

Maine Coon Breeders & Fanciers Association
Established in 1968 for the promotion and protection of the Maine Coon Cat

Scratch Sheet

A New Look & Editor for the Scratch Sheet

In This Issue

Feline Infectious Peritonitis	2-8
Winners' Gallery	9
Spotlight on Fancier Members	10-11
Mainerd Sez	12
What's New	13
Kids Korner	14
Calicoon Says Good-bye	15
President's Corner	16
Beanie Baby Raffle	16
MCBFA Loses a Friend	17
Food & Health Issues	17
The Standard of Perfection	18
Membership	19
Officers Contact Info & Advertising	20

As you saw with the Winter 2006 issue, the Scratch Sheet has undergone some significant changes. As the new editor, I had very large shoes to fill in replacing Kit Mounger. Thankfully, she is a constant source of advice and assistance. My plan was to delegate sections of the SS to interested members. Even while doing this, I find it's still a large task to complete every few months.

Susan Duke has accepted the role as health editor. In this capacity, she will be researching and presenting a new health topic in every issue. She is accepting suggestions for future topics, so if you'd like to read more about a particular subject, contact us with your request. Susan is as eager in her new role as I am in mine. This issue we're discussing Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) and breeder awareness. Dr. Susan Little was gracious enough to review the article for content and her comments are throughout.

Additionally, you will find new features such as the "Spotlight on" which highlights fancier & breeder members. With our members spread across the globe, this can provide as a getting-to-know-each-other venue. In the upcoming issues, I plan to feature some long-time breeders, many of whom you can find in your own cats' pedigrees, and Methuselah Maine Coons will be presented.

While there have been significant changes made, familiar features such as Mainerd, MCBFA book reviewer extraordinaire, the President's Corner, and the Winners' Gallery will continue.

And to introduce myself, Liz Hansen, your new editor. I grew up around cats & learning some about feline husbandry through the ferals we had. However, just six years ago I couldn't tell you what a Maine Coon was. But from the moment I met my friend's Maine Coon, Germaineium, I was hooked.

Today, when not working as a college professor of Chemistry, I spend my time learning & experiencing this terrific breed first hand under the cattery name Chemicoons and am a provisional breeder member of MCBFA. My cats are named after elements, chemical compounds, laboratory glassware and famous scientists (pictured right is Double Grand Champion Chemicoons Madame Marie Curie).

I've been showing since the time I met Germaineium (I helped his owner show him to a Regional Win in CFA) and am overjoyed that this show season I've earned my first Regional awards.

While at times it's been quite trying, losing litters, changing mentors, receiving positive echocardiograms & DNA results for HCM, it's also brought me valuable friendships and a house of wonderful, gentle giant companions. All of my trials and tribulations perish when I visit a cat that wouldn't be here except for my breeding program and see how happy and complete the home is with their new feline family member(s).

I look forward to providing you with insightful, informative issues. If there is something special you'd like to see in an issue, or pictures you'd like to share, I hope you'll contact me.



MCBFA

Spring 2006

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP): The Dirty Little Secret Comes Out!

In this first issue as health editor, I was asked to consider FIP. For many, hearing that a breeder has FIP carries a terrible stigma - unclean conditions, poor husbandry. What's a breeder to do if it hits their cattery when they've been practicing good husbandry? It happens. Several respected breeders have offered to share what they've learned about the disease, about things that may trigger it, how to recover from it, and how the stereotypical setting for FIP is not the only place it occurs. I hope you get as much from their writings as I did. Thanks, Donna, Paul, and Cat for your passion for your cats and courage to write about this challenging topic. Susan Duke, Dukehaven Cattery

Donna's Story

Donna Hinton, Nascat Cattery, Richmond Texas

FIP is that dirty little 3 letter word that you only hear hushed things about surrounding a breeder. It has always been associated with poor cattery conditions, overcrowding of cats, poor care, kitty mills and shelters (unsanitary environments that are ideal for coronavirus to spread). I think we were all guilty of this one time, whispering behind each others' backs when you hear, via the grapevine, that their cat died of FIP. We thought, "oh my, she/he must have horrible conditions. How can they let that happen? Stay away from them, their cats are ill." But then it happens to you, who have done your very best. Yes, I was guilty of this. It's time to come out of the dark ages of this disease and educate. FIP can happen to anyone. If you stay in breeding long enough, things happen. The odds are against you. It happened to me, three and a half years ago.



GC Nascat Porsche Cayenne



Nascat Blue Streak Peace

I was in shock and denial, when a 6 month old kitten that I just placed became ill within one week of going to a new home. This was the largest, healthiest kitten in the litter. No URI's, diarrhea, nothing! I've always taken pride of having a small cattery, large rooms, plenty of freedom and cleanliness. Litterboxes were dumped and bleached with hot soapy water twice a week, and scooped twice and sometimes 3 times daily. What went wrong? What did I do?

Of course I didn't believe it. In fact the first vet diagnosed the cat with HCM via x-ray because of fluid in the chest cavity and an enlarged heart. I picked the cat up when he was stable and took him down to my cardiologist, Dr. Lunney, for an echo which presented both good (it wasn't HCM) and bad (he strongly felt the cat had FIP) news. Fear struck in my heart. Not me, I don't have those types of conditions. I don't have overcrowding, my cats are big, strong, healthy, fed the best food, kept in the best conditions and have healthy pedigrees. It couldn't be, not one of MY cats! I asked the vet to please treat this cat. I don't care with what or how or why, just fix it. I was betting on him being one of those cats mis-diagnosed for FIP and knew we would make this cat well.

Unfortunately, the cat did not get well and just ten days later he was gone. I've never seen a cat go from a robust, 14 lbs cat down to 8 lbs in a matter of days. My vet, who had done his neuter just a month prior, was shocked at how fast this cat wasted away. What we witnessed was wet FIP. They aspirated his chest cavity 3 times in a 10-day time frame, but it was not meant to be. We really tried to beat this, but it can't be done. The "wet" form of FIP, with obvious fluid building up in the chest and abdominal cavities, will claim the cat within days to weeks of discovery. It's fast, horrible, untreatable, and fatal every time. Then 3 months later, another kitten, of a different litter, was wasting away with all signs pointing to "dry" FIP. This kitten was treated at a top vet school, tested for everything imaginable, but they were unable to save him. I sat and cried, along with the owner, when this beautiful kitten crossed over to the rainbow bridge. Confirmation of FIP was made with necropsy. Dry FIP is harder to diagnose and does take longer for the cat to die, usually about 7-9 weeks (or longer, if confined to one body system, such as the eyes).

I wanted answers. Where did I go wrong? I never, ever, wanted to go through this again, nor see a pet person go through it. The more I looked, the more some people didn't want to talk, and I felt like I was walking around with a scarlet letter on my chest. Or rather, "letters" F-I-P. In my mind there was this shame that I would be perceived as I a bad, dirty breeder and my kitten had died through my negligence.

There are good folks out there; a network to assist and take the assumed "shame" away. Not only were my true breeding friends available with shoulders to cry on, but so was Dru Milligan (President & Co-Founder of The Orion Foundation for the fight against FIP) who became my savior. What surprised me was there were others, just like me, who had a case or two of FIP, yet were afraid to talk because of the stigma that comes along with it.

(Continued on page 3)

What Happened in Donna's Case? The Theory

It's common knowledge, typically to breeders and vets, that cats will shed coronavirus, especially with stressors: inoculations, surgery, moving house, etc. According to Dr. Susan Little, cats with this virus can shed anytime, with the highest shedding rates in kittens.

I produce approximately four litters a year, a fairly low number, spaced about 6-8 weeks apart. I do intranasals at three weeks, first FVRCP at 8 weeks, and at this point in time, the kittens come out and join our household in the family environment. Prior to this, they are confined to my bedroom & kitten room with the queen.

Four years ago, mother nature was not co-operative, and for the first time in 8-9 years of breeding, I had 4 females all due within 5 weeks of one another. In total, 23 kittens were produced. One big happy family, full run of the house varying ages of 7 weeks to 11 weeks, with different shot schedules and lots of litter boxes, thus more cleaning and dumping. One group would get their first set of shots, a week later another group followed, etc. Even though all got along beautifully, cats can and do stress. My numbers were probably too high for some cats with lesser immune systems—coronaviurses were shedding and the most susceptible are the younger kittens. Most kittens do have strong immune systems to fight the benign enteric coronavirus and keep the viral replication rates low, thus reducing the risk of mutation to the FIP form. But for some reason (stressors and genetics among them), some kittens have a poor immune response and can't fight off the normal viruses - such as coronavirus - that are often found in a multi-cat environment.

After that situation, I decided to never allow myself to be in that situation again. Yes, I do hold off breeding girls; I will not have two litters close together. I went back to my 6-8 weeks spread. Have I seen it again? No. Those were my only two cases. Have I bred the parents again? Yes and never produced another FIP affected kitten. A few breeders were even placed out of those 23 kittens. I did inform the breeders that I had had FIP. One breeder even went and had a titer* on the female she received from me and was pleased to inform me that her titer was under 100. According to one test method, this value was considered a desirable safe range.

I realized this has to stop. It can and has happened even to the finest, cleanest, most conscientious breeders. If you haven't had it yet, you're lucky and I hope you don't ever see it affect one of your own.

Where Do We Go From Here?



CH Nascat's Kiko Firecraker 400

We need to realize that we don't know all the answers. We need more funds and research**. And most importantly, show compassion for our fellow breeders and cats. They are feeling guilt and frustration, yet it's OK—it's happened to more people than you realized. We need to encourage and engage with open discussions for solutions. Don't just point the finger and spread rumors about a disease that can happen to anyone of us, but learn, with consideration, for those affected. Share any changes in procedures, schedules, isolation, vaccinations or WHATEVER helped to keep this awful illness from recurring. I've learned and I will respond if anyone asks, "Have you ever had FIP?" with, "Yes, I have."

