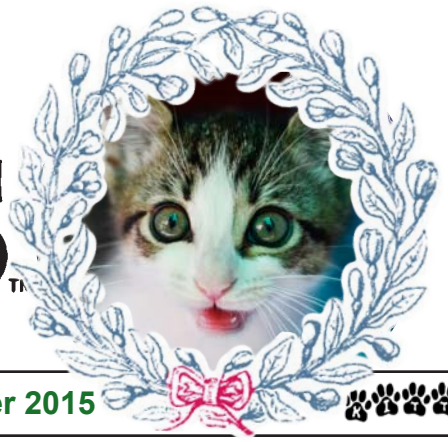


RESQCATS™

A non-profit animal rescue organization dedicated to the care and welfare of stray and abandoned cats and kittens.



paws for the news



Winter 2015



President's Message

Written on October 24, 2015



Jeffyne with "Tabasco"

It is hard to believe that another year at **RESQCATS** has passed. And what a year it has been! It has been the busiest in our 18 year history. **RESQCATS** will break all records from previous years with over 250 rescues and I predict around 200 adoptions!

There are several reasons for such a successful season.

First of all, our capacity increased with the five additional enclosures that were added at the end of 2014 in preparation for the 2015 arrivals. The loss of our longest time resident, "Smudge," opened up an additional space. That increased the number of enclosures by six giving us a total of 18!

In addition, **RESQCATS** had an amazing group of volunteers that worked hard to make sure that everything that needed to be done was executed to "purr-fectioin." Many of the long-time volunteers who

return year after year welcomed and trained new recruits. I shared at the beginning of the season that each volunteer's commitment and dedication would determine how many cats and kittens we could rescue and care for at a given time. The volunteers showed up ready to work and stuck with it unrelentingly through the entire season. I just have to say **RESQCATS** had an awesome team this year. I cannot praise the "family" of volunteers enough for effectively working together and making so much possible for each cat and kitten that came through our doors.

Finally, **RESQCATS** called on you to help support our efforts and you were generous in your donations. Every dollar you donated enabled **RESQCATS** to continue our work.

The year was even more challenging than in past years. During much of the season 30-40 cats and kittens were in our care at once and that does not include the 18 resident cats! It is a "dawn to dusk" undertaking. Just think about where these cats come from and that helps explain why many were malnourished, ridden with fleas, anemic, plagued with digestive issues and diarrhea due to parasites, suffering from severe herpes eye infections, sick with upper respiratory issues, ringworm fungus and more.

In addition, there were kitties with additional medical needs that required more than the normal health protocol. Several found themselves at appointments with veterinary specialists! "Tumbelina" required an orthopedic surgeon to fix her dislocated knee cap at a cost of over \$2500. "April" arrived the day after giving birth to four kittens and **RESQCATS** cared for them for the next ten weeks until they were ready to be adopted. When April's health exam revealed a heart murmur she needed an echocardiogram by a cardiologist to make sure her heart murmur was not serious or life-threatening. The net costs to **RESQCATS** after adoption donations for April and her litter surpassed \$900. "Serena" has been diagnosed with chronic pancreatitis. She has been hospitalized, had an abdominal ultrasound and been in the care of an internal medicine specialist since April. She requires regular check-ups, blood panels, medication and sub-q fluids every other day. Serena's medical expenses have surpassed \$3500 and are still mounting. "Henri" was a single kitten found with his mother, "Heidi," and had several health concerns that

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mandated over \$1000 in tests to diagnose and treat him. "Maya's" litter suffered from severe herpes eye infections. Several different medications were used to treat them for weeks. An eye specialist was consulted prior to adoption to ensure that any damage done by the infection would not require on-going treatment or eye removal surgery. Maya's litter had out of pocket expenses of almost \$2200 even after collecting adoption donations!

Now you might begin to understand the long days and sometimes nights!

Most often, even more kittens were in foster care. Newborns need to be bottle fed every two-three hours around the clock. RESQCATS is fortunate to have fosters who fit the 24/7 job of bottle feeding into their lives. It is a time commitment that requires dedication to a rigid schedule for weeks.

Other fosters rescue litters advertised as "free" or sold on Craigslist, apprehend kittens being mistreated and open their homes to abandoned litters. Word gets around about rescuers as one foster found a tiny flea anemic kitten dumped in her front yard by someone who must have known that "Little Mocha" would be discovered by her and saved. Another foster works tirelessly trapping feral cats and kittens for Catalyst for Cats and often fosters the litters until there is room at RESQCATS. One foster takes in the sickest kittens and they survive due to the intensive care and around the clock attention she gives to them. Another big-hearted foster rescued a pregnant mom and later a mom with newborns that were on the euthanasia list from a high kill shelter in the Los Angeles area. They reside in the comfort of her home with the best care and love until they come to RESQCATS. So fosters aren't just dawn to dusk like me, many work around the clock!

RESQCATS has continued to reach out to people giving away or selling kittens on Craigslist. One concern is that kittens that are being sold only create a cottage industry where people think they can make money by selling kittens. By rescuing them we may be perpetuating that kind of thinking and creating more opportunity for them to continue that ignorant behavior. But I cannot ignore the fact that many people who get kittens off Craigslist bring them home and it ends there. Numerous kittens never see a vet and are by no means spayed or neutered. I see it this

way. For every kitty that is rescued from Craigslist, we have provided proper medical care and because they are spayed and neutered before they are adopted we have prevented more unwanted litters from being born.

RESQCATS medical protocol includes a vet exam, fecal test, Feline Leukemia/FIV tests, worming meds, vaccination, microchip and most importantly, spay or neuter surgery. Spaying and neutering is the most important component in tackling pet over-population. (Obviously, we go beyond that and provide whatever medical care they need)

RESQCATS has helped with many of the feral cats' litters from Catalyst for Cats since the TNR (trap-neuter-return) organization discontinued their foster and adoption program due to the retirement of Randi

Fairbrother after 25 years of service to our community. Our assistance to Catalyst accounts for 40-45 additional intakes this year and has also added to our expenses. Many of the feral kittens are born in less than desirable conditions. Malnourished moms can barely take care of themselves so their kittens suffer, too. They arrive with fleas to the point of anemia, parasites that cause intestinal problems and dehydration and many other even more serious conditions that may require weeks of medical attention, monitoring and tender loving care.

Community outreach is an integral part in building relationships with other organizations. RESQCATS works along side other rescue

groups and also assists them with spay and neuter surgeries. It is a way for us to reach further into the community beyond our own walls to help end pet over-population.

