's left ear, which had grown upwards through the eardrum, causing it's rupture. He sounded so excited when he called to tell me he had found the problem - and that his partner could repair it surgically. This explained what my vet had been seeing via otoscope - the eardrum itself wasn't thickened as it had appeared, it had the polyp growing through it. Poor Jedi!

Arrangements were promptly made for the surgeon's partner to surgically remove the polyp. My vet kindly allowed us to come to her OR for the procedure, and gave up her only day off during the week so that she could be present. On March 21, I met with the first surgeon's partner for the first time at the clinic. I thought it very befitting that the first day of spring was the day that Jedi got a new lease on life.

A brief neurological exam was conducted, the x-rays examined, and the risks of the procedure explained to me. Jedi could be left with permanent neurological damage, including but not limited to: facial paralysis, Horner's Syndrome, nystagmus, deafness in the affected ear and the head tilt.

I felt that I had 2 choices - the surgery, or euthanasia. If Jedi had a chance at life we would find a way to pay the bill.

The surgical procedure involved is called a bulla osteotomy. I was granted permission to observe the surgery

by both my vet and the surgeon. I have seen some surgery in my time, but nothing as intricate as this! Jedi was prepped and anesthesia induction was by ketamine/acepromazine IM injection. Jedi's throat was shaved on the affected side, from the base of the ear down to the breastbone. A tube was inserted into his airways for inhalation anesthesia - isoflurine. We then moved from the treatment room to the OR, where Jedi was hooked up to the isoflurine, and laid onto his back in a V-shaped trough looking thing to hold him steady, a bag of fluids elevating his head. He was secured to the surgical table and draped.

The surgeon brought his own instruments, drapes, surgical garb, etc., truly mobile! None of the 3 vets at the clinic had ever seen this surgery, so everyone packed into the OR to peer over his shoulder. It must have been quite a sight to see us all trying to stand in the same spot at once! He has taught for years, so he wasn't bothered in the least by these antics, and would stop as he worked in order to point out different things as they came up. I couldn't have asked for a kinder, more instructive surgeon.

An incision was made from the base of the ear down the throat, lateral to the larynx. The work was very delicate and carefully done to navigate around major nerve groups, blood vessels and tissue to expose the bulla. (The bulla is a bone of the skull which protects the middle ear.) Instead of using a mechanical drill, he entered the bone manually using a tool which is also used in bone pinning. The bulla is normally the thickness of an eggshell. Due to ongoing inflammation, in Jedi's case this bone was about 6 times normal thickness. It took quite a while to get through. Once in, the surgeon opened the septum (a membrane which divides the middle ear into two compartments) and carefully curetted the base of the polyp to separate it from the tissue. Little pieces of the polyp were removed from the surgical site. Silly me wondered why this tiny amount of tissue would cause such a problem for my cat. The incision was then closed, and a drain inserted which would be removed in 24-48 hours. He then went through the external ear to clean up and much to my surprise removed a polyp which was the size of the first joint of my pinkie. We placed this in a specimen jar for later biopsy. My vet performed the world's fastest neuter while Jedi was still out. We figured Jedi would be concerned about his ear when he woke up, and maybe not even notice the loss of other special parts.

Jedi was taken off the anesthesia, wrapped in warm towels and handed to me. I rocked my unconscious cat and talked to him, hoping that somewhere in his fog he knew I was there. After a bit we placed Jedi in isolation in the ex-ray room (my vet is wonderful about not exposing my cats to any other cats at the clinic) and had a quick lunch.

Before leaving, I checked on Jedi, who was waking up. I sat and talked to him for a bit, but he seemed confused and aggravated so I thought it best that he sleep it off without my interference. I left him a toy from home with our scent on it, and took the polyp to the pathologist's to be biopsied on my way home. A few days later we were advised by the pathologist that the polyp was indeed your run of the mill inflammatory type.

Jedi came home the very next day, drain removed and looking like a victim of a very sound beating. He quickly recovered from the very pronounced Horner's syndrome brought on by the surgery, but to this day has no eardrum on the affected side and retained the head tilt. We are just happy that it is over now and that he is OK. And, as the flowers and trees bloomed this spring, so did our Jedi. Coat grew, muscle developed, and he was free of the chronic ear inflammation that plagued him for so long.

I owe a wealth of gratitude to the surgeons and veterinarians, and the members of the fanciers internet list who offered encouragement and shared their stories with me about their experiences with ear polyps in their cats. Because of the listmembers, I was very prepared for what the surgery and recovery would involve. Jedi received so many well wishes and good thoughts and prayers, and I feel that it contributed greatly towards his recovery.

End notes:

Dr. Susan Little, of Bytown Cat Hospital on Ottawa, Canada is a listmember on the fanciers internet list. She very graciously shared some information with the list about Horner's syndrome, and polyps so that we could all understand what was happening.

Horner's syndrome

Named for Johann F. Horner, a Swiss ophthalmologist (1831-1886) who first described the syndrome, consists of:

- 1: miosis: abnormal contraction of the pupil
- 2: protrusion of the third eyelid
- 3: ptosis: drooping of the upper eyelid
- 4: enophthalmos: recession of the eyeball into the orbit (the bony space in the skull holding the eyeball)

The system of nervous pathways involved in all these things is quite complex. It starts in the brain (at the hypothalamus), descends to the cranial part of the thoracic spinal cord (Vertebrae T1 to T3) and ascends to the eye (through the sympathetic nervous system). A lesion, injury, or inflammation anywhere along this pathway can cause Horner's syndrome.

Dr. Susan cites Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary as the source of this valuable information.

Polyps

Nasopharyngeal polyps are an important cause of chronic respiratory signs in cats, reportedly uncommon but often misdiagnosed. These polyps originate in the middle ear cavity and enter the Eustachian tube, where they can either enter the nasopharynx (the area in the back of the cat's throat) or they can grow into the external ear canal. They are made of inflammatory tissue often covered with respiratory epithelium.

There are two suspected mechanisms for their formation: a congenital defect of fetal development, and a response to chronic inflammatory middle ear disease, which may be caused by upper respiratory infection.

The average age of cats at diagnosis is about 1.5 years. However, polyps have been recorded in cats under 6 months old and as old as 15 years. They seem to appear equally frequently in males and females and have been found in both domestic short/longhairs and purebreds. The most common clinical signs are: noisy breathing, dyspnea (difficult breathing), nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing, and dysphagia (difficult swallowing). Also, signs of ear canal irritation or infection and very occasionally signs of vestibular disease such as a head tilt may be seen.

It can be quite difficult to confirm or deny the existence of polyps in an awake cat. The ears, nose and throat must be examined carefully. Sedation is almost always needed to visualize the polyp. If Horner's syndrome is present, other causes must be eliminated. Theoretically, facial nerve paralysis could be seen in cats with polyps (pre-operatively), but no cases have been reported.

In a sedated or anesthetized cat, the oropharynx (the central portion of the pharynx) and the nasopharynx (the part of the pharynx above the soft palate) can be examined. The polyp may be above the soft palate, so that its presence can be confirmed by palpating it, or by reflecting the soft palate to visualize above it with a small mirror. A flexible fiberoptic scope can also be used to visualize the area above the soft palate.

The polyps appear as round or oval masses on a stalk, and may be red, pink, gray or shiny. They may be very

large and can completely fill the nasopharynx. The stalk may be seen appearing from the Eustachian tube. The ear canals and the eardrum should also be evaluated as the majority of cats with polyps have otitis media (inflammation of the middle ear). The polyps can grow from the Eustachian tube, rupture through the eardrum and extend out through the external ear canal. In this case, the external ear canal may be infected, inflamed and irritated. X-rays of the middle ear should be taken.

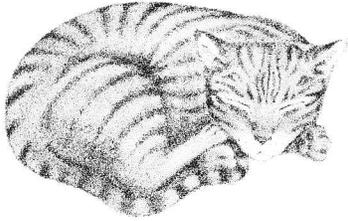
The treatment of choice is surgical removal of the polyp. Two methods are used. In the traction removal method, the polyp may be grasped with forceps and pulled out slowly and steadily while the cat is anesthetized. The stalk is usually 5-10 mm long. There will be a small amount of bleeding. Sometimes an incision must be made in the soft palate to gain access to the polyp. Many surgeons feel that the stalk will break in about 50% of the cases where traction is used to remove the polyp, leaving the base of the stalk in the middle ear. Therefore approximately 50% of polyps removed in this manner may re-grow.

The other surgical treatment is a bulla osteotomy. This is a more complicated and controversial surgery and has more complications and more risk than the traction removal method. Some surgeons argue that if there is no evidence of middle ear disease, a bulla osteotomy is unnecessary. However, re-growth of the polyp is very rare after bulla osteotomy. Extreme care must be taken to avoid damaging many vital structures during this surgery, including nerves and blood vessels. A drain is usually placed when the incision is closed and stays in place for a few days.

Horner's syndrome is a common complication of both surgical methods and usually resolves within 3 weeks. As well, respiratory problems can occur after the traction method is used. After bulla osteotomy, vestibular symptoms (head tilt, nystagmus [abnormal eye movement], and ataxia [loss of balance]) may occur. Uncommonly, the facial nerve may be paralyzed leading to drooping of the lip, drooling, and inability of the eyelids to blink. This neuropathy usually resolves on its own within a few weeks.

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP

(The author of the original poem is unknown, but changes to make it appropriate for Maine Coon lovers were done by Cynthia Bowen)



Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray my sanity to keep.
For if some peace I do not find,
I'm pretty sure I'll lose my mind.

