

# The Scratching Post



10th Anniversary Issue



SABCCI Newsletter - Autumn 2012

[www.sabcci.com](http://www.sabcci.com)



# The Scratching Post

## 10th Anniversary Issue

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### SABCCI Committee

Chairman – Tony Forshaw  
Vice Chairman – Karen Sluiters  
Treasurer – Alison Kinsella  
Secretary - Gloria Hehir

Ronnie Brooks, Elizabeth Flood, Alice Forshaw,  
Hugh Gibney, Aedamair Kiely, Membership Secretary - Betty Dobbs



## Editorial

Welcome to our Autumn 2012 10th Anniversary issue of The Scratching Post. The first issue was published in the autumn of 2002 under the name 'SABCCI Newsletter'. A competition was run to name the newsletter. The winner was Melanie Cameron giving us the current name 'The Scratching Post'.

Many thanks to Breffni House Pets in Dundum who has sponsored The Scratching Post over the 10 years. So if you're ready, sit back and join us in celebration with a glass of champagne and enjoy the newsletter!

Karen and Gloria ^..^

Do you have any photos or articles for the newsletter? Please send them to [karen@sabcci.com](mailto:karen@sabcci.com) or [gloria@sabcci.com](mailto:gloria@sabcci.com)



### Don't Forget

## The SABCCI Championship Cat Show

21st of October 2012

Knocklyon Community Centre, Idrone Road (behind Superquinn)

Knocklyon Dublin 16

Open to the Public 12:30 - 5:00

Best in Show Judging 4:00 onwards

See You There!



### Cat Complex

A lady came and said to me,  
'Oh would you like a kitten?  
It is a pretty one,' said she.  
'A male and it is Persian.  
He needs a home with loving care,  
A bowl of milk, a fireside chair,  
He'll be no bother you will see.  
Now say you'll take the cat from me.'

'I will,' said I, 'If he's a male.  
Be sure of that - it must not fail.  
A female cat is quite taboo.  
I don't want cat and kittens too.'  
The lady said, 'Now have no fear!  
His name is Peter. Take him, dear.'

Peter charmed us one and all.  
He was the sweetest kitten,  
So coy, so clean so soft and lean,  
No wonder we were smitten.  
Then came a bolt from out of the blue,  
A Tom cat's cry rang loud and true -  
Peter's ears pricked up and stiffened,  
From the garden Tom cries thickened,  
A quick glance round and through the door,  
Peter bolted, never more  
To return our faithful male.  
HE was SHE. So ends my tale.  
Of course this only goes to show  
That sex is complex, as you know.

Mary Unger 1918 - 2009



*Established in 1953, SABCCI will be celebrating their 60th Anniversary in 2013. The committee has already begun looking at ways to celebrate this occasion with a special year and a special 2013 Show, but we need to hear from you the members and any interested parties.*

*For the show itself, we are researching potential venues and have discussed special events around the show, but also celebrations that might be held during the year. For the show, it is hoped to have some new and innovative features, events and classes but we are requesting that members and interested parties please think now about how your club might celebrate the coming 60th Anniversary Year.*

*Please contact the Club Secretary, Gloria Hehir at [gloria@sabcci.com](mailto:gloria@sabcci.com), myself or any committee member (contact details on the website) if you have any ideas, proposals or suggestions you would like to put forward for this special year.*

*It is your club, please respond, we want to hear from you.*

*Thanks and Regards,*

  
TONY FORSHAW  
CHAIRMAN / SABCCI  
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### Cat Shows Coming Up For Your Diary

**Midland Cat Club** - Sunday The 17th of February , Kilmurray Hotel, Limerick  
**GCCFI Supreme** - Sunday 21st April, Ballinteer Community School, Dublin 16



## The Cat's Arrival

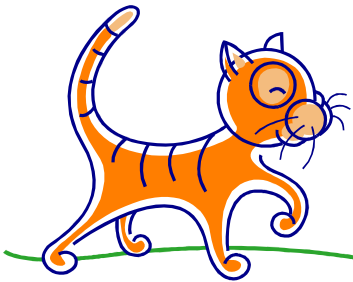
I recently moved country and, sadly, I had to leave my cat behind. So, feeling the need for some company and cuddles I contacted the local ISPCA. "Yes", they said, they had kittens in their shelter but there was another one in the Vet's office nearby. Perhaps I'd like to have a look at him first and, if I didn't like him, could I bring him along to the cattery?"

I went on a mad shopping spree in preparation for the arrival of my new companion. I bought, toys, litter tray, litter, food, food tray, water, water tray, etc Thrilled at the prospect of having a furry companion I headed off in my *jalopie*. When I arrived I was given the run down on a creature that would certainly be entitled for a sainthood application. On tender hooks, I waited to be introduced to this little paragon.

The assistant went and got him and I have to say I was somewhat surprised when she arrived back with a very adult cat. In fact he was about 6 years old but had been taking lessons from Garfield in the smooch area. He definitely welcomed being stroked. The girl told me he had been sick but had been treated but would have to come in for injections. I thought that was a bit odd as cats are supposed to be fully prepared when they are put up for adoption.

Although this was definitely not what I had prepared myself for, I didn't feel that I could reject him just because he was too old – I'm in that bracket myself so it was a kind of delicate area. Not what I had in mind but how do you say," thanks but no thanks"? I couldn't reject him outright.

So, on the understanding that it was for a trial period, we boxed him up and sealed the box with almost a roll of tape, I handed over my money and we put him into the car with the bag of litter (5kgs) on the lid to keep him in. I've had lots of experience in transporting cats. I fastened his seatbelt and, chatting away to my new friend so that he would remain calm, I headed for home looking forward to welcoming this fella into my bosom.



