

# The Scratching Post



**SABCCI Newsletter - Spring 2010**

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



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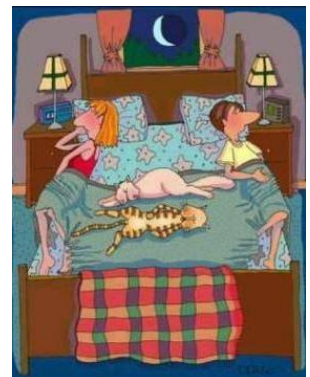
### SABCCI Committee

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Secretary – Gloria Hehir  
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Ronnie Brooks, Elizabeth Flood, Alice Forshaw, Hugh Gibney,  
Aedamair Kiely, Sue Middleton, Annie Murphy    Membership Secretary - Betty Dobbs



**T**o some blind souls all cats are much alike. To a cat lover every cat from the beginning of time has been utterly and amazingly unique.

Allen & Ivy Dodd



## Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2010 issue of The Scratching Post.

The Scratching Post is on the SABCCI website [www.sabcci.com](http://www.sabcci.com) in colour, under the menu heading 'News Plus'. Let us know if you would prefer to read The Scratching Post on the website instead of by receiving it by post.

Breffni House Pets in Dundrum once again has given us sponsorship so many thanks to them.

So if you're ready, sit back, have a Singapore Sling and ENJOY!

Karen and Gloria ^..^

Do you have any photos or articles for the newsletter? Please send them to us at;-  
[karensluiters@gmail.com](mailto:karensluiters@gmail.com) or [gloriateti@eircom.net](mailto:gloriateti@eircom.net)

## The Supreme Cat Show 2010

2010 Supreme Cat Show will be held on the 25th of April.

The show is being held at the Roadstone Group Sports Club (RGSC) in Kingswood City West Dublin.

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

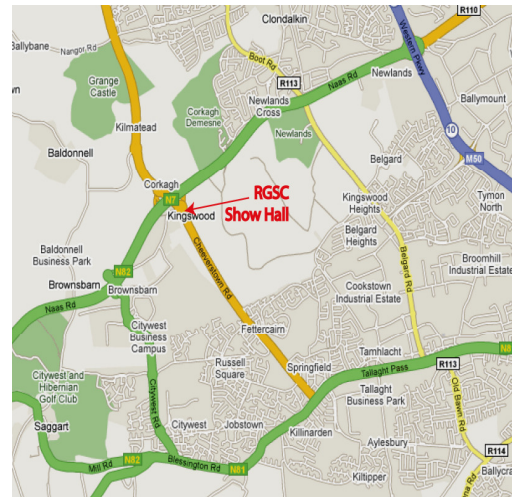
This year there will be a speakers corner -

12:30 - Maura Lenihan on Grooming

1:30 - Jim Sephens, animal behaviourist, on The Multi-Cat Household

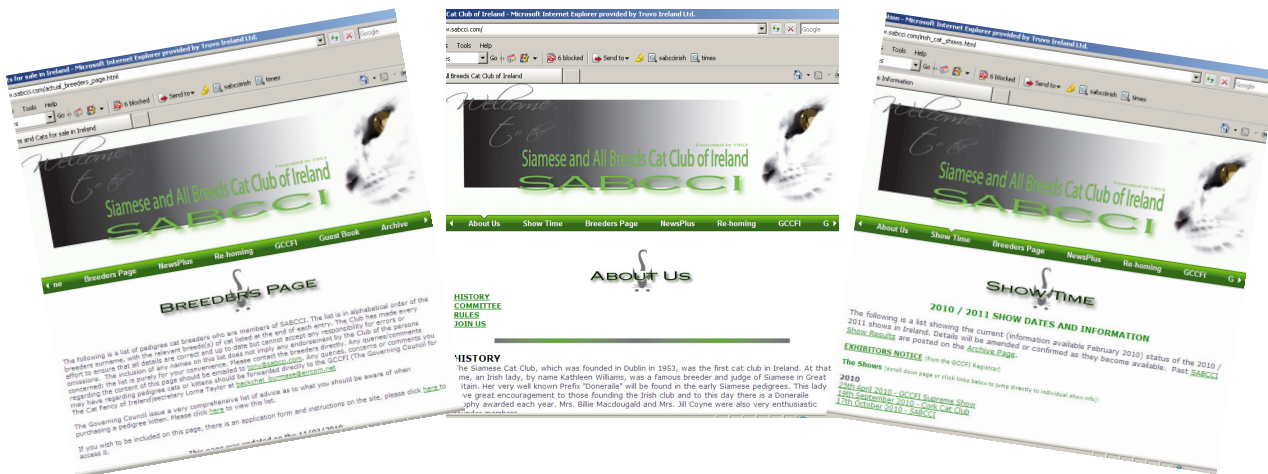
2:30 - Pete Wedderburn - TV3 Vet

NB. Please do not bring any animals however, the speakers will answer any questions



## SABCCI Website Has a New Look!

Take a look at our new SABCCI website, [www.sabcci.com](http://www.sabcci.com). In the last 9 weeks the site has had 5,000 unique clicks! The Committee would like to thank Tony Forshaw for all his work and long hours in re-creating the new SABCCI site.



