



Habitat for Cats

*dedicated to
helping
homeless cats
through
adoption and
health support*

www.HabitatforCats.org

#20 Fall/Winter 2007 P.O. Box 79571 N. Dartmouth, MA 02747

LIFE AND TIMES OF SYLVESTER HOFFMAN

by Sally Culberson



Sylvester (black & white), fully recovered from a leg amputation, cuddles with his friend, Ginger.

Two years ago we adopted Ginger when he was a young ball of fur. Our relationship with him has been so exceptional that, despite friends urging us to get him a companion, we were very hesitant. After seeing many disturbing images of animal abuse on TV, we agreed that "if" we ever adopted a sibling for Ginger, it would be a special needs cat. Well, be careful what you wish for, because I conveyed that thought to Trish, a volunteer with Habitat for Cats, and within days, she contacted us about Sylvester.

Our introduction and first visit with Sylvester left us very uncertain if we were doing the right thing for Ginger and if Sylvester was the right fit for our family. Sylvester's history was one of apparent abuse, in addition to an animal bite that created massive infection. The infection was deemed uncontrollable, so his hind leg was removed to save his life.

Not long after his surgery, we met Sylvester. On our first visit, he just lay

dazed in his litter box. We made weekly visits, seeing his progress and eventually seeing a spunky spirit emerge!

Upon bringing Sylvester home, we followed the recommended method for introducing the two cats. Within 2 weeks, Ginger and Sylvester were becoming great pals. Ginger somehow sensed Sylvester's recent surgery and the need for some special attention. So Ginger began by grooming Sylvester and watching over him. Soon Sylvester followed Ginger like any "little brother" following their big brother, and the play quickly ensued.

As for Sylvester's comfort zone with us, well that has been much slower. He gets lots of play time and now takes treats from our hand. On rare occasions, he sleeps on the bed with us. Petting is occasionally allowed (and he purrs up a storm) but he still just can't lower those defenses. We're truly a work in progress, but every time we see Sylvester and Ginger grooming each other, or see Sylvester run, FULL SPEED, through



the house, not letting his disability hinder his play, we KNOW we made the right choice.

Sylvester may not be a lap cat yet, but we're thrilled with each sign of progress! If not for the devotion and care from Habitat for Cats and its volunteers, Sylvester would not have had the opportunity to join our family and bring such joy into our hearts.

A little girl found Sylvester and went to one of Habitat's volunteers for help. Sylvester was abandoned to live outdoors in a dangerous neighborhood. He was very thin and seriously injured, the extent of which was unknown at the time, but he appeared to be at death's door. He was brought to the vet and a deep, infected wound was discovered. To save him, his back leg had to be amputated. Sylvester survived and fortunately found a loving home.

The collaboration of many people, and your donations allowed Sylvester and many more cats a second chance at a better life. With your donations, we can continue to improve the quality of life for abandoned, stray and feral cats.



Sylvester, a couple of weeks after the surgery.

Remembering Our Family and Friends

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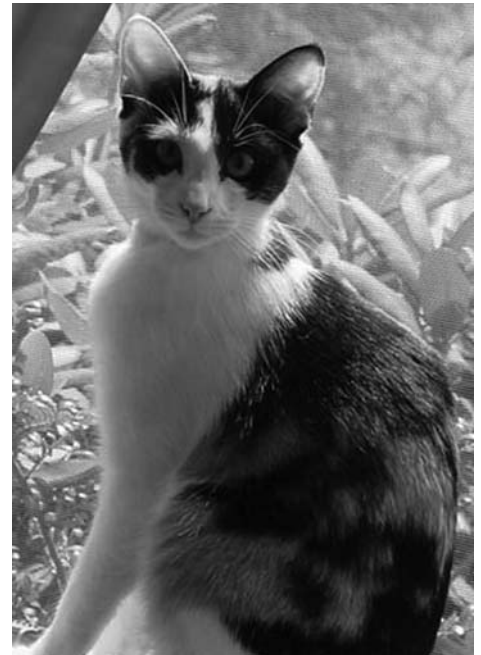
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“Cats have 9 lives” OR “Curiosity killed the cat?”

by A. Correia



"Cats have nine lives," or, "Curiosity killed the cat. Depending on your perspective, either of these sayings could apply to my cat, Pickles. Pickles was rescued during a Trap-Neuter-Release project in a backyard of a home in Fall River where she lived under a crawl space until she was 4 months old. The intention was to get her spayed, ear tipped and then returned. But, after a day or so of waiting for a vet appointment, Pickles signalled with a hearty purr and a belly flop that she didn't want to be returned to the great outdoors.