There was quite a racket coming from the box and, when I looked at the junction to the roundabout, a funnel shaped head thrust itself out of the box, tossed the litter aside as if it was a mouse, and he hurled himself out of the box and landed on my knee, clutching with his claws for dear life. Writhing in agony, I hastily pulled over and then the battle began. I was determined he would get in the box and he was determined he would not. Claws, scratches and flying hair later, I gave up, got out of the car and stood there at the side of the road muttering to myself about the ingratitude of cats who had just been rescued, and tried to figure out the best course of action. For a cat who'd been done he surely had retained more than the rudiments of his testosterone.

Checking for blood and brushing myself and my pride off, I assessed the situation and decided he'd have to go in the boot. Garfield, as I'd now named him, was sitting comfortably in the drivers' seat, nicely curled up. Now, "let the battle begin" I muttered. I quickly opened the door and tried the "mammy cat" grab on the neck but that didn't work. At that point I just grabbed whatever bits of him I could do safely, rammed him into the boot and slammed it shut. If cats could curse, I'm sure he was doing it; I know I was as I checked my wounds.

How to get him into the flat was the next problem. That involved grabbing a hold of him in such a way that a) he couldn't escape, and, b) I could manage to open the five doors between the car and the inside of my flat. There was nothing for it but to wade in. I pulled my (padded) sleeve down over my hand, opened the boot and almost passed out from the pong!! I thought "done" male cats couldn't smell like that.

*Now I was really mad.* I just grabbed him under his front paws and around his belly and made a dash for it with him wriggling and hissing and scratching and me trying to keep out of the way of his claws. Somehow I managed to hang onto him and finally, happily, threw him in the door and left him to fend for himself.

Racing back downstairs, I gathered up all his bits (not the ones that were supposed to have been left in the vets), and headed back upstairs, muttering curses in all the languages I could think of, and commenting on the ungratefulness of a cat that was more than likely for the high jump if I didn't give him a home.

This was not what I had in mind when I left home that morning looking forward to having a gentle companion. For the next few hours the cat and I kept to our separate corners, me nursing my wounds and pride and sense of aggrievedness; I'd no idea where he was or what he was doing and I didn't care. I put some food and water out, set up the litter tray and went to bed, not giving a hoot if he managed to disappear during the night.

At about 3.00a.m. I shot out of the bed, there was a furore "somewhere", mad digging, water swishing; the end was neigh, I was sure. "Oh no, - oh yes, he's found the litter tray". I went back to sleep resolving to deal with the situation in the morning. (continued next page)



(*Cat's Arrival contd.*) At around 9.00 (I'm not an early riser), I opened my eyes to find a cat peering at me. He sneezed in my face, shot three feet into the air and took off at the sight of my eyes. I shot backwards in the bed from fright myself.

Still very grumpy I got up and closed the door of the "litter tray bathroom"; I couldn't deal with that before coffee. The creature was in the sitting room but ran for cover when I came in. No problem with his appetite though, not a grain of food left.

Two cups of coffee and some porridge later I felt able to deal with the litter tray thing. This cat must have been digging for gold or was a secret truffles. The most offensive part of what should be in the litter tray was there but the litter was scattered high and low and he'd moved the tray itself several feet around the bathroom. "That's it", I said to myself, "he's going back on Monday". I ignored the little voice my head saying "and how do you intend to achieve that?"

We spent the morning avoiding each other. Every time I moved he ran and hid. Now, I'm paranoid enough without having a blooming cat treat me like I'm the Ripper. In the evening I lay on the couch reading, still annoyed that I didn't have a nice cuddly little ball of fur curling up on my lap. There was movement to my left and a cat with a very beseeching look on it's face was peering at me. Ah, he's lonely and wants a rub, I thought. When I put my hand out to stroke him, I got the Ripper treatment again. I opened the balcony door and suggested that he leap off it and make use of the river below to drown himself.

I was finding it very difficult to deal with cat rejection so took myself off to bed only to be woken once again at about 3.00 am by the mining operation noises in the bathroom. They were compounded by a mad meowing while he ran round the bed, leapt on it, leapt off again and disappeared.

It was Saturday morning and I groggily got into the shower. I'm a bit short sighted but even I could see a brown lump in the corner. Cursing I got out promising myself I'd deal with it after coffee. I got to the kitchen sink and started to prepare the coffee. There in the corner was another brown lump. Even allowing for his efforts at sanitary pooping, that was it! He was going back first thing Monday morning, whatever his future might be once he got there. Again that little voice in the back of my head was saying "and how are you going to do that?"

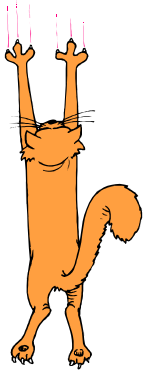
Monday morning, I searched the building until I found a man who was visiting. I explained the situation (not the degree) and he agreed to help me get the cat back into the box. I had a lot of tape. It took us half an hour of hissing and scratching but eventually he was boxed up and ready for transport to his old home. This time I put the box in the boot which was just as well because he was out of it in a flash.

When I got to the Vet's office I opened the boot to take him into the building. He was out of the box and had pooped again. Trying to avoid killing him I grabbed him under the arms and round the belly and brought him in. The assistant was busy chatting to her friend while I did my best to hang onto the writhing critter in my arms. After a few too many scratches I let him go.

The busy assistant came up and asked me "did you let the cat go?" I said, "Yes, he was scratching me". "That was very irresponsible of you", she replied.

I ran out before I could commit murder.

Gina Corbett



## Sphynx Designer Clothing Keeps Them Warm

The feline look, the bony frames, the studied poses and the fashion shoots - these cats are just like Victoria Beckham. And just like Posh, these ugly ducklings of the catwalk Smeagol and Zizzles are flogging the very latest in haute cature.

Owner Melanie Manson took a step back from her full-time job to start her own business selling warm, designer garments for hairless felines. Mrs Manson has created a collection about €30 a piece - a sundress, a kitty beanie, nautical sailor suits and sweatshirts. 'It is obvious that the little things got cold in the winter' says Mrs Mansons, who lives in Los Angeles California. 'after searching pet stores and the internet, it quickly become apparent that there was no clothing for this breed so we settled on buying some garments designed for tiny dogs. But as our beloved cats grew older, these became too short. Once I found my poor pussycat with his legs

hanging out of the neck of the garment - he was all tangled and upset.'

