



# Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue

## Newsletter

Fall 2021

### TIME TO PAWS AND REFLECT



The period of spring and early summer is the breeding season for outdoor cats and, during this time, our volunteers' cat-rescue efforts make a positive impact on our community. Unfixed felines contribute to overpopulation, and feral cats and kittens are typically fated to harsh, brief lives.

This has been our 21<sup>st</sup> kitten season, and our team was able to come to the aid of several homeless pregnant cats, thanks to our kitten-foster families.

Fostering any animal is work, but fostering a mother cat and her litter increases the workload because of the number of animals in a foster family's care. For the first few weeks of her newborns' lives, the mother cat usually does everything necessary for the well-being of her babies. After that, human support is definitely needed to raise healthy and happy kittens.

Foster parents' duties include constantly monitoring

the newborns' weight and watching for any health issues, as well as accompanying the animals on critical veterinary visits. As the tiny creatures become active, overseeing their safety can be a handful, but their development and antics are an absolute joy to watch.

In addition to kittens' physical well-being, foster parents take on the crucial role of their socialization. Kittens that are raised in a home environment develop positive relationships with humans, and friendly kittens are adopted quickly.

If a momma cat is fearful, she will need additional time and TLC to build her trust in humans. As with her babies, it is our goal to place her in a loving home as well.

Caregiving for a feline family can be a demanding commitment, but our foster families say it is an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience.

It goes without saying that all our foster parents are invaluable. However, we would be remiss if we didn't extend our kudos to the volunteers who participated in another successful kitten season. Thanks, and our appreciation to all of you!

~ Laura Wyatt, Director, Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue

### ADOPTION ALUMNI - Barney



Barney was rescued from a limited-time municipal centre earlier this spring. He had been surrendered when his owner passed away.

It was evident to everyone who met Barney that he thrived on being with people, and we were hopeful that the ideal family would come along who would

appreciate all the love this senior fellow had to give—and we were successful! He was recently adopted by Bernice and Victor, who gave us this wonderful update.

"I'm not sure who is happier—Barney or us!" reports Bernice. "When we first brought Barney home, he stayed in his safe room for all of two hours and then sauntered past me as I was going into the room. He checked out the whole house, top to bottom, before sitting himself on the black leather couch next to Victor. With his dark colouring, he blended right in with the furniture—lol."

"Barney immediately made himself at home and slept under our high bed the very first night. Every day he takes over more and more of the house and, if we are not with him, he yells in a deep voice to find out where we are. We really love him and think it's reciprocated."

"More people should know about the great work you do. Thank you so much." ~ Bernice & Victor

# Purr-adise Found



▲ “I am a builder and I like art, so I love the fact that cat-walks are like living sculptures,” says Peter. “The cats definitely enjoy them and I try to build them so I like the look of them as well. In that sense, we both win.”

## House of Nekko

As Peter's love of cats grew, so did the number he adopted. He currently has 24 felines sharing his home. Initially, many of the cats Peter adopted came from different shelters and were cats that were often overlooked and had been deemed unadoptable. “For the past 10 years, we have been adopting all our cats from a local Santa Barbara shelter called RESQUCATS,” Peter explains. “We support the shelter because the founder Jeffyne Telson does whatever it takes to save cats, including spending a great deal of money on their medical care.”

“Living with so many cats is work,” he adds, “but we get so much more from them than we give. The cats bring the house alive.” Peter believes these rescued cats deserve to be loved, and his home provides the perfect environment in which they can flourish.

## WHEN PETER COHEN ADOPTED TWO HOMELESS CATS 33 YEARS AGO, HE NEVER IMAGINED THE IMPACT THEY WOULD HAVE ON HIS LIFE!

The stray pair, named The Black One and The Grey One, provided the impetus for Peter's future feline-inspired undertakings: the adoption of 46 cats; the creation of an exquisite cat-inspired home; and the formation of ZenByCat, a charity dedicated to Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) research.

## Becoming a Cat Person

Peter had always been a dog person, but that all changed when he purchased a home in Santa Barbara, California, in 1988. The property came with the unexpected inclusion of two cats, who had been left behind by the previous owners and were living in the yard. Peter adopted the cats as his own and, as the felines had known only an outdoor lifestyle, they continued to live outside. Shortly after they were adopted by Peter, both were hit by cars in separate incidents. The Black One unfortunately succumbed to injuries; The Grey One survived after extensive surgery. She made a complete physical recovery, but she was suffering from loneliness, which led Peter to adopt two kittens to be her cat companions.



