

# The Scratching Post



**SABCCI Newsletter - Spring 2013**

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



# The Scratching Post

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*Don't forget the cat food*

### Cats or Husband?

A husband has filed for divorce because his wife refuses to part with her 550 cats. The man told the rabbinical court in Beersheba, Israel, that he couldn't sleep in the couple's bedroom because the bed was covered with cats. They wouldn't let him into the bathroom and also stole his food. The couple had attempted a reconciliation but the wife chose the cats over her husband.

Irish Times June 2012



**"You've been outbid for the vintage catnip — what do you want me to do?"**

## Editorial

Welcome to our Spring 2013 10th issue of The Scratching Post. Many thanks to Breffni House Pets in Dundum who continues to be our sponsor.

So if you're ready, sit back with a glass of sparkling water 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 GCCFI Supreme Show

21st of April

Ballinteer Community School, Ballinteer, Dublin 16

Open to the Public 12:30 - 5:00

Best in Show Judging 4:00 onwards

See You There!



**SABCCI News**

**Congratulations to - Christine Wall**

Christine has been awarded the SABCCI 'Points Trophy' for being the exhibitor with the most points accumulated at the SABCCI show in October. The award was announced at the SABCCI AGM last February.

### Bethany Trankner & Her Cat Sherlock

Bethany's kitten Sherlock was four months old when she decided to enter him into the Siamese and all Breeds Cat Club of Ireland show last October. This was both Bethany and Sherlock's first show and there was great excitement surrounding this new venture. To their amazement he outdid himself, by winning eight rosettes and two trophies.

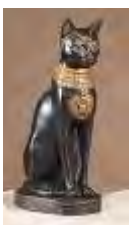
En-route to the show there was great anticipation as to what lay ahead. Sherlock nervous in his carrying case, Mummy making a homemade rosette (just in case!) and Bethany telling him, he was the best kitten in the world no matter what he won, (or more to the point didn't win!). On arrival he was vet checked in, to his little owners amazement there was well over a hundred cats there and some had even flown in that morning from England. No pressure Sherlock!



Sherlock took up his place in pen No. 111 and looked on in amazement at all the different cats and people, he had never seen such activity in his short little life. After judging, rosette after rosette was pinned to his pen, Bethany jumped up and down in excitement as she told her Mother that 'he has so many rosettes you can't see him in his pen'. A far cry from the homemade one Mummy had prepared! Bethany sat in the front row with her Grandparents for the final, where the seven Best in Show cats were brought up to their 'special' pens, with giant rosettes on them. Bethany leapt off her seat as she saw her kitten arrive in his case. Tears came to Mummy's eyes as Bethany beamed from ear to ear as her name was announced as the owner of the Best in Show Siamese by a judge, as another judge went onto take him out and show him off to the audience. As Sherlock went onto win his Silver Platter and Cup, Bethany declared it was the 'best day of her life'.

Now Bethany and Sherlock have come back down to earth, they chill out with a nice snooze after a long day at school and play happily together.

Well done Sherlock and Bethany!



### Nine Afterlives of the Cat

Like dogs, cats were very important to Ancient Egyptians. Egyptians gave cats a god-like status by 1700 B.C. and depicted them in statues and wall drawings [source: Bard]. Egyptians also mummified cats often. Inspections of these cat mummies reveal that Egyptians probably put just as much care and reverence into this mummification practice as they did for humans [source: Owen].

[Howstuffworks.com](http://Howstuffworks.com)

## The Pedigree - The American Shorthair

Records indicate several shorthaired cats arrived in North America on the Mayflower, in 1620, and later various other ships. Although they probably sneaked aboard, they were soon revered for controlling the rodent population on the ships and later on the settlers' farms. Those American barn cats were selected more for ruggedness and natural hunting talent than for their beauty. However, as the American cat population grew, farmers began to keep the kittens that appealed to them based on flashy colours, bold patterns, general conformation, and disposition.

In the early 1900s, cats were imported to the U.S. from different countries and mixed with the first American cats. In an effort to save the original American cat, a group of fanciers chose a handful of cats showing the characteristics of the "native" cat and began breeding them selectively. In 1906, the Cat Fanciers Association (CFA) recognized the American Shorthair, which was called the Domestic Shorthair at the time. In 1966, named was changed to American Shorthair, and denotes a pure breed rather than a mixed breed cat.

### The Body

These domestic cats are medium-to-large and solidly built cats and whilst medium-boned, they are very muscular and powerful cats with well developed shoulders, chest and hindquarters. American Shorthair cats are described as robust and sturdy cats that are slightly longer than they are tall. Their legs compliment their bodies and are medium in length and also heavily muscled. They have a heavy, medium length tail which is broad at the base and gently tapers to a blunt tip.

To compliment their solidly built body, these cats have large heads and full-cheeks which gives their face a sweet, open Expression. They have a long strong jaw, square muzzle, square and well developed chin. Ears are medium sized with rounded tips and are set quite wide apart.

Their large, wide-set eyes are bright and alert and the eye-colour is appropriate to the coat colour. While a brilliant gold eye colour is seen in most coats, blue or odd-eyes are seen in white cats; green and hazel eyes are seen in tabbies and green to blue-green eyes are found in tipped coats.