I've poured the milk and diced the meat,
All they seem to do is eat.
They're rolling a food dish across the floor,
I guess they want a little more.

I pray for time all to myself
(Did something just fall off a shelf?)
To cuddle in my nice, soft bed
(Oh no, another goldfish--dead!)

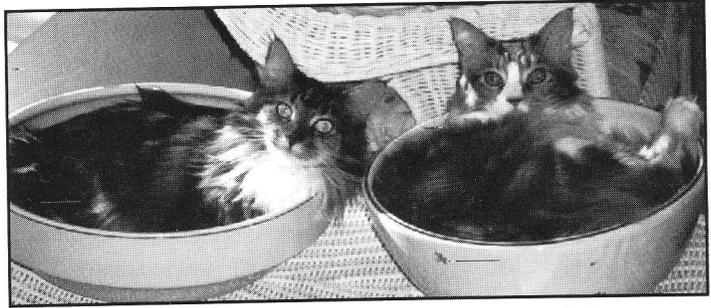
Some silent moments for goodness sake
(Did I just hear a window break?)
And that I need not cook or clean--
(Well heck, I've got the right to dream)

What's that crash? What's that bang?
Oh no, a fly in the house again!
I heard a rip, the curtains tore,
Another household mending chore.

I pray I find a little quiet
Far from the daily Maine Coon riot
May I lie back--not have to think
About what they're eating under the sink.

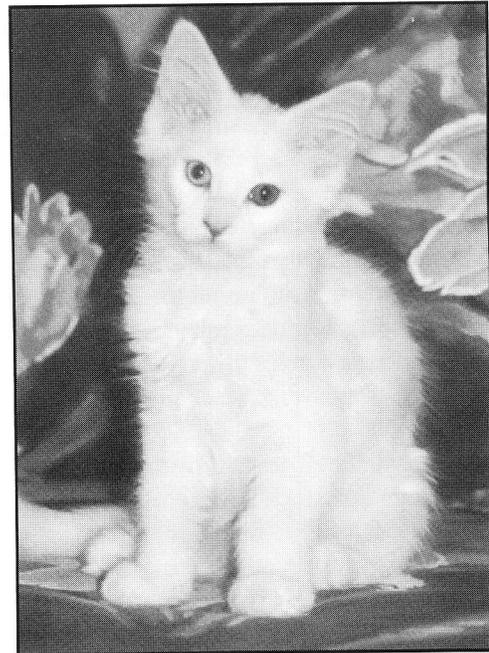
I've scooped the boxes and filled the dishes
It's time for snuggles and fishy kisses.
Furry bodies surround my head,
As finally I settle into bed.

Yes now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray my wits about me keep,
But as I look around I know--
I must have lost them long ago!



Furbowls

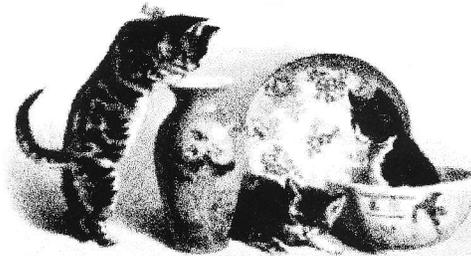
(Raja Red and Annie, owned and obviously spoiled by Bev Caldwell)



Pure Innocence

Talltails Odd Man Out of Quimby
Odd-eyed white

Before Cats I . . . *had knick-knacks*



Purrfluffles

By Jody Chinitz

Each of our Maine Coons enjoys the gentle massage of a comb flowing through their fur from ruff to tail. Their eyes slowly close and they drift off on resonant waves of contentment, offering an occasional nuzzle of encouragement and pleasure. But soon, all too soon, the reverie fades as the time arrives to tidy belly shag and britches . . . and once tucked into a lap for those attentions, can the claw scissors be far behind?

None of our cats view the weekly grooming of their claws and nether regions as a routine event.

There's Long-suffering, Eternally Patient Max. Settled tummy out in my lap, he looks up, deep into my eyes, with a sigh that is almost audible and a pleading expression that implores: Please, get this over with quickly, and Please, be careful Down There. Always the little gentleman, he waits resignedly as his rumpled fur is combed out into silky locks. But as the comb approaches ever closer Down There, regular time-outs are needed in order to unroll him from the little furry ball he tries to curl into. His eyes widen with a reminder to Please not snag anything Vital. I resist informing him that he has fewer Vitals Down There than he thinks.

That harrowing experience over, he relaxes, but only for a moment. As the claw scissors approach, his paws tense and every claw extends and curls -- gently, but nevertheless stub-

bornly -- around my fingers. After some earnest cajoling and encouragement, he eventually relaxes and allows his claws to be inspected and trimmed.

Such melodramatics! -- despite weekly groomings since kittenhood without a single mishap. But all is swiftly forgiven when the comb glides soothingly down his back again. Finish up with the treat of a fine-toothed combing on his head and shoulders, and his eyes close in bliss, and all is forgotten.

Then, there's Gracie, our Impetuous Forever Kitten. All sunshine and guileless charm, her every feeling is instantly expressed as a sound, an expression, or a movement. One moment she's beaming and purring as the comb slips down her back. The next moment, cuddled belly shag out, she's a squirming, betrayed innocent. Every sweep of the comb has to be paced in between her petulant kicks. (She claims these are simply reflexes, over which she has no control.) Lately, she's also taken to whining in a most uncatly little hum.

Claw trimming is a character-building exercise in patience -- mine, not hers. Since she delights in moving her paw just as the scissors are about to snip, trimming her claws has also improved my eye-hand coordination. I pause at Gracie's least fidget, so as not to miss and accidentally give her something to whine about. There are many such pauses,

each of which she punctuates with an indignant little snuffle. Afterwards, having flounced off in a dramatic huff, she turns and purrs contentedly as the comb smoothes her ruffled feathers.

Spoiled? Utterly. But who can resist her sweet chirrups and winsome smile?

And then . . . there's Sophie, Queen of Everything. A serious kitty with advanced degrees in Dignity, Sophie is always watching and thinking. Even play holds no idle amusements for her; she prefers games that require cunning and thought. But grooming is the one self-indulgence she enjoys with abandon. Manicure? Please do! She offers her paw and settles comfortably in. Combing? Yes, of course, take all the time you need, and then take some more.

Her Royal Felinity Sophie stretches sensuously and turns occasionally, offering every lock of her flowing coat to brush and comb. She purrs. She basks. She luxuriates in every attention devoted to her comfort and beauty. She especially pretends not to notice sister Gracie's glower of disapproval. Sophie is, after all, a supremely self-confident and clever girl, secure in her precedence and preferences. She would *never* revel in something all the more for its annoyance value to her sister!

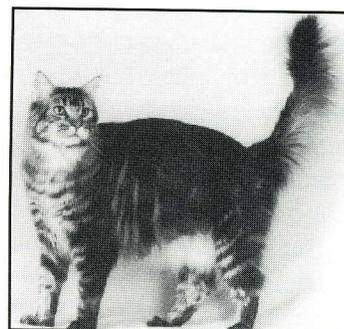
^..^)

Grand Gallery

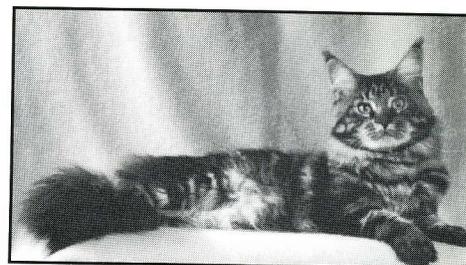
Congratulations to all these fine Maine Coon Cats, and their breeders and owners

NEW GRAND CHAMPIONS

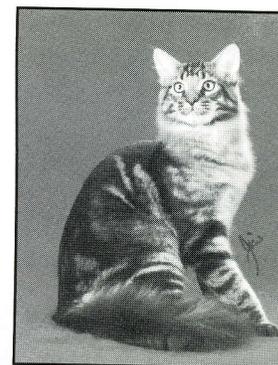
- CFA GRC Avicats Sophrosina Marfisa**, Brown Patched Tabby Female; BR: Julia Cozzarelli; OW: Julia Cozzarelli/Michael Kazmierczak
- CFA GRC Solkatz Sierra Madrelan of Doranjo**, Brown Classic Tabby w/White Female; BR: Nancy & Richard Koch; OW: Ann G. Johnson
- CFA Grand Champion Captain Coon Bojangles of Justajoy**, Brown Mackerel Tabby & White Male; BR: Sue Bostwick & Kristine Meilstrup; OW: Chris & Phil Haeck
- CFA GRP, ACFA GCH, TICA DGC Nascat's Emercoon**, Brown Classic Tabby w/White Male; BR: Donna E. Hinton; OW: Colleen & Eddie Kanieski
- CFA GRP Blazers Pink Champagne Wishes**, Cameo Mackerel Tabby w/White Neuter; B/O Dianna M. Jones
- CFA GRP Tabby Road Maxwell Edison M.I.M**, BR: John Kominos; OW: Laura & Tom Straub
- CFA Premier Captain Coon Crackerjack of Justajoy**, Red Mackerel Tabby & White Neuter; BR: Sue Bostwick & Kristine Meilstrup; OW: Chris Haeck & Adam Howell
- TICA SGC Mainelyhill Limelight**, Brown Classic Tabby Male; BR: Tomomi Hidaka; OW: Kazuyo Higuchi
- TICA SGC Mysticoon Rimrock**, B/O Muriel Kay Heimer
- TICA QGC Coonsworth's Runninbear of TipnTufts**, Brown Mackerel Tabby male; BR: Jack & Darlene Sweeney / Gerry Walsh; OW: Jo-Ann Cassidy
- TICA QGC Mainelyhill Prime Sugar**, Brown Classic Tabby Female; BR: Tomomi Hidaka; OW: Yumi Nagai
- TICA QGC Wyndabby Triton of LunarCoons**, Brown Classic Tabby male; BR: G.W. Jones/A. Rogers; OW: Paul Huntley
- TICA TGC Mainelyhill Daquiri**, Brown Classic Tabby Female; B/O: Tomomi Hidaka
- TICA GRC Mainelyhill Midnight Angel**, Black Female; BR: Tomomi Hidaka; OW: Takehisa Senda
- TICA GRC Mysticoon Cheyenne**, B/O Muriel Kay Heimer



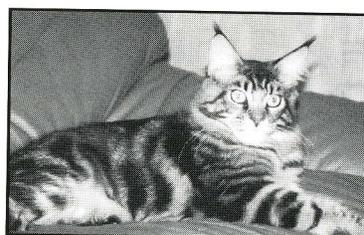
Tabby Road Maxwell Edison M.I.M.