Thanks to Dr. Susan Little, Winn Feline Foundation for review of these articles and alerting us to the Bria Fund. Please see the sidebar, page 8, for more information on how you can help in the fight against FIP.

*The standard serology testing will pick up antibodies against feline coronavirus, measured as a titer. A positive titer indicates exposure to feline coronavirus and high titers may occur in infected cats. All of the currently available tests for FIP are actually FeCoV tests—they cannot discern an FIP infection from a feline enteric coronavirus infection. A negative titer (no discernible antibodies) to FIP does not rule out the disease.

** Research & Sources page 5



About the Author,
Donna Hinton

Donna started showing in 1990 with a HHP and recieved her first Maine Coon, GPRW, Coonsboro Mario "Indy" Coondretti. After showing in the alter class for a few years, her mentors, Jill and Dave Burrow, came over to my house after a trip to NY and presented me with GC, RW Stormwatch DirTrack Demon of Nascat, DM (pictured above) from Cat Moody. The rest is history. Donna has always maintained a small cattery, One male and five females (with a few neuters/spays). She believes in staying small for more one on one attention to her cats, litters raised spaced out, with lots of socialization for the kittens.

Donna is a full breeder member of MCBFA & more of her cats & cattery can be seen at: www.nascatmainecoon.com

More about FIP & Paul's Experience

Paul te Bokkel, A Nice Moon Cattery, The Netherlands

FIP: The Disease

Feline Infectious Peritonitis is a disease that results from a mutated virus. Feline coronavirus (FCoV) can be found in most multi-cat households. This virus is not particularly harmful and normally causes nothing more than a mild diarrhea or a sneeze, but due to the very long RNA chains in the genetic makeup of the coronavirus (and because RNA (in comparison to DNA) does not have a good error correcting mechanism to prevent mutations), it tends to mutate relatively easily during replication. Most of these mutations will be harmless and cause the replicated virus to be ineffective or invalid, but sometimes, in an estimated 2 to 5 percent of the cats, the mutated coronavirus will cause the effects we all fear to see: FIP.

The mutated virus is called FIP virus or FIPV. The FIPV replicates in the white blood cells, and is thus able to spread throughout most parts of the body. In due time – days to weeks for wet FIP and up to several months for dry FIP – these organs will fail, causing death.

A documented and proven method for curing a cat with FIP does not exist. Most treatment is targeted towards modification of the immune response, and reducing vasculitis (permeability of the vascular system).

Diagnosis

Because the main symptom of FIP is organ failure, it is difficult to distinguish from other causes. **There is no simple method to test for FIP.** Several methods are in existence to test for different clues. However, blood chemistry in itself does not tell you what caused anemia and urinalyses don't tell you if kidney failure is caused by FIP or PKD for example. Antibody titers can only tell you if the cat was exposed to a coronavirus, but cannot distinguish between benign FCoV and FIPV.

The best way to look for FIP is where the direct effects of FIP or the existence of FIPV can be detected. The first is normally done by analyzing the effusive fluid, which is typically an orange/yellow, high protein sticky gooey. Together with other clinical findings, this normally is reason to decide that a cat has FIP. Obviously, in the case of dry FIP there is often no fluid, or very little fluid, so diagnosis is more difficult. A special test, the RT-PCR or shorthand PCR-test was thought to be definitive to test for the FIPV directly, but that too doesn't distinguish between FCoV and FIPV. Research is being done on FIP diagnosis, but currently no definitive and generally accepted, method is available. No one test is conclusive, which means a lot of cats will falsely be reported as having FIP and a lot of cats with FIP will test negative. **Don't trust any test for FIP without supporting evidence.**

In the end, there is only one way for a reasonably certain diagnosis; necropsy or biopsy of affected tissues. A test called immunohistochemistry can detect the coronavirus within lesions in affected tissues, giving strong evidence for FIP. All tissue damage, failed organs, fluids, lesions, necrosis and other remarkable findings can support the assumption of FIP.



Mis-Diagnosis

Last year, we had a kitten put to sleep at 10 weeks on the diagnosis of FIP. The necropsy revealed liver failure, causing heart failure and chest fluids. The *E. coli* bacteria were found to have invaded the bloodstream, no signs of FIP. The bacteria were resistant to the antibiotics given.

A friend of us had a similar experience with *E. coli* having put down 3 cats in 6 months. On our advice she had a necropsy done on the third and severe *E. coli* was discovered.

More recently, here in the Netherlands, we had a tragic story of a show winning stud that was put to sleep shortly after been diagnosed with FIP by **three** different and well respected veterinary specialists. The necropsy report is inconclusive and a strong case for other causes can be made. No signs of FIP were found. Personally I think a lot of cases of FIP are misdiagnosed. *(Comment from Dr. Susan Little: This works both ways. Cats are diagnosed with FIP that don't have the disease, especially if antibody titres are being used for diagnosis. But cats with FIP are also misdiagnosed as having other diseases, too).*

(Non)Contagious

It would be important to know what a cat or kitten died of as soon as you have more than one cat – and I'm pretty sure all people reading this are owned by more than one cat. 75-90 % of multi-cat households test positive for FCoV. A cat carrying FCoV may shed virus intermittently, so other cats in the household can pick up that virus and become a carrier, possibly shedding the virus themselves every few months, reinfesting the other cats on their turn. There are no documented cases of FIPV being contagious. *(Comment from Dr. Susan: We can see apparent FIP outbreaks in a cattery, but that doesn't necessarily mean that FIPV was spread directly from cat to cat. The reason we believe FIPV is not shed via the feces is because once the viral mutation occurs, the virus changes its tropism from intestinal cells to macrophages. Essentially, it moves out of the intestinal tract, and is no longer shed in feces.)*

Current thought is that the risk of transmission of FIPV from one cat to any other cat is assessed as being low-risk to non-existent. As said, there is the risk of FCoV being contagious, but that is mostly harmless by itself.

Vaccine

There is one vaccine in existence, Primucell. However, there is no guarantee a cat is completely protected against FCoV as tests have shown a 0 to 80% protection against infection. In the US, it is licensed for use on kittens 16 weeks and older, at which age most kittens already have been in contact with FCoV, meaning they are likely to already be infected with the benign FCoV, and hence making the vaccine ineffective.

Where it has been used is with the introduction of a FCoV-negative cat into a group where FCoV is commonplace.

Continued on page 5

Reducing Risk Factors

There are a lot of risk factors identified for developing FIP from an FCoV infection. A closer look shows that they can be divided into: age, stress and environment, and genetics. In most cases FIP occurs in cats up to the age of two, with an apparent higher risk for whole males.

Stress and environmental risk factors are easier to control, however they can be tough on our emotions. The single thing most often mentioned is to reduce or prevent stress. Try to keep a stable group. Do not introduce multiple cats or kittens at once. Try to prevent multiple concurrent stress factors. Rehome a cat that is not happy in your house. Avoid overcrowding. Go to the vet if you suspect illness. Keep your cats' environment clean, especially the litter trays and feeding bowls. Separate ill cats. Keep separated, small groups. And for breeders: lower the number of concurrent litters and their frequency. In general: keep your cats healthy and happy. That is probably good advice for any household, but if you've ever been confronted with (the suspicion of) FIP, you'll understand that it's a small price to pay for a good night's rest, as you'll be suspecting every cat in your house to develop FIP for months.

If you're a breeder, you may be able to do a bit more, by reducing genetic risk factors: Avoid pedigrees with multiple cases of FIP or poor immune systems in individual cats. Trying to breed for a better immune system in general will reduce the risk of FIP, and also cancer and bacterial infections.

Will these measures help? Nobody knows. And that is a very important observation. The risk factors all come into play when you want to prevent FIP, but **you'll never know if and how close you are to FIP**. Science also doesn't know what exactly causes FCoV to mutate into FIPV in one cat, but not in the next cat. But a fact is, a healthy cat is better equipped to battle any disease.

Any cat exposed to FCoV can develop FIP. There's no guarantee if you followed all advice above; your cats can still die of FIP (as Cat's and Donna's stories tell). It's for

these reasons that a well-known and respected FIP-researcher, Dr Diane Addie, sees only one solution to prevent FIP: eradicate FCoV. It's a simple reasoning; breed with queens that are free of FCoV or separate kittens at about the age of five weeks if their mother does carry FCoV (detected with titers). Get a titer from the kittens at 12 to 16 weeks to confirm their FCoV status and place the kittens with full disclosure if they test positive.

To 'clear' the rest of the cattery from FCoV, the persistent shedding cats should be placed (alone or possibly with another FCoV-shedding cat). This takes several months of repeat tests, as not every shedding cat will be persistently shedding. If the persistent shedding cats are removed, the rest of the cats are able to recover completely from FCoV infection, thereby eliminating the risk for other, FCoV negative cats and kittens. This takes time, devotion and considerable money (and is prone to failure), but if the cattery is successfully rid of FCoV, that will lead to a reasonable chance to never see a cat die of FIP again. The only downside could be that you will hesitate to sell kittens to homes where FCoV could be or is present.

Continued on page 6



A Maine Coon from A Nice Moon Cattery

RESEARCH & SOURCES

<http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/health/FIP.html> - The Winn Feline Foundation - Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

http://www.fabcats.org/fip_000.html - FIP

http://www.fabcats.org/fip_update.html - FIP update

<http://www.vet.uga.edu/vpp/clerk/baranik/> - Feline Infectious Peritonitis: An Overview

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cell-mediated_immunity - Cell-mediated immunity

<http://www.dr-addie.com/WhatIsFIP.htm> - Dr. Addie - What is FIP?