Silver Tabby



### The Coat

They come in more than eighty different colours and patterns, including calico, tabby and all white. Solid colours, Smoke, Bi-colours, Parti-colours and a range of Tabbies.

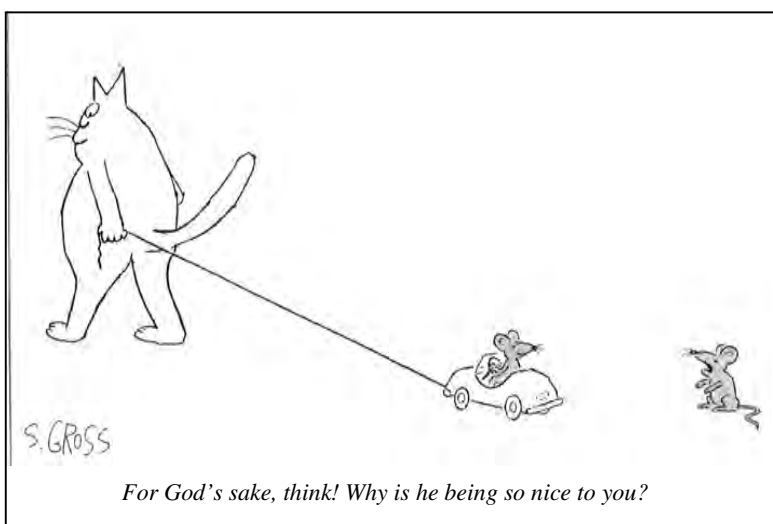
The coat is described as short, thick and glossy with hair that lies close to the body. They have a dense undercoat that protects the cat from cold, moisture and superficial skin injuries. They do not require extensive grooming. Brushing once a week is usually enough to maintain for coats.

### The Personality

They are playful and athletic, outgoing and most of all, very intelligent. They are independent and very alert cats which makes them excellent hunters. These cats demonstrate power, endurance and agility.

Although the breed is very affectionate, they do not require constant attention. They are very adept at entertaining themselves. An American frequently finds imaginary 'friends' with whom to play. Or, maybe they are refreshing mouse hunting skills from by-gone days. Whatever it is, they can play happily for a long time with something that is not visible to the human eye. They also love to be part of a communal game, chasing a toy on a string or attacking a waving feather. [catster.com](http://catster.com) & [catbreedsjunction.com](http://catbreedsjunction.com)

Above Steely Dan. Breeder Robin Pulaski has had her cats appear in the Friskies advertisements in the US.



*For God's sake, think! Why is he being so nice to you?*

### Rules for Cats

The cat is not allowed on the furniture.

Alright. The cat can go on the furniture, but NOT the kitchen counter.

OK. The cat can go on the kitchen counter top too. Just not when I'm preparing food. Deal?

Fine... The cat can go wherever it wants, whenever it wants, as long as it doesn't swat me in the face at 5:30 in the morning demanding to be fed.

The cat will be feed at 5:30 in the morning.

## Your Cuddly Kitty Is Deadlier Than You Think

For all the adorable images of cats that play the piano, flush the toilet, mew melodiously and find their way back home over hundreds of miles, scientists have identified a shocking new truth: cats are far deadlier than anyone realized.

In a report that scaled up local surveys and pilot studies to national dimensions, scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that domestic cats in the United States - both the pet Fluffies that spend part of the day outdoors and the unnamed strays and ferals that never leave it - kill a median of 2.4 billion birds and 12.3 billion mammals a year, most of them native mammals like shrews, chipmunks and voles rather than introduced pests like the Norway rat.

The estimated kill rates are two to four times higher than mortality figures previously bandied about, and position the domestic cat as one of the single greatest human-linked threats to wildlife in the US. More birds and mammals die at the mouths of cats, the report said, than from automobile strikes, pesticides and poisons, collisions with skyscrapers and windmills and other so-called anthropogenic causes.

Peter Marra of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and an author of the report, said the mortality figures that emerge from the new model “are shockingly high. When we ran the model, we didn’t know what to expect,” said Dr. Marra, who performed the analysis with a colleague, Scott R. Loss, and Tom Will of the Fish and Wildlife Service. “We were absolutely stunned by the results. The findings are the first serious estimate of just how much wildlife America’s vast population of free-roaming domestic cats manages to kill each year. We’ve been discussing this problem of cats and wildlife for years and years, and now we finally have some good science to start nailing down the numbers,” said George H. Fenwick, the president and chief executive of the American Bird Conservancy. “This is a great leap forward over the quality of research we had before.”



In devising their mathematical model, the researchers systematically sifted through the existing scientific literature on cat-wildlife interactions, eliminated studies in which the sample size was too small or the results too extreme, and then extracted and standardized the findings from the 21 most rigorous studies. The results admittedly come with wide ranges and uncertainties.