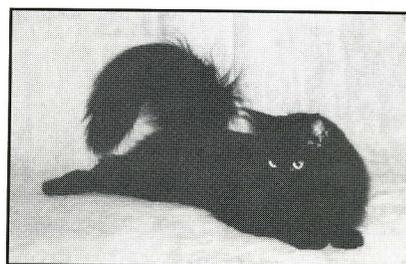
Mysticoon Rimrock



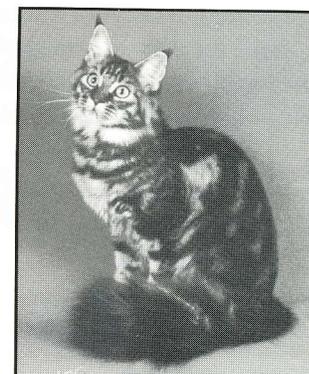
Wyndabby Triton of Lunarcoons



Mainelyhill Daquiri



Mainelyhill Midnight Angel



Mysticoon Cheyenne

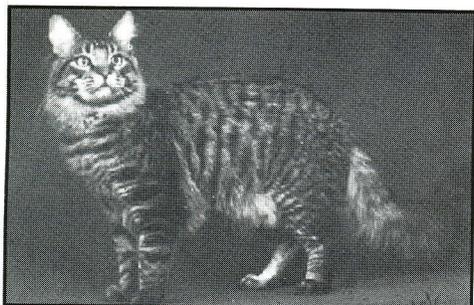
BEST OF THE BEST IN SHOW & BEST IN RING

(Please note that this listing is ONLY for First Best Of The Best or First Best In Ring)

- CFA GRP Rumford's Rocky**, Brown Mackerel Tabby Neuter; BR: Caron & Steven Gray; OW: Jodi & Greg Heichert; Best AB Premier, Barbara Sumner, Wildrose CC, 12/14-15/96; Best AB Premier In Show, Best AB Premier, Becky Jones, Liz Watson, Best SP Premier, Connie Chindlund, Cat'n On The Fox, 1/4-5/97; Best AB Premier, Becky Jones, Lucky Tom Cat, 1/11-12/97; Best SP Premier, Leta Williams, Sainly City CC, 1/25-26/97; Best SP Premier, Liz Watson & Bob Bryan, Hawkeye State CC, 2/8-9/97
- TICA QGC Tabbyskins Skowshegan, RW**, Brown Mackerel Tabby Female; B/O Vance J. Stroneski & Karolyn Pettison; NE Regional Awards Show, 7/26-27/97, West Springfield MA; Best Cat in Judy Chappetta's "Female Allbreed Championship Congress;" Best Cat in Barbara Ray's "Longbodied Allbreed Championship" Congress
- TICA QGC Mainelyhill Prime Sugar**, Brown Classic Tabby Female; BR: Tomomi Hidaka; OW: Yumi Nagai Best Cat, M. Oizumi SP, Enjoy CC, Japan, 4/97

Grand Gallery (Continued)

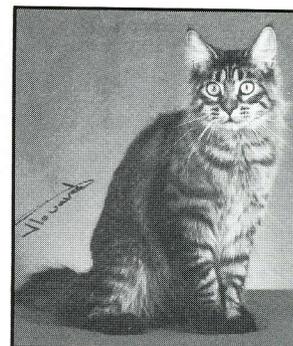
TICA QGC Coonsworth Runninbear of TipnTufts, Brown Mackerel Tabby male; BR: Jack & Darlene Sweeney / Gerry Walsh; OW: Jo-Ann Cassidy; Best Kitten, Mark Coleman, Secaucus Maine Coon Congress, 3/15/97; Best LH Cat, Deborah Reed, Bay St. Louis, 6/22/97
TICA TGC Mainlyhill Daquiri, Brown Classic Tabby Female; B/O: Tomomi Hidaka; Best Kitten, Y. Katoh SP, Tokyo CC, Japan, 11/96
Mainlyhill Happy-Go-Lucky, Brown Classic Tabby Male; BR: Tomomi Hidaka; OW: Yuriko Honma; Best Kitten, M. Oizumi SP, C.A.T Credo, Japan, 12/96



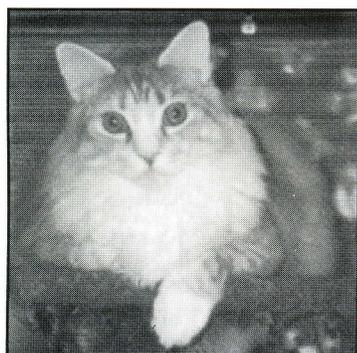
Rumford's Rocky



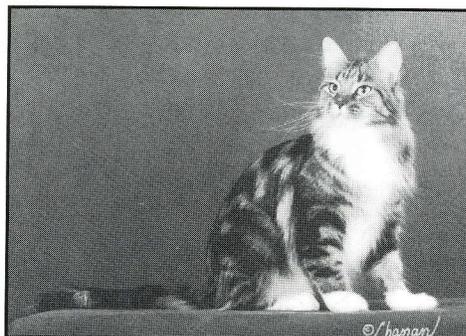
Nascat's Emercoon



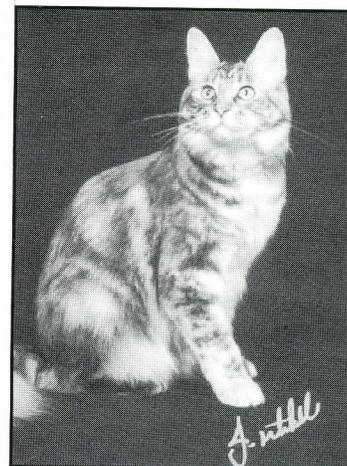
Tabbyskins Skowshegan



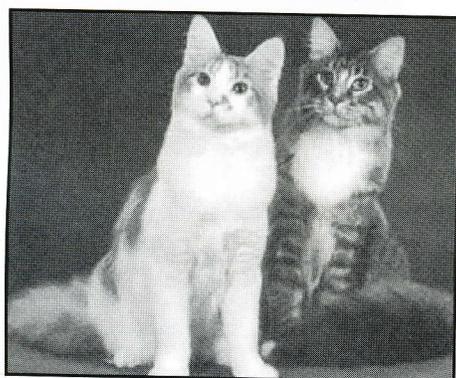
Blazers Pink Champagne Wishes



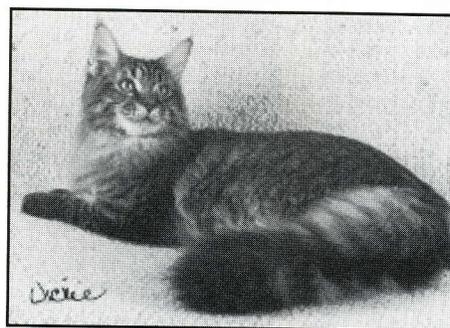
Solkatz Sierra Madrelan of Doranjo



Avicats Sophrosina Marfisa



**Captain Coon Crackerjack of Justajoy
and
Captain Coon Bojangles of Justajoy**



**Coonsworth
Runninbear of
TipsnTufts**

NEW GRAND LISTING CHARGES

New Grand listings are **FREE**

Best in Ring/BOTB are **\$2.00** for each win

All photos (please label the back) are **\$10.00** each

Include **STAMPED**, self-addressed envelope for photo return

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Must be received by Feb. 15, May 15, Aug. 15, or Nov. 15

Listings received after those dates will appear
in the following issue.

Send all submissions to the Editor (address inside front cover)

Circuit Around The Show

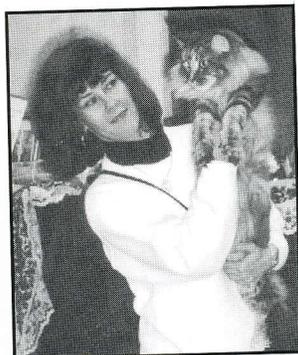
Cat Fanciers Federation, Inc. Allbreed Cat Show

Boston, Massachusetts, November 22 & 23, 1997
Photos by Joan Doran

Many Maine Coon exhibitors turned out for this special event at the Bayside Expo Center. The competition was tough, the adrenalin was flowing since it was an Allbreed Show. However, the Maine held their own, racking up many wins. It's always enjoyable for we Maine Coon exhibitors to get together, to share our new "tails," and to give congratulations to everyone on their accomplishments. **CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!**



Joan Doran with A'Doracoon Antosia



Lynn Herron with HeritageCoons Colleen O'Killarney



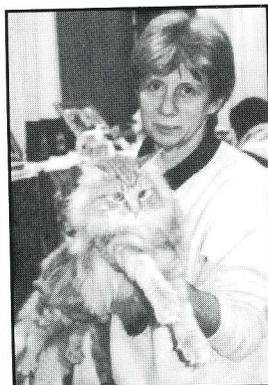
Wendy McGlynn with McWiskers Wilde Honey



Penelope Wells with Bellacoons Just Kunkin



Fran Tetreault with Katails Ermine



Betsy Piper with Heritage Coons Danny Thomas



Donna Cambell with Bellacoon's Gordon of Argull



Proof that the Maine Coons did well!