In our last issue, Autumn 2009, there was an article on fostering cats. Two of the fostered kittens pictured in the article are appearing in The Catwalk on Page 10 & 11. See how Tibi & Gizmo have grown since last Autumn.

## The Pedigree - The British Shorthair

To many people the word 'British' conjures up the picture of a sturdy square cat with broad shoulders and chest, a round chubby face short heavy legs and round bold orange eyes; the coat is short and dense with a crisp texture – it was once described to me as like snow – crisp on the surface with a dense padded feel underneath.

The British comes in a range of colours – the 'self' colours, that is one colour all over – blue being the most well known but also white, cream, black, chocolate and lilac with more recently fawn and cinnamon being added.

Then there are the tabbies which can be spotted (made famous by the silver spotted tabby kitten appearing in the adverts of a certain well known catfood) or classic (as in the photo). Tabbies come in a range of colours, brown, red, cream, tortie and all also come in silver – the red silver is drop dead gorgeous!



Tabby

Then there are Colourpointed – British cats with the Siamese pattern; Tipped – the short haired version of the Persian Chinchilla; Patched cats have a solid colour (or colours in the case of a tortie) plus white; the contrast of well defined patches of colour and the white is very dramatic. The torties and blue/cream (the dilute version of tortie) have all the colours mingled with no patches of solid colour.

One of the oldest British is the very distinctive Manx; he has a slightly longer head and more upright ears but a rounded rump with no hint of a tail and comes in all colours.

As a pet the British is a very healthy hardy cat because of the thick coat they like to be kept cool if not cold - any hot weather and you'll find your British asleep in the bath or the sink - and they love the snow! Also as a heavy breed (a male neuter can reach 15 lb) they don't like to be held up in the air – they like to keep their feet on the ground.

Playful rather clumsy as kittens - they grow so fast they lose track of where their feet are, but a placid relaxed cat is very easy to live with and no trouble to look after. The coat will shed come summer (!) but a good session with a comb to get all the dead hair out means you get it all over and done with. They take up to 3 years to mature and need plenty of quality food during the growing period – four meals a day until they are over 1 year old. And chunks of meat to chew on – this helps the teething but also develops those lovely chubby cheeks so distinctive of a Brit. A comfortable companionable cat, that's a Brit!

Ronnie Brooks    🐾



Blue Self



Non Self

### Test Your Knowledge

1. How many of species of cats are there alive today?
  - a. 45
  - b. 38
  - c. 126
  - d. 11
2. How many kinds of hair do most cats have?
  - a. 2
  - b. 3
  - c. 4

3. How much of each day does a cat spend napping?
  - a. 30%
  - b. 80%
  - c. 70%
  - d. 50%
4. How many whiskers do cats have?
  - a. An average of 24
  - b. An average of 12
  - c. An average of 6
5. How long ago was the first cat domesticated?
  - a. 400 yrs
  - b. 1,000 yrs
  - c. 4,000 yrs
  - d. 10,000 yrs



Answers on page 7



### Mystery Surrounds a Feline Felon

The owners of a cat with a passion for socks are leafletting their neighbours in the Loughborough area to see if they are missing any.

Henry, who is now a year old, has taken at least 57 socks although it is still unclear whether he gets them from washing lines or people's houses.

He is often seen on a wall near his home with the hosiery in his mouth. But owner Louise Brandon said they had so far been unable to reunite the stolen socks with their owners.



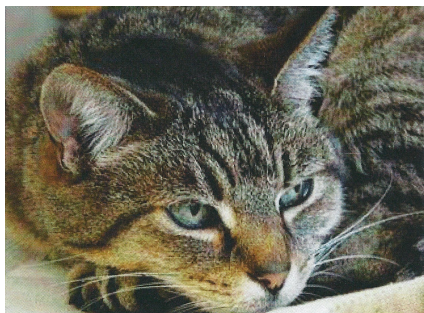
She said: "People must be going and replacing the socks because now we're getting new ones. But no, there just seems to this endless supply of neighbourhood socks coming in and we don't know where they're coming from. So it's a bit embarrassing."

Her four-year-old daughter Eloise added: "He steals socks every day."