Nevertheless, the new report is likely to fuel the sometimes vitriolic debate between environmentalists who see free-roaming domestic cats as an invasive species - super predators whose numbers are growing globally even as the songbirds and many other animals the cats prey on are in decline - and animal welfare advocates who are appalled by the millions of unwanted cats (and dogs) euthanized in animal shelters each year.

All concur that pet cats should not be allowed to prowl around the neighborhood at will, any more than should a pet dog, horse or potbellied pig, and that cat owners who insist their felines “deserve” a bit of freedom are being irresponsible and ultimately not very cat friendly. Through recent projects like Kitty Cams at the University of Georgia, in which cameras are attached to the collars of indoor-outdoor pet cats to track their activities, not only have cats been filmed preying on cardinals, frogs and field mice, they have also been shown lapping up antifreeze and sewer sludge, dodging under moving cars and sparring violently with much bigger dogs.

“We’ve put a lot of effort into trying to educate people that they should not let their cats outside, that it’s bad for the cats and can shorten the cats’ lives,” said Danielle Bays, the manager of the community cat programs at the Washington Humane Society.

Yet the new study estimates that free-roaming pets account for only about 29% of the birds and 11% of the mammals killed by domestic cats each year, and the real problem arises over how to manage the 80 million or so stray or feral cats that commit the bulk of the wildlife slaughter.

The Washington Humane Society and many other animal welfare organizations support the use of increasingly popular trap-neuter-return programs, in which unowned cats are caught, vaccinated, spayed and, if no home can be found for them, returned to the outdoor colony from which they came. Proponents see this approach as a humane alternative to large-scale euthanasia, and they insist that a colony of neutered cats can’t reproduce and thus will eventually disappear.

Conservationists say that, far from diminishing the population of unowned cats, trap and release programs may be making it worse, by encouraging people to abandon their pets to outdoor colonies that volunteers often keep lovingly fed.

Yet even fed cats are profoundly tuned to the hunt, and when they see something flutter, they can’t help but move in for the kill. Dr. Fenwick argues that far more effort should be put into animal adoption. “For the great majority of healthy cats,” he said, “homes can be found.” Any outdoor colonies that remain should be enclosed, he said. “Cats don’t need to wander hundred of miles to be happy,” he said.

Natalie Angier January 2013

## Somerville Cat Video Fest & ‘Strollercat’

Somerville, Mass. USA — “I think there’s something about cat videos,” Rachel Strutt, program manager at the Somerville Arts Council, told me the other day. “People just spend an inordinate amount of time watching cat videos. They’re great performers.”

We were talking about the awesomeness of cat videos because this Sunday the august Somerville arts folks are presenting the ‘The Copy Cat Fest’ a three-hour extravaganza of cat videos (both locally submitted and international), a slideshow of cat photos, readings of cat stories and poems, a cat costume table, cat cupcakes, cat-related vendors and an appearance by the infamous Strollercat (more on him in a minute). Emcee Jef Czekaj of Somerville will also read from his kids book “Cat Secrets.” Basically oodles of lolcats and unbearable adorableness.

“The response has been crazy,” Strutt said. “The event sold out in 24 hours. And so we had to add a second show.”

So actually the Somerville Arts Council is planning two three-hour extravaganzas at noon and 4 p.m. (because the 4 p.m. show sold out) on Sunday, Feb. 17, at Arts at the Armory.

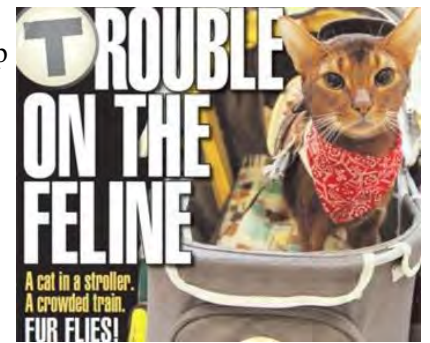
“We like to celebrate silly things and come together as a community,” Strutt said. “I think it makes sense for Somerville. I think people have an appetite for the absurd.”

They’re calling it the “Copy Cat Festival” because the idea for the thing came from the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, which held an open-air screening of its “Internet Cat Video Festival” last Aug. 30. “People tend to watch cat videos alone, maybe sneak in a few at work,” Strutt said. “They turned it inside out and made it a big public spectacle. And 10,000 people came.” (The University of Massachusetts at Boston screened that festival’s 78 videos here on Oct. 23.)

**Now, the saga of Strollercat** - “He’s the closest thing Boston has to a celebrity cat,” Strutt noted. “Strollercat, his name is Jake,” she explained, “and his owner dresses him up in various getups — tuxedo, ski parka, cowboy — and then she puts him in a stroller and rolls him around town.” Which was peachy until the evening of last Oct. 30, when his owner wheeled the Abyssinian onto the T’s Red Line. And the Twittersverse exploded: “Lady with a cat in full-sized/meant for children stroller preventing me and 8 other saps from going on T.”



Strollercat’s owner Coco Koh, who regularly blogs about her catty adventures, tweeted right back: “FYI snippy woman on the Red Line: cats (& dogs) ARE allowed on MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority) long as they’re properly contained!!!”