Carol Pedley with Le Beau Minu Moxie

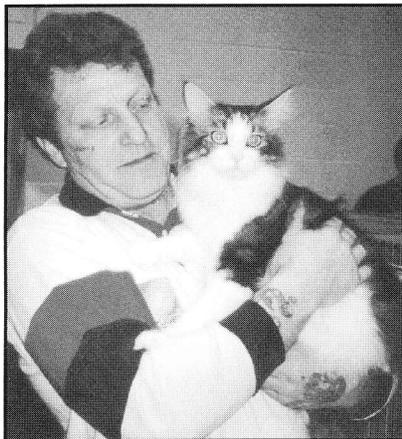


Chris Kern with HeritageCoons Vincegill of Bellerose

Notts and Derby Show, England

January 18, 1997

Photos by Elaine Harvey



Bill Fallows with
Beardwood Hamish MacGregor



Kay Dover with
Coonquest Mayacoon of Keyvador



Norrie Crook with Karolou Gilda



Elizabeth Cass with
Sarogna Iolanthe



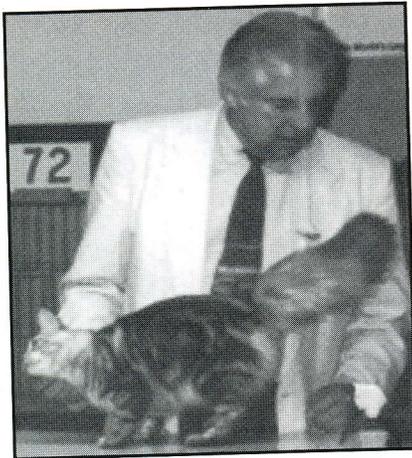
Sue Trantor with
Keverstone Solamaine Blue

Thanks to Joan, Elaine and Beverly for sending the photos on these and the following three pages. If you've got show pictures you'd like to share, please send them to the Editor, Trish Simpson, at 4076 Oso Parkway, Corpus Christi TX 78413

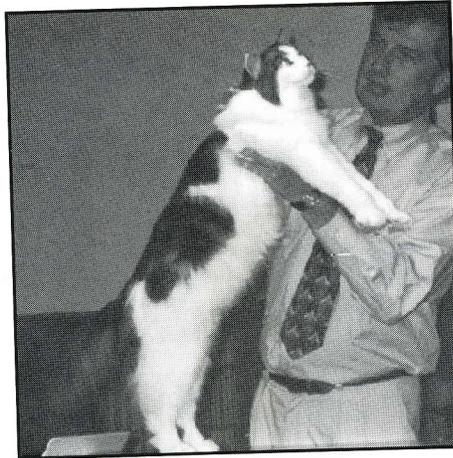
Kino Kat Klub CFA Show

Tucson, Arizona, September 13 & 14, 1997

Photos by Beverly Caldwell



Tabbypatch My Treasure
of Cancoon



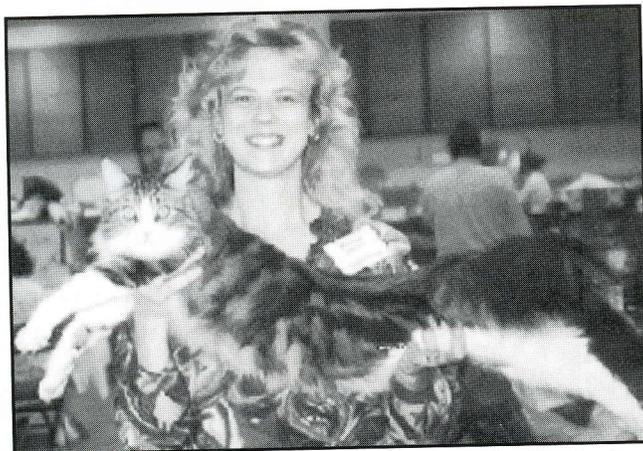
Groovycats in-a-gadda-da-vida
with judge Wain Harding



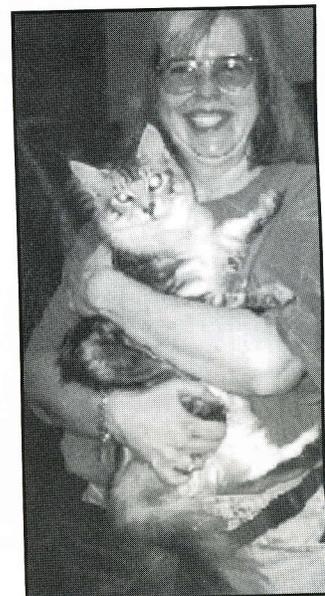
Beverly Caldwell with
Skimble's Raja Red



Ann Johnson of Doranjo with (left) Solkatz Elsa-Belle Starr of
Doranjo and (right) Kiskata El Dorado of Doranjo - still going strong
and still finaling at 10 years old



Marilyn Briggs of Cooniverse with Beau's Cassiopeia of
Cooniverse



Margie Wright of Zunicoons
with Almajoy Shadow Star of
Zunicoon

Coatimondi Cat Club TICA Show

Tucson, Arizona, December 6 & 7, 1997

Photos by Beverly Caldwell



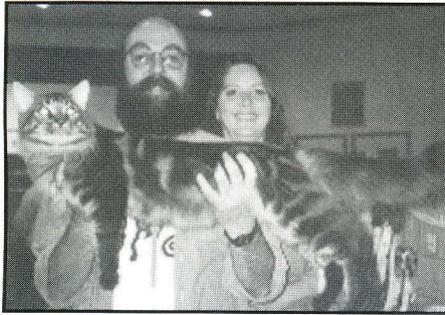
**Francine Spoltore with
Mackiekats Barnabus Collins**



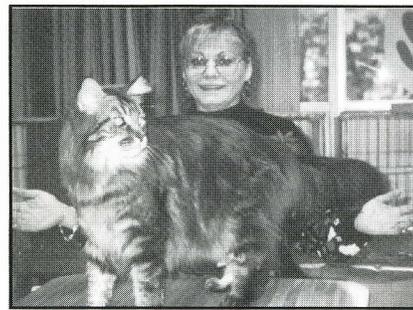
**Patty Leza with Kahunacoon's
Papette**



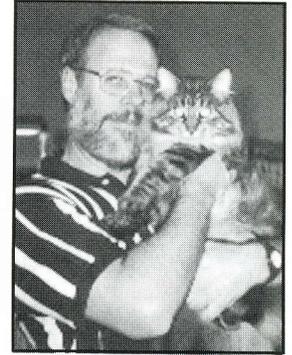
**Anne Cotter with Cottercoons
Mr. Ted E. Bear**



**Paul Huntley & Trish Leary with
Wyndabbey Triton of Lunarcoons**



**Debbie Ordoins with Degoonacon
Mackworth Bay**



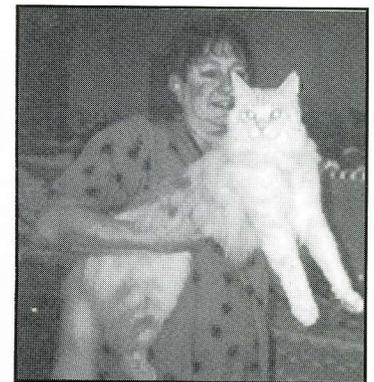
**Kent A. Taylor with
Kankoonkats Sir Sheb
Woolly T.**