Associated press

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### Hero Cat Saved Family From a Fire Returns



The 13 year old cat, Baby, who persistent pestering in the middle of the night saved her owners from a house fire, has come back home.

The heroic cat had been missing since the pre-dawn hours on Monday, when Baby and her owners, Letitia Kovalovsky, seven months pregnant with twins and partner Josh Omberg, escaped a fire that ravaged their house in Chicago. With a bedroom blazing and smoke filling their house, Baby sprang to action when smoke detectors failed to signal an alarm. She jumped all over Omberg, rousing him from his sleep.

But when the family escaped, unharmed, Baby ran off. 'cats scared in house fires often return after the scene clears' said Assistant Fire Chief Mike Weber.

Luckily, Baby did just that on Tuesday reported the Chicago tribune. Baby was lured by some food left in a live trap that was set on the home's porch. Omberg happily retrieved Baby making sure the heroic cat was safe. A relieved Omberg said 'I thought she would come back.'

Pawnation.com Jan 2010

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### A Cat's Nest In Norfolk

The Daily Mail reports a true story about a cat who has made itself a home in a pigeon's nest up a cherry tree in Reepham, Norfolk, England. The tortoiseshell cat, pictured, has been there for a week or so.

Miss Wendy Hobbs, in whose garden the cat is living, feeds the animal regularly when it comes down to terra firma. After it's meal it climbs back into the tree. Previously the cat had been seen travelling on the milkman's float.

Miss Hobbs, an animal lover, is keen to return the moggy to its rightful owners.

Ornithologists say they have never seen the phenomenon of a cat nest before. There are unconfirmed reports that 'twitchers' have detoured from their bird watching vigils on the nearby Norfolk Broads to observe Mrs Hobbs cat's nest.

Daily Mail





## The Siamese and All Breeds Cat Club 56th Show Knocklyon Community Centre - 20th September 2009



The Siamese and All Breeds Cat Club held its annual Championship Show on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at the Knocklyon Centre. Dublin 16, moving for this year only from our traditional October date. Our entry was down on last year but we still managed an impressive 101 entries including some very handsome non-pedigrees, although unfortunately due to the reduction in sponsorship the Show made a loss. Still a good time was had by all (I hope!) and that's what it is all about.

Our judges this year seemed to be fated, with Mrs Fryer being taken ill, as was Mrs Rose's husband – we send our best wishes to both and wish them a speedy recovery; however we were very lucky to obtain the services of Sean Farrell who was paying his first visit to 'the old country' for many years and also to Linda Clarke who stepped in literally at the last minute – thank you both so much. Our other judges were - from England Mrs Codd and Mrs Pike and from France - Mr Pobe.

Our overall Best In Show was a truly winner as she won Best in Show last year as a kitten; this year **Acclaim Cleopatra** the stunning Egyptian Mau bred by Carol Ervine and owned by Mark Quinn and Ann Marie McDonald did it again – surely a first in every sense of the word. The public's choice for most popular pedigree was **Labrys Warrior Princess** (British White), and the non pedigree was **Bertie** (black & White SH)

Finally as usual how can I thank the fantastic SABCCI committee – Alison our treasurer, Karen for the publicity, Gloria running a smooth effortless Best In Show, Hugh for those gleaming trophies, Aedamair stewarding, Alice and Betty making sure the vetting in ran smoothly, Annie keeping our French judge company for the day, Elizabeth for those fiddly bags for taking away the soiled cat litter (yes – someone has to do all those), Sue on the computer trying out a new system for results - which worked brilliantly by the way – oh, and Tony who did - well pretty well everything else, actually. The table was run as immaculately as ever by my pal Carmel and we got loads of help on the day from various exhibitors doing all those picky jobs – stewarding, rosettes, manning the gate etc, etc – thank you all. But most of all, THANK YOU to you the exhibitors for bringing all your beautiful cats – see you October next year!

Ronnie Brooks, Show Manager

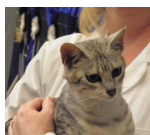
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### 2009 Show Results

<b>Best Persian</b>	Lisabel Galaxy, Exotic owned & bred by Mrs E McCarthy
<b>Best Semi-Longhair</b>	Ishcus Melisa, Maine Coon, owned & bred by Ms P S Saville
<b>Best British</b>	CH Sliabh Nasty Nic owned & bred by Mr J M O'Sullivan
<b>Best Foreign</b>	Acclaimed Cleopatra, Egyptian Mau, owned by Ms A M McDonald & bred by Miss C Ervine
<b>Best Burmese</b>	Ishcus Alyssa, owned by Mr A J Archer & bred by Ms P S Saville
<b>Best Oriental</b>	Kyomi Kohana, owned by Ms M Linehan & bred by Ms Simpson
<b>Best Siamese</b>	Shadowsquad Anam-Cara, owned by Ms M Linehan & bred by Mrs G Hudson

### Best In Show Pedigree

Acclaimed Cleopatra, Egyptian Mau, owned by Ms A M McDonald & bred by Miss C Ervine



### Best In Show Non-Pedigree

Bertie, Black & White Shorthair, owned by Miss M Mackenzie



## EU Pet Passport Extension Welcomed

The Irish Times - March 15, 2010 - Veterinary Ireland has welcomed the extension of a derogation to the EU pet passport system which it said will give extra protection to Ireland from pets being imported here.