RESQCATS also reaches out to owners who have pregnant cats or mothers with babies who may not be able to afford to have their mother cat spayed. And we certainly don't want them to give away the kittens and perpetuate more litters when the kittens become of age and reproduce. We offer to take care of all the mother cat's medical needs including spay surgery. In return the kittens are relinquished to us so that we can provide proper veterinary care including spay or neuter surgery prior to adoption. Once the kittens are weaned and the mom is spayed, she is returned at no cost to her owner. Quite often, the moms require more than the usual medical protocol and we spend



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hundreds of dollars to ensure that they are returned healthy. In most cases there is no compensation or donation from the owner even when we explain all that has been done for their cat and the expenses incurred during their stay at RESQCATS. I find comfort, however, that at least the cat will not become pregnant again and her babies won't either.

RESQCATS recently partnered with the Santa Barbara Humane Society in helping a family who started with a single unspayed female cat two years ago. The female had a litter and then her litter had litters while the original mom got pregnant time and time again. It didn't take long for the feline population in the small apartment to grow to 26. The family loved all of them but realized the magnitude of what the future would be if nothing was done. The Humane Society took 16 of the cats and kittens into their care and committed to spaying, neutering and finding homes for them. RESQCATS agreed to vaccinate, spay and neuter 10 of the cats and return them to the owner at a cost of \$982. There was no way to recover any of the expenses because no adoption donations would be collected. It is part of the service we offer to the community and a small price to pay to avoid more unwanted litters of kittens.

Kitten season was especially long this year. The reason is due to the warm weather and cats continuously going into heat having two and three litters a year. It is very unusual for this time of year, but RESQCATS will be looking for homes for kittens even when you receive this newsletter.

The two previous newsletters this year have been short and admittedly somewhat late in getting to you. Perhaps after reading this particular "President's Message" you have a better understanding of all that has occurred this year and realize that my priority is always to the cats and kittens first. I don't think you would want it any other way.

But there is not a day that goes by that I do not realize that RESQCATS could not accomplish all that we do without people. People who rescue kittens. People who alert us to situations of cats in need. People who allow RESQCATS to help them with their own cats who become pregnant. People who volunteer. And people like you who offer their support through monetary donations. There is a saying, "it takes a village" to do the work that needs to be done for the animals. I am grateful for the RESQCATS village.

So often I express the difficulty I have in asking for your support and share that I know it is part of my responsibility for the animals. Regardless, it never gets easier for me to ask for your tax-deductible donations.

I realize that there are many worthy causes in the world and that numerous organizations will be requesting donations during this holiday season. And

yes, RESQCATS is one of them.

I hope you will consider making RESQCATS one of your charities of choice. I can offer this to you in return. I pledge to continue my work with the help of others in saving as many cats as I can. I will work tirelessly to get them healthy. I promise to find the best homes for each and every one. And I assure you that the cats and kittens will pay all of what we do for them forward by providing joy, laughter and unconditional love to those who adopt them. So you see, every donation goes well past just the dollar amount. You may start with a donation, but what you really give is a precious gift that is immeasurable.

I send to you tucked into this envelope all that you give with your donation: love, light, hope and miracles.

From my heart,

Jeffyne Telson
President and founder of RESQCATS, Inc.



"Little Mocha"



"Darby"

"The smallest feline is a masterpiece."

— Leonardo da Vinci



And now...

A Few Words from Mr. Jeffyne...



Every year during the holiday season our television program guides are inundated with Christmas movies. Some films are classics from the past, some are the made-for-TV variety and some are re-makes of a few of our favorites like "A Christmas Carol" or "Miracle on 34th Street." But no film has weathered the TV-test-of-time like Frank Capri's classic 1946 picture, "It's a Wonderful Life."

Now, unless you've been living in a cave or under a rock for the last 70 years, you've probably seen this poignant and heart-warming fantasy film based on Phillip Van Doren Stern's short story, "The Greatest Gift." It's a tale about George Bailey, a common man who over the course of the movie comes to realize that his life is anything but "common."

George, played by the towering actor, James Stewart, has spent his life in the imaginary town of Bedford Falls, New York. The film follows George's life from, when as a young boy he risked his own safety to save his younger brother, Harry, from a fall through the ice, right through his teenage years when he meets and falls in love with Mary, his future wife, played by the always loveable, Donna Reed, to his adult years as he struggles to raise his young family, run the town's savings and loan business, and be an all-around good person, all while warding off the sinister advances of Henry F. Potter, Bedford Falls' richest and meanest man, played so well by Lionel Barrymore.

After telling us about George's life, you probably recall the film brings us to Christmas Eve, 1945. George has been going through a particularly difficult period. He's feeling worthless and empty. He wonders whether his life has amounted to anything. He's distraught and with the enormous stress of his life, he desperately contemplates giving up his life by jumping off a bridge into a river. But then enters Clarence Odbody, George's "guardian angel," so well portrayed by character actor Henry Travers.

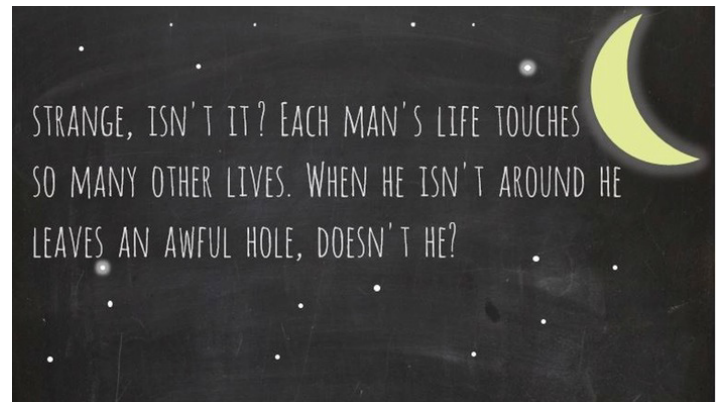
With Clarence's guidance, George comes to realize how important his life really has been, how his existence has affected so many people in such a positive way and that George Bailey really did have, "a wonderful life!"

While this movie has elements of fantasy, (but interestingly, no animals), I think there is much we can still learn from it...even after seven decades...and especially during this time of the year when we all can get so caught up in hectic holiday activities and perhaps

forget how really important our lives are to others...our families, our friends, our society, our country, sometimes all of humanity...and certainly our animal community.

Wow...so at this point you're saying, yes, I remember "It's a Wonderful Life," it was a great movie, but how did he get from a simple reel of celluloid to "I'm a really important person to the world." Well, the fact is you are important!

You ARE important to your family...you ARE important to your friends, you ARE important to society, your country, to humanity AND to the animal community. Because just like the fictional George Bailey, this world would not be the same without YOU!



Oh sure you're thinking, that's true of some people, but not me. I'm not changing the world! I haven't cured a deadly disease...I didn't solve the world's hunger problem or invent a miraculous gadget. No, I'm just a common person!

Well, while some people may make a larger or smaller splash in the ocean of life than others...you do nevertheless make a splash and you do create ripples, or waves, or in some cases a tsunami!