Universal Hub reported it almost immediately. The next thing you knew, Strollercat was on the front page of the Nov. 1 Boston Herald: “Trouble on the Feline: A cat in a stroller. A crowded train. Fur flies!”  
Greg Cook , February 14, 2013 - 90.9wbur

## Care for Your Cats in the Summer Months

- ⇒ **Poisonous Plants** - Make sure the garden plants in your garden are safe for cats if nibbled and even rubbed against. Many plants, particularly lilies, contain toxins that are very harmful to our cats. See [www.fabcats.org/owners/poisons/plants.html](http://www.fabcats.org/owners/poisons/plants.html) for a list of plants to avoid.
- ⇒ **The Sun** - Protect your cat from the sun to prevent sunburn or even skin cancer. Pale-coloured cats and those with fine hair on their ears are most at risk. Encourage your cat to sit in the shade if possible and apply a sunscreen (one designed for children or pets) that is SPF40 or more.
- ⇒ **A Bug’s Life** - Bee and wasp stings are very common in cats. Stings in the mouth or throat can be serious and immediate veterinary attention is required if this is suspected. Also, watch for potentially fatal flystrike (where flies lay eggs in soiled fur/wounds) and flies laying eggs in your cat’s wet food (clean bowls and don’t leave food out for too long). Also, before putting down ant powder or slug pellets, check the label to make sure they are not harmful to your cat.
- ⇒ **Let Me Out!** - Before you shut your shed/outbuilding/greenhouse/garage, check there are no cats inside - Cats are curious creatures and can slip in quickly and silently! Also, make sure coals and barbecue racks have cooled before you leave them unattended.
- ⇒ **Be Vigilant** - Air gun attacks on cats increase in the summer months. An air gun would make about 5mm in diameter, perfectly circular with a reddened edge. If you’re worried, contact your vet immediately. Encourage your cat to stay in your garden but if he does love to explore, ensure he is micro chipped.





## The Siamese and All Breeds Cat Club 59th Show

Knocklyon Community Centre - 21st October 2012



The 59th SABCCI Show was held on Sunday 21st October at our usual venue of Knocklyon. Unfortunately judge Mr George Gow had to drop out but Mrs Pat Perkins and Mr Steve Morris-Nash stepped in to cover his classes, our other judges were Mrs Barbara Prowse, Mrs Joan Smith and Mrs Michele Codd – Mrs Prowse and Mrs Smith were judging in England on the Saturday and flew over early Sunday morning to judge for us – we are so tremendously grateful for them taking all this trouble for us. We had an excellent entry of 135 cats and had to ask Margaret Baker to step in as well to do the non peds for us.

It was a lovely bright day, such a change after last year when we had the most horrendous storm which badly affected our gate – no problem this year as we had an excellent turnout!

We had a few problems when some of the certificates weren't signed; we were desperately short of help on the table and several workers had never done it before so there were necessarily a few hitches and some of our judges had to leave to catch flights back to the UK. The certificates have been sent to the judge for signing and will be passed on to the winners as soon as they arrive back, our apologies for any disappointment.

What an interesting Best in Show!

All the Persian winners, adult, kitten and neuter had the same SHEERBLISS prefix, 3 lovely exotics all bred by our long time northern supporters Heather Craig and Alan Bell. And would you believe all the Semi Long Hairs also shared a prefix – 3 gorgeous ISHCUS Maine Coons, bred by our own well known Sharon Saville Incidentally, her famous SUP TARA GR PR & INT GR PR ISHCUS REDDEVIL, owned by Em Callan and Jacqui Russell became the first HIBERNIAN in the country – what a wonderful day for Ishcus!

### The Best In Show Winners

**PERSIAN** – Christine Wall's INT CH SHEERBLISS ENRICO (Exotic)

**SLH** – Sharon Saville's INT GR CH ISHCUS MELISA (Maine Coon)

**BRITISH** - Maura Lenihan's SKYOTA SIODA DATHUIL (Selkirk Rex)

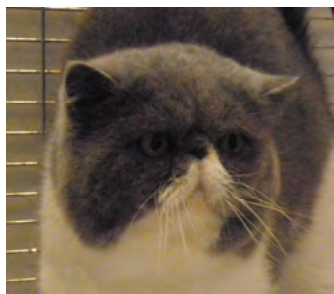
**FOREIGN** – Joy Frizelle's PR ACCLAIM DIVA FEVER (Egyptian Mau)