On mainland Europe there is free movement of pets that have been microchipped and vaccinated against rabies and these animals do not have to go through quarantine. Ireland and UK had argued at the time, the passport was introduced, that they needed more stringent regulations to prevent the entry of certain diseases into their countries.



The diseases causing concern were rabies, the tapeworm *echinococcus multilocularis* which causes alveolar echinococcosis in humans, and several tick-borne diseases. Ireland, UK, Sweden, Finland and Malta did not have and still are clear of these diseases but they are present elsewhere in mainland Europe.

The additional safeguards allowed by the derogation were that pets entering the country not only had to be vaccinated against rabies but must also undergo a blood test to demonstrate they have developed anti-bodies to rabies. It was also agreed pets could not travel to Ireland until six months after the date of the blood test and pets must receive a tick and tapeworm treatment prior to entry.

This derogation was due to expire next July but due to an intestine lobby by the Department of Agriculture and Irish vets, the EU decided to leave the additional safeguards attached to the passport in place until December 2011.

Alan Rossiter of Veterinary Ireland welcomed the retention of the derogation which he said would mean no change to the current system. "What we now want to achieve is a permanent requirement that pets travelling into Ireland receive a tick and tapeworm treatment prior to entry," he said.

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### Cat Definitions

**Caterpillar** – A soft scratching post for a cat

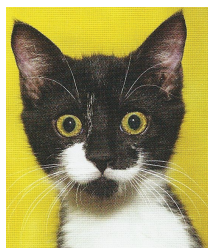
**Catatonic** – A feline medicinal drink

**Dog** – a cat's device for running practice

**Door** – something a cat always wants to be on the other side of

#### It's Not A Cat

It's.....



- A small, four-legged, fur-bearing extortionist
- A wildlife control expert impersonator
- An un-programmable animal
- A four footed-allergen
- A hair relocation expert

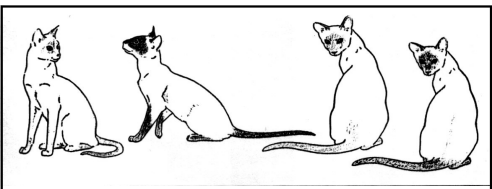
#### Law of Cat Invisibility

Cats think if they can't see you - you can't see them.



#### 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
- Bathing a cat will cause it to rain



ANSWERS -  
1 - 38  
2 - 4  
3 - 70%  
4 - 24  
5 - 4,000 yrs

## **Food For The Cat (& Dog) - How To Do It Yourself**

A follow on to the article on Food For The Cat in our Autumn 2009 issue

It is a well-known fact that fresh food is healthier than “instant” food, for humans as well as for animals. Vets learn during their studies that commercial food contains everything the animal needs and that pet owners should not mess with food for their pets. This, they say, can cause shortages and that’s why vets keep promoting dried food.

Preparing food for your cat or dog is not much more difficult than preparing your own food. It takes time and some knowledge. So here are some guidelines to avoid serious mistakes.

### **Meat**

To feed raw meat to animals is something people shy away from. We have always heard that raw meat can contain harmful bacteria. However it has been shown that dogs and cats are less sensitive to these than people. In the wild they eat rotting meat from dead animals, and then they bury it so that they can eat it again at a later date without any problems.

For us humans, when you are preparing raw food you have to take care that you touch the raw meat as little as possible and keep everything as clean as possible so to avoid contaminating oneself. This means- clean chopping boards, clean knives hands etc, just as you would do normally as you prepare your own food. The meat you can feed your cat or dog: chicken (filet, wings, and for big dogs even the whole chicken), lamb, beef, egg (raw or cooked), fish (fresh, from a tin, raw or cooked), cottage cheese and Tahoe.

Never feed pork. Pork can contain a virus, which could kill the dog and cat. If you want to feed pork, it has to be cooked but it’s better to avoid pork altogether, because pork contains fats that are unhealthy. Offal is very healthy but should be fed sparingly. Not more than twice a week.