With that purr, Pickles became my foster cat and took temporary residence with another foster cat in my home. Pickles' personality evolved to be lively, energetic and mischievous. It suits her appearance - a petite calico with a sleek, Siamese look. Pickles loves to chase toys, swat at bugs, play with water drops, jump at bubbles, dance with light reflections and basically, just celebrate living.

One of Pickles nine lives was used up on the fourth of July week. Somehow, she managed to knock out the bottom corner of a window screen and fell from the second floor. I searched and called out for her for two days, and left food & water out. Finally she showed herself.

continued on page 3

Donate Your Used Vehicles - Cars, Trucks, Motorcycles, etc.

You can turn your used vehicle, running or not, into a tax deductible contribution to Habitat for Cats through the Car Donation Program. Just follow these simple steps to donate your car:

1. Have your vehicle title ready
2. Call 1-877-227-7487
3. Provide your name, address, phone# and vehicle info from title
4. You will be contacted by tow company within 2 business days to arrange pickup
5. Habitat will mail a donation acknowledgement letter for your tax deduction in 6-8 weeks.

You can also donate on-line at www.donationline.com

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Pickles continued from page 2



She was frightened because of the fireworks in the neighborhood and a recent thunderstorm, so she wouldn't come to me. On day three, using bubbles and her favorite cat treats, Pickles came close enough for me to grab her and get her safely in the house. She showed how grateful she was with lots of purrs and rubs.

Another month passed of the good life before the next Pickles drama. I arrived home one day to sounds of what I thought was playful banter between the cats. As it continued, I went to check what was happening. To my horror, I found Pickles wrapped up and strangled on the computer power and speaker wires.

Blood was coming from her mouth and had splattered on the floor and walls. She was still alive. I frantically tried to untangle the cords, but they were so tightly braided that it was impossible.

Luckily, there was enough room between her neck and the cords to cut them (after unplugging them of course) with a utility scissors. Pickles calmly stayed in my arms as I rushed to get a pet carrier to bring her to the emergency vet. The vet determined that Pickles had probably bitten through a wire to try to escape and was electrocuted. She had an ulcer in her eye, a burnt tongue and singed whiskers. She required an overnight hospital stay, some minor follow up care, and all was well again with Pickles. I think she got over the trauma quicker than I did.

What have I learned from Pickles' escapades? First, make sure all your window screens are tightly secured, especially for the rambunctious kitties. Second, try to bundle loose wires/cables Third, have the vet emergency phone numbers listed on your pet carriers and the pet carrier in a handy spot.

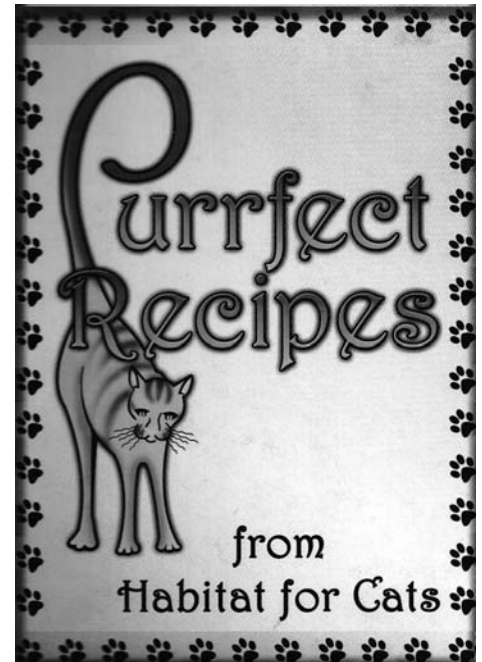
What did Pickles learn? Absolutely nothing. She's still living the rest of her lives to the fullest. I just hope she has at least seven more lives to go.