**BURMESE** – Karen Sluiters' TARA GR CH & PR ALDEBIZ GINCHIKARA (Lilac)

**ORIENTAL** – Pamela Sharp Popple's DENSON BRUCEGRAHAMNUTT (Havana)

**SIAMESE** – Bethany Trankner's SIAWYE SHERLOCK (SealPoint)

### Overall Best In Show - INT CH SHEERBLISS ENRICO



Now for the most difficult part of this report, my thanks to the many people who worked so hard to make the show a success. I am blessed with an amazing committee, every one of whom worked their socks off; it's a real team effort. Gloria who trouble shoots during the day then runs Best In Show so effortlessly; Karen who did the publicity, Hugh on the cups, Elizabeth doing the litter bags, Alice who does the information table and seems to keep a cool head when everyone else is rushing about like mad things; Alison who sorts out all the money and magically makes sense of it. Not on the committee but where would we be without them - Betty who organised the vets was then spotted beavering away on the results table, and Carmel running the table under extreme pressure with her hardworking team, but sadly undermanned, a sterling job under very difficult conditions. But mostly to chairman Tony who does all the odd jobs no one knows about, from getting the judges to and from the hotel and airport, making all the signs and erecting them, moving tables and chairs about ( With a lot of help from Alice I must say) and being the last person out of the hall, after sweeping it out. (Yes, we even have to do that folks!) But chiefly for listening to all my moans and saying 'don't worry, we'll sort it'. Bless you Tony. And to you the exhibitors for bringing your glorious cats for all to see, thank you each and every one of you.

Ronnie Brooks, Show Manager

PS Don't forget it's the big one next year – our 60th and any ideas that you'd like to see let one of us know.

*(The complete list of BOV winners is available on the SABCCI website.)*

## Cats In The News

### Larry vs. Freya in Downing Street Fued

Downing Street has denied rumours of a feud between cats belonging to the chancellor and prime minister after they were pictured fighting. George Osborne's Freya was photographed slugging David Cameron's Larry with a nasty-looking left claw, the evidence being posted on Twitter. But the PM's spokeswoman insisted the two tabbies were able to "co-exist". She added that she would not "get into commenting on the adventures of our feline friends".

Residents of Numbers 10 and 11 Downing Street have historically disagreed strongly over policy. Labour's Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were reportedly often left hissing over public sector reform impasses. But Mr Osborne and Mr Cameron are thought to be among the more friendly prime minister-chancellor teams of recent decades.

Five-year-old Larry, in fact, has sometimes been castigated for a lack of aggression, and his suitability for "mousing" duties was questioned as a result of repeatedly falling asleep on the job. The Political Pictures snap seems to confirm Freya's dominance. In it she bats Larry away, while he raises his right paw in what could be placatory fashion.

Larry came to Downing Street from Battersea Dogs and Cats Home in February last year after a large rat was seen scuttling past the door of No 10 during live television broadcasts.

Freya went missing from the Osbornes' old home in Notting Hill, west London, for two years, her owners being identified when a vet found the details on a microchip. They were reunited last year.

Perhaps hardened by her time on the road, Freya has been drafted in for pest control duties, in an arrangement described by the Daily Mail as a "job-share to avoid hurting Larry's feelings".

Justin Parkinson Political reporter, BBC News



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### Appeal Launched To Find Home For Abandoned Cat Who Resembles Silent Film Star

#### Loveable stray has tiny black moustache and a slapstick comedy walk

An abandoned cat with distinctive markings that make her look just like Charlie Chaplin was looking for a home last Christmas.

The loveable seven-year-old - named Charlie by staff at a Cambridgeshire animal shelter - is the spitting image of the silent film star. She sports a tiny black moustache, sticking-up hair and a comedic, pigeon-toed stance, just like the slapstick actor.

Carers also nicknamed the messy-haired cat 'the little fuzzy tramp' after Chaplin's iconic character from his 1915 film *The Tramp*.

But despite her movie star looks, Charlie has struggled to find a home because of adopters' preference for tabbies or ginger cats. She has been living at Wood Green Animal Shelter in Godmanchester since arriving in July bearing lesions and suffering from a skin condition.

Deputy manager Jane Harrup said: 'Charlie's little moustache gives her a real likeness to Chaplin. I noticed it straight away. When she came in



she had a bad skin condition and her fur was all sticking up and had bald patches. She looked fuzzy and tramp like, so she was know to us as the little fuzzy tramp - like the little funny tramp that Charlie Chaplin was sometimes referred to in one of his films. Charlie also sits with her feet very pigeon toed like Chaplin. Surprisingly I was the only one on the cat team who was old enough to know who Charlie Chaplin is - so I was the one who pointed out the similarity.'

Cat manager Christina Lines added: 'When she came in she was covered in lesions all over her shoulders and back. I took her home with me I could monitor her and give her treatment. She is much better now and will make a lovely pet. She is really friendly and great with children and she would make a lovely addition to someone's family. Everyone wants a perfect-looking cat like ones you see on the adverts. Black and white and all black cats are the hardest to rehome. If Charlie was a tabby or ginger I could have rehomed her ten times by now.'