'The success of our design was something I could not keep to myself. Now we trade in 32 countries including Britain and the US. Some people are frightened at the sight of a Sphynx,' Mrs Manson explained. 'Dressing them makes our guests feel less uncomfortable with their presence.'





## The Pedigree - The York Chocolate Cat

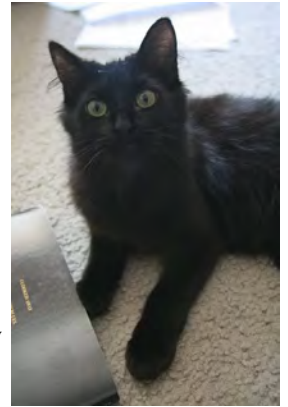
The York Chocolate Cat is a new American Breed of show cat, with a long, fluffy coat and a tapered tail and most of them are chocolate. The first part of its name is taken from New York State, where it was bred in 1983. This breed was created by colour-selecting domestic long haired cats, and as the name suggests, all members of this breed are solid chocolate or lilac, chocolate and white, or lilac and white. The breed is not yet widely recognized by breeders and the Cat Fancier's Association (CFA).

The breed was created by Janet Chiefari in 1983. The father was a black longhaired cat and the mother was a longhaired black and white cat. Their Siamese ancestors created the brown colouring in one kitten: Brownie. Brownie had a litter that subsequent summer with a black longhaired tom. There were two kittens in the litter: a chocolate male and a white and chocolate female. Upon noticing similarities in coat and body types, Chiefari began her own breeding program.

In March 1990, the Cat Fanciers Federation and the American Cat Fanciers Association recognized York Chocolates as an experimental cat breed. In March 1992, the breed was also given CFF Championship status. It was granted Champion status by the Canadian Cat Association in March 1995, as well.

The York Chocolate cat is a medium to large cat with a rounded head and a moderately long muzzle. They have large, almond-shaped eyes that are either gold or green. Their bodies are slender and mid-way between the Oriental and foreign types, with long necks. The cats have full, tapered tails, tufted feet, and sometimes ruffs. The coat is semi-longhaired and very fine. It is either solid chocolate, solid lilac, white and chocolate, or white and lilac. The kittens are much lighter, and tabby markings and tipping is acceptable until the kitten reaches eighteen months of age.

The York Chocolate Cat is a very friendly, even-tempered breed that is very content as a lap cat. They love to be held and cuddled. The cats are intelligent, energetic, and curious, happily following their owner around. They are good companions, good hunters and seem to be enamoured with water.



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## Cats & The Winter Weather

We had a mild winter last year but be prepared just in case a cold one comes.

- Look out for frostbite, which happens when animals are exposed to freezing temperatures and cold wind. Blood supply is limited to the extremities so tissues die as ice forms in the tiny blood capillaries supplying these areas.
- Frostbite typically affects paws, the tail and ears. Affected skin will appear pale or grey and feel cold. In severe cases, skin turns black.
- Don't leave cats in unheated cars, conservatories or caravans as they may get hyperthermia as their body temperature drops with decreasing air temperature.
- Signs of hyperthermia include shivering, but this can stop as the cat gets too cold. Pets can then become confused and subdued, before gums turn pale or blue. Breathing may become slow, shallow or irregular.
- Hyperthermia should be treated as a veterinary emergency, and the cat should be warmed up gradually by placing them next to a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel.



From: 'Your Cat' February 2012

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## What Human Doctors Can Learn From Vets

Who gets more respect: doctors or veterinarians? Veterinarians like to joke that physicians are vets who only know how to take care of one species. But that joke is only funny because of the usual pecking order: Doctors who treat humans are seen, and see themselves, as occupying the more knowledgeable and skilled position.

Barbara Natterson-Horowitz, a cardiologist at the University of California Los Angeles, wants to turn that assumption on its head. She believes that her fellow human physicians have much to learn from their veterinary counterparts - and that we shouldn't see human and animal medicine as separate fields. During a stint moonlighting as a cardiologist for animals at the Los Angeles Zoo, she became fascinated with the similarities between veterinary diseases and human ones. Now she's on a mission to raise the status of animal medicine and convince doctors to cross the species divide.

The Boston Globe, June 2012

## Quiz - How to Give a Cat a Pill - Part 2

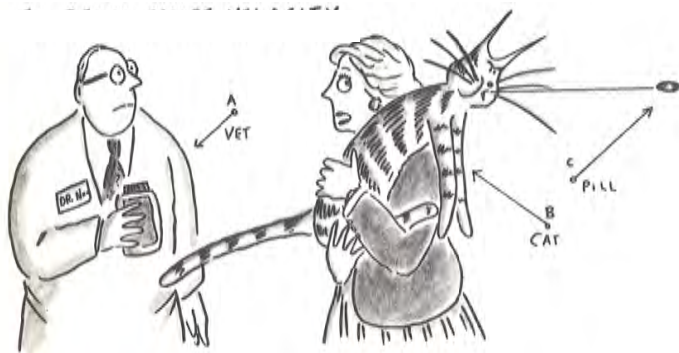
- The experienced cat's human will know that he/she must be respectfully and comfortably but firmly restrained in order for the pill to be administered successfully. Which of these methods can be confidently recommended?
  - Give the master or mistress a large bowl of brandy.
  - Hold the master or mistress tightly by the scruff of the neck.
  - Calmly and firmly wrap the master or mistress in a towel, so that no limbs can escape.
  - Call in four brave friends to hold one leg each
- The pill may be physically administered in a number of ways. Which one of these would *not work*?
  - Hiding the pill in the cat's favourite food.
  - Using forceps to place the pill into the throat.
  - Holding the cat's jaws open with one hand, insert the pill with the other.
  - Adding a teaspoon or so of water as a 'chaser' to induce the cat to swallow.
- Upon successful delivery of the pill the inexperienced human at once lets the cat go. Why, most likely, is this a mistake?
  - The cat is about to take revenge.
  - The room door should have been opened first.
  - The human should have called for a (human) ambulance first.
  - The human has not waited to make sure the pill stays down.
- Following administration of the pill, what behaviour does the typical cat *first* want to see from their human?
  - Maintenance of a respectful distance.
  - Begging of forgiveness.
  - Fawning.
  - Insistence on cuddling of the little mistress, or master.
- On completion of the first stage of recovery, what will probably best please cat and incline them toward forgiveness?
  - Openly counting the number of pills remaining in the course of treatment.
  - Self-mutilation by the human to demonstrate remorse.
  - A peace offering of the feisty feline's number one favourite food or treat.
  - Cowering at the sight of the cat.
- What edible compound is most likely to appeal irresistibly to a cat's taste buds, to the point where the cat will willingly eat it, even if it contains medication?
  - Brewer's yeast
  - Fresh fish
  - Raw beef steak
  - Boiled chicken