But if you have doubts about what I'm saying... about your importance in life... please take this simple test. Close your eyes right now and imagine (just like George Bailey did) that you'd never been born. Imagine that you'd never been a part of your family...that you'd never met your friends, that you'd never touched the lives that you've touched or influenced the people that you've known. Imagine that you never cared for, fostered or adopted a single animal...just imagine.

If you can imagine all of that, then I ask you...now, open your eyes and look around at your world. Look at you life! Look at what you've done...the lives you have influenced, the people you have loved...and those who have loved you.

Now think about the animals that have been in your life...the dogs, the cats, the birds, the fish...what would have happened to them if you had never been born? Would they, or even, could they have survived without



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you? If you're honest with yourself, I think you will say that they wouldn't have.

So as we scurry through this wonderful holiday season perhaps the greatest gift we can give...is the gift we give to ourselves...the gift of recognizing that no matter what we do in life...whether its helping people or helping animals...we all matter, and we all are making a difference.

Because just like George Bailey, we sometimes need to step back, look around, appreciate who we are and what we've done and truly realize...**It is a Wonderful Life!**

Happy holidays from Mr. Jeffyne.



Mitch with Adonis and Ares

The Reason

To you, from all your rescue cats.
I would've died that day if not for you.
I would've given up on life if not for your kind eyes.
I would've used my claws in fear if not for your gentle hands.
I would have left this life believing that all humans don't care.
Believing there is no such thing as fur that isn't matted, skin that isn't flea bitten, good food and enough of it, beds to sleep on, someone to love me, to show me I deserve love just because I exist.

Your kind eyes, your loving smile, your gentle hands, your big heart saved me.
You saved me from the terror of the pound,
Soothing away the memories of my old life.
You have taught me what it means to be loved.
I have seen you do the same for other cats like me.

I have heard you ask yourself in times of despair
Why you do it when there is no more money, no more room, no more homes.

You open your heart a little bigger, stretch the money a little tighter, make just a little more room...to save one more like me.

I tell you with the gratitude and love that shines in my eyes in the best way I know how
Reminding you why you go on trying.

I am the reason.

The cats before me are the reason
As are the ones who come after.

Our lives would've been wasted, our love never given.

We would die if not for you.

— Author Unknown



"Little Mocha" sleeping

Sometimes you need to look at life from a different perspective.

— from Lessons Learned in Life



"Now Otis says you were looking for me?"



In memory of...

In memory of **"Sophie"** who was deeply loved and wonderfully cared for by her human parents, Ian and Amanda. She will be deeply missed and never forgotten.

Colleen Robles of Santa Barbara Pet Pals



In memory of **"Smudge."**

Amy Vukovic



In memory of **"Lemondrop."** Your time on Earth was much too short and it broke my heart to let you go... but on the Rainbow Bridge you will get to be the happy, healthy kitten you deserve to be.

Jeffyne and all of us at RESQCATS



For **"Marisa"** in memory of her kitten, **"Angel."**

Love from your foster mom, Amanda Weston



For **"Dhyana"** and in memory of her kittens, **"Athena," "Hyperion"** and **"Aphrodite."**

Love from your foster mom, Amanda Weston



In celebration of...

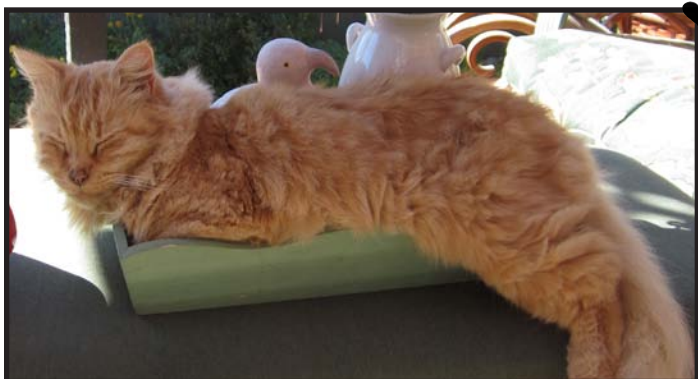
In celebration of **Suzanne Shanellec's** birthday....she requested a donation be made to RESQCATS in lieu of gifts! Happy Birthday!

Congratulations to **Mallarie and Nathan Schmeichel-Stevens** on their marriage!
Kitty Ryan



In celebration of **"Web"** and **"Deacon!"**
Penny Huff

In celebration of **"Jay"** who was adopted from RESQCATS and just turned 16 years old.
Happy Birthday Jay!



"Jay"

Where did all those cats come from?

At this time of year, I like to find a few moments to just reflect on all the lives that have been saved and changed in a single year. Over 250 cats and kittens found a better fate in 2015 because of RESQCATS' existence, the volunteers who dedicate their time and hearts to making a difference and due to the support of adopters and contributors.

But do you ever stop and ask where they all come from? And do you ever wonder what their stories are before being rescued and coming to RESQCATS?

I know many of their stories and others are a mystery. Honestly, I am glad I don't know the entire history behind many of the cats and kittens as some must suffer beyond my comprehension due to the shape they are in when they arrive. All of them, however, appear to be grateful for the softness of clean blankets to sleep on, full food bowls, fresh water, the discovery of toys and the tender loving care in the hands of humans who care and make a difference.

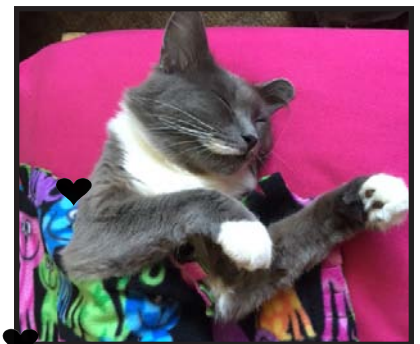
Here's looking back at 2015.

"April" was dumped at the Chumash Reservation as a tame cat. She had given birth to four kittens when she was discovered. She and her 1-day-old babies came to RESQCATS so that she could have the good fortune of raising them in comfort and style.



"Scooter," "Jaxen" and **"Hazel"** were discovered in the attic of an abandoned house. Their mother had died and no one knows what happened to her.

"Maya" had newborn kittens and a litter from the year before, **"Molli," "Misti," "Lucas"** and **"Pancha."** Pancha was pregnant and gave birth to four kittens at RESQCATS. So Maya was a mother twice and a grandmother while at RESQCATS!



"Maya"

"Hula," "Mahalo," "Aloha" and **"Maui"** were born at RESQCATS. Their mother was **"Pancha."** **"Maya"** was Pancha's mother! Three generations at RESQCATS at one time. We sure solved that problem with spay surgery!



"Tiberias" and **"Tahiti"** were being sold on Craigslist by a lady who does not believe in spaying and neutering. Her fifteen year old cat has had eleven litters of kittens!