- BAKE SALE - A Special Treat

This past spring and fall, Habitat for Cats held two huge bake sales at Walmart in Fairhaven. The selection of goodies included cookies, cakes, breads, sweets and special treats. All the items were beautifully decorated in seasonal ribbons and bows. Many goodies were served on china plates, others were in baskets, cookies were placed in large coffee cups, and pies & cakes were in hatboxes. All items were gift worthy. Notable mention must go to the chocolate covered maraschino cherries that were made to look like cute little mice, with ears made of almond slices. Thank you to all our bakers and decorators. Be sure to come to our next **Bake Sale on May 10, 2008 at Walmart**. You'll be buying delicious baked goods and supporting Habitat's efforts to help homeless cats.



Habitat for Cats Purrfect Recipes Cookbook



Habitat for Cats has collected the best recipes from group members, family and friends and compiled them into a keepsake cookbook. The book contains 299 well-loved recipes including appetizers, main dishes, desserts and many others. Recipes include the contributor's name, enabling you to find the recipes of family and friends. The cost of the book is \$12, with all proceeds going directly to Habitat for Cats. Books may be purchased from members of the organization, by calling 508-493-3889 or by emailing Habitatcat@aol.com. Books will be mailed out for an additional \$3 to cover the cost of shipping and handling.

Foster Homes Needed

Given time most every cat can get adopted, but they need a place to stay until that special home is found. Habitat for Cats is asking individuals or families who love animals to foster care a kitty to give him or her a chance for a new life. Foster families are reimbursed for vet care and cat food if necessary. For more information, call 508-961-2287 or send email to: info@HabitatforCats.org

“Dear Habitat”- Letters from Adopters



Habitat for Cats and Animal Advocates helped me to rescue this guy from the streets of New Bedford. His previous owner "put him out" when he wasn't so much a kitten anymore. He was literally up to his shoulders in the snow at my backdoor during the worst of the storms two years ago. As you can see he is happy and healthy and enjoying the company of his "brother", an FIV kitty also rescued (from the same street and same BAD owners). Thanks so much for the things that you do. I refer folks to you on a regular basis. You're angels to these kitties for sure. Keep up the great work!
--Lacy Berman



Yes, all is well with Tremont and sisters. Maybe toleration is where they're at, but he has become very sociable, and is apt to be anywhere! So, if you don't mind, we think we'll keep him! Biting and swatting is all an act - no real teeth behind it. Rolling over and stretching always, sometimes though he does roll off whatever he may be on, but always lands on all fours, shakes his head and hops back up. Tremont's a wonderful addition, and am grateful to have had the luck to be guided in his direction.
-- Thanks, Steve

Tremont's kitten years were not very happy ones. He lived in a house with teenagers who used to hit him with a stick and kick him around. They left him out in the cold and sometimes wouldn't bother to feed him. Tremont's life turned around when a volunteer with Habitat for Cats took him in and a wonderful person adopted him.



Venus is doing great. She is loved very much. Her favorite pastime is watching the birds from the bay window. She greets people when they visit, is very friendly and is loveable with everyone she meets. Thank you again - she has truly replaced my last cat. -- Noralie



Kramer is a very well adjusted cat. At first he wouldn't come and sit in your lap, but now he is a very cuddly and loving boy. I still have to laugh at the way he drinks water, he dips his paw into the water, then licks the water off his paw! Needless to say it took me a few tries to find a bowl he couldn't tip over! -- Rebecca



...we adopted a cat from you named Storm. We received your newsletter today and my daughter thought how nice it would be to let you know how Stormy is doing with our family. My daughter Faith will be writing the rest of this letter. You are angels and we are so very glad we found you. Stormy is a member of our family and so dearly loved! Thank you so much!

