

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

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## FEATURED CATS

Flower and Patch  
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## JERRY'S GEMS

Opinionated Jerry  
shares his wisdom.  
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# THE CAT HOUSE Scoop

Cat pictured: Clooney by Nicolette Brenton

VOLUME NO. 12 | ISSUE NO. 1 | SPRING 2012



### ADOPTION FACILITY

1935 Q Street  
Lincoln, NE  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 6–8 pm  
Sundays 1:30–4 pm

PO Box 23145  
Lincoln, NE 68542  
Hotline: 402-441-9593  
info@thecathouse.org  
www.thecathouse.org  
facebook.com/thecathouse

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The Cat House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all volunteer organization, funded entirely by donations and adoption fees.

## TCH residents share love, purrs through Cat Love Therapy

By Jeff Kennedy

At first, Shawntel Myers seems to be your typical 21-year-old college student. But the more one speaks with the UNL junior biochemistry major, the more one realizes she's a remarkable young lady with intelligence, organizational skills, and a heart to help those who are most in need.

Shawntel's relationship with The Cat House (TCH) began in May 2011 when she was searching for volunteer opportunities. Her mother directed her to TCH as a possibility. "It was a perfect fit for me because it was a chance to volunteer and I absolutely love cats," Myers stated.

In November 2011, Shawntel went shopping at one of TCH's garage sales and picked up the book *Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover's Soul*. While reading the book, she found a story about a woman who started a Pet Therapy program at local assisted living facilities using a beloved dog. The idea resonated with Shawntel who thought, "The Cat House has all these wonderful cats with love to

share. Wouldn't it be a good idea to utilize them in a therapy program?" That was the beginning of TCH's Cat Love Therapy.

Shawntel e-mailed TCH president Faye Stevens and asked if cat therapy had been done before and if she could pursue it. Stevens replied that TCH had tried something similar in the past with limited results, but encouraged Shawntel to pursue it if she was willing to organize the cats and volunteers and handle communication with the local facilities.

*continued on page 9*



Jean and Noah.

# Volunteer Opportunities

The Cat House has a very hard-working and dedicated crew of volunteers committed to improving the lives of cats in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

If you are interested in helping, you can fill out a volunteer application online at [www.thecathouse.org](http://www.thecathouse.org) or contact us by phone at 402-441-9593 or e-mail at [volunteer@thecathouse.org](mailto:volunteer@thecathouse.org).

You're in for a rewarding experience!

## Opportunities to help include:

- Care, feeding, exercising, and socializing of cats
- Laundry
- Facility maintenance
- Facility organization and restocking
- Transporting cats to and from vet clinic
- Newsletter articles, photography, and production
- Assisting with communication to volunteers and/or the public
- Adoption counselor
- Post-adoption follow-up calls
- Volunteer training program assistance
- Volunteer scheduling assistance
- Filing
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Feral/TNR program
- Foster home

## FUNDRAISER

# Kwik Shop Partnership

Kwik! Kwik! It's not too late to donate or "round up" your purchase total April 1-30 when visiting one of the Kwik Shops in Lincoln.

Lincoln Kwik Shops are supporting The Cat House during this month as part of Kwik Shop's local charitable partnership program.

# Spotlight on... Judy Smith

By *Martha Stoddard*

It's a good thing for Sloopy that Judy Smith quit her day job a few years ago. Retiring from her career as a secretary and bookkeeper gave the Lincoln woman time to nurse Sloopy, an amiable red-and-white Manx, back from the brink and provide her a lap of her own.

Judy began volunteering with The Cat House about three years ago. She started with the morning shift and has been a regular on Monday mornings – checking on cats, giving them food to tide them over until the evening crew arrived, scooping litter boxes and cleaning up dishes. It wasn't long before she offered to foster a cat at home. Her last cat had been gone a few years and she could see the need.

That's how Kiki, an elegant white older cat, came to live with Judy. Kiki didn't do well with all the cats at the shelter. At Judy's, she got to be the queen. "She did really good," Judy said. "She just took over and I did what she wanted." Unfortunately, Kiki developed an intestinal tumor, which cut her life short.

A few months later, when a call went out seeking a foster home for Sloopy, Judy stepped up again. Sloopy was a long-time TCH resident who had developed several health problems and needed more attention than a staff of part-time volunteers could manage.