The rooms above and below are the result of Peter's never-ending efforts to cat-ify his home. He estimates the cat-walks throughout the house have cost in excess of \$150,000 over the years.

His home is known as House of Nekko—the word *nekko* means “cat” in Japanese—paying homage to the time Peter spent in Japan.

None of the cats that reside in House of Nekko venture outside, as Peter is painfully aware of the risks free-roaming pets face. “Simply put, outdoor cats have a life expectancy of less than four years in a city environment,” Cohen says. “When we adopt cats from shelters, they require the cats to be indoor-only as a condition for adoption.”

Happily, Cohen’s cats are content to remain indoors, and it’s not surprising, as Peter has created an interesting and stimulating environment that keeps them engaged. His initial inspiration to refit his home to be cat-friendly came from Bob Walker’s book *The Cats’ House*, which highlights the catwalks the author constructed for his cat companions.

Cohen decided to add similar elevated catwalks to his own home and used his background as a builder/contractor to fulfill his vision. “The first catwalks were installed in the upstairs master bedroom around 1997,” says Peter. “From then on, it just kind of grew into a hobby. The finish carpenters I work with would build new walks when I had money and they had time. As we added more catwalks, we could add more cats.”

The interior design appeals to both people and pets. Cohen appreciates the visual architectural details and colors, and the cats enjoy the physical features as they literally climb the walls from bottom to top.

“Cats like to go high.” Peter says. “They love shelves up near skylights or just high up in a room. We try to incorporate climbing/scratching posts because cats like them. We also make sure to allow for human access to all areas. That is, we

won’t build a tunnel or area that cannot be reached in case one needs to grab the cat, clean, etc.”

Over the years, Peter has outfitted his 3000-square-foot home with 300 feet of catwalks, 15 feet of tunnels, and 8 bridges, and every room is connected in multiple ways, creating an environment that is both practical and appealing for his feline family.

“By giving them lots of walks, bridges, tunnels, etc. to explore and live in, we provide an interesting world for them,” he says. “Cats are like any sentient being, they need an interesting environment to live and prosper in.”

### ZenByCat

Miss Bean, a kitten Peter adopted in 2016, affected his life in a way he could not have envisioned. Miss Bean was diagnosed with FIP



shortly after she was adopted. Peter was heartbroken at the news, as he knew the prognosis was fatal. Hoping to beat the odds, he enrolled the kitten in an FIP clinical drug trial through the University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. Sadly, Miss Bean succumbed to the virus. In her honour, Peter started the organization ZenByCat to raise money and awareness for FIP research.

FIP has long been considered an untreatable disease. It affects up to two percent of kittens, and was one hundred percent fatal until recent antiviral drugs were introduced to help treat it. Thanks to the hard work of Dr. Niels Pedersen and the UC Davis staff overseeing the FIP drug trials, Peter's cat Smokey was one of the first FIP survivors.

While a great deal of work still needs to be done, the results are encouraging and provide hope for the possibility of a viable treatment for this dreadful disease. ZenByCat believes that the key to affordable treatment lies in funding for continued research.

"For the past five years, we have worked very hard to raise both money and awareness about FIP and it has become one of my life's passions," says Peter.

"When we first started, all FIP cats died. Today, because of the research that saved Smokey, we are able to save thousands of cats around the world. Dr Pedersen and others are working on better, faster-working drugs, as well as looking for a vaccine to prevent FIP in the first place.

"ZenByCat continues to help connect people with FIP cats to treatments, but our focus remains getting humans touched by this horrific disease to sign up for small monthly donations to help the researchers end FIP for all cats."

### **Solving Problems One Cat at a Time**

Peter Cohen has used his creativity and compassion to provide a paradise home for many unadoptable cats and, in addition, has made great efforts to champion cats with FIP. "We humans cannot solve so many big problems," Cohen says, "but we can solve little ones. Each cat we adopt from a shelter is one more sentient being that now has a home and love and care. It is that simple."

