

We Have Many Pets In Need Of Adoption - Please Open Your Heart & Home

Animalfriends

WINTER 2018 OF CONNECTICUT

LUCKY FELINES



The black-and-white cat used to follow Amondine around during her third shift at the SNET parking lot on Trumbull Street in Hartford. “I was doing my walk-through,” she recalls, “and I actually tripped over him. He came out of nowhere. All the feral cats that are down there don’t let you get near them....He was literally under my feet. You could tell with how friendly he was, he was definitely a pet.”

Every time Amondine was in her booth, the cat would appear on the steps or the railing. Every time she stepped out of the booth – even at 3 a.m., when she went to change the signs in the other parking lots -- he’d be trotting along behind her.

So she began calling him “Shadow,” and he became her “work pet.” Some of the “monthlies” – people living at the old SNET building, now an apartment complex – would bring him food. Amondine longed to bring him home; but she wasn’t sure how her dog, a pit bull with anxiety issues, would react. “Otherwise, I would’ve taken him, he was such a sweetheart. I did what I could, and I couldn’t have done it without my monthlies because I didn’t have the food.”

She worried about him. A lot. He had a heart condition that required medication, and the weather was turning colder. Plus, she was getting ready to take some time off. So she called AFOC director Judy Levy at 5 a.m. The organization took Shadow in and found him a loving home.

Portia was another friendly feline who owes her new lease on life to the AFOC. She happened to wander into a cemetery, where a woman was feeding a group of feral cats. The caretaker noticed that the mostly black cat had a head tilt and worried that she was having trouble eating.

The woman brought Portia and her brother, Harry, home but couldn’t keep them. Enter the AFOC. Portia got her head tilt checked out: the vet’s feeling was that she was, in all probability, born with it.

“Portia is a sweet young girl who is so friendly that as soon as I entered the room, she came to greet me,” recalls AFOC volunteer Eileen. “This girl is one of the special cats you could just pick up and hold.” She was able to place Portia easily – the young cat was so “adorable that when her new mom took one look at her, she knew it was meant to be. Maybe it was the beautiful amber eyes.”

-- T. J. Banks



If you are interested in being a foster family for future litters, please contact us at the shelter. We need your help.



UNITED WAY

You can donate while at work by making a contribution for THE UNITED WAY. Just specify that your donation is intended for AFOC. Please use the following letters and numbers on the form: AG 0640.



Sunshine Fund

Sunshine was a dog that came to us years ago. She was a Shepherd Husky cross and was found in a project in Hartford with one eye poked out by a stick. The owners signed the dog over to AFOC. We had her injuries treated and we found her a wonderful home. She lived to be over 14 years old. What happened to Sunshine was just the beginning of many years involved in rescuing injured and abused animals. This fund is in her memory.

I-GIVE MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Register with I-Give on line. Shop on line with major retailers and help AFOC at the same time! All consumer transactions will contain a percentage donated to AFOC.

Sponsorship Program

We have many cats that are not adoptable or hard to place. We are looking for sponsors willing to sponsor a rescue cat by helping to cover the cost of food, litter, and basic medicine. Our goal is to sponsor every cat.

ANOTHER CONVENIENT WAY OF GIFT GIVING!

You can now use your credit card and make a donation on-line through PayPal. Just go directly to our website for further details (www.afocinc.org).



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SUCCESSFUL 2017 BAKE SALE

This year, the annual AFOC bake sale at the Simsbury Stop & Shop was moved to the first weekend in October. We made \$720 in sales and donations. A number of people also picked up literature and asked questions about the organization. I'm hopeful that we'll get several adoptions as a result and maybe a volunteer and/or regular supporter. The event is always worthwhile -- not only for the money it brings in but also for the exposure it gives AFOC to the public.

We had really pleasant weather this year -- sunny and warm. Carmelo Aresco once again baked his yummy Danish coffee cake. He and I set up at 9 a.m., and George Murtha arrived around 10 to lend a hand with sales and information about our organization.

We had a quantity of wonderful baked goods provided by our team of bakers: Marilyn Beebe, Liz Calnen, Barbara Dennis, Erika Elbert, Barbara Greenleaf, Sue Jansen, Joann O'Connell, Ed Paquette, Jill Perrault, Sue Riley, Jane Wilson, Terri Wilson, Carmelo, and me. (I apologize if I have omitted anyone.) There were fewer people shopping in the afternoon, and we had sold most of our goodies by 2 o'clock, when we closed up. George took the leftovers to Roaring Brook Vets as a thank-you for their support for AFOC.