To start with, Sloopy suffers from irritable bowel syndrome. It took a long time to figure out what worked but she finally was stabilized on a diet of raw food that is commercially prepared and frozen. All seemed to be going well until she developed stomatitis, a painful gum disorder, and had to have some teeth removed. Then she got ringworm and, on top of it all, a nasty upper respiratory infection that killed her appetite.

By the time Sloopy arrived at Judy's place, she needed to be fed by hand and given fluids every night. She had a

regimen of pills and shots, plus lotion for her ringworm. Judy said she got help from other TCH volunteers at first. Now, it's just her and Sloopy, who has regained her appetite, gotten over the ringworm and is enjoying the comforts of a home. "She likes to lay in the patches of sunshine on the floor," Judy said.

Along with her work for the cats, Judy is a tutor with the Lincoln Literacy Council, a master gardener with the Lancaster County Extension Office and just finished a term in office for PEO. A Nebraska City native, she has a married son and two granddaughters.



# Happy Tails Stats

Here are the number of cats adopted in recent months.

October	21
November	25
December	26
January	20
February	22
March	26

# Donations in memory & honor of..

## In memory of

Peggy Hanlon from Lois French, Connie Stevens, Heidi & Matthew Prenosil, Gerald & Patricia Kamtz, Julie & Radley Breuer, Karen & John Kelty, Margaret & Gus Hitz, Jr., Angie Thompson, Joan Vlasin, C.G. & H.L. Franey, Janet Drake, Claudia & Dean Shaffer, James Burnett, Peggy McGrane, Marilyn & Billy Antley, James Waltke, Deb Harms, Cheri Mullen, Vicki Davis, Scott & Kristi Hawks, Cathy Seybold, Tammy & Tim Cheever, Suzie & Larry Meierdierks, & James & Mary Lou Tomka

Virginia Dowding by Barbara Kreifels, Sandra Backes, & Trudy Langner

Sharon Ann Friel from Jeff Friel & family

Sweet Missy from Alta Boswell

Beebop from Lori Cassel

Mandarin from Christy Reynolds

Beverly Bonnet, who lost her battle with leukemia and loved felines, from AFH

Dotty Kimberly from Jeanie Imler

Shirley from Robert Linderholm

Karen Busboom from Charlene Laulzenheiser

Betty Leacox from Donna Giebelhaus

Sandy Larkin

Lou Halda from Cheri Halda

Mary Virginia "Happy" Schrepf from Kelly Jordan & Breanna Benjamin

Brad and Ruthie from Chris Greene

Nicky, who was a wonderful cat, from Patricia Ann Speelman

Ron Preston by Janene Preston

## In honor of

Tuffy from Florence & Ronald Lee

Aladin from Denise Wiemer

Tootsie from Judy & Barbara

Allie, who was adopted from The Cat House, from Donna Giebelhaus

Whedda, Garder, Jessie, & Robert, the cats, from Margaret Snyder

George, who is in a TCH foster home, from Judy Halstead

Alma Vlasak from Boyd & Susan Alexander

Norma Patzloff from Sinda Dux

Vicki Kopp from Caroline O'Malley

Kristin Krejci

Katie at The Cat House from Bobbie Colgan

Arlys & Ken Reitan from Rich & Jeanne Kern (& Boo Radley, the cat)

Jeanne & Rich Kern from Arlys Reitan (instead of birthday gifts this year)

Jessica Hoburg, a great-niece, from Robert & Joan Hoburg (Jessica chose to have a donation given to TCH instead of a Christmas gift for the second year)

Bonnie Smith's birthday from Robert & Nancy Bidrowski & Deanna Zimmerman

Wynn Hjermsstad from Ernie Castillo, Bradd Schmeichel, & Opal Doerr

Sandy Maxa from her brother & sister-in-law

Jan Buffum from Karen

Punky from Elinor & Lynne Nevin

## Special thanks to

Dr. Shelley Knudsen

All Feline Hospital

Oak Creek Pet Care

Vondra Veterinary Clinic

Pitts Veterinary Hospital

BK Pet Necessities

Cause For Paws

Nature's Variety

Petco

PetSmart

## Avenger and the Bottle-Feeder

By Sonna Wellington

Eight pounds of airborne cat bounces from stomach to wall to floor these days as Avenger follows his "brothers" running their nightly high-speed laps through the apartment. To see him now, it is difficult to believe how close he came to dying.