**Alex deGuzman with
Degoonacon Tassi Woo
Kwiita Bay**



**Liz Witt with
Mainelycats Doctor Zhivago**



**Carol Juhasz with Pandomainea
Apache Dancer**



**Sharon Polstin with
Argo Rio Bravo of Burney Falls**

Phoenix Feline Fanciers, Inc, CFA Show

Tucson, Arizona, December 13 & 14, 1997

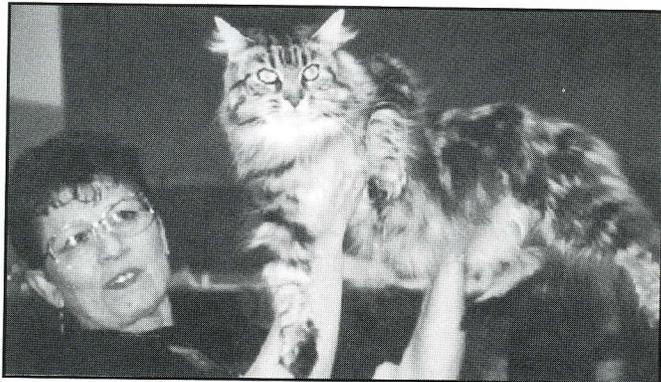
Photos by Beverly Caldwell



Lori Day with Cancoon Pawtucket



Elaine Magee with Dorwill Raisin' Kane of Coonalley



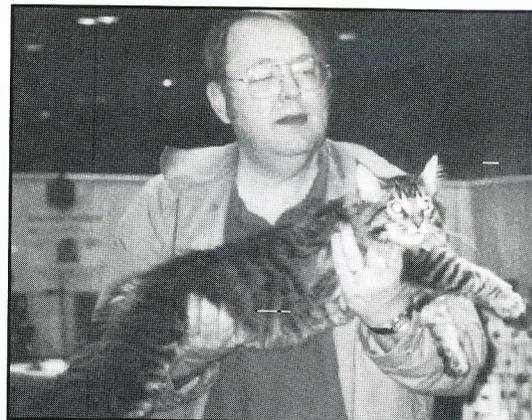
Pat Hughey with Ele Cats Nila



Kim Eigenhauser with Eigenkatz
Newton



Beverly Caldwell with Skimbles
Raja Red



George Eigenhauser with Eigenkatz
Newton

EMO

By Colleen Kanieski

The Kanieski family's infatuation with Maine Coon cats began in the early 1980's. Clay, then about eight, was fascinated with rocks. He spotted a lapidary shop on our way home from visiting Gramma Kanieski. With much persistence, he talked his father and me into stopping so he could take a look at the lovely stones and rocks on display. During our visit, a very large red cat appeared in the doorway. Intimidated by its size, I whispered to Eddie, my husband, "There's a huge--and I do mean HUGE--cat in the doorway staring at the boys." Clinton, about five years old, stared at the giant cat and clasped his arms tightly around my leg.

The owner of the shop recognized my concern. "He's a Maine Coon," he explained in a calm, reassuring voice. "He's big, but he has a sweet personality. His breed is pretty rare. He just wanted to see who was here and what was going on." He picked up the big, furry cat and placed him in Eddie's arms. My husband, totally blind, was fascinated with the cat's size and peaceful demeanor. Speaking softly into the cat's ear, Eddie said, "I'd love to have a big boy like you some day. Wow! What a cat!"

In 1995 after being a member of our family for about eighteen years, our blue domestic shorthair named Winchester had to be put to sleep. Clinton, then seventeen, had known no other pet. Eddie was devastated by Winnie's passing and Clay, though he knew it was time for Winchester to go home, deeply missed his nearly life-long friend.

I knew it would take a very special cat to fill the hearts of the men in my life. I remembered the Maine Coon cat Eddie had held years before and wondered where I could obtain one. A coworker gave me a copy of *Cat Fancy* magazine. In it there was a picture of a lovely brown mackerel tabby with white Maine Coon named Tracker. Pointing to the photo I exclaimed, "If I could just get a cat like that one!"

I began calling breeders listed in the ad section of *Cat Fancy* and contacted Bridget Bowen, an ACFA judge. I finally spoke with Claudia Hovden. After a very pleasant conversation, she told me, "Come to the Madison, Wisconsin ACFA cat show the first weekend in November. I'll be there. I don't breed brown tabbies, but I'd love to meet you and your husband. Other Maine Coon breeders who have brown Maine Coons will be there, too. I'm sure you'll find something you'll like."

Eddie to the cat show on our wedding anniversary was not an easy task. However, reminding him that we had sent

our first anniversary touring an aircraft museum seemed to turn the situation in my favor. We met Claudia there as well as a number of other breeders and exhibitors. It was amazing how many people were kind enough (and actually excited) to have Eddie hold their cats!

Claudia spoke with us for quite awhile and then encouraged us to look at other cats at the show. As we wound our way through the show cages, I spotted a set of black and white checkerboard show curtains. A sign read "Stormwatch DirTrack Demon of Nascat."

"He's here!" I cried, pulling Eddie to the cage beside me. "Who's here?"

"Tracker! The Maine Coon cat I saw in *Cat Fancy*! He's beautiful! I wonder if Claudia knows his breeder. Maybe she'll introduce us."

Eddie, unable to see the stunning cat in the cage, allowed me to lead him back to Claudia. Graciously she said, "Tracker's breeder is Donna Hinton. She's putting Tracker in the ring right now. I'll tell her you want to talk to her."

We decided to watch as Tracker was judged. While he was on the judging table, Donna came to talk with us. "You know which cat is Tracker, but do you see the one in the cage next to him? That's Callie. They don't

know it yet, but they're betrothed." She left at that moment as she was clerking in another ring.

I was instantly excited. "Eddie! That means she'll have a litter of kittens fathered by Tracker soon! I wonder if we could get one if we asked."

Having been raised in a very poor family, Eddie frowned. "It's probably pretty expensive."

"We won't know unless we ask. Maybe we can afford it. Even if we can't get a kitten, you've just gotta see Tracker!"

"Must be some cat to get you this excited."

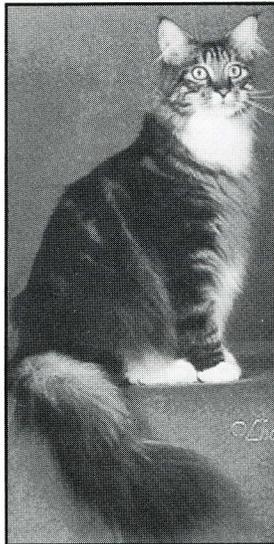
"Wait'll you touch him. You won't believe it! He makes that Maine Coon we saw years ago look small."

When Donna had a moment, I asked if Eddie could touch Tracker. Much to our surprise she said, "Why don't I just get him out and let Eddie hold him?"

With properly cleansed hands, my husband held out his arms to accept a normal sized cat. I smiled with delight when Donna placed Tracker in his arms. Eddie's expression turned to one of awe and fascination.

"We've got a problem," I told Donna and Claudia. "Eddie's in love!"

Claudia smiled. "He sure is. Looks like he found the right kind of Maine Coon for him."



Bravely I asked Donna if it would be possible to get a kitten from Callie and Tracker's litter. She said she had a huge list for pet quality kittens, so it would be quite a wait.

"No," I said quietly. "I want to show a neutered boy."

Donna smiled. "I've been looking for you!" Glancing at Eddie, she said, "I don't want you to be offended, Colleen, but please understand. This'll be Eddie's cat."

"No problem. He's supposed to be," I answered.

The following May, Callie had her first litter of kittens. That July we picked up a beautiful bundle of brown and white fur. After "pushing the pencil around a bit," we dubbed him Nascat's Emercoon Fitipawldi and nicknamed him Emo.

Donna, Claudia, and many other breeders became our friends and shared their expertise with us. We learned how to groom Maine Coons and the protocol of cat shows. On several occasions people seated near us while Emo was being judged said, "Emo sure is Eddie's boy. Just look who Emo's watching!" And, sure enough, Emo had his gaze fixed on the blind man who fed him, spent the day with him, and adored him.

The months went quickly. Before we knew it, November was upon us. We had promised Donna she could take Emo to California for the CFA International. Realizing our family--and especially Eddie--would be adrift without our brown tabby with white boy, she gave us Emo's half-sister to keep for the time Emo would be gone. Each night she called with a progress report including the number of kittens entered, how many were Maine Coons, and how Emo had done. Her excited voice made us smile as she announced Emo's rosettes. The last night of the International, Donna's tired voice came over the line. Thinking that Emo had not done well, we prepared for a negative report. To our surprise, she told us Emo had been named CFA International's Best Maine Coon Kitten!

When Eddie hung up the phone, tears filled his eyes. "Other than you and the boys, I've never had the best of anything. Now I have Emo - CFA International's Best Maine Coon Kitten - and my buddy. He certainly is special enough to fill part of the void Winchester left in my heart."



Chessie at nine years old
Loved by Lorie Truemner

Judie's Zoo

By Judie Voelkel

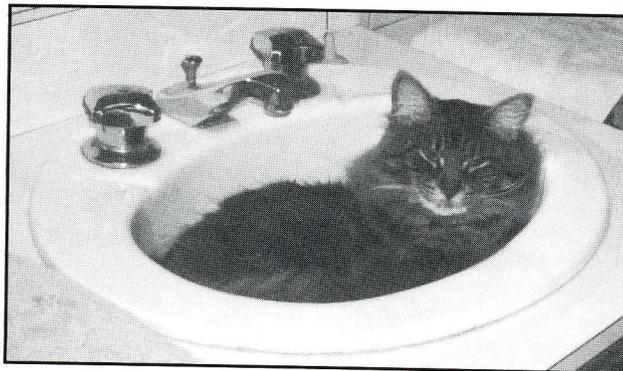
"Jean Valjean Has His Say"

"I am a prize! I should be given first prize for good looks, for the most marvelous personality, for bad behavior, for giving lots of love, for getting into fights in the middle of the night (when else would one get into a fight?), and for running to Judie — no, make that jumping upon Judie and screaming as loudly as I possibly can so that she will 'save' me from whomever I had the misfortune to pick a fight with. (You must understand that it is NEVER my fault! I AM NEVER TO BLAME!

"Why do humans feel it necessary to yell at their precious kitty-cats when they are suddenly aroused from a deep slumber? Could it be that we have frightened them? I just do not understand; but then I am not even nine months old yet. I have a lot of understanding to learn.