<http://www.orionfoundation.com> - Orion Foundation - Taking up the fight against Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

<http://www.vet.uga.edu/vpp/clerk/baranik/index.htm> - Feline Infectious Peritonitis: An Overview of Disease Transmission, Pathogenesis, Signs and Treatment With Emphasis on Diagnosis

Lecture "Laatste ontwikkelingen over infectieziekten bij de kat" from Dr Herman Egberink, specialist infectieus diseases and immunologie, FelCan 2005 (<http://www.felcan.nl>)

Lecture "Vaccination of cats in Great Britain" from Dr R.M. Gaskell, specialist feline medicine, FelCan 2004 (<http://www.felcan.nl>)

FIP: If Disaster Strikes.....

But what if one of your beloved fur balls is diagnosed with FIP? It is difficult to say, because a lot of personal preferences, possibly ethics and certainly grief is involved, but here's what we would do, should it happen (again) to us.

Remember, **any diagnosis of FIP should be confirmed by other signs, as there is no direct test.** Rely on your veterinarian to help you out here; he's the expert. Have him do the necessary blood tests, have the effusive fluids analyzed, rule out other causes, like (for example) toxoplasmosis, FeLV, FIV - whatever seems reasonable. If you're truly convinced that it is FIP, don't hesitate to let your precious go if he or she is in pain... You can read Cat's story about her feelings. We felt horrified at first to learn that our girl did not have FIP, as that meant we let her go for the wrong reason. But as I said before, the diagnosis FIP (whether right or wrong) is normally synonymous with several organs failing at the same time, in which case the name of the disease doesn't matter really; the outcome is the same: death.

That's why it's so important to **confirm suspected FIP diagnosis with a necropsy.** There is a chance that the outcome will point to something else, as it was *E. coli* in our case. The day we euthanized Cepheïde, we informed kitten buyers (she was 10 weeks), cancelled a stud service, cancelled a trip to pick up a kitten and informed the health committee of our association.

In effect, we closed down. This is the recommended action, at least here in the Netherlands. Close down for at least three months. Closing down means:

- Don't place cats or kittens
- Don't take in cats or kittens
- Don't give stud service
- Don't show cats

It doesn't matter if you have cats from other people in your house; you don't move the cats. The reasoning behind this is that you want to **avoid stress for your cats.** Perhaps sometimes moving cats to avoid stress could be wise, but the principle stays the same: have the immune system of the cats battle the FCoV. And the more at ease your cats are, the greater their victory. Coronaviruses do not do well on humans so you can visit other cat owners. You're also free to have guests (as long as they don't travel with their kitty).

The next step is to take care of yourself. We would recommend talking about it freely. Have people read these articles if they don't know about the disease. It can happen to anyone, every feline is at risk. A lot of people feel relieved when they're able to talk about it. Enter the FIP mailing list from the Orion Foundation. Call friends. Read about it – the Orion Foundation has a great collection of links.

We were lucky. After two days, on Wednesday, we got a preliminary necropsy result; "probably not FIP". On Friday this was confirmed by histology, so we were allowed to open our cattery again. The kitten buyers stayed and, although sad, chose another kitten from us, as their trust in us was confirmed by our full disclosure-policy.

Editor's note: Not all authors/reviewers agreed with cattery closure as a recommended action for FIP, however this practice is recognized as a common action in Europe. From Dr. Susan Little: Environmental persistence isn't the problem with this virus – it is cat to cat transmission. It might make people feel like they are doing something to close their cattery, but when a case of FIP occurs, the risk to the other cats in the cattery is just the same as it was before. No more, no less.



Kittens of A Nice Moon Cattery

About the authors, Paul te Bokkel & Natasja Hannink



Both Paul and Natasja were catpersons before they met, so it was only natural that it became their mutual hobby. They enjoy serving their masters, although besides the shared responsibility for the occasional litter, Natasja takes special interest in pedigrees and individual health records and Paul's attention goes to health and the bigger picture. They try to share as much as they can with people willing to learn.

You can see more of their cats at: www.a-nice-moon.nl/



FIP: Remembering Skye

Cat Moody, Stormwatch Maine Coons, New York

As an introduction, I bred for about 12 years as "Stormwatch" Maine Coons. I had lots of problems, some common and some bizarre, as every breeder does - whether they admit them or not. And over time, I found that I only wanted to deal with other breeders who DID admit their problems...how else were we supposed to know how to deal with these problems if people didn't even admit they were happening? I had ringworm early on...and discovered that no one was willing to discuss it or help me. A simple, common, skin disease....and no one would discuss it. It made me angry. I knew I didn't do anything to inflict this on my cattery, but it carried some huge stigma, at least until the advent of the mcats list and the new shared philosophy to help each other. But FIP???? I always smugly thought that good breeders would be immune to this, that it had to do with bad breeding or bad environment, that only those overcrowded, cheaply fed, badly vetted, badly housed catteries would experience this. And then.....many of my good friends, excellent breeders, excellent facilities and hygienic practices, no expense spared, top quality healthy pedigrees.....THEY had FIP happen? It didn't make any sense. I trusted them, I knew them, I knew their homes, I knew their cats, heck - some of the cats were from my lines. THEY had FIP in kittens?? How could this happen? And I'm ashamed to say that like Donna, no matter what I knew, it didn't affect my primitive mind-set...for FIP to happen, the breeder had to have done something wrong. I was completely off.

I had quit breeding, pretty much, by the summer of 2004. All the cats save one were neutered/spayed. I only kept my one stud male, Skye, whole, and only because I had babysat the previous winter for a friend's female and her kittens, and both of us just KNEW that the

combination of that female and Skye (pictured center) would be phenomenal. So I kept him whole for one last breeding, and the girl came in June to be bred to him. Oddly, in this one case, Skye wasn't that interested in this particular girl-oh, they were friendly, but he never seemed to be particularly interested in her. June went by, then July, August, and no breeding.

One Saturday in early September, I went into his walk-in cage. It had been a busy week, and I hadn't had much time for



personal attention for the cats - look, if you have a stud cat who loves his own scent, pees and then rolls in it, swishing his tail in his pee, then you understand my Skye and one's reluctance to get too touchy-feely with him without wearing plastic gloves.... but Skye had a bath on the Sunday before...and with a bath, you'd know if something was off. It wasn't, he was his usual robust self, solid muscle, and as typical with him, lying on his back in the sink and loving the blow-dry. Seven days later, I ran my hand down his back and reacted in horror-my hand down his spine revealed a huge weight loss, perhaps 6 lbs of his normal 16 lb weight was gone, something awful was happening. By pure coincidence, a local vet was dropping by in fifteen minutes; I waited in dread. Dr. C came in, I asked him to look at Skye, and he asked for a stethoscope. He listened for a minute and then said rather nonchalantly, "well, it's FIP or HCM, his lungs are full of fluid".

I can't even tell you what I felt at that moment. FIP? Well,

that's not possible, and besides he can't have that because I'm a good breeder and have never had FIP. HCM? Holy cow, how would I ever explain that? He's been with 15 girls, how could I call them and say he has HCM? What about the offspring? Which would be worst?

I hope you can all see how ridiculous this was. Trying to evaluate which disease would be "better" in the breeding world. I was being stupid, and panicked. I worried about my reputation. But honestly, what overcame me

was panic about my beloved Skye.

He was at the Emergency Clinic within minutes. My own vet, as well as the head of the emergency department, the local vet who had been at my house, associate vets.....everyone was on board within an hour (I pity the poor recent graduate who was handling Emergency Service and had all these experienced top vets arguing with him). Everyone, me, the vets and the specialists said "it's not FIP. It's Cat. It's twelve years of clean breeding." He's 7 years old. FIP only happens to young cats, NEVER a relatively young healthy indoors-only vaccinated male with limited access to equally "clean" females, bred to more than 15 girls so "genetic predisposition" not a factor. How could this be true?. The poor admitting vet kept running blood and fluid tests, saying "I think it's FIP", and all of us kept arguing with him that Skye did not fit the protocol, yet his results in the ICU were the characteristic heavy, thick, yellow fluid around the lungs/heart. We kept sticking the poor boy every hour and draining fluid despite his obvious

discomfort (a mistake I will regret forever and ever). All the while, I kept saying, with the concurrence of my team of vets, "drain it again." Sure that he was mistaken as to the FIP diagnosis, and that at any moment, some lab test would disprove FIP and give us a solution to this problem.

It was not to be. Skye was admitted on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. He played with the vet's stethoscopes, ate with vigor, I begged them to please note his deafness on the chart, and I went home, to sob on the phone with my personal vet and Gigi Haag for hours. Gigi stayed awake for 48 hours and assembled a list of those I thought needed to know, and listened to me cry and say "it can't be!" By far, the worst call I had to make myself was to the owner of the girl Skye had been living with. I felt certain that somehow, Skye had given her girl a death sentence. And what about the rest of my cats? I was so frightened I couldn't think straight, and could barely look at my own cats, thinking "how long does he/she have? How will I ever deal with losing them? It's Maki. It's Typhoon. It's (on and on), and they are going to die"

At 7 a.m. the next day, the vet reported that Skye was unresponsive. I was furious to discover that the admitting vet hadn't noted Skye's deafness, so no one on staff realized he couldn't hear. It gave us a few moments of thinking he was actually okay and no one was noting his unreponsiveness as related to being deaf, but still, he was filling with fluid and they kept draining it...and all symptoms pointed to FIP which we refused to believe. All of us, except the young vet actually on his case.

To her eternal credit, the owner of the girl he was living with suggested that rather than that my male had subjected her girl to a death sentence., that perhaps her girl was the source of the problem. She had begun breeding Devons, a breed prone to FIP and the only thing we

Remembering Skye, Continued



Cat & Skye

About the Author, Cat Moody

Cat writes, "Skye's death was so horrific to me, so meaningful, that I find it's the one thing I STILL cannot write about briefly and cognitively. I did "Stormwatch" for fifteen years and the one thing I cannot get over, despite many difficult things, is the death of Skye. It was the worst possible ending to a breeding career one can imagine, the dirtiest, most shameful end after all those years of trying so hard to do things right."

could think of was that the MC female had picked up the specific, mutate-able virus from the Devons and brought it in to Skye. Kudos to that wonderful owner, who instead of making me feel guilty about the girl's proximity to Skye, instead said perhaps her girl was to blame, and was straightforward, direct, compassionate and honest with me. What honesty and courage she exhibited, when I felt nothing but guilt.