This is actually the tale of four kittens, one of whom is very special, and a tale of bottle feeding kittens. It began when someone brought four kittens in a tiny box into The Cat House's Q Street shelter. Having been found in a Dodge car lot, they were named for Dodge cars: Journey, Charger, Challenger and Avenger. Their size made them look more like mice than cats.

Taken home for bottle-feeding by a foster mom, three grew at the normal rate for kittens, doubling their size and weight every two weeks or so. But one kitten, Avenger, didn't grow. His weight hovered around 8 ounces for weeks. Trips to Pitts Veterinary Hospital to see Dr. Mimi Harvey seemed to be weekly events, and many was the time that the foster mom was given a follow-up appointment, even though Avenger was not

expected to live to that appointment.

Despite the odds, Avenger hung on, not growing, but at least living. Tests were run, and there was clearly something wrong, but the diagnosis was not apparent. Feline Infectious Peritonitis was mentioned, as were stomach tumors. Avenger's "diaper rash" progressed to the point of being very similar to a human second- or third-degree burn, in that it was leaking plasma, and in turn bringing on dehydration and issues with kidney function.

Finally, Dr. Harvey decided on a broad spectrum worm treatment, something more powerful than what had been tried in the past, just to rule out the possibility that an extremely high worm load was the issue. It worked. Slowly, very slowly, Avenger turned a corner. He began gaining weight. His body was out of proportion by now, his ears huge compared to his body. It took time, but Avenger had no problems eating, and finally he got his body back in proportion. Dr. Harvey now proudly escorts Avenger around Pitts Veterinary Hospital,



all the while saying stories like his make the heartache she sees worth it.

Avenger's story may be extreme, but to a lesser degree, many of his issues are commonplace for bottle-feeding foster parents. Each kitten season, The Cat House has requests to take in very young kittens. Perhaps the mother was killed, or the kittens accidentally got separated from mom, but for whatever reason, kittens too young to be away from their mother are in just that circumstance. A dedicated volunteer accepts the kittens into his or her home, and becomes a "bottle feeder."

It is a large commitment, as these tiny ones need to be fed every 2 to 3 hours around the clock. They cannot pass urine or feces on their own and have to be stimulated to eliminate, and this also is needed every 2 to 3 hours.

*continued on page 9*

# Calendar of Events

Please join us in participating or celebrating the following events.

## Kwik Shop Month

**April 1-30**

Give at 14 locations in Lincoln

## Be Kind to Animals Week

**May 6-12**

Celebrate by volunteering or donating to TCH!

## Give to Lincoln Day

**Thursday, May 17 ONLY**

[givetolincoln.razoo.com](http://givetolincoln.razoo.com)

Sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation

## Adopt-A-Cat Month

**June**

The purr-fect month to find your new forever furry friend.

## 4th Annual Wine & Howl

**June 2** / 11 am-5 pm

Deer Springs Winery, East of Lincoln

## June Garage Sale

**June 22-23**

## Farmer's Market

**June 30-August 4** / 8 am-12 pm

Saturdays at the Haymarket in Downtown Lincoln

## Cat Show in Seward

**October 13-14** / Seward Fairgrounds

## 3rd Annual Meow & Chow

**October 28** / Time TBA

Scottish Rite Temple in Lincoln

# Blind Oskar Helps Out The Cat House

By *Martha Stoddard*

If you have ventured onto the Internet in recent months, you may have run across videos of an adorable tabby kitten named Oskar. He was born blind and has gone on to charm people around the world. Videos of him battling the hot air from a hair dryer, batting a ball with a bell inside, attacking the Christmas tree and cuddling with his big brother, Klaus, have been seen millions of times.

What you may not know is that Klaus, a handsome tabby with white paws and a crumpled ear, is a Cat House alumnus. At TCH, he went by Neffer, and he was famous for his ability to open latched doors when he wanted to wander the halls. Klaus found a home with Mick and Bethany

Szydowski of Omaha in December 2006. Oskar joined the household last summer and the two cats have become best buddies.

Oskar's people posted the first YouTube video in October and have added several more since. They have set up a blog ([www.blindoskar.com](http://www.blindoskar.com)) and a Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/blindoskar](http://www.facebook.com/blindoskar)), where they share stories about Oskar and Klaus and about other special kitties around the world. They also have Oskar merchandise available online through Café Press and, here's the really neat part, they are sharing proceeds from the merchandise with The Cat House. So, head online for a happy fix from Oskar and Klaus and thank them for their support of TCH.

## Catnip stix, pet beds, and carrier liners!

To purchase, stop by the shelter, or call the hotline at 402-441-9593.