"Serena" was rescued from Animal Control very pregnant and scheduled for spay surgery the next day.



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“Trucker” was found at a truck stop inside a newspaper stand in Ohio! He was discovered by a couple travelling from Santa Maria when they stopped for coffee and a newspaper. Imagine their surprise when they opened up the newspaper stand. He rode all the way back to California with them and ended up at RESQCATS!

“Kimmee” and **“Oliver”** were discovered by a lady on her daily walk as the only two surviving kittens and no mom to be found.

“Jack” and **“Sally”** were born to a thirteen year old mom who belonged to a lady who refused to spay her poor cat!

“Baxter,” “Ozzie,” “London,” “Layla,” “Stella” and **“Cara”** were being sold on Craigslist for \$10 each. RESQCATS paid the “re-homing” fee!

“Pavarotti” was stuffed into a car window that was open only three inches. Somehow he managed to turn on the flashers in the car and alerted the owners of his arrival!



“Pavarotti”

“Marbles,” “Titus,” “Celeste” and **“Cambria”** were turned into a county shelter and scheduled for euthanasia.

“Milo” and **“Emi”** were discovered at two weeks old in a bar-b-que. They were bottle-fed and fostered by Paityn Persson, 11 years old, until they were weaned and could come to RESQCATS.

“LazyBoy,” “Ottoman,” “Duvet,” “Futon,” and **“Seally”** were born in someone’s sofa and discovered during a remodel.

“Selena,” “Sedona” “Sierra” and **“Reyes”** were kittens born to a feral mom who was trapped, spayed and returned from Catalyst for Cats.

“Bella Baker” was found roaming the streets in

Korea town in the Los Angeles area. She was brought to RESQCATS and gave birth to seven kittens the very next day. Arrived in just the “nick of time!”

“Starsky” and **“Hutch”** were discovered at two weeks of age with no mother in a wood pile in coyote and bobcat territory.

“Caramel,” “Tabasco,” “Gelato” and **“Taffy”** belonged to an owned cat who was spayed and returned to her owner and these four were relinquished to RESQCATS.

“Phoenix” was found all by herself, anemic from fleas and horribly malnourished.

“Little Mocha” was left in a foster’s front yard. She was frail and anemic from all the fleas. We don’t know the entire story and can only guess that the person who dumped her there knew that the foster was a rescuer and would get her the help she needed. And she did!



“Phoenix”

“Mango” “Apricot,” Spice Girl,” Petit Four,” and **“Paprika”** were Catalyst kittens that RESQCATS took in to care for and find homes.

“Brooke,” “Storie,” “Kaia” and **“Sophie”** were discovered by a previous adopter under a car.

“Charlie” and **“Mo”** were rescued by a lady from the streets and had a severe case of ringworm. They were treated for several weeks and then the inseparable brothers found a home together.



“Charlie” and “Mo”

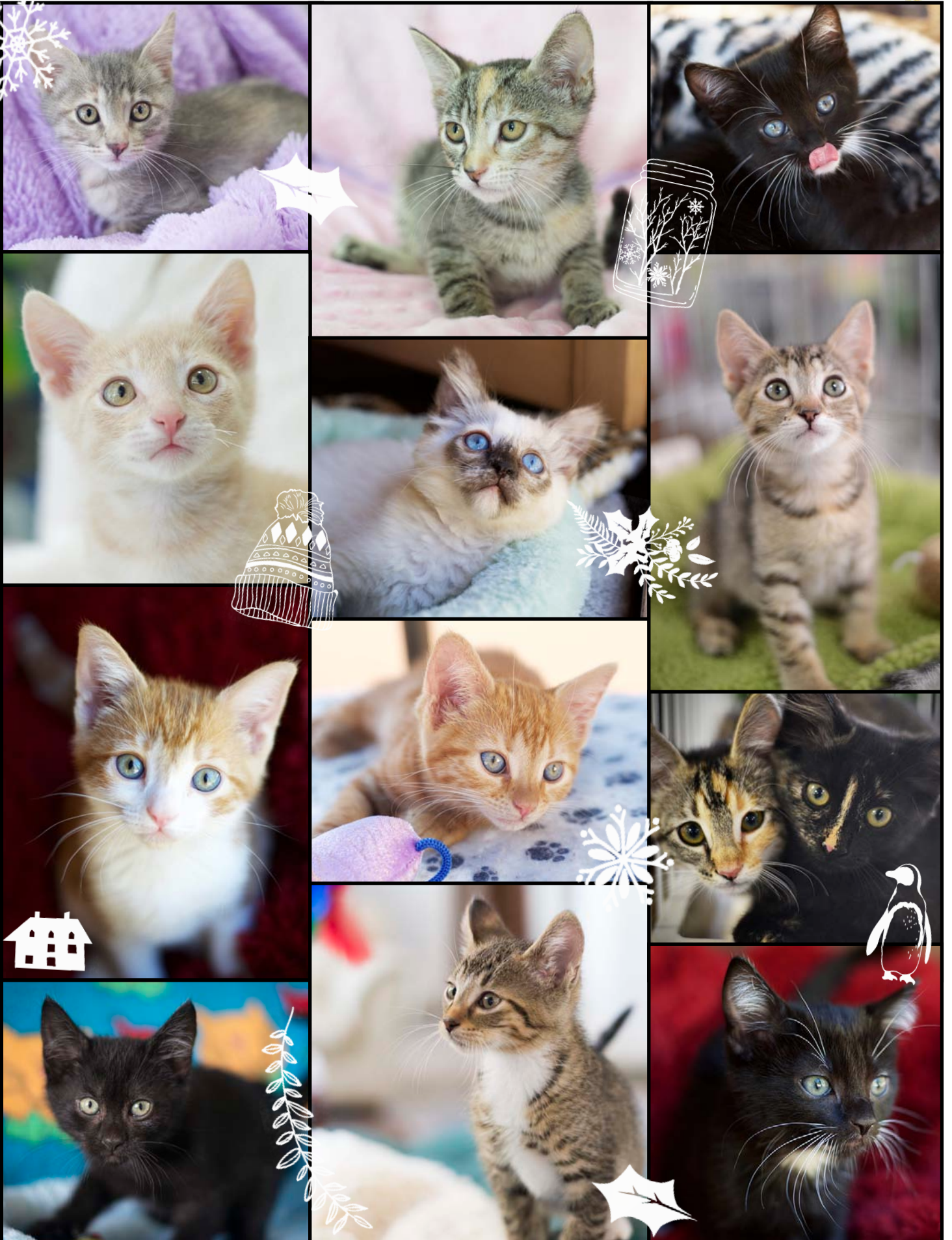


FACES OF 2015: A PICTURE SPEAKS 1000 WORDS

Many of you have asked about the most recent photos of the cats and kittens posted on Facebook and our website as they become available for adoption. I think a “picture speaks a thousand words.” The photos on this page have been an integral part in getting the cats and kittens adopted. I invite you to visit Cata Esteves’ website and you, too, can have beautiful photos of your pets. And what a wonderful holiday gift idea, too!

www.cataestevessphotography.com

Page 8 Names (left to right): Kabob, Loki, Trooper, Caramel, Karma, Dolce, Taffy, Penelope, Zinger
Page 9 Names (left to right): Adeline, Cora, Cosmo, Ellis, Mocha, Maggie, Pirate, Sedona and Selena, Gelato, Tabasco, Vinny





Some special thank yous...