You can feed: lambs heart, beef heart, kidneys, chicken livers, chicken stomachs and hearts. Liver on its own contains a lot of vitamin A, which is especially important for the cat, which can’t make vitamin A from carotene. To avoid chemicals, which can be in liver, it is better to use liver from organically bred/kept animals. Don’t feed more than twice a week. Cats that cannot eat liver should regularly have an egg yolk mixed with their food.

Bones are very good for your pet but they have to be raw. Chicken bones cooked can splinter! Watch out in the beginning when you are feeding bones. The animal has to get used to it. A dog or cat, which has only been fed on dried food, has to get slowly introduced to bones. So start with small bits and take care they chew their food. Give bones with meat on it. If you don’t like to feed bones, then don’t do it. It is not necessary but the animals love it.

### **Vegetables**

The second part of the food intake is vegetables, which have to be made small. Our pets can not handle big pieces. The vegetables they would get in the wild are from the bowels of their prey. Every vegetable can be used except onion and leek. Example for use: carrot, cauliflower, broccoli, spinach, beans, lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts, cabbage and also fruits like apple, pear or banana. Especially green-leaved vegetables and alfalfa contain much calcium and are good for the animal.

Besides meat and vegetables it is also important to feed carbohydrates. This can be: well cooked rice, grains, macaroni and spaghetti. Animals with stomach/bowel problems or allergies should stay away from grains.

Things to enrich the food: oil (linseed oil), fish oil, yoghurt, raw egg, kelp, garlic and herbs. Herbs: parsley (excellent for kidneys.) Thyme (good for infections and skin problems).

How much to feed the animal:

Cats are real meat eaters, while dogs eat everything. Cats are much more choosy and don’t take to changes easily.

Dogs should be given bones 5 times per week and other meals consisting for 1/4 -1/2 meat/protein, 1/2 raw vegetables and other meals cooked.

Cats 1/2 – 3/4 meat/protein and the rest raw vegetables and give raw chicken wings for the bones. The amount to feed differs per animal. Start to period and a dog within a 5 minute give the amount of food that a cat can eat within a



10 minute time period and watch over time if they put on weight or lose weight and feed accordingly.

Best way- meat/ vegetable mix about 20-30 gram per kg animal. For some animals it is better to lightly cook the food especially for those animals that have difficulties moving from dried food to the self made food and also for animals with stomach and bowel problems. **DON'T BOIL BONES!**

It is not necessary to have a balanced meal every time but what is important is variation in the same way as it is for us humans. So in short, use your creativity, experiment and see how your pet enjoys its food.

Source Centrum De Oasis (Holistic Vets) Holland

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## **Cat Bereavement by Jim Stephens**

It is often believed, that because cats are solitary hunters, they cannot live in social groups or that they are unaffected by the death of another cat in the household. Cats that suddenly lose another cat from the household can undergo behavioural changes which we can refer to as grief. No one can predict how your cat will react to the changes brought about by the absence of the other cat.

The sudden change can cause stress which can make the cat “depressed”. Common symptoms of depression are : a reduction in activity, increase in sleep, avoidance of human company, loss of appetite and increased vocalisations, all of which can be harmful to your surviving cat. Because stress hormones are secreted, there may be physical effects include stomach upsets, hair-loss (often through over-grooming since grooming is a comforting activity) and inappropriate toileting / spraying.

Behavioural changes may appear to show that the cat is unaffected or even “happier “. This is explained by the fact that the surviving cat no longer has to share valuable resources and can now have access to objects from which it was once denied by the other cat. This can also explain why the surviving cat can appear to take on the behaviours of the lost cat e.g. sitting in the favourite spot etc.



There are a number of things you can do to help a grieving cat to overcome the loss. If there is no risk of disease or infection then allowing your cat to investigate the deceased cat can reduce stress levels and behavioural changes as the cat knows that the body cannot move and now smells differently and therefore the surviving cat will not be “searching” for an absentee.

Minimising change gives the cat time to come to terms with the loss of a companion cat. Keep the surviving cat's routine the same. Changes in feeding times or even simply moving furniture around can cause further stress.

Encourage eating by warming food slightly or putting water or meat juice on it. Sit with your cat during meal times to provide reassurance. Don't be tempted to change diets to stimulate appetite as this may result in digestive upsets. If the cat does not eat for three days seek veterinary advice, as it may be in danger of a potentially fatal liver disease called hepatic lipidosis.

The use of cat Pheromones (Feliway) and calming supplements such as Pet Calm can help reduce stress and help your cat to come to terms with its loss and new environment. The period of recovery can be from 2 weeks to 6 months therefore it is advisable not to simply replace the missing cat with a new one as this will only add further stressors to the survivor's environment.

If your cat's behaviour changes radically then it is important that the cat be taken to a vet in case of any physical causes. If none are found then you can be referred to a qualified behaviourist who can help with these matters.