Emma Reynolds, Main Online. December 2012





## The Quiz - Famous Cats

1. The musical 'Cats' is based on a book of poems by which British author?  
A) TS Eliot  
B) Louis Carroll  
C) Robert Louis Stevenson
2. Which of these cartoon cats appeared first  
A) Felix  
B) Sylvester  
C) Krazy Kat
3. In the Pink Panther movie series, who is the panther?  
A) A thief  
B) A detective  
C) A diamond
4. In 'Puss in Boots' which does the cat not do?  
A) Turn straw into gold  
B) Trick an ogre out of his castle  
C) Win a princess bride for his owner
5. What is the real name for DC Comics 'Catwoman'?  
A) Felina Fatale  
B) Selina Kyle  
C) Melina Plunder
6. What kind of cat is Sassy in the movie 'Homeward Bound: Incredible Journey'?  
A) Siamese  
B) Himalayan  
C) Persian
7. When the Cheshire Cat in 'Alice in Wonderland' disappears what is the only thing he leaves behind?  
A) Eyes  
B) Smile  
C) Hiss



Answers on page 14

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## Yummy Cat Food

### Ingredients -

- 3 cups raw or lightly cooked ground meat (beef, chicken, turkey, or lamb)
- 1 cup raw or slightly cooked organ meat (kidney, liver, heart, lung)
- 1 raw turkey neck, ground or finely chopped (be sure not to cook)
- 1 cup well-cooked grain (oats, rice, barley or cornmeal)
- ½ cup well cooked vegetable (broccoli, zucchini, carrots, squash or green beans)
- 1 Teaspoon olive oil or flax seed oil



### Preparation & Cooking -

Mix all ingredients together, and then divide into individual portions.

The less you cook the ingredients, the more nutritious it will be for your cat. If you freeze the individual portions, they will keep for several weeks and you can defrost one a day. When thawing, try not to use the microwave or another cooking method, since this will reduce nutrient levels. Instead, let food thaw overnight in the fridge. To warm it, place the food in a plastic bag with zipper closure, then immerse the bag into hot (not boiling) water for 10 minutes.

The amount of food prepared with this recipe should last for about 5 days for an adult cat of normal size. Your cat may eat more or less at each meal; use common sense to divide on serving size. Because this mixture is slightly lower in calories than dry food, you will need to serve slightly more of it in comparison. [Healthy Recipes for Pets.com](http://HealthyRecipesforPets.com)

**N**o matter how much cats fight, there always seem to be plenty of kittens.

US President Abraham Lincoln



# The Catwalk

**Mimi -**

Go Away! I am  
Not in the mood!

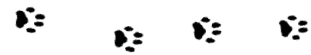
K.Sluiters, Dublin



**Louisa -**

Like my new tent!

S. Mackey, Dublin



**Yoko & Friend -**

How cosy is  
this?

A. Smith, Dublin



**Diva & Storm -**

I can't be that  
boring, can I?

T. Forshaw, Dublin



# The Catwalk



**Surya -**

Someone turn off  
that light!

G. Hehir, Dublin



**J'adore -**

I am really that  
good looking!

D. Hollander, Halland



**Snowball -**

I'm sooo tired.....

E. Callan, Mullingar



**Midge -**

Come into my office.  
I want to talk to you.

A. Rosse, USA



## Separation Anxiety & Your Cat

I was recently contacted by a cat owner who found that her cat would not eat when the owner was abroad or away on business trips. Any other time the cat was happy to eat but seemed to be aware when a longer than normal departure was imminent. On further questioning it became apparent that the cat, a female, was over attached to its owner and was attention seeking always wanting to be played with or else it would nuzzle for attention and if that failed then nip or scratch.

Separation anxiety is a common condition in dogs but one which has only recently been diagnosed in cats. It may have been misdiagnosed or unreported by owners because many of the symptoms exhibited by the cat can also be symptoms of other conditions often with a physical cause as one can consider when looking at the symptoms.

- **Over-attachment to the owner**, following that person from room to room around the house.
- **Distress as the owner prepares to depart** (pre-departure anxiety).
- **Vocalization** (crying, moaning, meowing) right after the owner has left
- **Anorexia** – the affected cat is often too anxious to eat when left alone.
- **Inappropriate elimination** – often in the form of urine marking, though faecal marking may also sometimes occur.
- **Vomiting** - only in the owner's absence.
- **Excessive self-grooming**. This starts as a displacement behaviour but can progress to compulsive self-grooming, if unchecked.
- **Destructive behaviour** – some cats may claw and scratch door edges presumably in an attempt to escape from their solitary confinement.



### Exuberant Greeting Behaviour

Sociality toward people has been shown to be governed by learned and inherited mechanisms. Domestic cats have developed the social skills necessary to cope with fluctuations in population density. For instance, when food is abundant in a restricted but desirable space, cats will tolerate crowding, and aggression may be inhibited. Social pressures on outdoor cats are driven by the availability of food, the population density of other outdoor cats, and the presence of various dangers. In the home a change of routine can be unsettling and lead to anxiety and the behaviours seen above.

There are 3 primary categories of separation related behaviours in cats : inappropriate elimination, vocalization, and destructiveness. Inappropriate elimination may be intentional (eg, territorial marking to release anxiety often on the bed of the missing person) or an involuntary physiologic effect of extreme distress (eg, stress-induced diarrhoea or urination). In one study, house soiling was the most common problem in cats with separation anxiety. In this study, inappropriate defecation was more common in neutered female cats than in neutered male cats. Seventy-five percent of cats that urinated inappropriately in association with the absence of an attachment figure did so exclusively on the owner's bed. This is because you as an owner spend 8 hours each day in bed and the bed acts as sponge and in effect becomes the concentrated essence of you. Excessive or persistent vocalization, typically attention-seeking distress calls, is reported in cats separation anxiety disorders. Destructiveness was observed in neutered males but not in neutered females. However, not all destructive behaviour that occurs in a owner's absence is due to a separation reaction. Accidental destruction of property by an unsupervised playful and inquisitive pet must be included in the differential diagnosis of destructiveness.