In addition to monetary donations, you can donate items that we use in the day-to-day care of our feline friends. To arrange a drop-off time and location, you can call us at 402-441-9593 or email [info@thecathouse.org](mailto:info@thecathouse.org).

### DRY CAT FOOD

- Any dry cat food
- Royal Canin Baby Cat
- Science Diet W/D, R/D, C/D or K/D\*
- Purina NF\*

### CANNED CAT FOOD

- Science Diet or Iams – kitten & adult – *turkey, chicken, salmon (ground or minced)*
- Fancy Feast – *turkey, chicken, salmon (ground or minced)*
- Science Diet A/D, W/D, R/D, C/D, or K/D\*
- Purina NF\*

### CLEANERS

- Scent-free liquid laundry detergent (*sensitive skin*)
- Scent-free dryer sheets (*sensitive skin*)
- Clorox bleach (*regular type*)
- Anti-bacterial hand soap
- Dawn dishwashing soap
- Dishwasher detergent
- Clorox disposable wipes
- Hand sanitizer

### CAT LITTER

- Non-clumping, regular clay litter (*no clumping, pine, or newsprint type litter*)

### SUPPLIES

- Brooms
- O'Cedar Light 'N Thirsty cloth mop refills
- Paper towels & bathroom tissue
- Dixie heavyweight disposable bowls, 10 oz
- Large trash bags (*heavy duty*)
- Kitchen and office size trash bags
- Copier/printer paper

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Shallow, stainless steel food/water bowls, 16 oz or larger, with a wide bottom and low sides to accommodate whiskers!
- Meat flavored baby food (*chicken, turkey, beef, ham*)
- Small chenille or cotton reversible bath rugs (*no rubber backs*)
- Catnip in bulk
- Rotating teeth combs for cats
- "Slicker" brushes for cats
- "Cable Cuffs" or "Cable Clamps" cable management tool
- Pet carriers, hard plastic with metal doors
- Large litter boxes without covers
- Lint rollers

\* sold at vet clinics

# Flower

By Anne Stubbendeck

When you first meet Flower, she may come off as a shrinking violet. Stick around though, because it doesn't take too long before she starts darting around your feet, asking for attention. Visually, Flower is a darling cat. She will charm you with her black fur, little white feet and that distinct dollop of white down the center of her sweet face.

Flower was born to a feral cat in April 2009. She was somewhat socialized by the caretaker of the feral colony when she arrived at TCH in July 2009. Flower was in various rooms in the back of the shelter and didn't see a lot of people so she remained very skittish. She was then moved to a room upfront where she could watch everybody and see what was going on. She learned by observing other shy cats interacting with people that humans weren't so bad after all. Flower really began to "flower" then, to the point where she would jump into people's laps.

Flower loves people, especially those who are willing to take it slow with her in the beginning. Good things take time, and the seeds of love you plant with Flower will surely bloom. She would make a great companion and a lovely accent to your life.



Photo by Patrice for Sisters Photography

# Patch

By Anne Stubbendeck

This pretty calico lady is on the lookout for a best friend and certainly has all the makings of one herself. Patch is, for the most part, a laid-back cat, but she has been known to get a little wild and crazy with the stuffed catnip sticks. Patch graciously accepts pets and praise from visitors. She would certainly open up and become a highly loving cat in a happy home of her own.

Patch was microchipped by TCH before she was adopted out in June 2009. In September 2011, she was picked up as an outside stray by Animal Control, scanned for a microchip at the humane society, and released to TCH five days later. It turned out that the original adopter gave Patch to someone else and that individual did not want Patch back. Sadly, Patch was exposed to the FeLV virus during the 2-year period and is now FeLV+. If only the adopter had remembered that even if the phone message says that TCH is "full," we will ALWAYS take our cats back.

Patch currently lives in the Special Unit at TCH for cats with FeLV. She has quite a few wacky roommates whose antics don't seem to faze her one bit. She spends a lot of her time in the "windows" watching activity on the second floor of the building, being patient and pretty. Looking at Patch, you can tell that she has a lot to give to a special person who is willing to receive and allow her to be a bright patch in their life.