Jim Stephens - MSc. CABC (Companion Animal Behaviour Counsellor) , [www.petsbehave.com](http://www.petsbehave.com) [info@petsbehave.com](mailto:info@petsbehave.com) 01-4949 800

Jim will be in the speakers corner at the Supreme Show - see page 3 'Supreme Show'

# The Catwalk

Diesel -



Honestly, I thought  
I left it right there.

Didn't I?

V. Reynolds, Dublin

Tibi -



Well, let me  
tell more.

R. Butler, Kildare

Office Trainee -



Is this the shift key?

R. Brooks, Carlow

# The Catwalk

**Pushkin -**

The basketcase

Good!

A. Kiely, Dublin



**Gizmo -**

The Cushioncase

Better!!

R. Butler, Kildare



**Burbonne -**

The Bedcase

Best!!!

G. Hehir, Dublin



## The Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable. All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigour; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them.

When our time comes they will be waiting for us and then we will cross the Rainbow Bridge together.

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### Tara Grand Premier Dodderedoo Arnold

March 2010



A male Burmese known as 'Arthur', a gentle loving and much loved cat. A great companion, who liked nothing better than to accompany me wherever I was going; even packing himself to go on holidays to Madeira.

He loved cat shows and on many occasions sneaked in with the intended exhibit, only to be discovered by the excess weight in the carrier. On any opportunity, he got he delighted in slipping out of the hall door only to be brought back to me under the arm of one of his many friends in the neighbourhood.

Arthur succumbed to kidney failure in his 20th year. He is very sadly missed: I have lost a friend. I trust that his mate of many years, Siamese Red Point 'Jack Jack' greeted Arthur at the Rainbow Bridge and that they are curled up again together at peace.

Georgina Goodison, Kaliste Siamese Cats  
(photo - Arthur & Georgina at the Supreme Cat Show on the day he became a Tara Grand Premier)

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### Caramel

February 2010

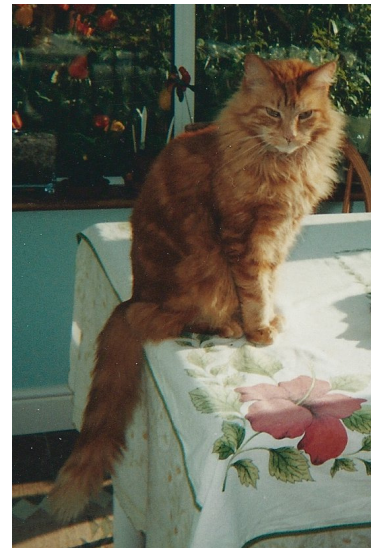
A few lines about Caramel who went to sleep in February this year and broke our hearts:-

You came to us as a fiery red fur ball and soon enchanted us with your antics, especially hitching a lift down the stairs, perched on our necks.

Your gentle nature made us love you as a family member and we are so sad we had to say goodbye in February.

For the 10 years of unfailing affection you gave us and for the happy times we shared with you, we remain truly thankful.

Annie Murphy



**No Heaven will not ever Heaven be - Unless my cats are there to welcome me**

Anonymous





## New York City East Villagers Remember a Cat Called Pretty Boy

Pretty Boy, known as the Mayor of East Seventh Street, at Mikey's Pet Shop, died last June. Pretty Boy was a dignified white cat who had a confident swagger and a distaste for rainy weather. Thus the long delayed memorial service to sprinkle his cremated remains along the path he once strutted.



Believed to be about 22 years old, Pretty Boy was a local fixture for over a decade, making his rounds on the south side of the block between First Avenue and Avenue A, as shops opened and closed and renters moved in and out. His death, of natural causes, unleashed a storm of emotion.

A business owner broke into tears at his mention. One young resident wept through a rehearsal for her kindergarten graduation. And Herbie, a dishevelled supermodel of a cat who used to live with Pretty Boy at Mikey's Pet Shop, has retreated behind bags of kitty litter to grieve privately.

'Every day I cry,' said Betty Knapp, who used to work at Mikey's. Pretty Boy used to rest on her chest when her blood pressure rose, she said, and it helped to calm her down. Now, she bursts into sobs when she talks about him, 'He knew he was the man. He was the man on East Seventh Street. Everybody just loved him.'

While accounts differ on exactly when Pretty Boy appeared on the block, Mikey Diaz, owner of the pet store, said he had strutted in and leapt onto the counter shortly after the store opened in this spot in 1998. Pretty Boy started sleeping in the shop at night and was later joined by Herbie. During the day he ventured a few doors down to a hair salon called Chatsii, where he perched on the reception counter and leapt onto the laps of customers. Some days, Mr Diaz said, he swaggered through a Swiss restaurant on the block.