At 9:00 a.m on Sunday, the vet requested permission to "DNR" if his heart stopped. I gave it, almost hoping this was the end. At noon, the vet reported Skye was simply not responding to anything, but had started to struggle against the drains and was in crisis, but his heart was still beating and he could breathe. I waited for the phone call telling me his heart had stopped and it was over, but instead I had to endure formally authorizing his euthanasia yet again, since he stopped breathing an hour

later but his heart was still beating - not specifically what I had already authorized. I wanted to scream, "just get this over with!" It wasn't just sad, but horrific. I called Gigi and could only choke out "make the phone calls". Skye died. Not peacefully, and not in my arms, Not with me feeling like I'd done anything right. I'd tortured him for a whole day in a quest to solve a problem that was not "solvable". Beyond that, I thought, what can I possibly do to give a slight silver lining to this? What will honor his memory? Remember, it was the solid and specific end to Stormwatch, the whole thing was over upon Skye's death, ending with a bang, not a whimper, and that affected me enormously as well. To have it all end with FIP and the tragic death of a special cat just seemed cosmically unfair.

So I waited for the test results to confirm it, and once that happened, I posted his story to mcats. I don't think, despite the ever-increasing open discussions on the list, that anyone had EVER posted the death of a well-known cat, from a fairly well-known cattery, as being caused by FIP.

And I asked others to join me, to be honest and tell their stories as well, so all the newer folks in the fancy never had to experience the shame, the blame, the isolation and the stigma that we'd all been through. And the response was simply amazing. MANY long-time, famous breeders, wrote back immediately to say "me too". ME TOO???

That was astonishing and brave, and will forever change the perspective we MC folks have about this disease. I applaud each and every one of them who came forward, in public, to say "Yes, it happened to me too. It's not just bad breeders. I did everything right and it happened to ME TOO". And every single time I read another response, from another reputable and well-known breeder, I thought..."well Skye, perhaps your purpose was truly doing something for the whole breed here, maybe more impact than you would have by producing umpteen grands". That was the only thing that gave me any comfort....but it honestly was some

comfort.

And the vets told me, with other breeders confirming, none of my other cats was at any higher risk than any other cat. FIP does not work as a straightforward contagious disease, the underlying virus may be specific as to which one form will or will not mutate to FIP in the right (or "wrong") circumstance, but there's no direct correlation established as yet. It took me six months to believe the vets and others who offered advice, and a year to breathe easily again. And as of a few years later, not a single cat in my home appears to have been affected.

The vets were telling the truth. One FIP death does not mean the rest of the cats, even if they share living space and litterboxes. I think that perhaps when you're dealing with young kittens, precautions can and should be taken due to underdeveloped immune systems, but with other adult cats, relatively healthy and with strong immune systems, it simply doesn't take hold and run rampant. It can and does strike undeserving cats, breeders, and owners with seeming abandon. It's vicious and awful and fatal and we need to devote the funds to finding a cure or prevention.

I send out an annual holiday newsletter to all my pet owners, and that year I included a special plea. I told them, many of whom were owners of his offspring, Skye's story. I asked them to donate to The Winn Feline Foundation. We raised over \$3000 for FIP research - and each donation specifically noted it was for Skye and FIP. I thought I owed it to him, and in part as atonement for refusing to believe his diagnosis and making him suffer at the end, to step forward and say "here. In print, for all the world to see. Now every time you hear of this, take away some of your prejudice and let's deal with this realistically. This was me, and this was Skye, and neither of us were to blame."

All of this doesn't help with missing him, of course, but maybe-just maybe-a little bit of good can come out of the tragedy and sadness. It changed me.

Sidebar: The Bria Fund for FIP Research

by Susan Gingrich, Bria Fund Founder

Greeting to all you Maine Coons' lovers. Thank you for your efforts to educate your members and the public about FIP. Experiencing Bria's life and death from FIP changed my life forever. Thanks to the generosity of the Center for Health Transformation's Foundation, the Bria Fund (<http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/bria-fund.html>) for FIP research was founded in November 2005. Through research, better understanding of FIP, leading to prevention and treatment can be achieved. We dream that someday kittens, adult cats, and the people who love them will no longer share the pain and the sadness of FIP. In honoring her, through The Winn Feline Foundation's dedicated FIP Fund, Bria (pictured) and her spirit will never be forgotten.



Read more about the fund and/or donate: <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/bria-fund.html> or call (732) 528-9797

WINNERS' GALLERY

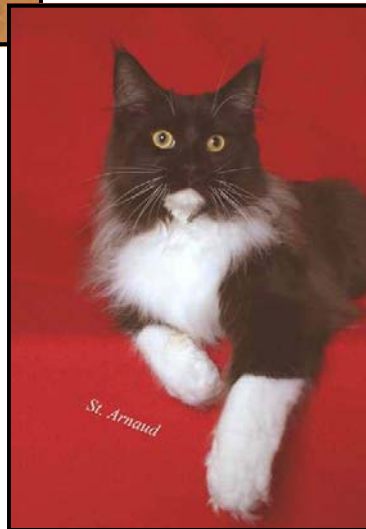


Supreme Grand Champion
Coondalay Macallan of Pinecoon
Brown Mackerel Tabby Male
Breeder: Keri Chapman
Owners: Dave & Betsy Tinney



Supreme Grand Champion
Velvet Jewels Cobalt of Bluemania
Blue Classic Tabby Male
Breeders: Roxann & Van Rokicki
Owners: Steve & Tracey Reed

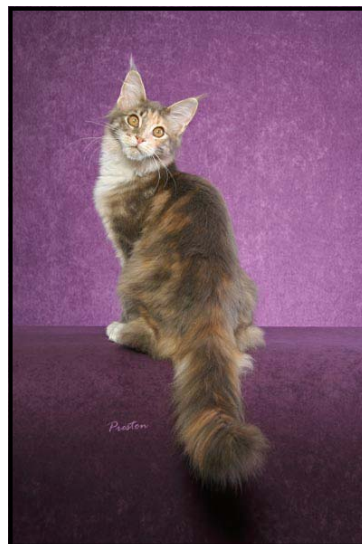
Supreme Grand Champion
Windwalker Wonder
Brown Classic Tabby Male
Breeders/Owners: Marilyn Bryant & Jeff Muss



Grand Champion
Panther Hill Edward Weston
Black & White Male
Breeders/Owner: Cain Haley



Triple Grand Champion
Smokeycoons Here Comes the Sun
Red Classic Tabby & White Male
Breeders/Owners: Elaine & Fred Weitz



Double Grand Champion
Woodpile Americium of Chemicoons
Blue Classic Torbie & White Female
Breeder: Jan Dell
Owner: Liz Hansen



Supreme Grand Champion
Broadway Wellington of Windwalker
Brown Classic Tabby Male
Breeders: Jennifer Sable & Jean Thompson
Owners: Marilyn Bryant & Jeff Muss

Spotlight on Fancier Members—What's one more Coon Cat?

Judy O'Donnell and Glenn Campbell, Center Conway, New Hampshire

We first fell in love with the Maine Coon Cat breed when we got McGwire from Advent Hill in 1998. McGwire was the epitome of what a Coon Cat should be, big, goofy and loved everyone. Since we had only one other cat, a domestic shorthair named Bowie who was several years older, we thought we ought to get another Maine Coon as a buddy for McGwire. In early 2003 we looked around a bit on the internet and found a breeder not far from us in Sanbornton, NH called Kiana Coons. They had one kitten left from a litter, a silver mackerel male. The mother was CH Kelim Coons Clarice of Kiana Coons and the dad was Ch. Kerry-Kit Michael Caine of Heritage Coons. We took a drive to Sanbornton and came home with our second Maine Coon Cat. He was long and slender and had a ruff so big he looked like a collared lizard. Because of his silver color we named him Mercury. While we were there we met his litter mate, Misha, a brown mackerel with white, who they were going to keep for breeding. Mercury and McGwire quickly became best buddies.

On March 12th of 2004, our beloved McGwire was walking into the kitchen and, as if someone turned off a switch, fell dead. It was HCM. We were heartbroken. We knew that the best way for us to deal with that kind of a loss was to get another Coon Cat, of course. We wanted another brown classic boy, like McGwire. Kiana Coons didn't have what we wanted at the time so we contacted Kelim Coons in Ashland, NH, and asked to be put on their waiting list for one. It just so happened that Mercury's mother, Clarice was now at Kelim Coons and she was pregnant. The Sire of this litter was Kelim Coons Borealis. When this litter was born, they were all brown classics with white, which is what we wanted and 4 of the 5 were males. So in July of 2004, we brought home Jefferson.

Around the same time we saw on the Kiana Coons website, that they had decided to take Misha out of their breeding program and were trying to find a home for her. We had always liked the look of Misha so we figured, "What's one more Coon Cat?" If you are reading this publication, I am sure you understand. So shortly after we added Jefferson to our household we got Misha who was Mercury's littermate and all three had the same mother. Maybe it is just the nature of the breed, but all three seemed to instantly bond with each other. Mercury is very much the Alpha cat. He is a smart and usually dignified male. Of course he has his moments of being a goofball, but then, don't we all?

When we first got Misha she was extremely timid and shy towards us. Now she is a one cat circus. She spends her days being a clown or doing aerial acrobatics. She loves to climb up high and is very athletic and agile. She is bright and funny and just brimming with personality.