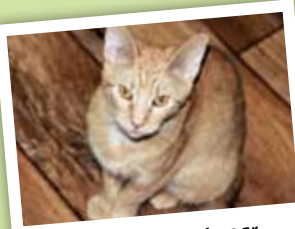
*Cats with FeLV have a compromised immune system, which puts them at risk of developing other illnesses, but with proper care, the disease can be managed and cats can live many healthy years. FeLV is incurable and can be transmitted to other cats through prolonged exposure to saliva and other body fluids.*



## These cats are looking for forever homes.



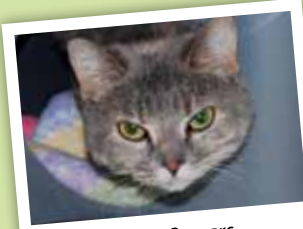
Maggie - 2 years



Abby, FeLV+ - 1 year



Smoke - 4 years



Bree - 2 years



Autumn - 5 years



Izzy - 7 years



Duchess - 6 years



Julie - 4 years

Visit our shelter at 1935 Q Street on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-8 pm and Sundays from 1:30-4 pm. You can also visit The Cat House kitties at the PetSmart adoption center located at 5200 N 27th Street.

# A Card-Carrying Volunteer

By Ann Stubbendeck

Cheryl Johnson is definitely doing her part for cats in Lincoln. She currently has 12 of her own and 1 foster cat and volunteers at TCH helping to feed cats and clean rooms. All of that is already a rather large charitable donation, but Cheryl doesn't stop there. A long time craft enthusiast, she decided to start selling her handmade cards at functions and events put on or attended by TCH such as cat shows, craft shows, and The Lincoln Farmer's Market. And what is the best part? It is that 100% of the proceeds go directly to TCH.

This donation of time, talents and materials has already supplied TCH with a new computer. Cheryl's initial goal was to raise \$400 for the much needed computer upgrade, but what she ended up with was \$560. On the heels of that success, Cheryl decided that she needed a new goal, a much bigger one this time. Cheryl is currently crafting on a mission to raise enough money to provide TCH with its very own blood pressure equipment, and that isn't cheap. Good, vet-quality blood pressure equipment ranges from \$1,200 to \$1,400, but Cheryl believes it's definitely in the cards for TCH to have it.

What would having blood pressure equipment mean to TCH? Hypertension can be common in older cats and is not usually recognizable through simple means of observation. If left untreated, hypertension can lead to more serious health problems such as blindness and heart failure. Regular blood pressure monitoring in cats can help prevent these problems, which if left undetected and untreated over time can result in premature death. Hypertension can also be a clue that a cat is experiencing poor kidney function or hyperthyroidism. Having blood pressure equipment on site at TCH would help provide even greater health care for the cats.

This goal may take some time to achieve, but the overall response to Cheryl's handmade cards (\$3), bookmarks (75 cents) and pet-themed photo mats (\$2) has been overwhelmingly positive among people looking to give a less generic, and



in many cases, more affordable alternative to typical store bought greeting cards. Not only are the cards well made and adorable, but they also help support a local non-profit that saves and improves the lives of cats in Lincoln and surrounding areas. People give greeting

cards in the hope that they will lift the spirits and brighten the day of the recipient, and what better way to do that than by informing the person that all of the proceeds from their greeting card are going to such a good cause?

If you would like to see or purchase any of Cheryl's products, you can do so starting Saturdays in late June at the Lincoln Farmer's Market in the Historic Haymarket or at any of the various indoor garage sales that TCH holds throughout the year. Cheryl is also in the process of developing a way to display and sell her cards during open hours at TCH.

**SPONSORED BY THE LINCOLN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

## Give to Lincoln Day: May 17, 2012

### What is Give To Lincoln Day?



Give To Lincoln Day is 24 hours of giving to nonprofits on Thursday, May 17. Everyone is encouraged to make

a gift to the nonprofit organizations they care about. Please take the opportunity to donate to The Cat House on May 17. The 24 hours of giving will run from 12:00 am through 11:59 pm on May 17 only.

The Lincoln Community Foundation is encouraging people to make their gifts online at [givetolincoln.razoo.com](http://givetolincoln.razoo.com). The Cat House will be listed as "Cat House"; the names of nonprofits will be in alphabetical order, so look for us under "C." Gifts will also be accepted in person during regular

business hours at the Lincoln Community Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South. If neither of these options work for you, call The Cat House hotline at 402-441-9593 before May 17, and special arrangements will be made to accommodate you.

### \$200,000 Challenge Match + Three Bonus Grants

Every donation made on May 17 will help nonprofits even more because they will also receive a proportional share of a \$200,000 challenge match fund provided by the Lincoln Community Foundation and their partner sponsors.