Carmelo had baked extra coffee cake, and he made an additional \$52 for the organization when he went back to work on that Monday. Thank you all for your support. We'll do it again next year.

--Ruth Woodford

THE STORMY SAGA CONTINUES

Maybe you remember Stormy from the last newsletter. He was the very old cat found malnourished in a storm drain out in Bristol this past spring. After spending several weeks at the veterinary hospital, he came to the AFOC shelter. Although he was happy there, it wasn't an ideal place for him..

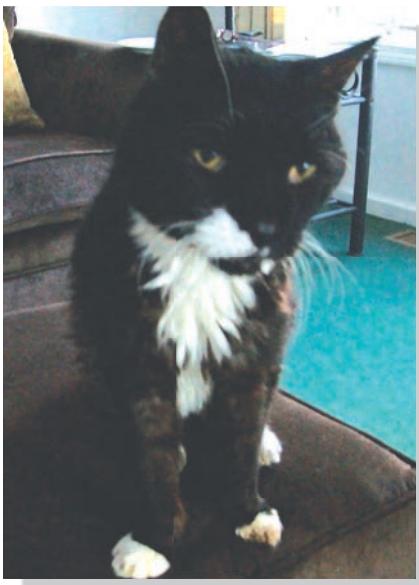
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BARNABY



He weighed only 6 pounds, and his thyroid numbers were way too high: that meant that he needed thyroid meds every 12 hours. The vet said that his life could probably be measured in days, not in weeks or months.

Stormy, however, wasn't ready to give up, and neither was I. He came home to Torrington with me.

My tuxedo boy got his meds every 12 hours.

I fed him five times a day with a syringe and gave him an appetite-stimulant pill every three days. After six weeks, he was eating on his own and starting to put on weight. Now, after

more than five months with us, Stormy weighs 10 pounds; his thyroid numbers are ideal, and he no longer needs the appetite stimulant. He knows his routine and lets me know when it is time for

him to eat. Thanks to his will to live, I expect Stormy to be around a long time.

-- Jean Blackman



The first time I spotted Barnaby was in April of 2016, as I started mowing my lawn. The top of a small orange head appeared above the overgrown grass on the front yard of the vacant house next door. I stopped mowing and approached slowly, only to have him slink away when I got within 20 feet. But a quick glance revealed two concerns: a mangled left ear and ribs that were noticeably visible through his orange fur.

While there was nothing I could do about his ear, my love of cats immediately kicked in: I raced to the kitchen, emptied half a can of wet food into a bowl, and went next door. I put the bowl down on the lawn, but it was lost in the long grass. So I went back inside, took the large rubber mat in front of the sink, and placed it under the food bowl.

The orange cat kept his distance. Once I went back to my own yard, however, he cautiously approached the mat. With one eye on me, he sniffed the food, then inhaled it. I re-filled his bowl a few minutes later, and he emptied it again with enthusiasm.

It took several weeks to lure him onto the porch. I could still not get anywhere near him; but he was content to eat the food and sleep on one of the cushioned chairs on our open porch as long as no one seemed to be around.

The first big breakthrough came as I sat on the porch one day with the food only a few feet away. After eating, he amazed me by coming over and rubbing against my legs. I let him familiarize himself with my smell and finally was able to pet him as he walked by. Congratulating myself on my superior cat knowledge and ability to communicate with wild animals, I reached out to pet him on his next pass and got whacked on the back of my hand with his claws fully extended. My hand looked like something out of the prom scene in "Carrie."

We both made some adjustments over the next few months. Then one day, while I was stroking his back, he flopped over on his side and let me massage him. He purred away the entire time. Soon, he was enjoying many of the same perks as our indoor cats: tuna water, cat treats, belly rubs, and monthly applications of Frontline to ward off ticks.

With inclement weather approaching, we faced another challenge – how could we get him through the winter? We could neither bring him into the house with our other five cats nor

Volunteers needed, sometimes on very short notice, to transport cats to veterinary appointments. Most appointments are from the shelter in New Britain to a vet in the Farmington Valley. Very occasionally, the appointment could be to specialists in Massachusetts or just over the border in New York State. If you are willing to do this, please call Jean, the shelter manager, at 860-489-4901.

leave the basement door open all winter for him.