### Treating Separation Related Behaviours

The most important thing to do if you suspect your cat of having separation related behaviours is to eliminate the possible alternative physical causes of the symptoms . For example parasites may cause over grooming, worm infestations diarrhea, UTI inappropriate urination, all of which and more can be eliminated by a visit to your vet. Once the vet has eliminated any of the possible physical causes of the presenting problem then a behavioural history can be taken to ensure that it is actually separation related and a behaviour modification programme instituted.

Although all cats and their problems are individual there are general principles involved in behaviour modification of separation related problems. The aim in such programmes is to decrease dependence on the carer and to promote more independence and confidence in the cat. Gradual desensitisation of the cat to the triggers associated with departure (eg. Suitcases) and replacing them within a new context can help in changing the behavioural response. Thus the suitcase can be more or less permanently out on display rather than coming out the day before departure. Better still the empty suitcase can be made part of play with toys put into it etc. the owner must also try to stop inadvertently rewarding “bad” behaviour such as giving into attention seeking behaviours and instead reward “good” behaviours. This is where clicker training (see last newsletter) can help train a different response by the cat to being more independent.

Environmental enrichment and structured daily play where the owner decided what when and duration of play activities can help reduce the cat's need for attention seeking and thereby increase its confidence on being “alone”. If you want your cat to feel satisfied, entertained and secure when you aren't around then the environment in which he lives has to inspire that. By adding puzzle feeders, elevated areas, hideaways and more, you'll encourage him to find ways to trigger and satisfy his prey-drive. The more enriched and secure the environment is, the better your cat will feel when he's by himself. If you know your cat is food motivated and loves the puzzle feeders, then save them for when you won't be

*'Separation Anxiety' contd next page*

home during the day. That way, they'll become very special treats for your cat during your absence. A cat tree serves as a place to nap, play, climb, scratch and if placed near a window will provide a front row seat to the birds outside. As long as there is no threat of other cats coming into the garden, consider putting a bird feeder outdoors so your cat will have some first-rate entertainment while perched on his cat tree.

**Inspire confidence when you interact with your cat.** - Don't reward your cat with attention when he's meowing and being insistent. Instead, reward him with petting, treats, praise and attention when he's acting the way you **want** him to act. Reward him when he's quiet. Reward him when he does something to entertain himself. Reward the behavior you want to see again and don't reinforce the unwanted behavior.

**Engage your cat in interactive play sessions on a daily basis** - Interactive playtime allows your cat to simply enjoy being the mighty hunter. For a cat, being able to engage the prey drive and enjoy a successful capture is the ultimate in joy and satisfaction.

**Don't make a big production about leaving.** - If you anticipate that your cat is going to suffer from separation anxiety, you'll just make it worse if you overdo the goodbye process. Kitty will think you're leaving for a month instead of just 8 hours. Make your goodbyes very casual. Cats easily pick up on the emotions of their human family members. If you're upset then kitty may get upset.

**Practice coming and going** - If your cat starts to get tense whenever he hears you pick up your keys or if he sees you reach for your purse or coat, then practice doing those things several times a day without actually leaving. Pick up your keys and put them back down. Do this multiple times. Later in the day, walk to the door and then back. Do that several times. Now, put the two together – pick up your keys, walk to the door and then back. Later in the day, put on your coat and then take it off and then add all three together – putting on your coat, getting your keys and walking to the door. Work up to actually walking out the door and then immediately returning. Each time you walk back into the room, greet your cat casually or engage in a little play session. Vary the times you do these training sessions throughout the day or evening. Gradually increase the time spent outside of the home.

If there are particular objects that trigger the anxiety such as your keys, your purse, your brief case – then carry those around the house for a while each day so they are no longer an anxiety trigger.

However, some cats are so stressed by separation that they require medication to reduce their anxiety levels before they can begin to learn coping strategies. A good behaviourist will be in touch with your vet to discuss the need and type of medication required and be able to explain to you this and the protocol to use. The use of pheromone technology can also help reduce anxiety levels sufficient for behaviour modification techniques to begin. Some owners see the separation related “bad” behaviours as a feline revenge attack on them when in reality the cat is the “victim” of over attachment and once understood in this context the panic behaviour can be successfully changed by the patient owner.

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 Supreme Show on the 21st of April in Ballinteer Community School.

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## Keeping the Mystery In Your Relationship With Your Human - Hide All Day

Sometimes you need a day to yourself in order to rekindle the fires of your relationship. If you're really starting to feel that both of you need a little break, go and find a warm new hiding spot and settle down for a long day of keeping out of sight. This serves a dual purpose. First, it gives you the time to take stock of your relationship. Second, it makes your owner miss you like mad. As soon as she notices you aren't around, the search will begin. In the wardrobe, under the bed - she'll turn the house upside down trying to find out where you've gone. When you don't turn up in any of your usual places, the panic sets in. She'll rack her brains, trying to recall the number of times she opened the door that day, how long it was open, and whether it is possible that you could have sneaked out in the eight seconds it was open. After she has run around the house, calling your name, trying to see if you're outside, slowly and nonchalantly pad out into the living room, She'll be so overjoyed to see you that it will be at least three days before she takes you for granted again.