"How could Moi frighten anyone? I am the one who was upset! And why should I have to give up my new bed just because the others need their water bowls refilled? Can't Judie walk down the hall to the kitchen or to one of

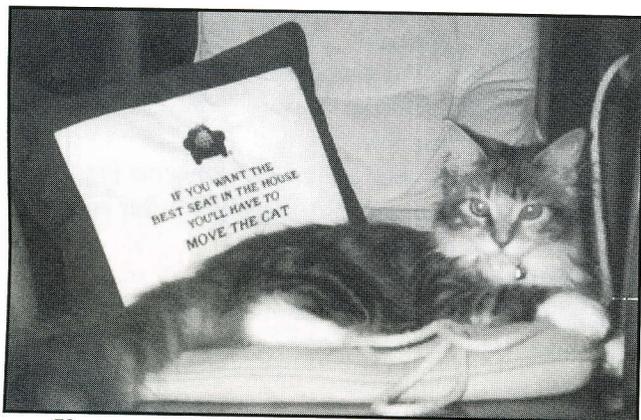
the bathrooms, balancing twelve or more bowls filled with fresh water? Or better still, why can't she carry a gallon jug full of fresh water to MY room to fill up the water bowls? She is darned lucky that I permit the others to eat and drink in here, let alone use the litter pans." She'd better stop and think about *that!*



"And you people out there in Feline Land had better stop and think about how lucky you are to be permitted to share a 'CAT's DOMAIN'!"

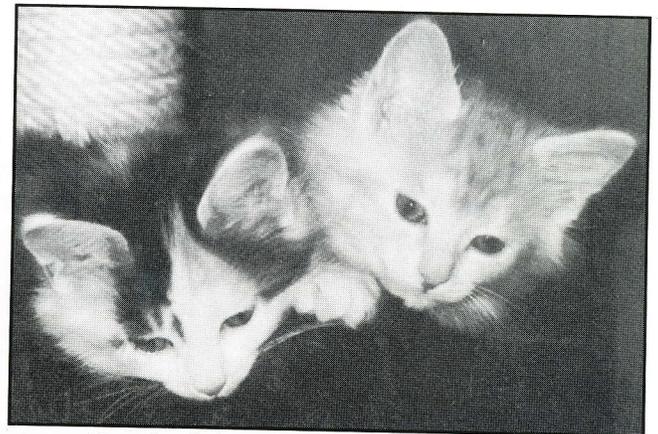
(Well, at least Jean Valjean is no longer chewing so much on my hair every night. He still pesters me and sleeps in strange places, and in odd positions, whenever and wherever he chooses. I am sure that I will be punished for quite some time to come for adopting two puppies two weeks ago, who are now seven weeks old and smaller than any of the cats. My revenge. The cats are being pestered and then yipped at. What fun! What else is THE ZOO for?

My very sincere "Thank you" for all your warm "welcome backs." You know who you are! A good summer to all. I will just take it one day at a time.



If you want the best seat in the house, you'll have to move the cat.

"Abby," owned by Charlotte & John Calhoun



Almaviva & Amelia Dels Magics de L'Emporda
Breeder: Hannelore Spahn, Spain

Adventures in Moving

By Al Urjick

As the veterans of many moves over the last 25 years, all with some number of cats between a few and a herd, my wife and I knew that our relocation from the D.C. area to south Texas would undoubtedly produce new and interesting adventures. Our expectations were well-founded.



At the time of this latest move we had actually thinned our herd down considerably by sending ladies (and I use the term "ladies" loosely) out for breeding, and only three of our furry friends would join us for the 1,500 mile car trip. Two of these were older, neutered Maine Coon Cats who were experienced travelers from whom we expected no trouble. The third, however, was an unknown quantity.

This cat, Sabrina, a sort-of Siamese, had wandered into our household last Christmas after being abandoned by her former owner, and taken up residence as the "emergency spare cat." We had some trepidations about how she would adapt to life on the road.

Our trepidations were quickly proven correct as she commenced to bellowing before we had even pulled out of the driveway. Ever the optimist, my joy and comfort (and copilot) assured me that Sabrina would soon grow tired of yowling and would settle down. Since we had made the tactical blunder of putting her carrier on top of the others and immediately behind the driver (me), this assurance offered little comfort. Having resolved, however, to be a cheerful traveling companion and supportive cat-co-dependent, I sweetly agreed (but had my secret doubts).

Eight states and seven days later, with many stops for sightseeing along the way, I was still making an honest effort to be cheerful, but it was damn hard. Yep, that cat shrieked the entire fifteen-hundred and some miles. We did reposition her carrier to the bottom layer, but if you've ever tried to muffle a Siamese yowl, you can appreciate how little difference this made. (It only took a few weeks for us to get our hearing back.)

Throughout the trip all three kitties enjoyed the challenging morning game of "catch me if you can" as we packed up to leave each motel. Since this is pretty normal feline behavior, we took it in stride and only had to destroy one motel room getting our hands on the undisputed champion of this game — our five-year-old Maine Coon female, Button.

We all (people and cats) survived the trip with our sanity reasonably intact and our hearing only moderately damaged. After one night of having to smuggle our feline companions into an "Absolutely No Pets!" room, we decided to move them into the house we would soon occupy as soon as our furniture caught up with us. We turned all three cats loose in the completely empty house (after checking that there were no escape hatches available in closets and cupboards), thinking that we were doing them a favor by giving them the chance to get used to their new environment. As we soon learned, this was not an entirely good idea.

After spending a few hours looking through the house and assuring ourselves that the cats were settled (food, water, box, etc.) we left them on their own and returned to our motel. When we returned the next day two cats were there to greet us, but the champion hider (Button) was nowhere to be seen. After an exhaustive search of every closet, cupboard, and conceivable hidey-hole — still no Button. Knowing this cat's ability to vanish, I confidently said, "Not to worry - she'll emerge and be fine by tomorrow." Not so. After repeating essentially the same scenario the next day, and the next, we began to succumb to panic and were on the verge of thinking about disassembling walls (as an indicator of Button's intellectual stature, this is the same cat who, on a previous trip, got herself trapped in a friend's lobster-trap coffee table). (Compounding the difficulties of settling into our new house, south Texas was experiencing the most intense rainstorms of the last 100 years, which delayed our move-in by a week. And the continued lack of any of their furniture and familiar belongings added to the cats' concerns [except for Silverado — the grand old man who after many, many moves, takes it in stride]).

After three days of "missing-in-action" status we had decided that somehow Button must have gotten out of the house. Although we canvassed the neighborhood for anyone who had seen a large, brown, slightly deranged cat, we found no sign of her. The neighbors didn't help soothe our worry by pointing out that our neighborhood (which faces onto protected wetlands) is inhabited by coyotes, alligators, and other scary wildlife which Button is not equipped to face.



Three sleepless nights, several teary outbursts, and long (expensive) phone calls to Button's extended family of friends and loved-ones about her disappearance, we returned to the house on the fourth day with little hope left that we would find her. And, though we in fact did *not* find Button, we *did* find a small clump of her hair on the living room rug which we were pretty sure had not been there the previous day. This was enough to keep hope alive that she was somewhere in the house, so once again we opened every cabinet and cupboard, looked up the chimney, etc. No Button. The next day, however, brought even more hope in the form of a *large* clump of Button-hair that we were *absolutely* certain had not been there the day before. With the first twinge of real hope in five days that Button was alive and present, we started our search again. Almost immediately I heard her distinctive meow coming from upstairs. In one of the empty bedrooms, there was Button sitting happy as could be on a closet shelf. This was the same closet that we had minutely examined during every previous search for the past four days. We're still not entirely convinced that she wasn't temporarily abducted by aliens.

Happy to have all three cats accounted for, we thought that perhaps the adventures were over. Not quite so, however. In our focus on searching for the missing Button we had failed to notice some other creatures inhabiting the house. These include small, green lizards which are quite harmless and friendly (and even desirable since they eat noxious insects). They also include really big, ugly, brown bugs that have no redeeming qualities. It didn't take long for the "spare cat" to figure out that both lizards and bugs constitute prey, and she soon led the two Maine Coons into the ways of the hunter. The first incident involved Sabrina tearing across the living room with a lizard

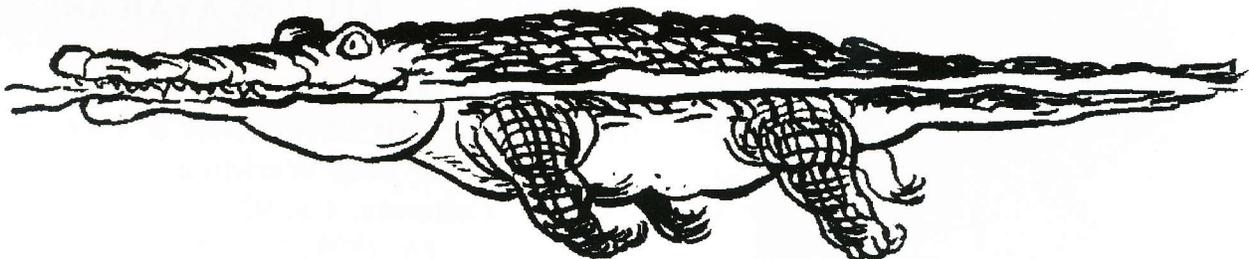
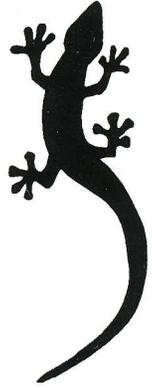
dangling out of her mouth. This lizard we rescued and put outside where it only had to deal with alligators instead of cats.

The second lizard, however, was not so fortunate. Knowing that we would take away her prey, Sabrina quickly swallowed this one whole and almost the last we saw of it was its tail disappearing down her throat. Unfortunately, we did see more of it the next day in the form of partially-digested lizard parts.