-- Nicole Irwin

My name is Faith. Stormy has changed my life since I first saw her. She is truly a wonderful pet. I am so glad we have her. She has gone through so much and today it's almost shocking to hear what she went through. You can't tell today. She loves to talk and purr and have a grand old time. She has touched us all in our hearts and I thank you for saving her in her time of need. The only thing we have is problems with telling her not to jump on my mommy's dresser. Thanks a bunch! -- Faith Snyder-Irwin



Here's a photo of Lily. She is so precious. I love her. She is so sweet. Lilly sits on my lap every night when I am reading, she sits on top of the monitor when I'm on the computer. She follows me around all the time. She makes me laugh so much with the funny things she does. She even comes to me when I call her. -- Claire

Kitten "Season" Extends Into Winter



Kitten "season" seems to have lasted much longer than usual this year. It used to be rare to find kittens during late fall but that's no longer the case perhaps due to the warmer weather, or perhaps due to rising veterinary costs. No one knows for sure. What is apparent is that Habitat for Cats has been swamped with requests from people looking to rescue, trap or take in kittens born to their un-spayed pets. Most of the rescue/trap situations were for kittens born to feral or stray mom cats. However, there were also people who never got their own domestic cat spayed. They soon discovered the cat was pregnant and they needed to find homes for several kittens.

In one situation, someone had two un-spayed pet cats. Habitat took in the first litter born (4 kittens) and was reassured by the owner that the mom cat would be spayed. Months later, we were called again by the same person to take in TWO litters, (a total of 7 kittens), resulting from both of the un-spayed pet cats. The owner said she delayed spaying the cats because of vet costs. Habitat volunteers quickly setup two vet spay appointments for the mom cats and eventually took the 7 kittens into foster care to place for adoption. A total of 11 kittens were born in just this one case.

Through Habitat's trapping efforts, we have rescued over 250 kittens since January 2007. Habitat placed the kittens in foster homes, where they received vaccinations, medical care, socialization and nurturing until the kittens were ready for adoption. The majority was transferred to other no-kill shelters in Massachusetts where the adoption demand is greater than our local area. Once a week, one of our volunteers loads up their car with a group of kittens and delivers them to shelters up to an hour and a half away.

Along with kitten rescue, our main focus has been to ensure the mother cats get spayed. If needed, we trap the mother cats. Then we arrange transportation to and from the vet. We have a special after-care location where the spayed cats go to recover from surgery with Habitat volunteers overseeing their progress. We have also helped low-income pet owners with vet costs.

Though kitten season will taper off in January and February, another spring is just around the corner. Habitat starts getting calls for help for feral mom cats and newborn kittens as early as March. It's only a small window of time when we're not rescuing and placing kittens, who would otherwise grow up to be wild.

The hard facts are that kittens as young as five months old are capable of reproduction. Plus, only one in five kittens born will be lucky enough to find a home.

Please help us end this cycle of reproduction by educating others to the cat over population problem and by making a donation to Habitat for Cats. If you are already a Habitat contributor, thank you for continuing to help to save the lives of these lovely and deserving creatures. If you would like to make a donation, please send a check to Habitat for Cats, P.O. Box 79571, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747.

Massachusetts Animal Friendly License Plate




By purchasing this license plate, you will be contributing to a statewide program that will directly benefit Massachusetts animals.

The initial cost of this Animal Friendly license plate is \$40, \$28 of which will be used to help fund this statewide program. The remaining \$12 is a one time only cost to cover the manufacturing of the plate.

Upon renewal, the entire \$40 will go to this spay/neuter program. (The standard registration fee is due every two years upon renewal in addition to the Animal Friendly license plate fee).

Funds received from the sale of these special license plates will be dispersed annually by the Massachusetts Animal Coalition (MAC) through a grant process. These funds will be awarded to non-profit humane organizations, like Habitat for Cats, and municipal animal control agencies in the Commonwealth that provide spaying and neutering services to cats and dogs.

To purchase an Animal Friendly license plate go to: www.mass.gov/rmv




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Secrets of Adopting Shy Cats

by Pamela Marean

Cats who are extremely shy with people may have to overcome a past that includes very little human contact, bad treatment by people on the streets or in a previous home, and threatening experiences with other animals while trying to survive alone.

A shy cat is not really the same thing as a feral cat, but both are timid with people because they are afraid of humans due to their life of hardship and deprivation. Right off the bat, some shy cats are very comfortable living with other cats and make great cat companions. Sometimes other cats in the house, who do love and trust humans, can help the shy cat see that there is no longer anything to fear.