The Lincoln Community Foundation also will provide three bonus grants to the three nonprofits that have the most donors making gifts during Give To Lincoln Day.

\$2,500 will be awarded for first place, \$1,500 for second and \$1,000 for third. The minimum donation is \$10. There is no maximum donation limit; however, the proportional share of the \$200,000 match fund may not apply to large donations.

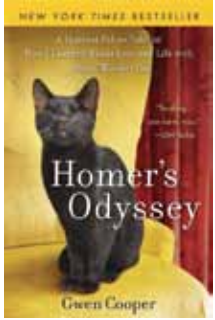
**More information about Give To Lincoln Day can be found at [www.GiveToLincoln.com](http://www.GiveToLincoln.com).**

**Please mark your calendar NOW and give to The Cat House on May 17 so that together, we can help more cats in Lincoln and stop the needless killing of homeless cats!**

# Kitty Lit

## Homer's Odyssey by Gwen Cooper

A book review by Jeff Kennedy



When Gwen Cooper got a call from her veterinarian saying she had an eyeless 4-week-old kitten up for adoption, Gwen firmly told her “no.” Gwen was living paycheck-to-paycheck in a rented room in a friend’s house, she had just broken up from a long-term relationship, and, worst, she already had two cats and feared being categorized as a “crazy cat lady” if she adopted a third. The veterinarian persisted, saying that the couple who found the kitten had opted for euthanasia, and everyone on her list for potential adoptions said no to the little black, blind cat. Only Gwen was left. With a sigh, Gwen told the vet she’d see him but offered no promises.

Upon meeting the tiny cat, Gwen couldn’t refuse. The blind kitten came to live with her and her two cats in their rented room. Soon she named him Homer after the allegedly blind Greek poet who authored *The Odyssey*. In the book’s forward, the veterinarian, Dr. Patricia Khuly, wrote, “(Homer) will always remind me that there’s nothing a partnership between a veterinarian, a loving owner, and one fighting patient can’t achieve.”

Homer’s *Odyssey* tells the story of two focal characters. One is Homer himself; the other is the author. It had been assumed that because Homer was blind since birth, he would be “underachieving” and “less independent” than a typical cat. Homer was quick to challenge that assumption and, in fact, prove the opposite. Gwen Cooper was a college graduate in her mid-20s when she adopted the cat, and the story can be taken as her maturing, much of which could be attributed by the influence Homer had on her.

The main lessons Gwen learned from Homer can be narrowed down to two primary themes: Courage and Love. These are reflected in the book’s subtitle: *A Fearless*

*Feline Tale, or How I Learned About Love and Life with a Blind Wonder Cat.*

Courage is something Homer exhibited from the very beginning and only continued to grow throughout the narrative. Gwen found herself making life decisions more intentionally focused on “nothing ventured, nothing gained” as opposed to her previous more cautionary, conservative decision-making. She attributed much of this to Homer, writing about his own courage:

*“Every leap from a chair back or tabletop is taken on faith, a potential leap into the abyss. Every ball chased down a hallway is an act of implicit bravery. Every curtain or countertop climbed, every overture of friendship to a new person, every step forward taken without guidance into the dark void of the world around him is a miracle of courage.”*

The other trait that Homer exhibited was extreme extroversion. He truly was a cat who never met a stranger and was willing to offer his unconditional love, ...well, unconditionally. Yet, while he was willing to give love freely, he wasn’t desperate for love in return. Any cat lover or volunteer at The Cat House knows many cats who have this trait, but the importance of Homer having it was the effect it had on Gwen, who was navigating the waters of her young career and the dating scene.

The stories throughout the book range from inspiring to laugh-out-loud funny, to emotionally touching. At one point Homer proved his dexterity and overcoming physical abilities by jumping five feet in the air to catch a fly mid-flight. Another anecdote shows his courage and his love by his chasing off an intruder who had broken into Gwen’s apartment. A third incident has Gwen bringing home a date only to be greeted at the door by a pleased Homer carrying in his mouth a tampon.

Perhaps the most moving and riveting point in the book came when Gwen, whose apartment was just six blocks from the World Trade Center, was not allowed to return to her building for three days following the September 11, 2001, attacks.

She describes in great detail her emotions about being separated from her cats, not knowing how they were, as well as the eerie change in New York City following the attacks. These two chapters have great insight into what it was like in post 9/11 New York for someone who lived and worked blocks away from Ground Zero.