A very special *thank you* to **Sue Grafton and Steve Humphrey** for your generous donation right in the middle of kitten season when it is needed the most. I felt like an angel dropped in when I opened my mail. A simple thank you hardly communicates my appreciation for your loyal support. The impact you have on so many lives at RESQCATS is immeasurable.

Thank you Gennelle Linville for making such a difference at RESQCATS over the years. Your generosity touched so many lives as we continued one of the longest and busiest kitten seasons in RESQCATS' history. From my heart...you are special.

Thank you so much to **St. Francis Pet Clinic** for your generous donation to RESQCATS. You have such an impact on so many felines that come through our doors with all that you offer to RESQCATS. Kitten season seemed to have no end in 2015 and your contribution made such a difference for the second and third rounds of kitten season. I am especially grateful to **Elizabeth Faoro** for your sensitivity, compassion and generosity for such a special gift.

One of the reasons that RESQCATS has been able to rescue and care for so many cats and kittens in the last few years is due to **The Montecito Pet Shop** and their dedication to handling the majority of adoptions at the store. In the past, adoptions have taken as much as 25-30 hours a week to interview, make appointments, introduce the kitties to potential adopters and finalize the adoption process. I can now spend those hours rescuing and caring for many more felines because of your commitment to conducting all the necessary steps towards a successful adoption. You are very much appreciated and this thank you comes from my heart.

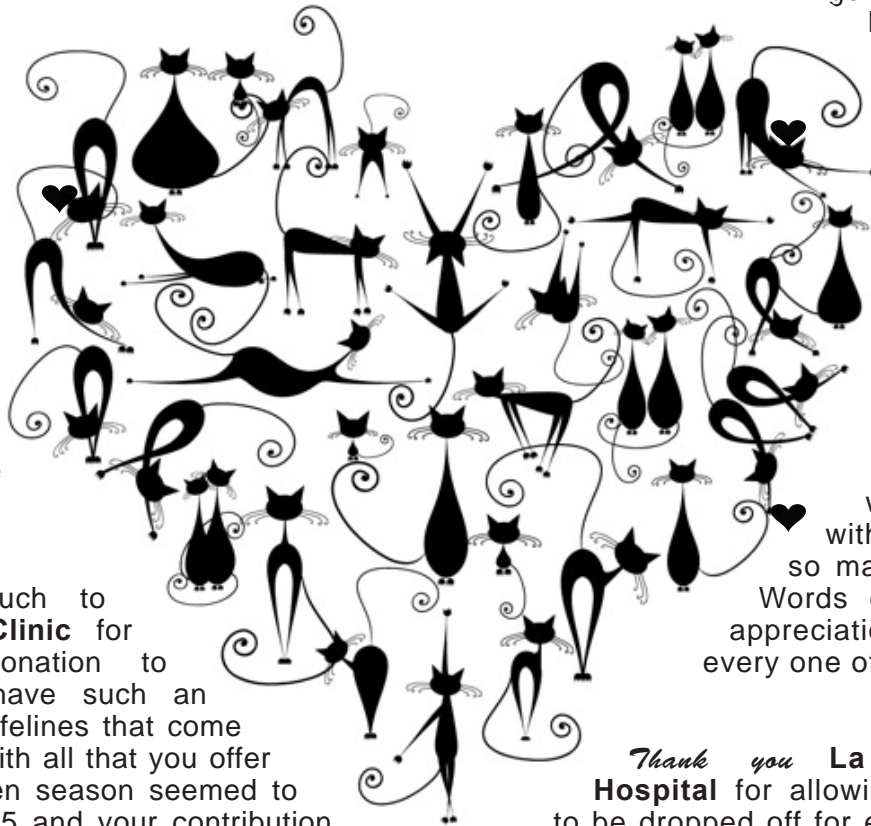
Thank you to **Chrissy Slaughter** for rescuing "Heidi" and her only kitten "Henri" from a dangerous area on the Douglas Property. And thank you **Jenny Slaughter** for saving "Spirit" and her three babies living behind a storage unit by the beach. I am so very grateful to each of you for recommending RESQCATS for a grant from **Dogs and Cats Stranded on the Streets**. The difference you made not only for the kitties you rescued but for the generosity of the grants has been paid forward to help so many other cats than just the ones you saved. You are "angels" in my book!

A special *thank you* to the staff and veterinarians at **St. Francis Pet Clinic** for working so closely with RESQCATS on so many cases this year. Words cannot express my appreciation for each and every one of you.

Thank you **La Cumbre Animal Hospital** for allowing so many kittens to be dropped off for exams with a simple phone call. The veterinarians and staff bend over backwards to help with health exams, ordering medications and allowing RESQCATS to be part of all they do to make a difference for animals.

Thank you **Greg Haskell, DVM and Adobe Pet Hospital** for taking on the toughest challenges with some very sick kittens and for always being there to figure out what needs to be done to save them.

A heartfelt *thank you* to **Rick Morgan, DVM** of St. Francis Pet Hospital for the endless hours you spend working with RESQCATS. Your words of wisdom and support are some of my truest treasures.





“Bella Baker”... brings a renewal of the human spirit

The world of rescue can feel lonely sometimes. Most often I deal with kittens that have been abandoned, uncared for by negligent owners and strays born in deplorable places ignored by people who just don't care. Some days I feel overwhelmed and wonder if there is anyone out there who feels the same compassion for animals that I do. Of course there are!

But when kitten season is only halfway over and I am already exhausted, my vision of the human race can easily become blurred after the very long days, the stories of neglect and lack of compassion added to all the responsibility of rescuing and caring for the kitties. Don't misunderstand. I love what I do. It is my passion. But it is not unusual for rescuers to lose sight of what they are doing. Instead, we think about all the animals still out there that urgently need help. I think all people who rescue animals experience moments like this. And somehow these feelings become the rescuers' common bond.

Sometimes, during those difficult times, an “angel” appears in human form and suddenly I realize that there are people in the world who really do go the extra mile to make things better for the animals.