From 'The Devious Book For



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## Guidelines For Cats - Looking Cute

Never underestimate the power of looking cute! Wide eyes and pricked ears and whiskers with your head cocked slightly to one side is almost guaranteed to provoke the 'ooh' reaction, especially from younger members of the household. Learn from kittens - they frequently get away with all manner of misdeeds on the strength of being unspeakably cute. Mature cats should, of course, avoid misdeeds (as far as feliney possible), but accidents can and do happen. Many a canny cat has avoided chastisement by simply being 'too cute to be cross with.'

## Curiosity Tamed the Cat: Feline Domestication

In sharp contrast to dogs, cats did not evolve to look or act very different from their wild ancestors. This fact has made it difficult for scientists to determine when exactly cats domesticated. Although evidence shows that cats probably did not evolve from modern large cats, such as lions and tigers, Archaeologists cannot use the shapes of old bones and scientists cannot investigate DNA to distinguish between ancient small wild cats and modern domesticated cats. However, some evidence does lead scientists to believe that the modern domestic cat (*Felis catus*) may have descended from a European wild cat (*Felis silvestris*) and an African wild cat (*Felis lybica*), cats that still exist in the wild.



Other clues provide some convincing evidence about early feline domestication. For example, excavation of a 9,500-year-old gravesite revealed the remains of a human buried alongside a cat. From this evidence, historians believe that most likely by this time humans got personally attached to their feline friends. The proximity of the human and cat indicates that the burial was intentional and that cats held a significant role in that culture.

Even if guessing when cats became domesticated is difficult, why humans took them in is a little easier to speculate. Every kid who's seen a "Tom & Jerry" cartoon is familiar with cats' infamous dislike of mice. Usually cats are more successful at capturing, or at least scaring, their rodent prey than Tom ever was. It's exactly this skill that probably made cats so appealing to humans. Trading pest-control for food and shelter, cats eventually overcame their aversion to domestication.

Cats probably did not take to domestication as easily as wolves/dogs did because cats have no social hierarchy that allows humans to take the alpha role. Wolves travel in packs, following a highest-ranking wolf, but a cat is a solitary and proud animal who takes orders from no one. Although the domestic cat is its own species, its independence and the fact that domestication didn't cause any drastic changes allowed feral cats to survive on their own fairly well even if raised in the luxury of a human home. So, although they are not known for taking orders from humans, perhaps cats stick around because they enjoy receiving food and shelter from their human masters (or servants, depending on who you ask).

Although it was nice to have hunting and pest control partners, humans needed to rely on more than just dogs and cats to advance their civilization.

Howstuff works.com

## Did You Hear The One Where A Dog Applied For A Job?

A local business was looking for office help. They put a sign in the window stating the following: "Help Wanted. Must be able to type, must be good with a computer and must be bilingual. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer."

A short time afterwards, a dog trotted up to the window, saw the sign and went inside. He looked at the receptionist and wagged his tail, then walked over to the sign, looked at it and whined.

Getting the idea, the receptionist got the office manager. The office manager looked at the dog and was surprised, to say the least. However, the dog looked determined, so he lead him into the office. Inside, the dog jumped up on the chair and stared at the manager.

The manager said, "I can't hire you. The sign says you have to be able to type." The dog jumped down, went to the typewriter and proceeded to type out a perfect letter. He took out the page and trotted over to the manager and gave it to him, then jumped back on the chair.



The manager was stunned, but then told the dog, "The sign says you have to be good with a computer." The dog jumped down again and went to the computer. The dog proceeded to demonstrate his expertise with various programs and produced a sample spreadsheet and database and presented them to the manager.

By this time the manager was totally dumbfounded! He looked at the dog and said, "I realize that you are a very intelligent dog and have some interesting abilities. However, I still can't give you the job." The dog jumped down and went to a copy of the sign and put his paw on the sentences that told about being an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The manager said, "Yes, but the sign also says that you have to be bilingual."

The dog looked at him straight in the face and said, "Meow."

**L**aw of Cat Sleeping: All cats must sleep with people whenever possible, in a position as uncomfortable for the people involved as possible, and as comfortable as possible for the cat.

Answers from page 9  
1. TS Ethic  
2. Crazy Kai  
3. A diamond  
4. Turn straw into gold  
5. Selma Kyle  
6. Persian  
7. Smile



# KIT'S KORNER



The word 'cat' begins with a 'c', of course. Find 5 other things in this picture that begins with a 'c' and colour them in.

## **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**. Come visit their stall at the Supreme Show

**Remember - The GCCFI Supreme Show on the 21st of April**

**Ballinteer Community School, Ballinteer 16**

**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 at the show

Good Luck to Exhibitors on Show Day!

Breffni House Pets

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