Homer proves to be a special cat who transcends being a “special needs” cat by overcoming his limitations. He is a wonderful example of a feline of enormous spirit and puts to rest the idea of “unadoptable” animals.

This book is highly recommended. Gwen Cooper’s writing is thoughtful, descriptive, and engaging. Her life stories have a humility about them as she describes her evolution from a mid-20s “sex-in-the-city” girl to a stable, married, professional writer. Her relationships with her cats, especially Homer, lie at the forefront of the story. As it states in the book jacket, this is a book for “anybody who’s ever fallen completely and helplessly in love with a pet.”



### Light the Night for Lila and Nora

Lila is blind and needs surgery to remove her left eye, which is affected by glaucoma, and to reconstruct her right upper eyelid. There is a small chance that she may be able to see out of the right eye after the surgery. Nora also needs surgery for her right upper eyelid. Surgery will cost about \$2,000. Please go to [www.thecathouse.org/donate](http://www.thecathouse.org/donate) to help cover these costs.

# Jerry's Gems

## Dear Jerry,

My friend says cats should stay indoors. I disagree. I grew up on a farm and we always had cats outside. Shouldn't cats have a chance to get out and roam? Won't they be bored inside?

## Signed, Open Door Policy



## Dear Open Door:

Hey, hey, Jerry here! I'm taking over this column from Vonda. She got a nice home and wanted to retire from the advice cat business. She asked if I would step in since I always have something to say. I was happy to oblige.

Now, about your question. Your friend is obviously someone who really cares about cats and wants to do the best for them. I'll bet your friend's cats live a lot longer and are a lot healthier than those you knew on the farm. Am I right? Of course, I am.

Now, some cats might disagree. I've been at The Cat House long enough to have met cats who lived outdoors and cats who divided their time between inside and outside. They may talk about great adventures, but I've noticed they like the indoor life just fine and they don't have much to say about the bad parts of being outside.

There are lots of bad things, though. Take cars. I think cars are scary enough. I mean, you get in one of them and the next thing you know, you'll be at the vet. But when cats try to dodge them on the street or highway, cats can lose big time. My friend Cheddar got hit by a car and it broke his pelvis. He was laid up for a long time but at least he lived. Lots of others don't survive.

*continued on page 9*

# Hope and home

*By Denise Anderson*

In Greek mythology, Pandora received a box as a gift from the Gods. She got curious and opened the box, releasing all the evils of mankind. But Pandora closed the box before hope escaped, so humans always have hope. For cats, the gift they are hoping for is a home where they can live the rest of their lives. Two older cats from The Cat House found that forever home when they were adopted recently by a wonderful couple.

Elaine came to TCH in 2010, a move she was not particularly happy about. She was an introvert and not always welcoming of human company. Then she developed ringworm and had to go into quarantine, which meant less chance to interact with people. She became friendlier after getting over the ringworm and receiving lots of love from volunteers that worked with her, but she was still shy.

Pandora came to TCH in 2011 with her mother, Xena. From the moment she showed up at the shelter, we knew she was an extrovert. She spent a lot of time interacting with people and speaking her mind. She expressed her disapproval loudly when she did not get her way. She expected to be waited upon and admired by those around her.

Enter Dr. Seralyn Cox and her husband. They met Elaine and Pandora at TCH and fell in love with their complicated personalities. They decided to adopt and brought the cats home, one by one, before Christmas. Pandora made herself at home pretty quickly while Elaine, as might have



Elaine and Seralyn



Pandora

been expected, took a little more time to adjust to life outside the shelter. Pandora showed her outgoing personality by sleeping on the bed the very first night. Elaine defers to Pandora on most things and is shedding her reputation as a grouch. She now approaches her new Mom and Dad when she wants petting or under-the-chin scratches and purrs often because she is more relaxed.

Although the cats have opposite personalities, they are getting along well in a caring and loving home. Both cats have learned to tolerate being together and to relax in each other's company. They are happy and healthy, and the family couldn't have hoped for a better gift.



PW, FeLV+ - 3 years



Butters - 3 years



Greta Garbo - 2 years



## Jerry's Gems

*continued from page 8*

That's only one of the scary things out there that can hurt or kill your cat. There's also dogs, wild animals, poisons, traps, bad weather and mean people. I don't read the newspaper much, too much depressing news. But I've heard stories about cats getting shot with arrows or dart guns or worse.