FunTriva.com

Answers on page 15

**Law of Pill Rejection** - Any pill given to a cat has the potential energy to reach escape velocity.



### Surrogate Mother

This domestic cat has become a surrogate mother for a tiny Colombian tigrillo or margay, just 9 days old, which was found in a rural area and taken to the Animal Welfare Foundation in Medellin.

metro-herald, August 2011



**C**ats like doors left open, in case they change their minds.

Rosemary Nisbet

### The Mayor Is The Cat's Whiskers

The mayor of an Alaskan town is celebrating 15 years in office with record approval ratings. Tourists come to Talkeetna from all over America to rub the mayor's tummy, That's if he's not enjoying his afternoon nap.

The people of Talkeetna elected Stubbs the cat as their first citizen when voters didn't approve of the two exiting candidates for mayor. As the town has no municipal authority, the office of mayor is honorary.



The cat's owner, Lauri Stee, who converted her shop into a part-time mayor's office, said: 'He doesn't raise our taxes - we have no sales tax. He doesn't interfere with business. He's honest.'

Sunday Times July 2012

### A Poem -



When're I felt my towering fancy fail,  
I stroked her head, her ears, tail,  
And, as I stroked, imposed my dying song  
From the sweet notes of her melodious tongue.  
Her purrs and mews so evenly kept time,  
She purred in metre and she mewed in rhyme.

Joseph Green, 18th century poet.





## The 22nd Supreme Show 2012



The 22<sup>nd</sup> SUPREME Show was held on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at Ballinteer Community School Dublin 16. It was a beautiful sunny morning and our Exhibitors arrived in good cheer looking forward to a successful day. Thanks to our Honorary Vets Malcolm Argyle and Mark Heffernan, handlers Aedamair and Alice, for the early start and their valuable time. The Show Hall proved to be a great success with all those present. A very spacious, bright and airy hall that would prove to be invaluable later in the day when the public started to arrive to view the many beautiful cats on show. We were able to provide excellent catering facilities for all those present, with plenty of drinks and snacks available from early morning. We were also delighted to have a good variety of Trade and Cottage industry stands at the show which provided interest to exhibitors and visitors alike.

We had a very respectable entry of 93 cats in the show and we would like to thank all of the exhibitors for their tremendous support in the current difficult economic climate, it was greatly appreciated.

Our judges had travelled over from the U.K. for the Show – Mrs. Anne Gregory, Mrs. Sheila Hamilton, Mr. John Hansson and Mrs. Pat Perkins. Our judge for the Non-Pedigree section was none other than our own Mr. Paddy Treanor BVM MRCVS and by all accounts they had a very enjoyable Show.

Our sincere thanks go to Carmel Byrne for heading the Top Table for us and those that helped her, Caroline, Shirley, Hugh and Cathy. Their contribution is enormous and makes for a smooth running Show. Thanks to all of our Stewards on the day for their excellent and smooth handling of the Best-In-Show. Thanks to their hard work it ran like clockwork. Not an easy task.

A special word of thanks goes to Tony Forshaw for his wonderful support throughout, for designing the front cover of our catalogue, for our Best-In-Show pen signs and for getting the Judges to and from the Show. Also a huge thank you to Karen Sluifers for the great publicity that she generated before, during and after the Show. Well done Karen.

Last, and by no means least, sincere thanks to our show Committee for their support, in particular, Betty for her assistance in compiling both the Schedule & Catalogue and for her wealth of knowledge, Georgina for organising the stands & Pot Draw, Ronnie for the breed signs and for her help throughout the day, Alison for taking good care of our finances during the day and everyone else that gave a hand, including Mark & Freddie on the door.

Joint Show Managers - Susan Middleton & Gloria Hehir

Congratulations to everyone who participated in this our 22<sup>nd</sup> SUPREME SHOW

### Supreme Winners

**ADULT: BULGARI BUBU-COONS** (Brown Classic Maine Coon M) Owned by Miss M. Kusmierz  
**KITTEN: DOBSHANGRILA XENA:** (Brown Spotted Bengal Kitten) Owned by Yuliya Dmytreyeva  
**NEUTER: PR. POPPYLOVE MARBLED ORCHID** (Blue Tortie Burmese FN) Owned by Mr. C. Noonan  
**NON-PED: GIZMO** (SH Ginger & White M) Owned by Mrs. Joy Frizelle

### Supreme Exhibit - DOBSHANGRILA XENA





## Cats In The News -

### Lost Cat From Amsterdam Found Wandering 16 KM Further In Purmerend



When Cobie Jansen from Purmerend, Holland, was working in her garden on the 21st of August, she noticed a lovely calico cat coming towards her. It was very obvious that cat hadn't eaten for a while. So here is Cobie's story:

It was a beautiful cat but when she came closer I saw that she didn't look so well. She seemed not have eaten for quite some time, so I gave her 2 tins of cat food and 2 bowls of cat milk, which she devoured. There was definitely something wrong with this cat so I rang the Animal Rescue Centre in Purmerend, who connected me through to the Animal Ambulance. I explained to them what had happened and they asked me to bring the cat to them, which my husband did. So when he came home again he told me that it was the right thing we did and he said: You won't believe me but this cat has been missing from Amsterdam since April.