I truly believe from my own experiences that a cat that has been through hardship and finds a safe home is grateful and likes to show it with purring and cuddling that can go above and beyond what a cat who has always been safe might share. I think of shy cats as having their own sets of "rules" that they've developed to survive. Many don't feel safe being picked up. If I am respectful of the "rules," the cat, over time, will drop them because the shy cat realizes there is no threat. Is a shy cat right for you? Here are some questions to ask yourself courtesy of SAFE (Save Animals from Euthanasia) www.safeanimals.com.

- Can you and your children accept a cat on its own terms? Can you put the needs of a cat above your own needs?
- Can you accept a cat that may not behave like other pet cats you've known?
- Will you be happy with a cat that may not snuggle with you? Maybe you already have an affectionate cat to show the shy cat they way.
- Are you persistent and patient? Will you work with a shy cat for months waiting to see a change in their behavior?
- Is someone home a good part of the day or evening and willing to spend time with a shy cat?
- Is your home relatively calm and quiet?
- Will you keep doors and windows closed to ensure your shy cat won't stray?

Here's some tips to help a shy cat make the transition into your home:

- Restrict your shy cats to a small room for several weeks, maybe even more

depending on how adventurous they seem to get. Shy cats feel safe in small spaces. They need to explore gradually.

- Quality time with people is very important. Start out with slow movements, a quiet voice, brief eye contact. Be as predictable and routine as possible. Lay on the floor and talk to the cat - the cat gets used to you being no threat, down at its own level.

- Offer delicious treats with a long handled spoon - little bits of tuna or other irresistible smelly foods.

- Start to offer touch by holding out your hand or a toy and letting the cat come over to you. Reaching toward them can seem scary. Use a wand toy, or a stick with fleece at the end to play or pet the cat's cheeks.

If you adopt a shy cat, your expectations must be realistic. Shy cats are likely to stay shy for months, making sometimes slow (and sometimes surprisingly fast) progress over a year. Go slow and build on each day's success gradually.

Though shy cats take gentleness and patience to help draw them out of their fear, I have adopted many of them and found that once the hiding and hissing is a thing of the past, they have become my most devoted pets. Here are two stories from previous adopters about their experience with a shy cat.

but not ventured any further. She loves to look out windows, and lately I have been losing a lot of sleep because she has really taken to me and she loves to jump up on our bed and meow to get my attention. She is very talkative, and playful. She still runs under the bed when anyone moves quickly about the room, but she quickly comes back out to greet us as soon as she figures out that nobody is going to hurt her.

I can see her having full reign of the house in a couple more weeks. She is a doll. -- *Thanks again. Sonia*



Pickles (Promise) is doing beautifully. She is now wondering around the whole 3rd floor. She has come down a few steps

When we first got Lola, she wanted nothing to do with us or anyone else. She had just been separated from her only source of comfort in her life - her brother Charlie. We put her in the den, which is sun filled and full of plants. At meal times she would remain hidden until the door was closed and then she would come out and eat. We tried playthings, treats, sitting in the same room with her - nothing seemed to work. Finally we put the Rock to work - Rocky ("Raccoon") is the most mellow cat I've ever owned. He's always relaxed and ready for a hug. I let him into the room one day, keeping an eye on them both because I didn't want her to hurt him unintentionally. There was a lot of hissing on her part, but he just sat down and looked at her as if to say, "This too shall

continued on next page

Shy Cats

continued from page 6

pass.” This went on for a few visits until one day I decided to leave the door open. When I went back to check on them, she was sharing her lunch with him. At that point, I left the door open all the time. She still stayed pretty much in the room until one night I woke up to hear all kinds of running around and crashing going on - the bath mats were in a heap, bedspreads had been pulled on the floor, as she and Rocky were chasing one another around the second floor. No scratching or howling, just playing. I looked in on them a few hours later and they were curled up - Lola in her little cat cup, and Rocky on the floor next to her. Within a couple of weeks she was getting into all kinds of mischief but she had mellowed out to the point where I could pet her. Today she still follows Rocky around but she "zonks" out with her other brother T.J in his cat bed. When she wants affection from me, she throws herself on the floor at which point she likes to have her tummy scratched. It took a while, but she is now a beloved member of the family. The effort was well worth it, as she is now an affectionate, funny little duck.