Other cats can be dangerous, too. My friend Patch, whose story you can read in this newsletter, is an example. She got an incurable disease—feline leukemia—from hanging around with the wrong cats. Several of her roommates got infected with another incurable disease—feline immunodeficiency virus—from getting into fights.

I'm with your friend on this one. If you want your cats to be with you a long time, keep them inside. To keep them from getting bored, provide them some fun toys, a little play time every day, things to climb on and a window from which to watch the neighborhood. You can trust old Jerry on this. 🐾

**Sincerely, Jerry**

## Avenger

*continued from page 3*

As you might well imagine, taking home a litter of five bottle-feeding kittens doesn't leave much time for sleep, meals and a personal life.

Plus, these young kittens are very fragile, and things that might be simple for an adult or normal-sized kitten to be treated for, like worms, can be a life-threatening illness for them. Very young kittens cannot be treated for fleas, but must be flea-combed every day, as the loss of blood volume to the fleas is also life threatening.

But on the other end, bottle feeding can be the most rewarding experience. Seeing kittens grow, develop and eventually be adopted into a good home brings with it the knowledge that, had it not been for all the time spent, these kittens would have perished. As Avenger approaches his first birthday, he is an excellent example of a kitten who owes his life to the bottle-feeding care he received.

## Cat Love Therapy

*continued from page 1*

The Cat Love Therapy idea has taken off under Shawntel's guidance. She has only been turned down by one facility, because the staff was concerned about allergies amongst the residents. So far Shawntel has mobilized 20 to 30 different cats and almost 20 different volunteers to go on 10 outreach visits, most recently to the Zoo-seum event at the Lincoln Children's Museum and a visit to residents at Milder Manor. Residents and management at Milder Manor were so encouraged by the cat visits that they've now requested monthly visits.

At a recent visit to Milder Manor, Shawntel and five other volunteers showed up with six cats in carriers. It was obvious that the visit had been well-organized between Shawntel and Milder staff because there were lists of residents to visit, their room numbers, and the room numbers of allergic residents. Shawntel efficiently assigned sections of the building splitting up the volunteers in groups of two. The residents who had asked to see the cats were thrilled being able to pet the animals and hear their purrs.

One notable resident, Nora, is staying at Milder temporarily while recuperating from a recent injury. Nora has four cats at home and had been really missing them. In fact, Nora is a longtime friend of The Cat House and has voluntarily trapped feral cats in her neighborhood for the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program. So far, she has successfully taken more than 30 cats through the TNR program just from her neighborhood.

"When I saw The Cat House was bringing cats for us to see, it just made me

so happy," Nora said. "I knew I couldn't miss it." She took turns petting some of the cats and was enjoying it. Then Shawntel put Mojo in her lap.

Mojo, a large, young blue-and-white cat with extra toes, was on his first therapy visit and had been, up to that point, a little scared and timid. But once he settled into the blanket covering Nora's legs in her wheelchair and Nora started petting him, he became very content. He purred

and stretched as Nora stroked his head and back. Nora and Mojo stayed that way until it was time for Mojo to leave.

Another resident, Jean, had been forced to give up her cat of nine years, Maggie, when she moved into the facility. Jean spoke with pride and love about all the things Maggie used to do (what cat owner doesn't tell these stories?) and then began to get tears in her eyes speaking about her longtime feline friend.

Jean was elated to hold and pet the cats, in particular Noah and Flower. Both cats seemed very happy to snuggle up to Jean and

let her pet each of them. Flower was still in Jean's lap when it was time for the cats to leave and neither Flower nor Jean seemed overly thrilled with letting the other one go. Happily, Jean was assured the cats would be returning next month.

It's people like Nora and Jean that make the Cat Love Therapy idea so successful. Said Shawntel: "There's nothing better than seeing all the smiles and leaving knowing you've just made the day for many residents!"



**Mojo on Nora's lap.**



**Jean petting Flower.**

The Cat House needs your support so we can continue helping our feline friends. To donate food, toys or supplies, please call 402-441-9593 for an appointment. Contributions can also be made with a credit card through Paypal. Please consider donating, or visit our website to learn how you can help!

The costs to operate the facility continue to grow. One way of reducing costs is to minimize the number of newsletters that are printed and mailed out to our supporters. We are, therefore, asking if we can send future issues of The Cat House Scoop to your email address instead of mailing you a printed copy. Rest assured though, if you don't have access to a computer, we will continue to send the newsletter to you by mail!

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