The baby of the family, Jefferson, is everything you would want from a Maine Coon Cat. He is big, goofy and about as sweet tempered and gentle as any animal could be. We call them the Three Stooges as they fill our days with laughter and companionship.

Although McGwire is gone, his legacy is that he endeared a very special breed of cat to us that brings us love and joy and makes our house a home. We can't see us ever being without a Maine Coon Cat again.



Above is Kelim Coons Jefferson (on the left) and Kiana Coons Lil Sister Misha



Left is the two of them, supervising some recent renovations



Misha & Kiana Coons Mercury



Ra Ra in her Steelerette Uniform

Spotlight on Fancier Member—THE PITTSBURGH STEELERETTE!

Mary E. Kollar-Hammel, Canonsburg, PA

As a child, I was allergic to dogs & cats. Although I had a puppy in 3rd grade, it proved to be too much. So in 1987, as my first husband & I were making a move from Pennsylvania to Alabama, a close friend brought me a going-away present: her first-born kitten of her cattery. Krisken K Maximilian was a Red Neuter Persian, to be followed by his brother, Cream Neuter Persian, risken Muad'Dib & cousin, Snooksy Brass Ring of Krisken, a Tortie Persian spay.

I started showing in 1988, & by 1989, had made friends with Glen Popiel, owner of Willowplace Xmas Snow. I drove to a show in Memphis, Tennessee, with Rebekah Cumbie & Rochelle Crow, where Glen let me escort Xmas to a ring. Glen later told me I should get a "Real cat", a Maine Coon. I liked the idea of working-with other color, it would be something different. I had seen mostly browns who I wasn't excited about, but quickly became inspired by Ravasant Bama Blue & Bentley's King Edward III, exceptional blue & black smoke boys.

Barbara Ray was the breeder of Xmas and after contacting her, I found, at the time, she had nothing of other colors. I contacted Rebekah, who had a litter, so we went to visit them. There were some red males, but nothing that captured my heart. Rebekah said she had a little female and when she brought her out, I was mesmerized! I'll never forget that moment and her SWEET face, and even better, she was a cream classic tabby! She started as Jemimah Puddleduck {of the 'Beatrix Potter' litter}, & became Acrith Chusuk's Auliya Sayyadina. As you are probably figuring out, I was quite easily HOOKED!

Auliya became a CFA Premier, CFF Altered Grand, & TICA Quad Grand (just needing a Best for Supreme), and the LOVE of our lives! Following her were Marglow's Faline Karama, a Blue Lynx Pt. Balinese, and then, a VERY special boy, Willowplace Bama Nite Skyz N Starz, a Silver Classic Tabby from Barbara. We thought, "Finally, Another!" [BamBam is the litter brother to Willowplace Abner, owned by Cindy Skipchak]. He was so much in his short life & I was again smitten by the breed. Willowplace Iron City Houserocker (a Red Silver Classic Tabby) came as his replacement. Also along the way was Catpalace Tudemax (Red/White Bicolor Persian) and then our household pets: RW/IW/Supreme Grand Master Tasha Yar D Sale Cat, a tortie DLH, and RW Ostumpa Kes, a black and white DSH.

Around the time of showing them, I got involved in the TICA HHP Judging Program. I was then Mary E. Grossman, & soon-to-be-going- through a separation & divorce, which unfortunately kept me from completion. Another HHP followed who never was shown due to a lack of time and support.

From there, life drifted and I met my husband of now 1 yr who fell in love with Auliya, who passed 4th of July '04 at almost 15. He cried alongside me, as she was the 1st cat of the remaining crew, who became his buddy and one of those "Gentle Giants", the Maine Coons! Upon hearing of Rebekah's passing, (also around July 4th) in '05, I contacted Liz Flynn, hoping to find another wonderful cat from Rebekah. Acrith Tiger Lil, aka "RaRa", was sent to me from Augusta, Georgia, picked-up by Elektra Hammond, of Ithaca, NY. She then went to Syracuse [for The TICA Annual] and was picked-up by Kathy Robinson, who of Pittsburgh, PA. "RaRa" has been her call name since kittenhood. She enjoys playing "food hockey" and isn't a bit afraid of my two Labrador Retrievers.

I'd promised to make RaRa a cheerleading skirt, to wear in support of the Pittsburgh Steelers. It took me until SuperBowl Sunday, but I accomplished it! Knowing this was the last chance, and praying for a win, I finished the skirt and snapped some photos. The rest, as they say, is history. The Steelers became SuperBowl 40 Champions and our RaRa was able to help cheer them on!



Ra Ra on a non-game day trying to make the difficult decision of what to wear!



Cheering on her team to another victory

MAINERD SEZ

Mainerd sez, nothing delights my feline heart more than reading about the conversion of a lifelong dog person to an even more dedicated cat lover! Pick up a copy of Willie Morris' *My Cat Spit McGee* (Vantage Books, ISBN 0-375-70693-3).

Willie Morris, a native Mississippian, spent his early years as a typical Southern boy to whom the dog was the epitome of loyalty and love. He regaled readers for years with such books as *My Dog Skip* detailing the close relationship with his beloved canine companion. It was not until he had retired from an active life as an editor for *Harper's Magazine* and returned to renew his love of his native South and his kinfolk both living and long gone that Willie Morris accidentally entered upon a surprising journey into the world of the cat.

In *My Cat Spit McGee*, Morris speaks of falling in love with JoAnne, throughout the book referred to as Cat Woman, and finding himself unexpectedly forced into getting to know cats (which he thought was an unmanly thing to do!) when his stepson-to-be presented JoAnne with a scrawny little kitten found in a ditch. It was Christmas time, but her reception of this present was still hard for Willie to accept. He did name the kitten (a great favor granted to him by Cat Woman) after a female friend from his childhood, Rivers Applewhite, but that was to be that. However, as is the way of the feline, into his life, especially when she be-
age and presented the family with came the true hero of this white cat, quickly charmed Willie, attraction he felt for the kit-became more important to his hu-



Rivers managed to edge her way came pregnant at a very tender four kittens, one of whom be-story. Spit McGee, an odd-eyed though he stoutly denied this ten. Before long, Spit McGee man than Willie had ever imagined, as the two, feline and man, learned about each other and found ways to share a good life in the world around Jackson, MS.

Though Spit would not con-descend to recognize a leash, he accompanied Willie on tours of the old home places of relatives now departed, visits to friends in the literary world, musings about bullfrogs in the pond by the house, and he shared the workroom where Willie set down many stories. Willie concludes that whereas a dog is a faithful, predict-able, consistent companion, the relationship with a cat cannot be taken for granted. "A person is in the *company* of cats, and cats insist that they be *treated* as company."

One reviewer said that reading this book is "like sit-

ting on the porch on a quiet evening, listening to a longtime Southern friend spin out a story."

This cat highly recommends that you find a copy of the book, a porch with a swing, and share that story being spun.

Till next issue, then!

Mainerd

Cisco Kitty, Forever Friends

by Sandra Baba, MCBFA Fancier Member

Will be featured in our next issue. The coffee-table book is about her Maine Coon, Cisco, who lived with the family for over 22 years. Many photos of Cisco included. Look for Mainerd's review and an interview with Sandra in the Summer issue. In the meantime, pick up a copy of her book for \$27 + \$3 S/H at www.shogunbaba.com



DK Sechercats Bruce Maddox
Enjoying his garden in Denmark



What's New in MCBFA?

- ◆ Welcome to our latest Full Breeder Member: Anne Paplanus, Mainastasia Cattery, of Missouri
- ◆ MCBFA Scrappy Cats and Happy Hearts Quilt (pictured right) to be Ruffled. It is a queen-size quilt. In addition to this quilt, contributors were so generous that there will also be a pair of lap quilts on the same ticket. Money raised by sale of tickets will go to Dr. Meurs' HCM research, with matching funds from an anonymous donor. For more details, or to purchase raffle tickets, contact Kit Mounger (mountainmaines@adelphia.net or 423-639-1585), Vicki Shipp (mcsnert@yahoo.com or 706-736-3312) or Paypal Roxann/MCBFA directly for tickets to: roxann@velvetjewels.com.
- ◆ Current and past issues of the SS are now available through www.mcbfa.org. To access the issues, you'll need a username & password. If you are on yahoogroups, your username was set as BOTH your username & password for access. If you aren't on yahoogroups, simply send a request to the editor, Liz@chemicoons.com.



How Beautiful! I can just picture myself sleeping on it, on my bed.



A New Yahoogroups & HCM Database

Trish Huntley, Lunarcoons Cattery

A new list was started by former MCBFA Breeder Member Trish Huntley in response to breeder and fancier demand for an ongoing and open forum for the discussion of HCM. This new list is not only a medium for unmoderated discussion of ALL issues related to Maine Coons, but also maintains the world's **largest** database of results of positive and negative cats in regards to the one known mutation within the MyBPC gene associated with HCM. Echocardiogram findings, listed with mutation status, are also available on most cats. Results are obtained from owner submission, public posts, etc...Data on the database is uniform, making searching, sorting and analyzing quite simple.



Trish reminds list participants to be civil when discussing hot topics and that passion [on the list] does not equal personal attacks. Flaming nor rudeness is discouraged and thus far have not been present.

Anyone may join the group and/or submit info for the database to Liz@chemicoons.com. UnmodMChhealth can be found on yahoogroups: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UnmodMChhealth/>

What's New in CFA?

The Centennial Celebration Challenge

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of CFA, a special feline contest was devised and cat lovers everywhere are invited to participate by voting for their CAT IDOL! MCBFA members' cats are in the running so please vote, but hurry - voting ends June 5. GC, RW Tropikoons Talladega of Nascat (kitten) & GC, GP, RW Maroon Coons Shantily Lace of YIKat (premiership).