It was mid-June and kitten season was in full swing. RESQCATS had already faced severe upper respiratory issues with eleven stray kittens from three mother cats living with people who didn't care. They were extremely sick when they arrived and required weeks of treatment and support even after they went to their forever homes. I had begun to feel the “busy-ness” of the season with the increased number of kittens coming to RESQCATS due to the change in Catalyst for Cats and their discontinuation of a foster and adoption program. Catalyst kittens often arrive from horrible circumstances where people just want the cats removed and someone else to pay everything. In addition, we were tackling a situation in a Santa Barbara home where a mom named “Maya” had four one-year-old cats that were unaltered. Maya had given birth to a second litter of six that were only a few days old. In addition, one of her daughters from her previous litter was already pregnant. I feared the other two females might also be pregnant by their unaltered brother. When I arrived there was no food in the house for the cats. The family had no money and often fed the cats tuna when they couldn't afford to buy cat food. At least they realized they needed help. At that point in time, to put it politely, humans were not at the top of my “favored” list.

I check my email several times daily and opened a note from a man asking for my help. His name

is John Baker. We have a mutual acquaintance but that was not the only reason I quickly responded to his request. I could almost hear his voice through the heartfelt written words in his email. John was desperate. He lived in Koreatown in the Los Angeles area and had befriended a cat who was very pregnant. He was consumed with getting her off the streets and into a safe place to raise her expectant family. I called him and the conversation immediately connected our two souls in that we both care deeply about animals. I agreed immediately to take the cat.

John offered to drive her to Santa Barbara and said he would arrange for a temporary safe place for her to stay until he could make the journey. I was fine with the plan and expected to hear from him the following day. But there was no call...and no email. It wasn't until several days later that we spoke and I was briefed on the delay.

There was still panic in his voice as he shared the story of the last few days. John had taken the very pregnant cat to a friend's apartment knowing she would be out of harm's way. But she escaped somehow. John spent the entire night searching for her. Sadly, he had no luck and knowing him as I do now, I imagine he was inconsolable.

But to John's surprise, the cat showed up the following day. Now think about it. This was a strange neighborhood to the cat. She had only been in the apartment a little while before finding a way out. She spent the night who knows where. Then something in her feline brain must have kicked in and she found her way back to the apartment!

John and “about ready to pop” kitty arrived at RESQCATS on June 20. I knew the minute I met him that he was a special man whose compassion for animals surpassed anyone I had dealt with in the previous arrivals this season. I had prepared a large, quiet, isolated room for her and we quickly got her settled.

Our next task was to find a name for the beautiful brown tabby with large gemstone green eyes. Since she was from Koreatown, we thought we could find a Korean name that meant beautiful. A little research on the internet ruled that out quickly as neither of us could pronounce the Korean name for beautiful. John suggested we name her “Bella,” which means beautiful in Italian. I shared with him that I once had a long time resident cat named Bella, but we could incorporate his last name. So she became “Bella Baker!”

John spent most of the afternoon with Bella Baker, but we also found time to talk, share stories,



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feelings and we even shed a few tears together. It was upsetting for him to leave...not that he was the least bit uncomfortable with the set up for Bella Baker...but because his heart and soul had gone into rescuing her and he would be 2-1/2 hours away from her, making visits difficult.

For me, it was a glorious afternoon of rejuvenation and renewed faith in the human spirit.

Bella Baker gave birth to seven kittens the next day which also happened to be Father's Day. She had been rescued, transported and obviously arrived in just the nick of time. And it was pretty special to walk into her enclosure on a day of celebrating fathers in the world to find kittens being born. I wondered who their father was!

The text messages flew back and forth between John and me as I announced the subsequent birth of each kitten. And during the following weeks we exchanged more texts and I kept him up-to-date on the babies and Bella Baker with photos. John even made a second trip to Santa Barbara and RESQCATS to visit. Another great exchange took place as we admired Bella Baker and her family, shared life stories, talked about animals and some of his other rescues. It was as if we had been friends for years.

I will never forget the day that I called John to share of the sudden death of one of the kittens, "Ace." All had appeared normal with him and the only sign was realized in hindsight. He slept a bit more than his siblings or appeared to be on a different play schedule. Nothing stood out to alert me that anything was wrong. Then, one morning, there he was...just gone. Devastated doesn't even begin to describe my sorrow. I

was nervous as I spoke to John, somehow thinking that he would in some way blame me. But his words were only kind ones of support and genuine concern.

The kittens grew and the first two were adopted, then another and another and one more until finally only Bella Baker and one daughter were left.



"Bella" and "Newt"

Historically, people are drawn to kittens and only kittens. In fact, many don't seem to notice the mother cats. I somewhat panic when I have a mother cat that needs a home as it often takes months for someone to step forward and truly "see" the beauty in a one-year-old kitten that got pregnant and missed out on some of her own kitten-hood due to raising a family. It is always nice... even if just once in a while... a mom and one of her babies find a home together?

I thought I would hold out a bit and refuse to send the kitten with anyone that wanted only her. Maybe someone would come along and take them both if I stood firm long enough in my conviction that a mother and daughter team would be a nice addition to an adoptive home.

Wishes do come true. LaRea Sullivan found it impossible to separate Bella Baker and her daughter, "Newt." I spoke with her at the time of their adoption with enthusiasm and happy tears. Honestly, I don't know who was more excited....LaRea or me!

Bella Baker delivered some beautiful kittens into this world and I am sure that they have changed the lives of their adopters by bringing joy, laughter and unconditional love into their homes.

But her biggest gift was to me in the very special people she brought into my life.

I am eternally grateful to LaRea for seeing the need for cats like Bella Baker who need homes and opening her heart to a mom and her daughter.

And John...well, I think we are kindred spirits.

Bella will have a place in my heart forever. I think of her very often and so I am repeatedly reminded that I am not alone. There is goodness in the human spirit and people who share a deep compassion for animals...just like me.



"The human spirit is a magnificent entity. Just when we think we can stand no more, something significant touches our soul... and life goes on."

— Peggy Toney Horton



Many of you have asked about the book I am writing about RESQCATS. Although I had hoped to have it completed and to press in time for the holidays, the busy kitten season has been my first priority. However, I will complete the editing in early 2016 and thought I would share the first chapter of the book with you...as a teaser of sorts! So here you go!



Years before I dreamt of starting RESQCATS I shared my home with a cat named Tattoo. I cannot imagine writing a book without writing about "Tattoo." She was my first cat when I became independent and lived on my own after graduation from college. The experiences in my newly found existence were with Tattoo by my side. And for that reason, she will always have first place in my heart!