But the turnover of shops on the block meant changes for Pretty Boy. The previous owner of Chatsii said that after she retired in 2004 Pretty Boy was no longer welcome in the place: The new owners were allergic to cats. And the Swiss restaurant closed. So in 2004, Pretty Boy showed up at Salon Seven, a little further down the block, and began a friendship with the owner.

It made a good life: After waking to breakfast and a face washing from Mr Diaz, Pretty Boy headed over to spend the day in Salon Seven, sniffing hub caps on the way over and meowing for water upon his arrival.

He spent his day purring, sprawled on the appointment calendar at the reception desk and in the laps of clients having their hair washed. The cat's love of hair salons made the owner suspect that he was a reincarnated hairdresser. When he returned to the pet shop at day's end, Pretty Boy was less subdued, chasing Herbie around the store and breaking into catnip. When rats appeared, however, Pretty Boy typically stayed on the counter and let Herbie handle them.

At the end of his life, Pretty Boy was balancing a fairly demanding schedule. He spent Saturdays travelling back and forth, greeting clients at the hair salon and purring for fans and families who stopped by to him after services at a synagogue in the neighborhood. Sundays brought children from the Ukrainian church.

Standing before the Pretty Boy memorial he made with photographs and a vase of pink peonies Mr Dolengowski, owner of the salon, conceded that the cat's death had broken his heart. 'You get so hard living here,' he said gravely, mournful voice. 'But pets open up that heart center. There is something about the unconditional love; they clean the blues off you. That is their mission. That's why a lot of New Yorkers have pets.'

Due to the steady rain, Pretty Boy's funeral had to be rescheduled twice as mourners awaited an outlet for their collective grief.

New York Times - June 2009

***It is a very inconvenient habit of kittens that whatever you say to them, they always purr.***

## Cats 'Exploit' Humans by Purring

Cat owners may have suspected as much, but it seems our feline friends have found a way to manipulate us humans. Researchers at the University of Sussex have discovered that cats use a "soliciting purr" to overpower their owners and garner attention and food.

Unlike regular purring, this sound incorporates a "cry", with a similar frequency to a human baby's. The team said cats have "tapped into" a human bias - producing a sound that humans find very difficult to ignore. Dr Karen McComb, the lead author of the study that was published in the journal *Current Biology*, said the research was inspired by her own cat, Pepo. "He would wake me up in the morning with this insistent purr that was really rather annoying," Dr McComb told BBC News. "After a little bit of investigation, I discovered that there are other cat owners who are similarly bombarded early in the morning."



While miaowing might get a cat expelled from the bedroom, Dr McComb said that this pestering purr often convinced beleaguered pet lovers to get up and fill their cat's bowl. To find out why, her team had to train cat owners to make recordings of their own cats' vocal tactics - recording both their "soliciting purrs" and regular, "non-soliciting" purrs. "When we played the recordings to human volunteers, even those people with no experience of cats found the soliciting purrs more urgent and less pleasant," said Dr McComb.

Dr McComb and her team also asked the volunteers to rate the different purrs - giving them a score based on how urgent and pleasant they perceived them to be. "We could then relate the scores back to the specific purrs," explained Dr McComb. "The key thing (that made the purrs more unpleasant and difficult to ignore) was the relative level of this embedded high-frequency sound." "When an animal vocalises, the vocal folds (or cords) held across the stream of air snap shut at a particular frequency," explained Dr McComb. The perceived pitch of that sound depends on the size, length and tension of the vocal folds. "But cats are able to produce a low frequency purr by activating the muscles of their vocal folds - stimulating them to vibrate," explained Dr McComb.

Since each of these sounds is produced by a different mechanism, cats are able to embed a high-pitched cry in an otherwise relaxing purr. "How urgent and unpleasant the purr is seems to depend on how much energy the cat puts into producing that cry," said Dr McComb. Previous studies have found similarities between a domestic cat's cry and the cry of a human baby - a sound that humans are highly sensitive to. Dr McComb said that the cry occurs at a low level in cats' normal purring. "But we think that (they) learn to dramatically exaggerate it when it proves effective in generating a response from humans." She added that the trait seemed to most often develop in cats that have a one-on-one relationship with their owners. "Obviously we don't know what's going on inside their minds," said Dr McComb. "But they learn how to do this, and then they do it quite deliberately."

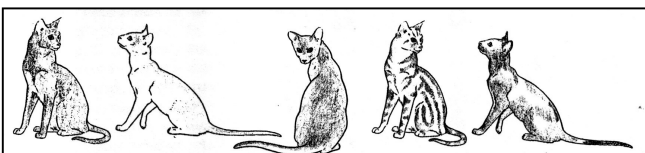
So how does Dr McComb feel about Pepo now she knows he has been manipulating her all these years? "He's been the inspiration for this whole study, so I'll forgive him - credit where credit's due."