To read more and/or to vote:

<http://www.cfa.org/centennial/contestants.html>



Maroon Coons Shantily Lace of YIKat



Tropikoons Talladega of Nascat
Photo by Helmi



Meet one of our young fancier members, Kaiti, and her new Maine Coon, Kilei. Kaiti participates, with Kilei, in TICA's new Junior Achiever (JA) program. In this program, young exhibitors experience TICA and learn about feline husbandry. In doing so, each handles their cats in a special JA-exhibitor only ring, where they are expected to demonstrate general knowledge of good feline care and specialized knowledge about the cat/kitten being shown. Judges evaluate each JA (not his/her cat) towards advancement in the program. Each JA begins the program as a junior novice and can graduate through five levels until reaching the highest rank of senior advanced level.

TICA's goal for the JAs is the promotion of sportsmanship, self-confidence, and fostering an ever growing knowledge base of feline husbandry, breeds, grooming, and show participation and production. To this end, each youthful exhibitor is paired with a mentor, is eligible for awards & trophies, makes alliances with other animal husbandry-based programs, supports feline health & care, and learns the ins & outs of showing cats.

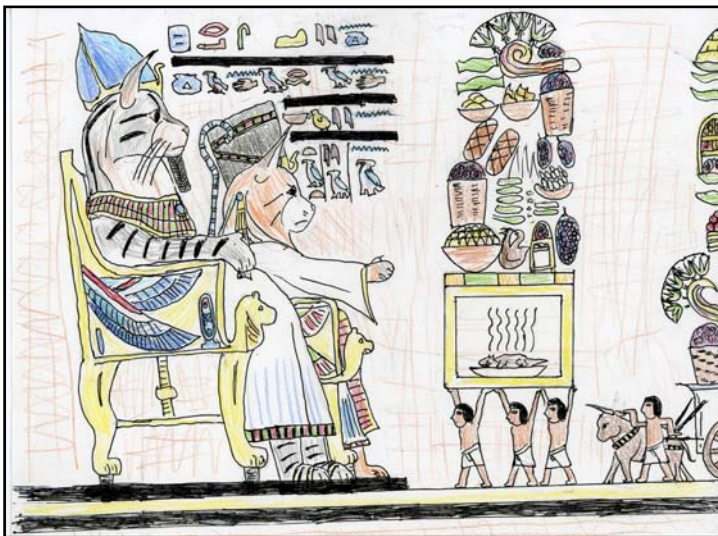
For more information, or to find out about the JA program in your area, visit:
www.justcats.org/TICAJA/ TICAJACommittee.html

*CFA has a similar program called Junior Showmanship



Egyptian Cats

By Katherine, age 12, of North Carolina



Kitty Litter Cake

Great for Summer Cookouts

- 1 German Chocolate Cake Mix
- 1 White Cake Mix
- 2 Large Packages Vanilla Instant Pudding Mix, Prepared
- 1 Large Pkg Vanilla Sandwich Cookies
- Green Food Coloring
- 8 Small Tootsie[®] Rolls
- 1 New, Plastic Cat Litter Box
- 1 New Pooper Scooper



Prepare cake mixes and bake according to box directions (any size pans)
 Prepare pudding mix and chill until ready to assemble
 Crumble white cookies in small batches in food processor, scraping often. Set aside all but 1/4 cup. To the 1/4 cup of cookie crumbs, add a few drops of green food coloring and mix until completely colored.
 When cakes are cooled to room temperature, crumble into a large bowl. Toss with half the remaining white cookie crumbs and chilled pudding.
Important: Mix just enough of the pudding to moisten it. You don't want it too soggy. Combine gently.
 Put the cake/cookie/pudding mixture into the new litter box.
 Put 3 unwrapped Tootsie rolls in a microwave safe dish and heat until soft and pliable. Shape ends so they are no longer blunt, but curving slightly. Repeat with three more Tootsie rolls and bury them in the mixture.
 Sprinkle the other half of the cookie crumbs over the top.
 Scatter the green cookie crumbs over everything—this is to look like the chlorophyll in litter.
 Heat 4 more Tootsie rolls in the microwave, but be sure these three are almost melted. Set them on top of the cake; sprinkle with cookie crumbs. Take one, heat until pliable, and hang over the side of the box. Sprinkle it with cookie crumbs as well.
 Place the box on a piece of newspaper and sprinkle a few of the cookie crumbs around for a truly disgusting effect!
 Recipe & picture courtesy of www.fabulousfoods.com

Calicoon Says Goodbye

RW/SGC Calicoon Sherman, Outstanding Sire

Sire: IW/SGC Mt Kittery Katahdin of Donnahugh Dam: Calicoon Ramath's Samantha
Date of birth: April 19, 1991 Breeder/Owner: Lynne Sherer

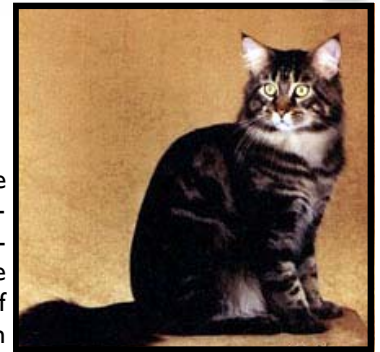
It was with a very heavy heart that Lynne announced to the Maine Coon community the passing of her beloved Sherman. Sherman sired over 40 litters of kittens. His last litter of kittens, a litter of eight brown classic tabbies, turned a year old just after his crossing to the rainbow bridge. With that last litter, he made the mother an outstanding dam in TICA. Six of the eight have been shown and the best kitten of the litter, RW, SGC Chemicoons Catalyst of Woodpile, spent most of the show season as the best Maine Coon kitten Internationally in TICA.

Sherman, himself, knew the show halls quite well. As a youngster, Lynne's son, Scott, proudly helped exhibit him to the title Supreme Grand Champion and to his THREE Regional wins in TICA. Lynne remembers fondly her son in his coat, tie and smile, receiving Sherman's awards at the regional banquets. After all, Sherman was "his" cat. When Lynne was finished using him as stud, they planned for him to reside with a now grown-up Scott. However, as time passed and Sherman remained healthy, happy and continually producing such beautiful and healthy representations of the breed, it was difficult for her to make that decision to neuter him. In the end, Sherman never made it to Scott's home. He died this past December in Lynne's arms of adrenal cancer at 14 & 1/2 years old (just shy of making the Methuselah's list).

Not only was Sherman truly an outstanding sire (two plus times over) and show cat, more importantly he was a true gentle giant. He loved nothing more than to give endless head bumps and purrs.....until he'd knock Lynne's glasses off her head!

Sherman is now happily playing with his brother TICA IW/SGC Calicoon Captain Clifton Curtis, his mom, Calicoon Ramoth's Samantha, and dad, TICA IW/SGC Mt. Kittery Katahdin of Donnahugh, at the Rainbow Bridge.

And what about Scott? Well, he recently adopted one of the cats from Sherman's last litter of eight—a near clone of Sherman nicknamed Mikey—and is very happy that he inherited many of the traits and habits of his dad. As for Lynne, she is thrilled that Jan Dell, Woodpile cattery, will be sending Catalyst to her this fall, to fill in for Sherman, as stud for her breeding program.



Sherman at 2 years old



From Sherman's Last Litter, Scott's Cat, Mikey, 1 yr old



Sherman at 7 months

"But a family cat is not replaceable like a worn-out coat or a set of tires. Each new kitten becomes its own cat, and none is repeated. I am four cats old, measuring out my life in friends that have succeeded but not replaced one another." Irving Townsend



SGC/RW Calicoon Seahawk Helse

Sire: SGC/RW Calicoon Prince Valiant Dam: Calicoon Mitzi
Date of birth: Oct. 1st 1990 Date of death: May 2006
Breeder: Lynne Sherer Owner: Alice Pursell, MCBFA fancier member since January 1992.

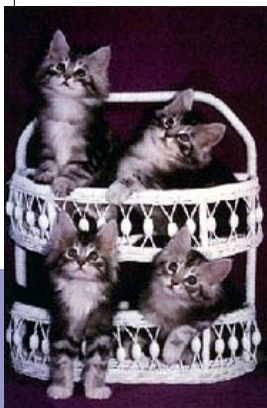
Seahawk was a very special cat. From his early days as a show cat to had later years as a therapy cat, he was a great Maine Coon cat. He was approved by the Delta Society, an organization that certifies therapy animals. He visited a nursing home with his owner, Alice Pursell, on a regular basis. He brought smiles to the elderly residents faces. One woman who had not spoken in years smiled and said "cat" when she saw Seahawk. Every October, the facility he frequented enjoyed hosting his birthday party.

"Seahawk came from a very photogenic litter. The picture (left) of his litter was featured in a photo spotlight in Cat Fancy Magazine." says Lynne Sherer.

Not only was he a very special Calicoon cat, he was Alice's constant companion and will be greatly missed.

*Seahawk is listed on the Methuselah list of Maine Coons (those living 15 years or longer). To view the list, or to nominate a Methuselah, visit: <http://pawpeds.com/MCO/mchs/methuselah.html>

"Seahawk was more than just a pretty face; his work and joy in life was visiting as a therapy cat." Liz Flynn





President's Corner



In her spare time, Lynne trains the Calicoon kittens in the fine art of synchronized basket posing, an upcoming Olympic event.

Welcome to June! Yes, spring has nearly come and gone in most parts of the northern hemisphere. But more importantly in the cat world, another show season has come to an end. For those who have been showing this year, it is a relief to have finished the task started and perhaps achieve a breed, regional or national/international win. I hear there are a lot of Maine Coons that have achieved awards this year and my congratulations go out to all of them. The top winners in the associations will be featured in the next issue of the Scratch Sheet along with pictures as available. Caron Gray will also be featuring the winners on the website so if you have a winner and would like to be included, contact her as soon as you know your placement. Her street and email addresses are on the officers page 20.