To learn more about Peter's animal advocacy efforts, visit:

<https://www.zenbycat.org> . 



▲ In 2016, Smokey took part in the first FIP drug trial. He was one of five cats that survived and was cured of the disease!

Smokey is now five years old and is definitely living his best life ever. According to Peter, Smokey is "a loving, happy, and fearless cat!"

# Absolutely Amazing Appendages



## ▼ The Exception to the Rule

Cats have retractable claws, with one exception being cheetahs. Cheetahs have semi-retractable claws that act like cleats and provide traction for these speedy animals—who can reach a top speed of 70 miles per hour.



A cat's paws are an incredible piece of anatomy and serve several purposes. They help a cat hunt, groom, communicate, and acquire information about their environment. Here are just a few fascinating facts about cats' awesome appendages.

### Paws Act as Shock Absorbers and Sensors

In the wild, cushiony paw pads assist a hungry cat to move and hunt comfortably and silently. They act as both sound and shock absorbers, softening their landings when cats jump or tread through rough terrain.

In addition, a cat's sensitive paws come in handy as little sensors. Paw pads have a large concentration of nerve receptors that provide cats with important information about their surroundings, helping them to sense vibrations, textures, and pressure. This can alert them to possible predators and the movements of their prey.

Although their paw pads are strong enough to protect cats against some environmental damage, they are very sensitive to temperature, pressure, and pain. The soft pads are not insulated and can be severely injured by extreme temperatures.

### Paws Act Like Sheaths

All cats, except cheetahs, have retractable claws, so the claws can stay sharp and protected when they are relaxed and sunken into the toe pads. These hidden sheaths also keep claws from hitting the ground and making a noise, allowing cats to stalk their prey undetected. However, when a cat runs, climbs, or jumps,



### **Paws Scrub Like Loofahs!**

Cats constantly groom themselves as a way to stay clean, transfer their scent, and even soothe themselves when they are experiencing anxiety or pain.



### **Paws Look Like Jelly Beans**

*Toe beans* is the nickname that arose for cats' squishy paw pads, because they resemble jelly beans.



the paw pads release the claws to perform their extremely important job of gripping the ground and other surfaces so your cat doesn't fall or lose balance.

### **Paws Are Flexible**

The ability of the front paws to bend and turn inward makes cats incredibly adept at climbing trees, allowing them to remain stable as they sink their claws into trunks and branches with ease.

While ideal for ascending trees, the design of the paws is less suited for descending them. Since their front claws face in the wrong direction for a head-first descent, and because their front legs and paws are weaker than their more-muscular hind legs, cats must back down trees.

### **Scent Glands in Paws**

Smell is probably the most common basic means of animal communication. Whenever cats scratch an object, they release pheromones that mark their territory and transmit information about themselves. The special mix of pheromones is different in every cat, just like a human thumbprint.

There are four glands, one on each paw, that give off a strong scent for other cats to smell when the paw is stretched and the claws are extended out. Your cat will often have favorite areas to scratch—unfortunately, those areas may be furniture. Fortunately, there are lots of easy ways to redirect destructive scratching.

Try placing a scratching post close to the area your cat is scratching. Research has shown that cats highly favour cardboard for scratching, but other materials, such as rope or carpet, could also appeal to your cat. It is important to try a variety of surfaces, as cats are unique individuals with their own likes and dislikes.

### **Paws Act as Loofahs**

Cats are fastidious about their hygiene and spend 30 to 50 percent of each day grooming themselves. Their paws act as built-in loofahs that help them clean those hard-to-reach areas on their necks, on their faces, behind their ears, and under their chins. They accomplish this by first licking their paw several times and then rubbing the paw in a circular motion in areas that they can't directly lick.

From a very young age, cats will instinctively clean away food and additional odour-causing agents so they will not be detected by potentially threatening animals. Kittens typically begin grooming with their front paws before they are 4 weeks old.

### **Paws Are Color-Coordinated**

The color of a cat's paw pads usually coordinates with the fur color, and sometimes the paw pad color will match the nose.

White cats usually have pink pads, and the same goes for ginger cats. Black cats have black pads, and gray cats have gray pads. Tuxedo cats can have pink, pinkish-white, black, or a mix of these colors on their paw pads. In cats with multiple coat colors, like tortoiseshell or calico, there can be interesting color combinations—maybe two pink toe beans and the rest black, or multi-colored pads and toes.