The little cat was chipped, so they could find the owner easily. The family, it belonged to, was delighted, because they thought they had lost her for good.

It is a good long distance from Amsterdam to Purmerend, the little one had quite some journey.

Dichtbij.nl , 06 September 2012

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### Sugar Survives 19 Story Fall

Boston - Rescuers are calling her a miracle cat. Her name is Sugar, a white ball of fluff that survived a fall from her owner's window on the 19th floor of a Boston high rise, reports CBS News affiliate WBZ Boston.

"I look out my window all the time and I think, 'Wow, this is really high,'" Sugar's owner, Brittany Kirk told WBZ. She believes in the old saying about nine lives. "I think she probably used one or two or maybe eight."

When workers with the Animal Rescue League examined the cat, they found it had minor bruising on the lungs, but no broken bones, no cuts, and no serious injuries. They estimate she fell between 150 and 200 feet.

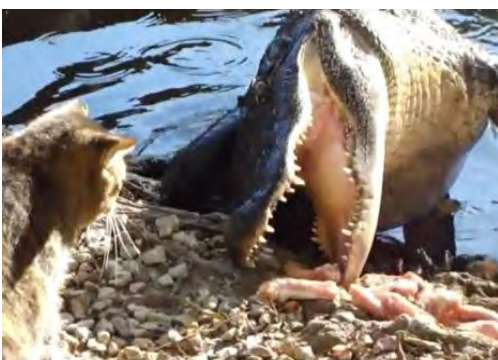
Surprisingly, rescuers say studies show cats have a better chance of surviving falls when they're from higher than nine stories. "The cats were able to relax, orient themselves in a flying squirrel position with the legs spread out. It slowed their descent down," said rescue manager Brian O'Connor.



2012 - reported on the CBS News website:

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### Cat vs Alligator



As the top predator in the river food chain, you'd expect an alligator to have first dibs on lunch. But when this specimen spots an inviting pile of chicken on the river bank it doesn't count on a furry rival being...a cat!

The reptile's size and jaws filled with razor-sharp teeth hold no fear for the feline, which stands its ground even though it is one snap away from becoming a meal itself.

The stand-off was caught on video by a visitor to the Cajun Pride Swamp Tour in Louisiana and posted on YouTube. As the alligator tries to tuck in, the outraged cat launches a couple of swipes as 'get him kitty' is overheard on the footage.

The bewildered alligator then slinks away to contemplate an easier and less humiliating way to eat. Alligators can reach to 14 feet.



T. Tahir, Metroherald - Jan 2012 Photos - YouTube,

# The Catwalk

Oscar -



What part of  
'no vet' did  
you not  
understand?

M. Mackey, Rathdrum

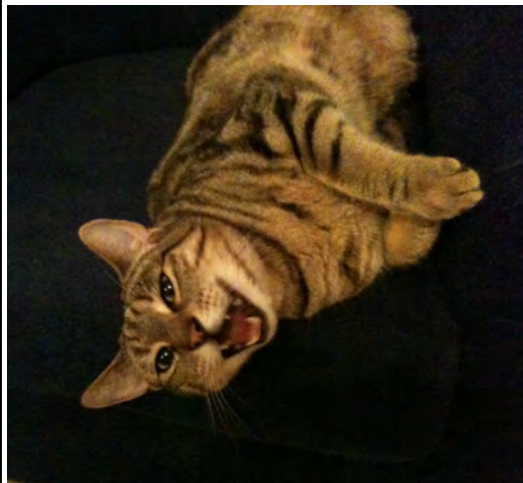
Amber & Gabby -

Gabby is Siamese,  
Amber is not Siamese,  
but - thinks she is -  
poor Amber!

T. Byrne, Canada



Bart -



That was a very  
funny story. Tell  
me another one.

E. Callan, Mullingar

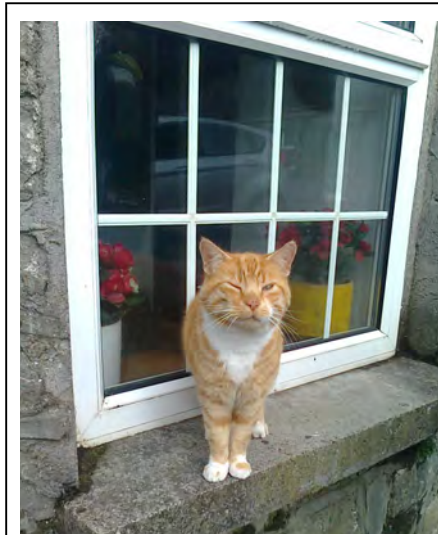
# The Catwalk

## Sweetie & Bobby -

Katie Taylor  
Watch Out!!



E. Flood, Bray



## Country Cat -

Your not from around here  
are you?

S. Mackey, Dublin

## Pipeline Cat -

When it is 32 degrees  
in the Canary Islands,  
what a nicer place  
to nap but a cool drain  
pipe. Just hope it  
doesn't rain!



Gran Canaria



## Train Your Cat ?

A lot of owners feel that cats are untrainable but stop and think about it and you will realise that the cat which always appears when the kibble hits the bowl or the spoon is rattled against the tin of food has actually learnt a pairing between a sound or action and the arrival of a reward. This simple pairing of a sound to signal the arrival of a reward can be extended as the basis to train your cat and is a fast, fun way to train your cat or any other animal. Operant conditioning has been widely used to train marine mammals and even gold fish, but is probably better known as "clicker training" in the companion animal field. The key to training is to catch your pet in the act of doing something you like, and tell the pet you like it with a reward. Clicker training is one of the fastest, easiest ways to communicate this lesson. The sound of the "click" identifies the behaviour which is to be rewarded, and a special treat rewards the cat for performing well.