The HCM fund raising is continuing. We are nearing the donation point that qualifies us for the \$5000 in matching funds. Please continue to have fund raisers/raffles at shows to help us reach this goal and consider making a donation or an additional donation, if you have given something in the past, to help further research on HCM. Some have suggested a donation of \$5 (or more) per kitten you sell. Currently, we are raffling a beautiful quilt hand made by several of our members and a "friend to the Maine Coons." Those members include Barbara Boblick, Elva Fisher, Linda Marshall, Betty Parks, Vicki Shipp & Kit Mounger. Vicki's sister, Kris Jerrett, a friend to the cats, also graciously contributed. I have had a sneak preview and it is gorgeous - something a Maine Coon lover or any cat lover would want to have. See page 13 for pictures & ticket information.

We have more new features in this issue of the Scratch Sheet. Primarily, Susan Duke has written a column on FIP and will continue to provide information on feline health in each issue. She will try to cover subjects of interest to both breeder and fancier members. If you have a subject you would like to see covered in future issues, please contact the SS editor. Lynne

Beanie Baby Raffle A Big Success!

John Kominos, Tabbe Road Cattery



John Feeding Walrus

At the Nauticats Show in Augusta, Maine, on March 17-19, 2006, Jean Thompson of Broadway Maine Coons and Cheryl and John Kominos of TabbeRd Maine Coons held a Beanie Baby Fund Raiser on behalf of MCBFA to collect funds for HCM gene mutation research. In the weeks leading up to the show, many breeders from all across the country graciously responded to our posts and inundated Jean & Jennifer Sabel with bins full of Beanies delivered to their store, Cat Bamboo, in Nyack, NY. John & Cheryl collected several bags full of Beanies at shows.

The Nauticats Club generously donated prime space to Jean, John & Cheryl at the show so that they were able to easily display and sell several hundred Beanie Babies during the course of the

weekend. On Sunday, the final day of the show, Nauticats came through again and donated the proceeds from a cat tree that was up for raffle. To draw a crowd, John hoisted up his big brown Maine Coon, SGC TabbeRd I Am the Walrus, to the top perch of the tree while Jean and Cheryl hawked last minutes raffles. When spectators in the crowd asked to pet Walrus, John quickly responded, "Buy a raffle for a dollar and pet the Walrus!" The dollars came pouring out as one person after another gladly reached up to touch Walrus.

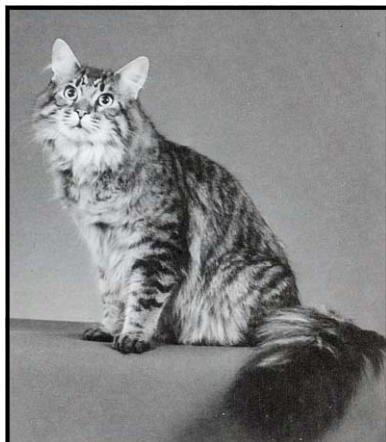
All in all, the sale raised \$900, with \$450 worth of Beanies sold, along with another \$450 contributed for the cat tree raffle. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this sale a huge success and special thanks to Nauticats for their donation of space and the cat tree.



The HUGE lot of Beanie Babies Raffled Off
All Proceeds To Benefit HCM Research!

MCBFA Loses a Friend, Breeder Member Judy Ingram, The Tribe Cattery

Portions from the ACFA newsletter



QGrC The Tribe's Cochise, LA
Also on ACFA's Supreme Roll of Honor

Judy Ingram, born February 29, 1940, passed away on December 13, 2005. Preceded in death by her husband and best friend, Ronald James Ingram, and her mother, Betty Haralampus, well known in the cat fancy as a former President of ACFA and All-breed Judge. The Northwest has lost two very wonderful fanciers in the past few years.

Judy was a very special person. She touched so many people during her life and not just in the cat fancy.

Judy loved all animals and especially her cats. Judy helped many start breeding with stock from her cattery, The Tribe.

Judy was a unique person and someone who leaves a large void.

Judy truly cared about people, their cats, and what was happening in their lives. She will be greatly missed in the show halls with her wonderful sportsmanship, lovely cats and her smiling face.

Judy had been fighting liver cancer for many years and kept that fact very private. None of the Maine Coon breeders in Washington knew of her battle. We didn't even hear of her passing until sometime in February.

****Stay Tuned as Judy and her cattery, The Tribe, will be Spotlighted in an upcoming issue.**

Cytauxzoonosis In Cats

F. D. Daley, DVM; P. Rakich, DVM, PhD; K. Latimer DVM, PhD

Cytauxzoonosis is a serious, often fatal, protozoal disease affecting domestic cats in the south central and southeastern portions of the United States. Rapid onset of severe clinical illness and high mortality (historically greater than 95%) are associated with this disease in domestic cats. Ticks are believed to be the natural vector for this organism. Ticks have been shown to transmit the disease from bobcats to domestic cats, causing the clinical signs associated with cytauxzoonosis. As expected, cytauxzoonosis is seen more often during the summer months (May through September) when ticks are more likely to be found. Cats with access to the outdoors (especially wooded areas) are at higher risk of coming into contact with infected ticks and acquiring this disease. Also note that indoor-only cats have acquired this disease as well through dogs or humans who come into contact with said ticks and bring them inside.

Clinical signs are nonspecific, usually appear ~10 days after infection by tick transmission and include acute lethargy, depression, and anorexia. Infected cats also often exhibit mucous membranes with icterus (jaundice) and pallor (loss of color), and dehydration. As the disease progresses, mild to severe dyspnea (breathing difficulty) becomes apparent with concomitant radiographic evidence of moderate to severe bronchointerstitial pulmonary disease. Less frequently, enlargement of the kidneys, spleen, and liver have been identified on physical examination. A fever may be present as high as 107°F. Hypothermia, extreme lethargy, and coma generally are signs of terminal disease.

For more information, ask your veterinarian, or see <http://www.vet.uga.edu/vpp/clerk/Dailey/index.htm>

Food Recalls



March 2006, Royal Canin has an on-going, firm initiated food recall. The following foods should NOT be fed to cats. They were found to have excess Vitamin D3 which can lead to hypercalcemia in cats.

- ◆ Royal Canin Veterinary Diet Feline Sensitivity VR
Cans with the following numbers & dates on bottom: 518A-best before 05/2007
- ◆ Royal Canin Veterinary Diet Feline Calorie Control
Cans labeled with 449A-best before 11/2006, 451A-best before 12/2006, or 515A-best before 04/2007
- ◆ Royal Canin Veterinary Diet Feline Renal LP
Pouches labeled on back 519B-best before 09/2006, 522B-best before 09/2006, 526A-best before 10/2006, 541A-best before 02/2007, or 543A-best before 02/2007

All Codes on canned products consist of 3 numbers followed by 7 letters. All codes on pouches consist of 3 numbers followed by 5 letters. Each unit is also stamped with a "best before" date.

Celebrity & MCBFA Breeder, Donna Hinton

PBS recently featured an hour-long episode of "The Standard of Perfection, Show Cats" where our very own Donna Hinton, Nascat cattery, is featured. "The Standard of Perfection" has been the guideline by which animal show judges award points and prizes to worthy animals. With wit and respect, viewers are taken behind-the-scenes of the Cat Fancy Association's International Cat Show in Houston, Texas, where they expose the intense preparation to prime a cat for the biggest show of the year.

This episode revolves around the owners, cats and judges at one of the world's foremost feline competitive events. It can be nerve-racking for exhibitors as they watch their prized pets proceed to the next round or face elimination from competition. The program shows the training, pampering, grooming, bathing and fuss that goes into preparing a "campaign cat" for the biggest event on the CFA calendar.

While other breeds are also featured, both Donna and Betsy Gaither, Texas Belle cattery, represent the Maine Coon. Both take viewers through their homes, introduce their own various cats, explain the time spent on this hobby and the appeal of both the cats and showing. Betsy gives credit to Karen Crooke's famous RW, GC Terrificats Johnny Walker for her addiction to the breed. Donna introduces her first Maine Coon, RW, GP Coonsboro's Mario "Indy" Coondretti, who is obviously a loved pet and the king of her home. From there, she takes us to meet Lottie, Tropikoons Lotus Espirit, whom she will be exhibiting at the International. Not only do viewers meet Lottie, they get a front-row seat for her show bath!



2nd Best Maine Coon Kitten
Tropikoons Lotus Espirit of Nascat
Breeder: Stephanie Boulter
Owner: Donna Hinton

A Behind-the-Scenes Interview with Star Donna Hinton

Donna was gracious enough to give me some of her time as I inquired further about her TV debut. The following comes from that conversation.

At a show during the spring of 2004, Donna was asked by CFA judge Kitty Angell if she would be willing to be "followed around" at CFA's International Cat Show that fall. While she agreed, her main concern was how they would portray cat fancy exhibitors and breeders. In the end, she was quite pleased with their portrayal and says she'd work with that same crew/company any day. Here's how her day in the spot-light unfolded.

Donna had no idea what they planned to spend their day doing, but was informed they were interested in the day-to-day activities of raising cats and preparing for a cat show. She gave them a tour of her home, introducing all of her cats, even the famous NW, GC Nascat Gwydion of Gradach, who happened to be over visiting. Unfortunately, he was cut from the final footage. So were many things, as Donna would later learn. All in all, they shot 100 hours of footage of the five various breeders/exhibitors and of the cat show itself, yet edited it down to just a one-hour show.

What wasn't cut, however, was Donna's one shaved-down Maine Coon, Lizzy (GP Nascat's The White Flag Lap). Donna tried tirelessly to keep Lizzy away from the film crew, due to her embarrassment of having a lion-shaved Maine Coon. But in the end, an energetic, extremely out-going Lizzy prevailed and can be seen leaping across her kitchen counters.