We found a company that makes heated cat houses and ordered a double-wide one with an electric pad: the pad is pressure-sensitive and heats up when the cat sits on it. I set it up and realized we had no outside outlet to plug the heating pad into. Betsy immediately nixed the idea of running an extension cord through the window and into the kitchen. So I ended up contacting an electrician, who installed an outlet on the front porch.



It took a week or so, but we were finally able to lure Barnaby into the cat condo though one of the two plastic-covered doorways.

Barnaby still lives on our porch, eats three (or more) meals a day, gets lots of petting, and seems content with his new life. Despite the hazards of living outside, he has managed to thrive, bulking up to roughly 15 pounds.

It would give me great joy to introduce him to the pleasures of a warm and loving home. But he is still a very wild, willful cat and has his own ideas on how he wants to live his life. It is our sincere hope he lives a long and comfortable one -- inside if possible, outside if he chooses.

-- Gary Berman

IN LOVING MEMORY

Reginald: Donations were made in memory of Reginald Cyr.

--Marie Cyr, Judith & Bruce Morris

Marmalade: Donations were made in memory of Marmalade.

--Lois & John McHugh, Nancy McHugh

Roxie: A donation was made in memory of Roxie, a loving pet of Adrian & Eleanor Healey West Hartford, CT.

--John Darcey

Kelsey: A donation was made in memory of Kelsey.

--Jane Boyle

Kayla: A donation was made in honor of Kayla.

--Ingrid Persson

Leona & Harlan: A donation was made in memory of Leona & Harlan Feinberg.

--Barbara Russell

Clara: A donation was made in honor of Clara Flarahty's birthday.

--Matthew Epright

Sassy: A donation was made in memory of Sassy, beloved pet of Paula Cutoon.

--Joan Walden

Ozzie: A donation was made in memory of Ozzie, pet of the Levy family, West Hartford, CT.

--Barbara Kronfeld

Anthony: A donation was made in memory of Anthony Fiorillo.

--Jean Olson

Lady: A donation was made in memory of Lady, our beloved Golden Retriever.

--Janie & William De Dominicis

Dillon: A donation was made in loving memory of Dillon.

--Diane Francello

Oreo: A donation was made in honor of our wonderful little friend, Oreo.

--Marion Goodwin

Steward: A donation was made in memory of Steward Friedman.

--The Penwood Association

We would be happy to accept a donation of a car, van, truck, RV or boat in any condition, running or not. They are a charitable tax deduction and help us continue our daily work.

SEND IN THE CLONES

During the winter solstice of 2001, there arrived in our old seen-it-all world a creature that was truly unique: Copy Cat ("CC" for short), a grey-and-white kitten, born at Texas A & M in College Station. She didn't look like anything special. But CC had been a long time coming, and, even though her four siblings had died in utero, she was healthy and thriving. She was the single viable kitten to show for 87 heartbreaking attempts by a crack team of geneticists. CC was a miracle--- the first cat to be cloned and to survive.

The process sounded simple enough. Retrieve a cell (the A & M team used an ovarian cell); remove and preserve its nucleus; implant that nucleus into the denucleated ovum of a surrogate cat; and then implant the manufactured embryo into the second cat. The kitten born from such a procedure would be a carbon-copy cat, at least in theory. Yet anyone who has ever known a set of identical twins will tell you that twins are rarely as identical as folklore would have it. The same DNA doesn't translate into identical personality or identical mannerisms. Nature, ever the changer, plays a large part in this. And so it was with CC.

Rainbow, the calico original, had a reputation of being shy and stand-offish. She had also been fighting a weight problem all her life. CC, on the other hand, was playful, outgoing, and thin. Even their coats were very different. Rainbow lived up to her name -- gold fur over white with blocks of tan and brown -- while CC was patterned grey and white. The most striking resemblance between the two lay in their faces, particularly around their mouths and cheeks. In a black-and-white photo, those faces looked to exactly the same.

But they weren't the same. The research team saw the differences and alerted their backers, Genetic Savings and Clone, to that fact. And after an initial burst of interest from the pet-owning public, the overall fascination with clones as a commercial venture began to wane. Cost, inconsistent results...the reasons were probably many. And 9-11 had given the 24-hour news cycle something even bigger to talk about.