**Choose a Special Reward**-The reward must be very high value to the cat. If it's something available all the time, why should your cat care ? For some cats, food treats work well. Cats respond first to smell, and second to taste (they won't taste if it doesn't smell good!), so choose a treat with a pungent aroma. Fishy treats are a hit with some cats. Professional cat trainers for movies use smoked turkey cold cuts. It takes only a tiny taste (about the size of the tip of your little finger) for a treat reward. You don't want to upset nutrition, and you don't want the cat to get so full he doesn't want to train. Cats may instead prefer toy or play rewards. A special feather tease, or fetch-ball, or catnip mouse toy could be the reward incentive that makes your cat want to work. Again, reserve that toy so it *only* comes out for training, to increase the power and value.

**Load The Clicker** - For clicker training to work you must first *load the clicker*. This explains to the pet that the *click* sound has a meaning that something wonderful will happen. Basically, you associate the sound (click) with the reward (treat or toy). Just sit down with the pet and a saucer full of tiny smelly treats, and begin to CLICK (toss a treat), CLICK (treat) CLICK (treat) as many times as the cat shows interest. If the cat prefers the toy, then you'll CLICK (offer the feather) CLICK (feather) CLICK (feather) and so on.

You'll soon see the pet look at the treats (or toy) rather than the clicker when it makes the sound. Be aware that cats won't want to train for as long a period of time as dogs. Your cat may be done after only half a dozen repeats. Several very short training sessions are more beneficial than a single marathon event.

- Don't hold the clicker too close to your cat's face. Some cats find this intimidating or startling, and other cats fixate on the clicker. Try muffling the clicker by hiding it behind your back or in your pocket.
- If you have a sound-sensitive cat, the sound of the clicker may be too scary. Try holding the clicker in your pocket, or wrap it with a handkerchief to make the sound quieter. If your cat is still frightened of the sound, you can use a visual marker (such as a flashlight) instead of a clicker.
- Only click once. Always give a treat following the click.

When your cat associates the click with a treat, try to "capture" a behaviour. If you catch him doing something you like (maybe the way he tilts his head) click and treat whenever he does the behaviour. You'll find he starts to do it more often in order to get the treat.

**Shaping** : Choose one spontaneous behaviour or something your cat does that you like. Some examples are sitting, looking at you, raising a paw or lying on his bed. Each time you see your cat doing this behaviour, click and treat. You need to be observant, and have your clicker and treats handy at all times. When you catch your cat doing something right, let him know.

**Caution:** Once you start clicking and treating your cat for a behaviour, be prepared to see the behaviour repeated often. Don't choose a behaviour that will become obnoxious when performed frequently.

- Reward (click and treat) partial steps in the right direction, gradually getting closer to the final position. Repeat until your cat performs the behaviour easily. This is known as "shaping" a behaviour.
- Start training in a place with no distractions (other household pets, children, neighbourhood cats, etc.). After all you were meant not do your homework with the TV on so it's only fair for the cat to have the same advantage of a distraction free environment.
- Gather together a variety of motivators. Food treats should be small, soft and smelly. Let your cat select his favourites. Other motivators -- petting, toys, games or walks -- work well at the end of a training session. Always combine food and other motivators with verbal praise.
- If you make a mistake and click at the wrong time, don't worry about it, but do go ahead and give your cat a treat anyway. The click must always mean a treat is coming. Next time, pay attention and be ready to click at the precise moment your cat performs the behaviour (e.g., his bottom hits the floor for a sit).
- It is better to click too early than too late. If you click too early, you can shape the correct behaviour by rewarding progressive steps. If you click too late, you may be reinforcing the wrong behaviour.
- Cats learn at different rates. Don't get frustrated if your cat doesn't seem to learn as quickly as you'd expect. Make sure you're being consistent.

*Continued on next page*

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‘With the qualities of cleanliness, discretion, affection, patience, dignity and courage that cats have, how many of us, I ask you, would be capable of being cats?’

**Name It** - Give the verbal cue (e.g., "sit") and/or a hand motion (which will become a hand signal). Click, and give the treat from your other hand. If you get no response or an incorrect response, don't click and treat. If you still get no response or an incorrect response, go back to shaping the behaviour a few more times, and then try again.

- If your cat doesn't immediately perform the behaviour, the temptation is to repeat the cue. Don't fall for it -- you don't want your cat to get into the habit of responding only after the third or fourth time you repeat the cue.
- Check your posture. Work toward an upright posture rather than bending over your cat.
- Don't assume that your cat will instantly associate the name with the behaviour. Lots of repetitions may be needed before your cat will reliably perform the behaviour on cue.
- Keep training sessions short -- even 30 seconds at a time will do.

**Increase The Effort Required** - Gradually require more from your cat to earn the click and treat. For example, string together two or three behaviours before rewarding him, increase the time or distance (not both) of your stay, work in a more distracting place, change your position in relation to your cat or reward the faster or straighter sit. Go ahead and praise your cat for correct responses, but instead of rewarding every response, reward the second, third or fourth response on a random basis.

- Start by working on the basic behaviour in every room of your home. When your cat is reliable in these settings, work with him outside (on leash and with few distractions at first). Don't assume that your cat is ready to perform around other animals.
- Don't be discouraged if your cat seems to forget all of his training when he's in a new location. He may do it perfectly at home but then stare at you dumbfounded when you try to show off your training skills. Make it a little easier for him at first (go through the shaping steps again).
- When you increase the difficulty of your training (e.g., by adding distractions), also increase the value of the reward for a successful performance; choose a better treat than the one you normally use for training.
- Don't ask for too much too soon. If your cat is losing interest in the training session, take a short play break as a reward for an easier task.