They next inquired as to whom she was planning to show, and she told them her young female kitten Lottie (Tropikoons Lotus Espirit). And what else goes into showing a cat but the ever-essential SHOW BATH. Donna can be seen giving Lottie what appears to be a thorough, yet quick bath as she explains the various steps of grooming needed to prepare a longhaired cat for the show. What viewers don't see is the three hours of filming it took. Poor Lottie (and Donna) were ice-cubes at the end of filming.

"Will she be the winning cat?" inquired the producer, and to that Donna's immediate response was "No, her brother will be." And sure enough, Donna was right. At the end of the weekend, Lottie's brother, Tropikoons Long John Silver, was best Maine Coon kitten in show and 5th best overall longhaired kitten! Lottie didn't fare too bad, coming in as the 2nd best Maine Coon kitten and 8th best overall longhaired kitten.

And what did Donna earn for her first film? A mere copy of the show!

Donna doesn't really check the weather maps and forecasts so extensively before each cat show—that was a bit exaggerated in the show!



Best Maine Coon Kitten
NW, GC, GP Tropikoons Long John Silver
Breeder/Owner: Stephanie Boulter



Check your local PBS listings for show times or visit www.shoppbs.org to purchase a VHS or DVD.

Breeder Member Dues

Past Due, April 2006:

Bistline, L
Boulter, S
Brickley, D (IB)
Burrow, J/D
Dillingham, D
Edwards, T (IB)
Frew, G/B
Gaudet, J/B
Haley, C
Hall, M
Hill, V/D
Horton, V
Ingram, J
Johnston, V/R (IB)
Jones, A/G (IB)
Juil, K
Katsumata, F
Kembitzky, L
Komar, L
Lymbouris, S

Past Due, April 06:

Mann, A/E (IB)
Miller, T
Motohashi, F
Olssen, U/P
Patteson, C
Refstrup, P
Stelmaschuk, C/T
Seurinck, M/N
Sherer, L
Shiino, M
Shindler, K/A
Shipp, V
Skipchak, C
Smith, M
Szabo, A
Tetreault, F
Tobias, P
Walsh, G
Winsky, S
IB = Inactive Breeder

Fancier Member Dues

10th Year Free- COONgrats!

Dodge, S and Creighton, C

Past Due April 2006:

Ball, J
Bretl, V
Brown, B
Butler, L
Coggins, L
Dailey, A
Gladstone, G
Guckes, C/B
Marshall, L
Shaffer, L
Smithson, C N
Wade, S
Wolfe, C

July 2006:

Bair, B
Clardy, J/D
Coffman, F
Cole, C
Connor, C
Dalton, D
DePew, R
Hull, N S
Klauser, M B
Llewellyn, R L
Mitchell, B
Nissen-Foley, K
Phillips, M J S
Robbins, P/A G
Romanelli, M/R
Square, J

Foreign April 2006:

Corbin, B
Stewart, N



Join Us!

MEMBER DUES

Any and all dues may be paid to MCBFA's PayPal account using the address roxann@velvetjewels.com. PLEASE DO NOT SEND TO THE TREASURER OR EDITOR

Fancier Memberships: Send membership fees and addresses to the Fanciers' Secretary, Liz Flynn.

Payable in US funds only

\$20.00/one year

\$35.00/two years

\$50.00/three years

This includes first-class postage.

Canada: \$15.00 + \$6.00 postage (\$21.00 total)
Postal Money Order Only

All Other Countries: \$31.00 per year; International Money Orders. No bank checks.

Provisional Breeder Memberships

Online information and application forms can be downloaded at the MCBFA website, www.mcbfa.org

If website is not available, prospective Provisional Breeders should do the following:

1. Write to the Provisional Breeder Secretary, Joan Gaudet, for information and application packet. Do not send money at this time.

2. One the application packet is received, follow the instructions and send the completed application with appropriate dues (\$30.00 first year; \$25.00 subsequent years) to the Provisional Breeder Secretary, Joan Gaudet.

Breeder Memberships: \$25.00 per year to Breeder Member Secretary, Liz Flynn. A copy of a current litter registration must be included to enable you stay on the Active Breeder list.

Change of address should be sent to the appropriate secretary.

All dues may be paid via PayPal: roxann@velvetjewels.com
Or snail mail your payment to:

Fanciers & Breeder Members

Liz Flynn
208 Kings Chapel Road
Augusta, GA 30907

Provisional Breeders

Joan Gaudet
512 Lester Street
Lafitte, LA 70067

Provisional Breeder Dues

Past Due, April 2006:

Craig, A
Harvey, A
Hoon, L
Koch, A & E
Perlmutter, L & Deiner, H
Whittenburg, T
Wood, T

July 2006:

Ezepek, J
Fuller, A & L
Hansen, L
Bearizo-Harvey, L
Kaiser, S
Kereluk, T
LeBaron, N
Martin, G

July 2006, Cont:

Mueller-Rech, H
Null, J
Sullens, P
Stroud, C
Sutherland, M



The MCBFA, Inc., Executive Council has directed that MCBFA services be suspended for the following individuals for the period of time indicated.

Permanent

Chris Buck (Buctales) Oct 2001

Johnnie Hardee (Guitars/Megacoon) Feb 2003

Bill/Trisha Swisher (Kanab) as of 2/27/2003

Marla Vales (Marala) April 2003

Susan Lee (CoonsCross) Feb 2004

Ginny O'Neill Follensbee (Majesticats) Aug 2004

Suspended 1 year with loss of Breeder status

Maryrose Sanchez (Codycats) Feb 2006

MCBFA Officers

PRESIDENT

Lynne Sherer
3840 Charbon Lane
Bartlett, TN 38133
901-373-3394
Lsherer1@midsouth.rr.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Carol Pedley
PO Box 10, Job Rd
Standish, ME 04084
207-642-4937
pedley@pivot.net

TREASURER

Roxann Rokicki
W 8905 Canary Road
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
920-887-7704
roxann@velvetjewels.com

RECORDING SECRETARY

Vicki Shipp
2719 Wicklow Drive
Augusta, GA 30909
706-736-3312
mcsnert@yahoo.com

BREEDER MEMBER SECRETARY

Liz Flynn
208 Kings Chapel Road
Augusta, GA 30907
706-860-1521
Tankopje@aol.com

PROVISIONAL BREEDER MEMBER SECRETARY

Joan Gaudet
512 Lester Street
Lafitte, LA 70067
504-689-4535
lafittecat@aol.com

FANCIER MEMBER SECRETARY

Liz Flynn
208 Kings Chapel Road
Augusta, GA 30907
706-860-1521
Tankopje@aol.com

NORTHEAST DIRECTOR

Merry Braun
339 W Cedar Street
Norwalk, CT 06854
203-853-0093
N1RRA@aol.com

MID-ATLANTIC DIRECTOR

Amy Gerver-Marsh
12460 Andover Court
Woodbridge, VA 22192
703-492-9115
vmainecat@earthlink.net

SOUTHEAST DIRECTOR

Sharon Butler
266 Bohler Drive
Evans, GA 30809
706-860-6820
sharonbutler@comcast.net

MIDWEST DIRECTOR

Caron Gray
19165 Bennington Drive
Brookfield, WI 53045
262-782-1110
rumford@wi.rr.com

SOUTH CENTRAL DIRECTOR

Karen Crooke
PMB 321
3195 Dowlin Road
Beaumont, TX 77706
409-899-1668
gambitsmom02@aol.com

WESTERN DIRECTOR

Judi May
3021 Road 84
Pasco, WA 99301
509-544-7893
chattacoon@direcway.com

OVERSEAS DIRECTOR

Misha Peersmans
Sporwegstraat 42
B-2600 Berchem, Belgium
32-3-230-9373
dorsai@pandora.be

Appointed Officers

ARCHIVIST

Beth Hicks
3840 Charbon Lane
Bartlett, TN 38133
901-373-3394
Bhicks01@midsouth.rr.com

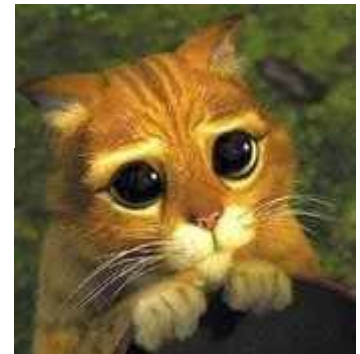
ETHICS COMMITTEE

Betsy Tinney
11320 W. 169th Court NE
Redmond, WA 98052
425-883-8986
Betsy@pinecoon.com

EDITOR, The Scratch Sheet

Liz Hansen
2790 Alnwick Court
Henderson, NV 89044
636-734-9233
Liz@chemicoons.com

NO NEED TO BEG!



Anyone may submit articles, pictures or stories to the Scratch Sheet for FREE; however, only a Breeder, Provisional Breeder, or Fancier may submit Winners Gallery information. Submit to the editor, Liz Hansen, Liz@chemicoons.com or snail mail to: 2790 Alnwick Ct., Henderson, NV, 89044. Pictures will be returned.

Cattery Ad Rates

Business card-size ads \$5 per issue
1/8 page \$10/one time or \$35/year
1/4 page \$20/one time or \$65/year
1/2 page \$40/one time limit 2 per year
Full page \$85/one time limit 1 per year

Merchandise and/or Cat Show Ad Rates

1/4 page \$25 per issue
1/2 page \$50 per issue
Full page \$100 per issue

Advertising

- Anyone may submit merchandise ads or cat show ads.
- Any member may submit listings and photos for the Winners Gallery.
- Only Full Breeder Members may advertise cats or kittens for sale, stud service, catteries, or any other service related to animals.
- Please no laser color copies; they do not reproduce well. Photos will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.



Geesh, What a Guy will do to Impress a Girl!

Payment must accompany ads. Please send your ads and payments to the Editor; all checks made payable to MCBFA.