### Some Cats Have Extra Toes

Some cats can have as many as six or seven toes on each paw and so are referred to as *polydactyl* cats. Polydactyly is a congenital physical anomaly that causes some cats, dogs, and even humans to grow extra digits.

Sometimes the extra toes are merely auxiliary, non-functional appendages. The number of extra toes on one front paw can even differ from the number on the other front paw. Polydactyly is not painful or uncomfortable, and the oversized paws don't get in a cat's way.

Jake, a Canadian polydactyl cat, and Paws, an American polydactyl cat, were recognized by Guinness World Records as having the highest number of toes on a cat. Each cat had a total of 28 toes.

### Cats Walk on their Toes

Cats are digitigrades, which means they walk on their toes. Although we might think of cat paws as their feet, they're more like toes, and the actual foot extends up to the second bend in the leg.

The reason cats have evolved to walk on their toes is that it lets them move more quietly and faster, which makes them better hunters. Being stealthy and quick gives cats a huge advantage for survival. Felines share this useful trait with dogs, hyenas, pigs, hippos, elephants, and, surprisingly, even dinosaurs. 



▲ With a total of 28 toes, Jake had seven toes on each paw—each toe had its own claw, pad, and bone structure. Fortunately, the unusually high number of appendages did not negatively affect his personality, which Jake's owner described as "affectionate, playful, loving, and wildly entertaining."

## HOW TO DONATE THROUGH YOUR EMPLOYER

Many companies believe in corporate social responsibility and support local charities. As an extension of corporate philanthropy, matching gift programs are designed to be the means by which businesses encourage employee charitable giving.



Companies match donations made by employees to a wide range of not-for-profit organizations. As a registered charity, Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue is an eligible recipient of the matching gift funds.

In addition, if you donate to United Way, you can also request that your contribution be directed to us.

# A Change of Luck for Black Cats!



Since the Middle Ages, black cats have evolved into icons of anything related to witchcraft, especially during the Halloween season.

Fortunately, in our current culture, black cats are among the least frightening decorations displayed at Halloween, making them a fun and kid-friendly symbol of the holiday.



## Cats have always been associated with myths and magic.

In particular, black cats have been thought to bring both bad luck and good luck. Over the centuries, these dark, gorgeous, and striking felines have endured the stigma of cultural and historical myths, superstitions, and fables that make them both feared and revered.

### Harbingers of Bad Luck

The fear of black cats appears to stem from medieval times, when an animal with dark feathers or fur, including crows and ravens, signaled death. In 16th-century Italy, it was believed that death was imminent if a black cat would lie on someone's sickbed, and many people in medieval Germany believed themselves to be cursed if a black cat crossed their path from left to right.

During the Middle Ages, black cats also were equated with black magic. Roaming nocturnal black cats were thought to be *familiars*—witches in disguise, witches' pets, or animal-shaped demons sent by witches to spy on humans. Since that time, black cats have evolved into icons of anything related to witchcraft, especially during the Halloween season.

The superstition around familiar spirits is thought to have begun as medieval folklore. The tale, which spread throughout Europe, was about a man and his son who came across a black cat and, to scare it away, they started throwing rocks at the animal. The injured cat ran into the home of a woman who was suspected of being a witch. When the woman appeared limping and bruised the next day, people believed that woman was the cat in disguise.

Witches and cats were also famously entwined in US history

during the 17th-century witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts. In the 1600s, American settlers who arrived in the Northeast believed that black cats were witches' companions, and that anyone seen with a black cat should be severely punished.

Their suspicions that witchcraft was being practiced in their communities grew to mass hysteria, which led to the Salem witch trials that lasted for more than a year and resulted hangings and prison sentences.

### **Bearer of Good Fortune**

Despite their reputation for being bad luck, black cats were also believed to bring good luck for many centuries and in many cultures.

In ancient Egypt, black cats were held in the highest esteem because they resembled Bastet, the cat-headed Egyptian goddess of home, fertility, and protection from disease. Some believed that having a black cat—or several—in the home could draw good will from Bastet.