-- Kevin E. Boyle

Cats Available for Adoption



Ottie

Ottie is a cute female, tiger, kitty who was rescued, along with her mom & sister, from Otis Air Force Base. She was just 8 weeks old when she came into Habitat’s care. Ottie has always been on the shy side. She can be picked up, but is still insecure about being held for a



Lindsey

long time. She loves to cuddle with other cats and likes being petted.

Lindsey, is a very pretty orange cat with lovely green eyes. She is sweet and will come up to you, but when you pick her up, she is easily destabilized and is wary. Both of these kitties need a home that will allow them to blossom at their own pace. After all, good things come to those who wait.

To adopt Ottie, Lindsey, or any other cat, please contact Habitat at 508-961-2287 or email us at info@HabitatforCats.org

Habitat’s Wish List

- Foster Homes
- Volunteers
- Cat food & litter
- Dog Houses
- Cat beds & toys
- Cleaning supplies (bleach, clothes detergent, floor cleaner, paper towels, etc.)



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YARD SALES Fun-draising

If you missed one of Habitat’s yard sales this year, you missed an opportunity to get great bargains on all sorts of things. This fundraiser is more than a typical yard sale. It is a combination of a flea market, white elephant and rummage sale. The yard sales were held at The Smith Mills Church Hall in N. Dartmouth, where items filled the entire hall and flowed out to the front entrance. All the items were donated and collected a couple of months prior to the sale and displayed neatly by categories. Habitat volunteers did all the work in order to raise needed funds to continue our efforts in ‘07. Your donations in 2008 will help keep Habitat for Cats in the “business” of helping homeless cats through spay/neuter and adoption programs. Please help.



Habitat volunteers pitch in at yard sale. Pictured above are Jackie Gonzales & Lynn Magnin, and below is Rhonda Snell.





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Will You Be His Angel?



GROVER

Grover is a beautiful black male cat, who is extremely loveable and very playful. He is currently healthy, but is feline leukemia (Felv) positive. Grover has been at the Adoption Center for about 1 year and must

be confined to a room to keep him separated from the other resident cats. When kept indoors and away from stress and diseases, Felv cats can live many years. The key is to keep them as "only" cats or as a companion to another Felv positive cat. Grover is tender and gentle, yet demanding in his need for attention. Finding the right home for Grover has been difficult due to the conditions of his adoption. John Lucas, one of Grover's volunteer caretakers, has this to say, "Of all the cats I have nurtured and socialized during my short time at the Adoption Center, I have greatly appreciated Grover's personality the most. Isolated and for the most part separated from all other cats, he never stops enticing and inviting the free roaming others to his den. Without any doubt, most volunteers would have offered our Grover a home had we not already had others in our care. I consider it a rare privilege to have been exposed to Grover's personality. I am much richer for this experience. What more could one human say about this feline? In one sentence... Grover would reward anyone offering a home with the greatest of pleasure, entertainment and love."

If you have the heart and home for this kitty, please call us at 506-961-2287.

- Save Your Sales Receipts - Lees and Shaws Supermarkets

Lees Supermarket in Westport and all Shaws Markets will donate 1% of collected sales receipts to Habitat for Cats. Bring your receipts to Bradshaw's Insurance Company, Main Rd. Westport or on Faunce Corner Rd in N. Dartmouth or mail to HFC, PO Box 79571, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747.

Thank You to all the people that have been faithfully collecting receipts for this fundraiser. Keep them coming....

Shop on-line for Habitat for Cats

Habitat for Cats is registered with www.iGive.com/HFC an on-line shopping mall. Anywhere from 1 to 26% of each on-line purchase you make at stores like the Gap, PetCo, PetsMart, Macy's, Best Buy, Barnes and Noble, L.L. Bean, and many more, may be donated to Habitat for Cats. You shop and the retailer will donate a portion of your purchase.

THANK YOU

Thank You to employees of Borges Electric for their consistent contributions. It is greatly appreciated.