BBC News 2009 - [news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)

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### More Cat Resolutions

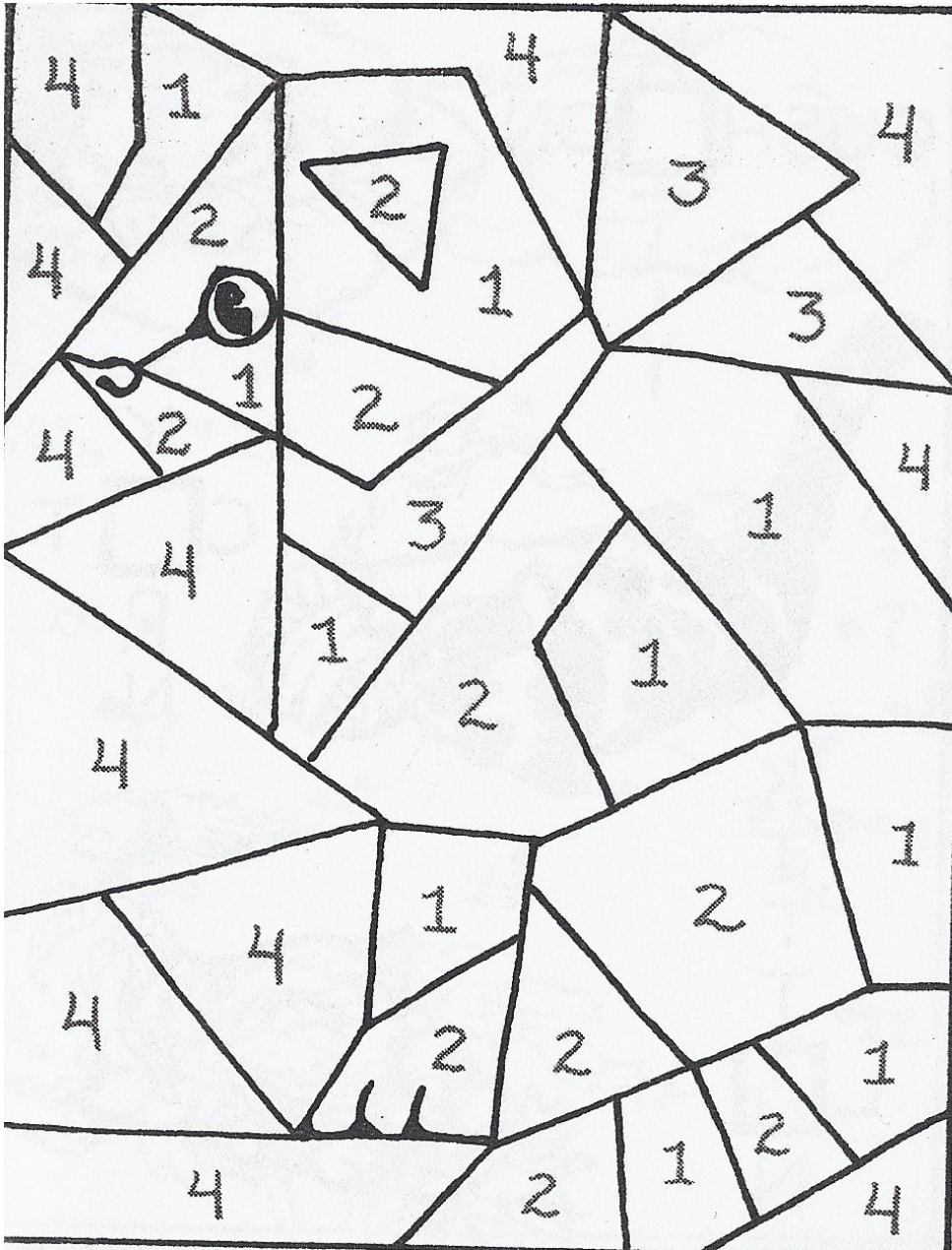
- I will not perch on my Human's chest in the middle of the night and stare into her eyes until she awakes up.
- I will not drag dirty socks from the laundry basket in the middle of the night, deposit them on the bed and yell at the top of my lungs so that my Human can admire my 'Kill'
- As fast as I am, I must remember that I cannot run through closed doors



**A**ll things come to those who purr!



## KIT'S KORNER



Use these colours to find out what is in the picture:

1. Brown or Orange
2. Yellow, or leave White
3. Pink
4. Light Green or Blue

## **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 to us.

Many thanks to our sponsor **Breffni House Pets** who has supported SABCCI over the years

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