Training goes beyond the trick aspect, though, and engages the pets' brains. You can extend training to include accepting a crate, a halter and leash, rides in the car, and more. Training strengthens the bond between owner and cat, because suddenly you are communicating--and the cat realizes he can control outcome by his actions.

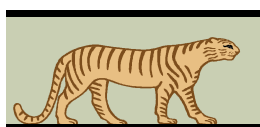
Jim Stephens MSc. CABC , Companion Animal Behaviour Counsellor , [www.petsbehave.com](http://www.petsbehave.com).

Any questions for Jim? Come see him at the 'Speakers Corner' at the SABCCI Show on the 21st of October in Knocklyon.

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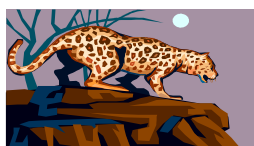
## Cat Relatives From a Cats Point of View - Part 2

You might be surprised to learn that the domestic cat (you) is not the only kind of cat in existence. Here is a clear and unbiased look at what we've heard about the other cats of the world.



**Tigers** - Tigers like to swim! That means they like to go in the water and stay there for an extended period of time. Weird! You'd think, based on that, they wouldn't be any sort of relation of yours, but one look at them pretty much confirms it. They may be huge (bigger than all your other relations even), but the family resemblance is there. The sharp incisors. The whiskers. The ears. The twitchy tail. But they have stripes like a zebra. Zebras like swimming. Zebras are also bigger than most cats.

Therefore it is obvious that a tiger is half cat and half zebra. They're still your relatives, though, so be respectful, which is actually easy because tigers are very polite. They won't leave big muddy paw prints in your house, and they will bring a carcass they picked up on the way over.



**Jaguars** - Jaguars are laid-back, and, with their keen sense of hearing, they make good listeners. They are also excellent at preparing meals, making them great guests. Don't believe us? If one should stop by the house and you don't have anything to eat, he will apologize for dropping in unexpectedly and whip up a delicious five-course meal just from stuff you had lying around. Also - this is really cool - they have the strongest jaws of all cats and can bite right through a skull. Yes, vile, but cool.

They also tell pretty funny stories about living in the jungle, Like the one about the monkey that rode a giraffe like a cowboy. We'd tell you the whole thing but it is better when they do it.



**Ocelots** - Size-wise ocelots are somewhere between us and a jaguar. Because of their in-between status, they just want to fit in, so they'll do anything for a laugh. That's great, for a while, but it can get pretty annoying when it's nothing but 'The Ocelot Show'. You usually have to do what they want to do, otherwise they won't show up. Aside from those traits, they're not that bad.

## Your Cat's Nose

There's been a myth floating around for years about what it means if your cat's nose is warm instead of cool, or dry instead of moist. A warm dry nose by itself doesn't mean your pet is sick or has a fever. In fact, your cat's nose can be moist and cool one moment, and dry and warm the next, and it doesn't mean that he's sick. It's all perfectly normal.

Now if your pet has other symptoms, like for instance loss of appetite, vomiting or diarrhea, lethargy, or other obvious signs of illness, then a dry, warm nose goes along with those other symptoms of systemic illness.

The time for a second look is if your pet's nose is changing texture. For example, if it becomes flaky or crusty or you notice a change in the color. If the nose is not only dry but the skin is also cracking, or if it's getting lighter in color ... if you can see scabs, open sores, non-healing cracks or fissures, or other types of skin irritation ... those are all things that you'll want your veterinarian to take a look at.

*Your Pet's Nose Can Change Color for a Variety of Reasons* -The color of your pet's nose can be black, pink (a pink nose is also called a Dudley nose), liver colored, or the same color as your cat's fur. Nose color is determined by genetics. Some noses fade during the colder months and return to their normal color during the summer months. This is a condition known as 'snow nose' or 'winter nose.'



If you happen to have an orange or calico kitty, you might notice that black spots appear on the nose and lips as your pet gets older. This is a totally normal change veterinarians call lentigo simplex, and it's no cause for concern.

Sometimes the nose will go lighter when the pet is sick and return to a darker color once health is restored. If a pet gets a scrape or other abrasion to the nose, often the nose skin will turn pink as the healing process is occurring, and then the darker natural color will appear as the scab wears away.

Contact dermatitis can also cause your cat to lose pigment on the nose. Some pets have sensitivity to plastic food and water bowls, and continued exposure can cause the nose to lighten in color. Sometimes the lips will also become inflamed.

*Diseases Affecting the Nose* - Pemphigus complex is a group of very serious autoimmune skin diseases that affects cats. There are two main types: pemphigus foliaceus and pemphigus erythematosus. Both start with patches of red skin on the face, including the nose and ears. The foliaceus variety often spreads to other parts of the body, including the feet, central body, core, and paws.

Pemphigus erythematosus involves only the face, head, and footpads. The red patches rapidly turn into blisters, and then pustules, which can become crusty and cause the hair to stick to them. They look like oozing, crusty sores. Areas of skin depigmentation are also seen with both of these disease processes.

*Keeping an Eye on Your Pet's Nose* - Checking your cat's nose should be a normal part in their care. Getting acquainted with the look and shape of your pet's nose when it's healthy is important, because then you'll be able to determine when a problem pops up and it becomes unhealthy.

You need to look for any unusual signs like nasal discharge, especially and certainly if it goes from clear to mucus-y or bloody, stay alert for excessive dryness, crusting, or loss of pigmentation. I also recommend you watch the nose as your pet breathes. Cats are nose breathers when at rest. If the nostrils flare more than normal, your pet could be having a breathing problem.

If you notice anything unusual about your pet's nose, especially if you are seeing other signs of illness, certainly make an appointment with your vet.

As some of you know, topical ointments applied to the nose are often totally useless, because they become oral supplements in a matter of seconds to minutes in most cats. The only supplement I recommend applying to your pet's nose while you're waiting for your vet appointment is natural vitamin E. You can actually poke a vitamin E capsule to open it, squeeze out the contents, and apply it to your pet's nose until you can be seen by your vet. Other creams and salves can be fairly irritating to your pet's nose, so I don't recommend you apply other products unless you have specifically been told to do so by your vet.