In Norse mythology, Freya, the goddess of love, fertility and beauty, rides on a chariot pulled by two black cats. To win favor with Freya, farmers would leave bowls of milk for her companions in their fields. Freya would then bless them with a good harvest.

English and Irish sailors in the 17<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries believed that having a black cat aboard assured a safe journey. In addition to ensuring protection for the ship, the cats were also helpful in protecting the ship's stores against vermin.

Sailors' families also embraced having a black cat at home, believing its presence would assure their loved ones' safe return from the sea.

In some cultures, black cats were seen as good omens for pending nuptials. In Japan, a young woman owning a black cat was once believed to attract more suitors. And in the English Midlands, giving a black cat as a wedding gift was believed to bring the bride good fortune and happiness.

Here are some other examples of the positive powers of the black cat:

- Asia and the UK: You are going to be lucky in life if you own a black cat.
- Scotland: You will have coming prosperity if a black cat appears at your doorway or on your porch.
- Italy: if you hear a black cat sneeze, you are in for a streak of good luck.
- France: Something magical is about to happen if you see a black cat..

It is certainly good luck for our beautiful black cats that negative superstitions have virtually vanished and the affirmative ones remain. Black cats are definitely loved and cherished by families across the world. 



### **A MAGICAL MOUSER!**

Tiddles, an enchanting black cat, was born on the HMS Argus and later became the official Captain's Cat of the HMS Victorious in the early 1940s. He was known for his mousing skills as well as for being a good luck charm.

Tiddles safely travelled more than 30,000 miles during his naval service, which led many of his shipmates to believe that black cats are indeed lucky.

In July 1942, Tiddles was photographed at his favourite station on the ship's capstan, where he would play with the bell-rope.

**Fergus – A Consummate Communicator**

Adopting Fergus was the best part of our 2020, and we can't imagine life without him. He is truly perfect and we feel so blessed to have found him. Once he realized that he was the only cat in our home and his food was safe, he settled in and found his inner kitten—and it didn't take him very long!

While he is still a solid boy, he has lost weight since we adopted him, and he is very active. We have just moved homes and we now have stairs, so he is getting more exercise. We are amazed by how playful he is, and how much he loves to chase his pom-pom toys and string. He sleeps with us all night long and alternates between snoring and purring. He is polite and gentle, and has never tried to scratch the furniture. From day one he has LOVED his litter box—the novelty of having his own bathroom has not worn off!

Fergus communicates with us in many different ways. He has become a lap-cat and loves to snuggle—belly rubs are his favourite—and when he wants more petting, he thumps his tail to let us know. He always likes to be included in conversations and definitely has lots to say! When it's time to eat, Fergus prefers to

have company while he dines, and he will herd us into the kitchen.

Thank you for believing in Fergus and taking care of him when he needed it the most. We are so grateful, and he is, too! ~ Katie & Clair

**Millie – A Positive in a Pandemic**

This year has been hard for everyone and, as someone who struggles with mental health and feelings of isolation, I have found it has been very difficult. I adopted Millie shortly before lockdown went into affect, and then, due to a lack of a job, I had to leave my partner and friends in Toronto to isolate with family in the country. I truly did not know how I would have made it without Millie. Millie came with me and made me feel loved and seen. As our bond grew, it was hard to remember a time before she was in my life.

In September, I was able to come back to Toronto and move in with my partner and his cat Dot. Though not the biggest fan of Dot, Millie adjusted beautifully and continued to give and receive love. Now, we have moved into a wonderful new place, full of big sunny windows. And not only is Millie entirely adjusted to Dot, but she is also the happiest and the most confident I have ever seen her. Before she

was taken in by Forgotten Ones, she experienced some unfortunate circumstances that made her a bit jumpy, startled by sudden movement and loud noises. Watching her grow out of that behaviour and to stride confidently across the apartment, to sniff Dot without fear, and to cuddle up with me every morning, has been one of the greatest gifts of my life.

I adopted Millie right before COVID hit us, but I did not take the decision of adoption lightly. I think it's important for everyone to take adoption and the life of an animal seriously and to decide after careful consideration. That said, it is the best decision I ever made. I cannot imagine my life without Millie, and I don't care to. She's my girl. So, thank you, Forgotten Ones, for changing my life. ~ Rachel