Fast-forward to today. The most recent corporate manifestation of genetic manipulators is ViaGen, a subsidiary of Trans Ova Genetics. In the early 2000s, the company concentrated primarily on livestock animals: prize-winning dairy cows and race-winning thoroughbreds. In the past year, however, ViaGen has cracked the pet-cloning market and brought the prices down considerably. A bereaved pet owner may now clone Fido for a mere \$50,000, down from six figures. Fluffy will run half as much at \$25,000. The cost differential is based on the fact that cats are easier to replicate, proving that even clone dogs are more trouble than cats. A pre-packaged clone kit is available on-line, and the collection process is a cinch. A sample of skin is "harvested" from the donor (dead or alive) and refrigerated. The tissue is sent to the lab where the cells are cultured in vitro and then frozen. This first step runs about \$1000 for a living pet and 50 per cent more for a deceased one, the process being more complicated when dealing with an animal who is no longer living. Step two involves the extraction-and-implantation procedure. Pet owners can now have their beloved pet returned to them in kitten form for a little less than the cost of a low-end BMW. Death is no longer final. Lazarus can be returned to the bosom of his family.

But this journey to immortality has not been without its pitfalls. Some twice-over owners are disgruntled that their copies don't like the same treats, play with the same mouse toys, or behave in the same manner as the originals. ViaGen's mission statement spells it out: "we understand the unique love that our clients have for their pets.... [and are] dedicated to delivering outstanding service and results." They do not claim that you will receive the same cat. How could they? Good intentions don't necessarily yield the same pet reborn. In fact, the researchers are pretty certain that they won't, and they tell you that up front.

And then there's the moral question. Should we clone pets? The statistics for homeless cats are staggering. Each year, 3 ½ million cats are abandoned in the U.S. alone. These are just the ones in shelters, the countable ones. No one knows the number of homeless cats "on the outside." And of those incarcerated, nearly half will die. 1.4 million cats were euthanized in 2017 alone. If that isn't an argument for adoption over cloning, then what is?

But the story of CC does have a happy ending. After all the initial hoopla surrounding her birth, she was adopted by Duane and Shirley Kraemer, two of her creators, and went to live in a plush condo with a wrap-around sun porch. She grew to adulthood and went on to deliver three healthy kittens of her own.

CC celebrated her 16th birthday on December 22, 2017. By all standards, she has lived a very long and interesting life. There are obviously worse things in the world than being born a celebrity clone.

-- Dr. Thomas D. Morganti, Avon Veterinary Clinic

MY DAD'S CAT, SAMMY

People who love cats tend to like save-a-stray stories. This is a true-life one about the stray kitten my dad found in the Church Street garage in Hartford years ago.

My father didn't grow up with pets. The plastic cover wedged to her sofa indicates that fur may not have been Grandma's favorite decorating choice. At any rate, Dad was fine with my cat Nipper and our sweet Teddy, a smallish mixed-breed dog. He didn't seem to be looking to add anyone to our household. Cats, however, don't necessarily care what humans think. Samantha (Sammie) didn't.

When Dad brought this skinny little calico home one day, she pretty much noticed only him. Adoration and then some. She talked to him and twined around his legs; every time he sat down, she was on him like a second skin. My Mom and I were allowed to put food down, but I swear she thought it just appeared magically. In fact, she was so wrapped up in Dad, the other animals never considered her a threat at all and hardly seemed to notice her.

We took Sammie to be spayed, only to find out she was already pregnant. When it was time for her to deliver, my parents, however, were needed for emergency measures. Having been on her own from when she was just a young kitten, Sammie had no idea what to do! They did all the traditional things, making her a soft lined box and rooting her on. Unfortunately, these clues weren't enough for her inexperienced self.

Dad and Mom -- Sammie even let her help -- realized there was a problem when the first kitten emerged and Sammie didn't start to lick away the fetal sac. Intuition didn't kick in, so they removed the sac and helped the tiny black creature awaken to the new world. The next one, a soft yellow tiger, received pretty much the same treatment from Sammie I was told. But my parents thought she was getting the hang of this birthing thing, so they went to bed. Mistake.

Two more were born some time later, and Sammie never helped them. They never had a chance. My parents strongly regretted for a long time that they hadn't stayed longer with her.

But Sammie loved the kittens suckling, and they stayed at it longer than most do. She would lie there like an empress giving audience to her adoring courtiers, purring and kneading madly while they drank. Prince Patrick and Tawny turned out to be great cats. Sammie remained faithful to my Dad until one day much too soon she disappeared. We never found out what happened to her in those bad old days when our animal friends still went outside. Dad pretended it didn't matter so much; but she had been his first cat friend, and he missed her.

-- Rob Echelson

Please reach into your heart and give what you can afford to help these animals get a second chance in life.
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