Dr. Becker, mercola.com

### Cat Superstitions

If a cat washes its face, company is coming  
If a cat purrs, a ghost is in the room  
It is bad luck to cross a stream carrying a cat  
Dream of a tortoiseshell cat and you will be lucky in love



### How To Annoy Your Cat - Oversleeping

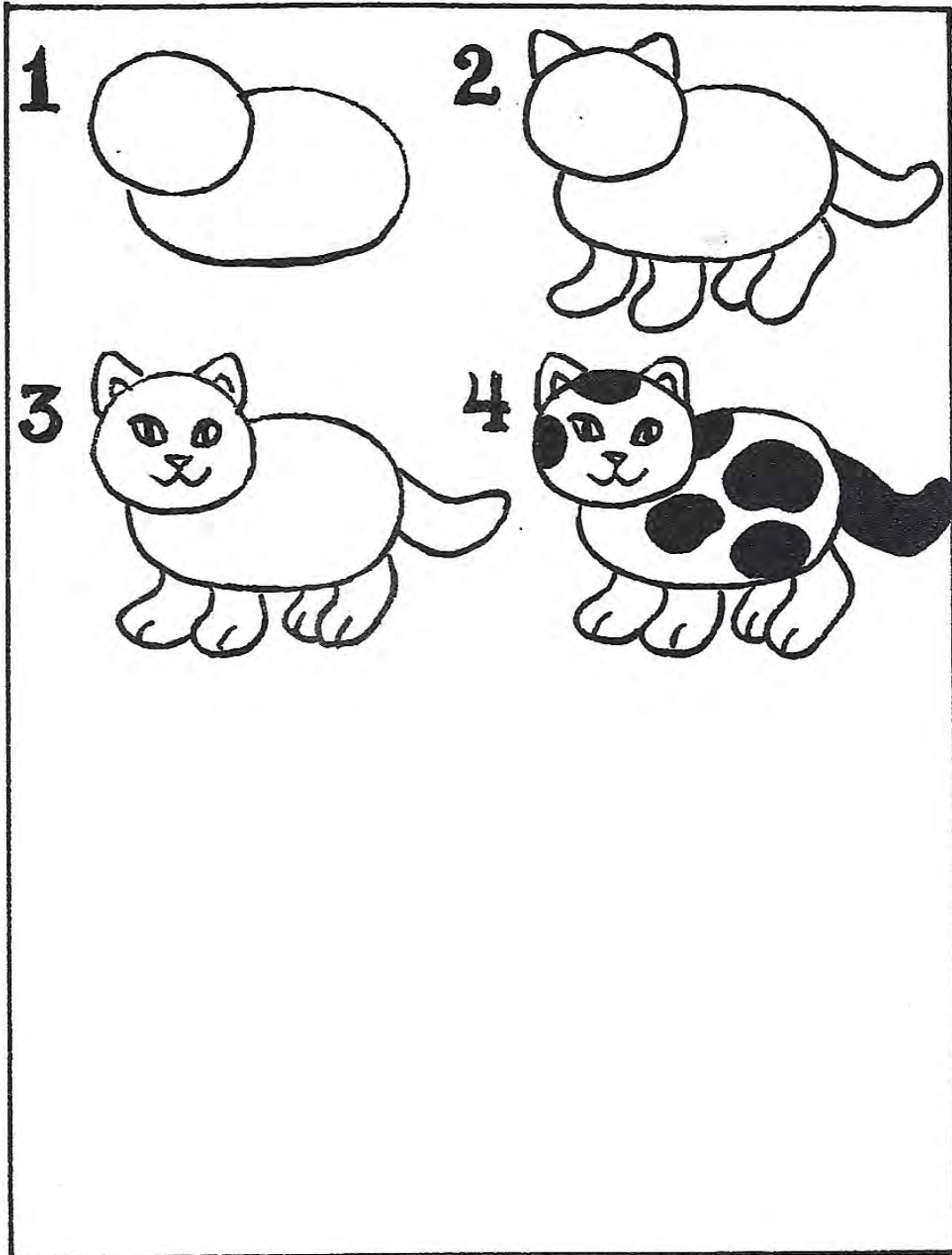
Why would an owner want to sleep late when a kitty bowl needs to be filled? Cats just don't understand it. Which is why they raise a ruckus to point out food bowl infractions or other owner irresponsibility. Even a small change can annoy your cat.

Pawnation.com





# KIT'S KORNER



You can draw a cat that looks like the one in Step 4.

Use a pencil to draw Steps 1, 2 and 3 in the blank

Answers from page 7

8-9  
3-5  
8-4  
8-3  
8-2  
3-1

## The Final Miaow

As you can see we have come to the end of our newsletter and we hope you found it interesting and enjoyable. Many thanks to everyone who sent us material and photos for the *CATWALK*. We can always do with more photographs and stories, so please keep sending them in.

Many thanks to our sponsor **Breffni House Pets** who will be the SABCCI Show on the 21st.

**Remember - The SABCCI Championship Cat Show 21st of October**

**Knocklyon Community Centre, Knocklyon Dublin16**

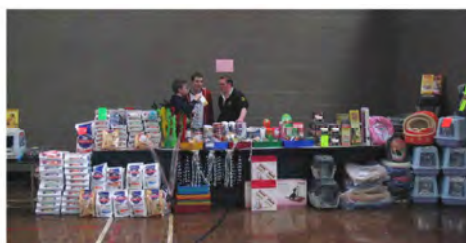
**Doors open to the public 12:30 to 5:00**

**See you all at the show! ^..^**

# For All Your Pet Needs Breffni House Pets



See You On The 21st!



**Good Luck to All Exhibitors at The Show**

Breffni House Pets  
Windy Arbour, Dundrum Dublin 14  
(01) 2961339