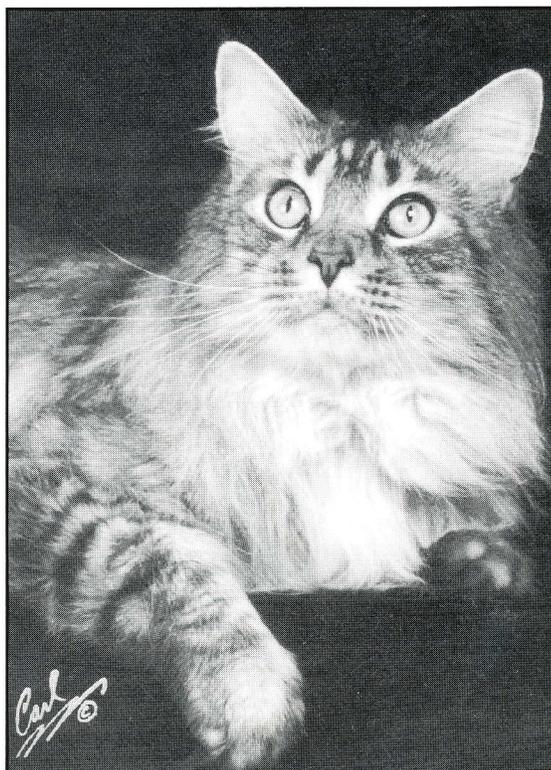
The big, ugly bugs (BUBs) have provided even more entertainment to both the feline and human occupants of the house. When a BUB dares to make its presence known all three cats quickly surround it and take turns pawing at it, two with their giant paws and one with her tiny ones. When the BUB works up the courage to make a run for it, whichever cat is in its direct path leaps backward like a startled gazelle, while the other two leap after it. Despite several broken lamps and semi-valuable knick-knacks, we've been so amused by this game that it's hard to be mad at either the BUBs or the cats.

After the first week or so we noticed a distinct lack of both lizards and BUBs in the house. Apparently the word is out on the street that this cat-patrolled residence should be avoided, and things have been pretty quiet on the wildlife front (we did have a mouse in residence for a couple of days; we haven't seen it in quite some time, however, and we suspect the worst).

Three months into living in the new house with at least most of the familiar stuff in place, the cats seem to have adapted and even forgotten all about the adventures of moving. Just to keep them on their toes I think I'll bring in three carriers and get out some suitcases.



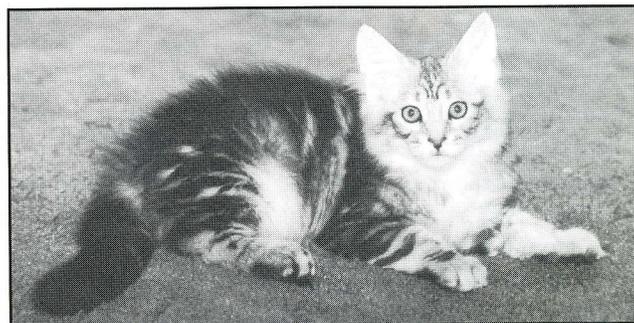
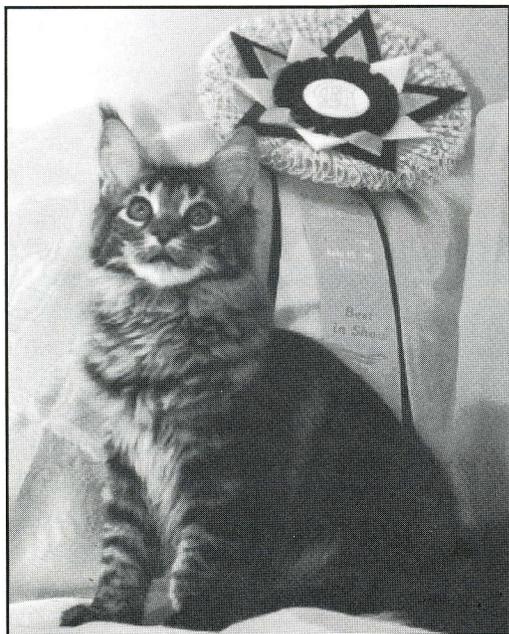
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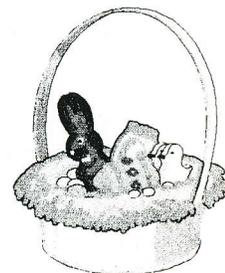
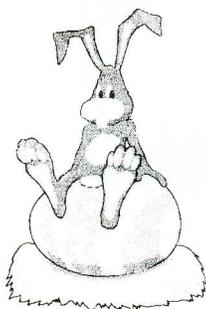
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Penn-Jersey Cat Club

Spring Celebration Show
 April 3-4-5, 1998
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Featuring Maine Coons and Ragdolls



Maine Coon Events

Kitten - Cat - Alter - Male/Female Congresses
 Division Awards for Cats
 Top 3 Best of the Best Maine Coon Kittens - Cats - Alters

Ragdoll Events

Congresses and special awards

Awards will be given on Saturday to the top-3 best decorated cages following our Spring/Easter theme!

Friday

Larry Paul - SP
 Pat Smith - AB
 Robin Higgins - AB
 Barbara Ray - AB
 Judy Chappetta - AB

Saturday

Larry Paul - AB & Male MC
 Don Caruthers - AB
 Juliana Slater - SP
 Fate Mays - AB & RD Cats
 Connie Webb - AB & RD Kittens

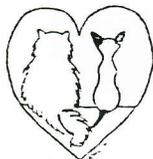
Sunday

Paul Lahey - AB
 Robert Forte - AB
 Juliana Slater - AB
 Fate Mays - SP
 Richard Bailey - AB

Richard Bailey - Female MC

Pat Smith -- will be judging Connie Webb's HHPs and HHP Kittens

Don Caruthers -
 MC Cat, Kitten, and Alter
 Congress



Entry Clerk: Chris Unangst - 209 Hillstone Drive - Raleigh, NC 27615-4911
 (Phone - (919) 870-8624, 24-Hour Fax (919) 870-8667)

Show Hotel & Show Hall: Meadowlands Hilton - Secaucus, NJ - (201) 348-6900. Show Rate is \$84.00 (single or double). Reservations must be made by March 11, 1998.

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Special -- 3 cats -- 3 days -- \$210.00

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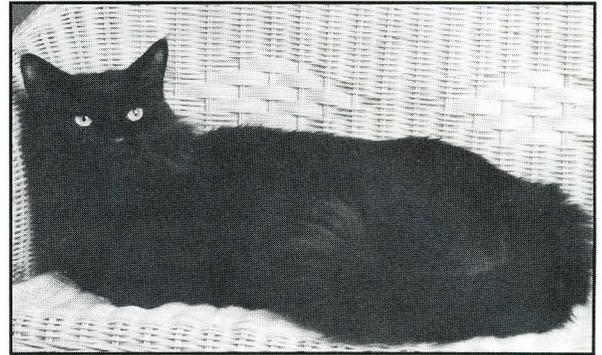
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and helping with MCBF and for the
Honeycoon-look.

Very special thanks to Sharon and Laura
Cunningham for two wonderful cats and for
their help and guidance.



TICA GRC St. John's Voodoo Queen

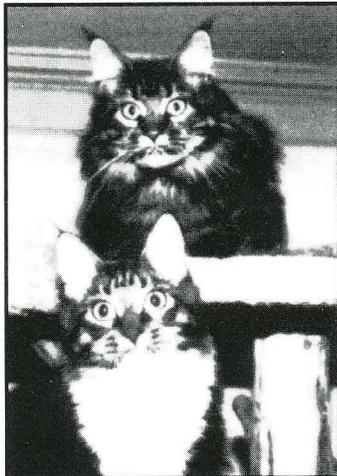
Black Maine Coon Female (One-Show Grand)

Sire: Honeycoon Fletcher Prescott

Dam: Woodpecker's Tiffany

March 1997 TICA Show Böblingen:

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Best Female Maine Coon - Congress



TGC Seascape Sabrina (top)
Seascape Reba

Seascape

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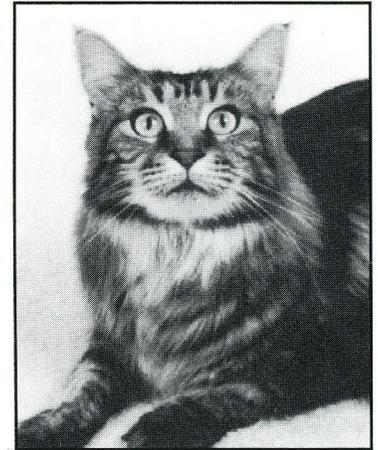
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QGC COONSWORTH RUNNINBEAR OF TIPSnTUFTS - JO-ANN CASSIDY



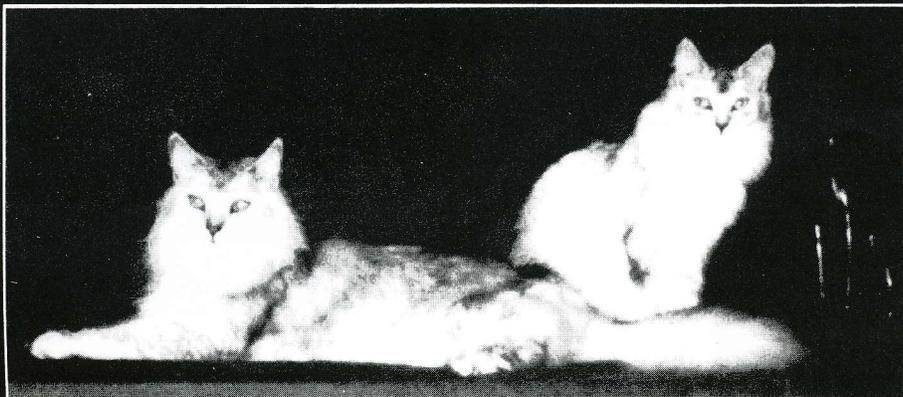
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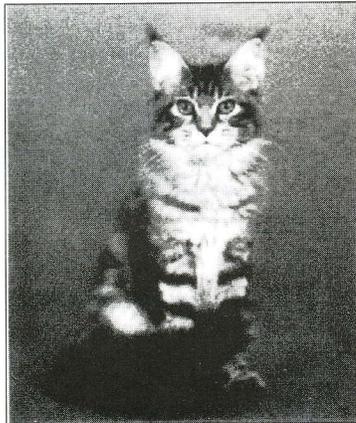