Tattoo-my first cat

As a little girl, I grew up with outdoor cats that were never allowed in the house. Perhaps that was the norm and what most people did with their animals back then or maybe my mother just didn't want animals in the house. It wasn't until I moved out on my own that Mother allowed our family cats to be indoors. There's no telling what changed her mind. Maybe she suffered empty nest syndrome and needed the presence of another living being besides my father in the house. Or perhaps by the time I left for college people were becoming more educated about the dangers to pets left outside. Since then, our cats have been indoor cats.

My folks worked hard at making sure that I got an education.

My father paid his way through college working three jobs while raising a family. My mother never went to college. When given the choice of having a new car or going to college, Mother chose the car but she always regretted it later in life. She attended business school and was employed as a secretary. Her main focus was as a mother first, however. Reduced work hours meant that she had to go to work after I left for school, complete the job requirements and return home before I arrived in the afternoon. Mother and Daddy worked diligently to make sure that my brother and I had everything we needed and most all we wanted. However, as with many families, money was always tight. They felt that a college education would insure that my future would not be as difficult as their life had been financially.

I graduated from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas in 1979 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Graphic Design. When I chose Graphic Design as my college major, my parents were baffled. While both had always been supportive of my artistic talents, they did not quite understand what graphic design

was or what one does with a degree in it. So they encouraged me to get a teaching certificate in art. My mother felt that a teaching certificate always gave a woman something to fall back on once she raised her family and needed to return to work.

In my best interest, my folks had a plan for me. The plan was to get a college degree, find a great job, stay with the same company and grow within the corporate ladder for my entire career. That is until I got married, bought a house with a white picket fence around it and bore children. Staying true to the plan meant time off to raise my kids was mandatory. Once the children were old enough there was the option to return to work if needed. At this point, the teaching certificate came into play. Maybe that was how it was for women back in the 1950's, or perhaps that is what my mother could have had if she had gone to college instead of getting that new car. Regardless, their predetermined plan just didn't work out for me.

My first job out of college was at Neiman Marcus in Dallas, Texas. The job description included fashion layout for newspapers nationwide and direct mail design. I also free-lanced package design for Neiman's epicure shop to make extra money. Designing cookie tins, labels for thirty five different flavors of expensive gourmet popcorn and packaging for a variety of other epicurean delights was most enjoyable. The freelance projects and the creativity they inspired were more enjoyable than my salaried job. I desired an occupation that would be more graphic design oriented. Specking type and fitting fashion drawings into newspaper layouts for advertising was not what I envisioned myself doing forever. So I set out to find another job.

After two interviews, Susan Crane, a company that designed gift wrap for department stores, hired me. The job not only seemed more suited for my talents but the salary was better.

I left Neiman Marcus on good terms with the assurance from art director that there would be opportunities to continue to do freelance package design for them. Nothing could be better!

The folks didn't understand why I would leave a job after only a year. It was obvious to all of us that I had already found flaws in their "plan" for me. The topic of not having a teaching certificate on which to fall back per my mother's advice dominated our conversations. Within a year of leaving college, I began my second job, which was not what my father felt exhibited a good reputation in the working world! As my parents, they had always realized my capacity of being a "free spirit." Now I was proof in the making.

The second interview at Susan Crane was mostly an introduction to the other employees. At that time, the new boss introduced me to the designer that was leaving and the reason the job opening existed in the first place. The proposed schedule was for me to start in two weeks after his departure. The guy was



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pleasant and incredibly excited about his upcoming opportunity in a large advertising company in New York City. There was one serious dilemma, however. Her name was Tattoo.

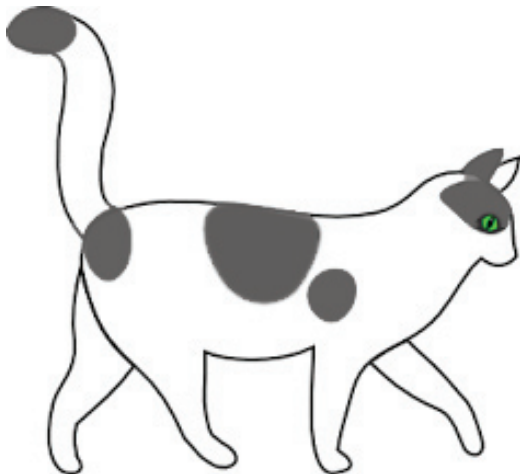
Tattoo was two years old when we began our life together. She was an average sized cat with short white fur accompanied by a multitude of various sized gray spots. The name, Tattoo, seemed perfectly suited for my new spotted girl so I kept it. Glistening yellow green peridot gems best described her gorgeous eyes. Tattoo was friendly and affectionate, as well as curious and confident so it took less than a day for her to adjust to my apartment.

At this time in my life, I had been on my own for a year, was single with my career ahead of me and was taking care of myself financially. I owned my own car and rented a cute one bedroom apartment. But it was lonely sometimes and Tattoo was great company when I was home.

Our morning routine on weekdays was always the same. Tattoo perched on the bathroom counter as I got ready for work. Watching me put on my make-up was her favorite early morning activity. She gazed curiously as I applied blush and eye shadow followed by liner and mascara. This was Dallas and Dallas women dress according to high fashion and wear make-up! On an occasional morning, I put blush on Tattoo's cheeks and eye shadow above her lids for fun. My mom always teased during her visits, "Looks like Tattoo has been in the blush and blue eye shadow again!" Yes, admittedly, that was back in the days when blue eye shadow was in style!

The small brushes I used to apply were a favorite toy. The last thing I made sure of before leaving the bathroom to get dressed was to safely tuck the brushes into the drawer so there was no chance of her hunting and swallowing them while I was at work.

Tattoo must have missed me during my long days at work. Travelling time in the morning and evening was an hour each way if traffic flowed well. Theoretically, I left at seven a.m. for an eight o'clock



start time. The job was from eight to five so I could be home by six p.m.

That rarely happened, however! Remember, I was single. So after five o'clock p.m. any responsibilities were purely social ones. There were aerobic classes to attend and guys to scope out at the fitness center, although I can tell you my experiences with any jocks at the gym were nothing to get excited about. The athletes were more about themselves, how much weight they could hoist above their heads and how many females they could conquer. I remember a guy I met while running on the track that was good-looking, and seemed nice so I accepted a date with him. Unexpectedly, he came onto me at high speed from the moment I got into his car. The advances continued the entire date and escalated upon the return home. At that point, throwing him out of my apartment was my best move. He did call the next day to apologize for moving so "fast" while admitting that he sensed my displeasure. I minced no words when I explained that I don't move that rapidly on a first date. And you know what he said! "Well, I move fast because I am a sprinter!" I replied that I was a slow long distance runner and hung up the phone! That was our one and ONLY date!

Other nights were all about "happy hour." Many times happy lasted more than just an hour. I went with coworkers or met friends after work and we cruised the most popular bars for singles. Half price drinks were accompanied by enough snacks to suffice for dinner. When the disco music started, we danced the night away. The whole night! I still wonder how I ever managed to leave the bars at two in the morning and be at work by 8 a.m.