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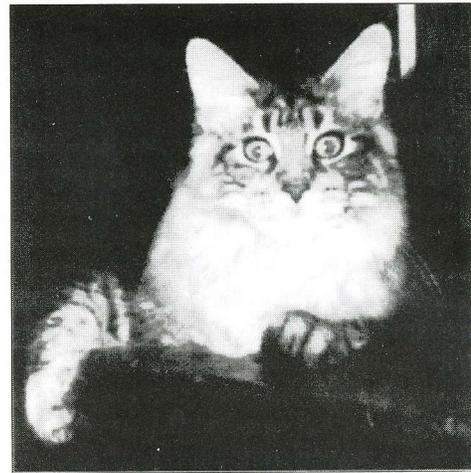


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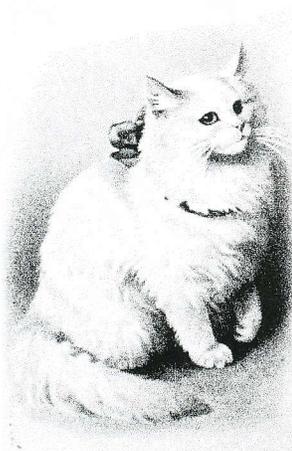
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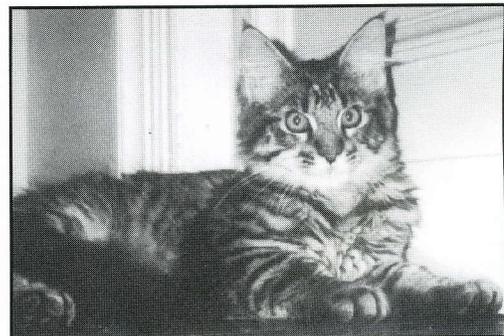
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Fancier Renewals Due IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Dear Fancier Members,

This is to notify all Fancier Members that due to the lack of a *Scratch Sheet* for the past nine months, all Fancier memberships are being extended as follows: All members who joined prior to May 1997 will receive an extension of nine months. New members who joined between June 1997 through August 1997 will be extended for six months. New members joining between September 1997 through November 1997 will receive will receive a three month extension.

I would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the address or phone number listed in the List Of Officers on page three, or 3-mail me at: Mcwiskers@prodigy.net.

We are also looking forward to re-starting a "Fancier Section" in *The Scratch Sheet*, but need to have enough material for each issue. Pictures, short stories, helpful hints, etc. are welcome. I would also like to see if there is enough interest to start a "Pen Pal" column, as we have Fancier members all over the world. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let me know.

Thanks again for your support, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Wendy McGlynn
Fancier Member Secretary



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (Or Change of Address Form)

NEW FANCIER MEMBERSHIPS, RENEWALS, ADDRESS CHANGES
Wendy McGlynn
39 Broadway
Pembroke NH 03275

BREEDER MEMBER ADDRESS CHANGES
Edith Dunford
9 Cliff St.
Stonington, CT 06378

PROVISIONAL BREEDER MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & ADDRESS CHANGES
Joan Gaudet
Rt. 1 Box 618M
Marrero, LA 70072
504-689-4535
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NEW FANCIER MEMBER FANCIER RENEWAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS

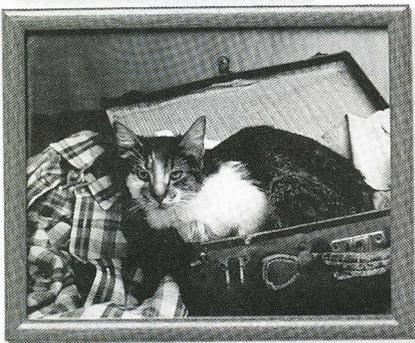
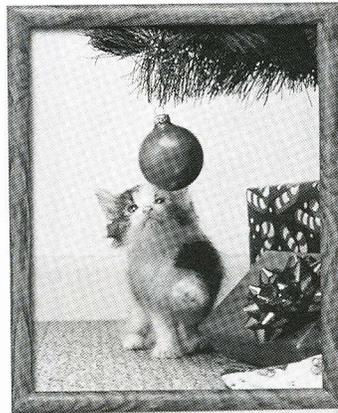
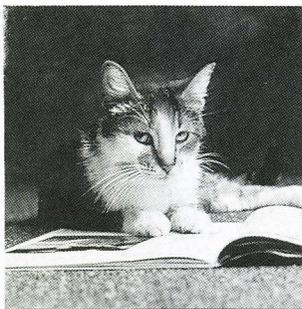
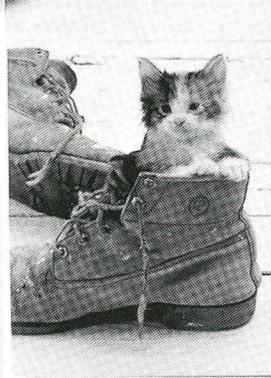
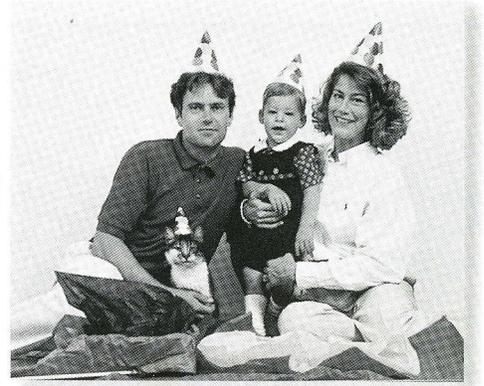
Please send me information on how to become a Breeder Member of MCBFA

I have included the extra postage required to mail *The Scratch Sheet* to my overseas country

This is a NEW ADDRESS. Please change it on the MCBFA mailing list

PLEASE SEE PAGE THREE FOR MEMBERSHIP DUES AND POSTAL RATES

You love your
 cat enough to
 give him the
 best dry food.
 When it comes
 to canned,
 don't love him
 any less.



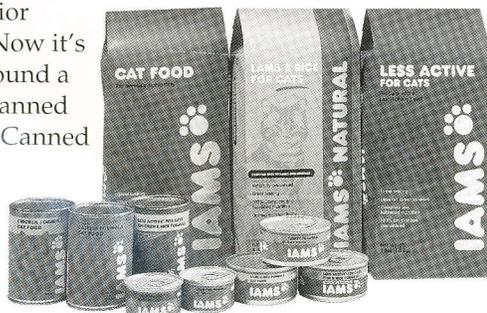
You and your cat have been through a lot over the years. A lot of different cat foods, too. First you found the dry food with superior nutrition. Now it's time you found a premium canned food. Iams Canned Cat Food. It's more nutritious because its

quality ingredients are more digestible. With all the protein, carbohydrates and other nutrients your cat needs for a shiny coat, clear eyes and strong muscles.

And you'll be happy to know it's formulated to maintain an acidic urinary pH, which many veterinarians recommend.

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To learn more about our cat food, call 1-800-525-4267. You'll find Iams Cat Foods are good for life, pound for pound and ounce for ounce.



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Iams Adult Cat Foods are available in 8 canned varieties (3-, 6- and 14-oz. cans) and 3 dry formulas (4-, 8- and 20-lb. bags)





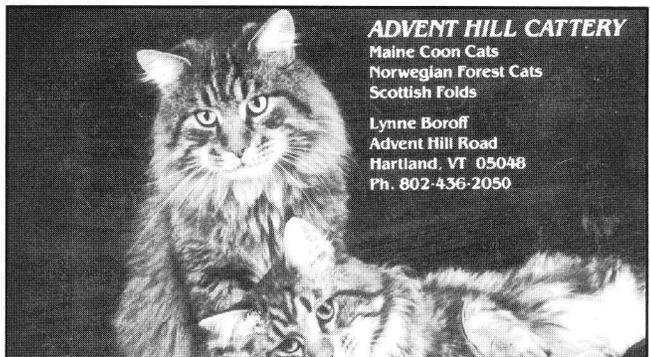
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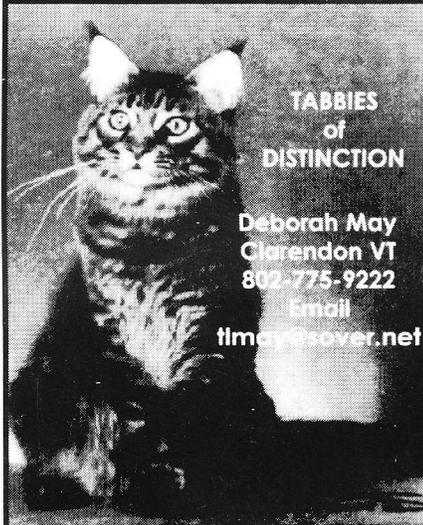
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