Sweet Tattoo met me at the apartment door every evening regardless of what time I got home. Upon hearing the turn of the key in the lock she could make it to the door by the time I tried to cross the threshold. I inserted my foot to gently force her back into the interior and entered carefully. The evening, or whatever was left of it, was spent with Tattoo under my feet or by my side.

I should have realized that the days were long and alone for her. Many days, boredom succumbed to unrolling the toilet paper and decorating the entire apartment with it. Sometimes the delicate lace pillows on the bed showed evidence of having been tackled and the field goal for kicking them was living room and kitchen. More than once, the loose lid on the Q-tips container was discovered and all the swabs inside had disappeared. I wondered what she did with all of them and discovered at least 100 under my couch when I moved.

Tattoo was always there to greet me and I could always rely on her to welcome me with open paws! That is...all but once.

I left work, stopped by the deli to pick up dinner and got to the apartment around six pm. The plan was

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for a quiet evening on the couch with my cat and a movie. Tonight was different when I opened the door and entered. There was no Tattoo. The apartment was eerily quiet. There wasn't a mew or sign of life so I began a hysterical search. I looked under the bed which always seems to be the first place people look for missing cats! (Why is that?!) The wardrobe closet was closed but I inspected inside anyway. The bathroom shower was empty and so were the cabinets. I hurried into the kitchen and towards the pantry. Upon opening the food cupboard, gigantic yellow-green eyes stared through the dark. "Tattoo," I shrieked! "Have you been in there all day?! Oh no, I am so sorry!" She had been locked in my pantry for eleven hours. What could she have done in there all that time? I'll tell you what she did. Tattoo managed to open the Crisco shortening and break a bottle of garlic salt. Thank goodness she wasn't hurt. Broken glass from the container covered the floor but there was no sign of blood. All four paws, however, were coated in Crisco and garlic salt and were a mess as she jumped out and trotted across the floor leaving tracks of shortening and garlic everywhere making her way to the litter box. The plans for a quiet night and movie were replaced with cleaning her feet AND my carpet. I felt so guilty. The only comfort was in the fact that it had been a day that I returned home directly from work!

Work on free-lance designs for Neiman's continued on weekends. Today graphic designers can generate and alter designs with the push of a key on the computer with all the programs available. But back in my day, designs were created at the drawing board...or my kitchen table! Transparent vellum paper enabled me to perfect designs by using overlays. Color changes weren't accomplished by a right or left click on the computer. Colored markers were used! Thin tipped markers were for fine outlines and wide tips shaded large areas. I will brag here that I owned a marker in every available color.

My little buddy was there to help, too. Tattoo always managed to find a spot on the kitchen table where I worked. She removed markers from their container and pushed them around like toys. Loose lids were sent flying into the air with a quick tilt of her head as she watched them fall to the floor. It followed that they then got batted around throughout the apartment. Needless to say, several made their way under the couch with the lost Q-tips. When Tattoo tired from hunting marker lids, she returned to the table to sprawl out across my work. The markers that had lost their lids during the escapade could only be salvaged by wrapping them in plastic wrap.

There is no explanation for what came over me one day when working on a design for a butter cookie tin.



Something possessed me to color Tattoo with the markers. Her pure white fur disappeared into a myriad of hues... red, hot pink, yellow-orange, turquoise blue and purple. When the coloring was completed, she looked like a rainbow colored cat but didn't seem to mind. In fact, she liked the attention and we agreed that she looked absolutely beautiful. Grooming over the following days gradually turned the bright colors into a blend of pastels that resemble dyed Easter eggs. When my mother visited she said, "I see Tattoo has been in your markers again!"

Tattoo also joined me for dinner when I ate at home by placing herself in a semi-circle around my plate as close as possible without touching it. Then, when she thought I wasn't looking, she gently took her paw and swiftly swooped across my plate to remove anything she thought she might like to eat.

Moving around the apartment was a challenge as Tattoo was like a third leg walking between my legs and under my feet constantly. I am not complaining... just saying she craved time together and this small compensation on my part was well deserved for all the time she spent alone.

People who love cats are familiar with the phrase "lap cat." Tattoo defined the term eloquently without being particular about whose lap she liked. Any lap would do....mine, a friend, a date, a boyfriend. She possessed a talent for picking out the one person in a room who was not especially fond of cats and if given a choice, theirs was always the lap she chose!

Bedtime was special for both of us as she managed to find a favorite spot snuggled and tucked into the small of my body. Other times, she wrapped herself around my head and we shared the pillow. There was never a night that we were not together. And any overnight guests...if you know what I mean...had to share the bed with her, too.

Asking the landlord for permission to have a cat was not something that ever crossed my mind. It took five years for the management to discover Tattoo. A notice was posted on my door stating I was to meet with the apartment manager immediately. The timing



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of the notice couldn't have come at a worse time. My fiancé had ended a seven year relationship only eight weeks before our wedding date leaving me devastated. I suppose the manager took pity on my plight as I sat in her office sobbing and telling the story of my broken engagement. The manager never asked me to leave or find another home for Tattoo. (After that experience it is easy to understand why I am so adamant about requiring adopters from RESQCATS to present landlord approval!)

It would have been an emotional breaking point if Tattoo had not been there for me. She watched boyfriends come and go, stayed by my side when I was happy, sad, uncertain, or with clear vision. For the first time in my life I understood what unconditional love from a pet was about.

Tattoo welcomed "Violet," a kitten I rescued off a busy highway as easily as she accepted her new home with me. She (and Violet) made the cross-country trip from Texas to California in late 1985 so that I could marry the man of my dreams.

At the age of twelve, Tattoo was diagnosed with hyperthyroid disease and was treated with radio-active iodine treatment. Fortunately, the treatment was a success but I remember how difficult it was the first two weeks after her return home. The vet recommended limited cuddle time for two weeks due to the radioactivity that could be transferred from her body to mine. Somehow we got through it and she was back to herself. Once she recovered, she acted like she was a kitten again.

Two years later, Tattoo was diagnosed with bone cancer in her nose. Sadly, nothing could be done to save her.

Tattoo... was my very first cat. She was the first cat I ever had to euthanize. The first cat I ever remember losing. The first cat I grieved. She was my first for a lot of things. So it is no wonder that Tattoo has first place in my heart!



"Tattoo" and "Little Violet"

The RESQCATS "Family"

Volunteers are the core of RESQCATS. Their dedication and commitment is a precious gift that makes such a difference. Volunteers work together to clean enclosures, handle maintenance, socialize kittens, design and put together the newsletter, bathe kittens, foster, send out e-newsletters, help with fundraising, participate on the board, prepare financials, and so much more. I am grateful beyond words to each of you.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
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