



# PAWS FOR THOUGHT

HUNGRY AND HOMELESS CAT RESCUE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2012

Hello Fosters / Adopters / Volunteers & Friends of Hungry and Homeless kitties! Welcome to our April Newsletter.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has declared April *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Awareness Month*. Let's get involved by finding as many permanent loving homes for our rescue kitties as we can!

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**P.A.W. (Pet Appreciation Weekend) – April 14 & 15**



Mark your calendars – April 14th & 15th – Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue is having a fund-raising event and adoption promo – sponsored by **Pet Valu** in Alta Vista at **2641 Alta Vista Drive**. We will be selling crafts and baked goods, homemade dog and cat treats, and distributing information to raise awareness of the plight of our homeless street kitties. Come with your friends and family who want to adopt a cat or two, and meet some of our little feline rescues from the website who will be at the store. [E-mail](#) us for more details.



**Handmade soaps and bath products – proceeds to Hungry and Homeless kitties**

Purple Urchin, a local manufacturer of handmade soap and bath products, is the latest supporter of our hungry and homeless kitties in need. In honour of April being *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Awareness Month*, Purple Urchin will donate 100% of its proceeds sold via our website.

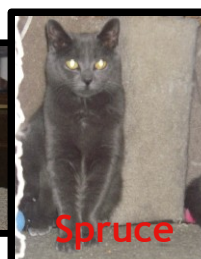
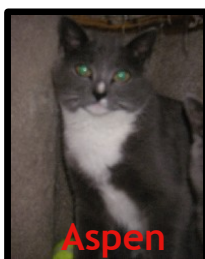
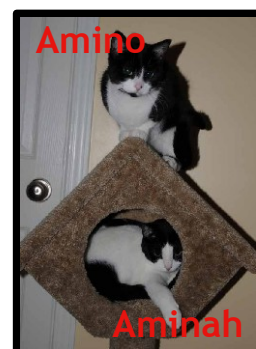
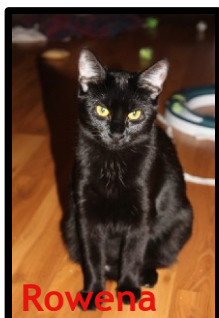
[Buy your beautiful, hand-made, luxurious soap and bath products](#), and support our rescue kitties.

### April 14th & 15th Adoption Promotion

To promote much needed adoptions, we will be having a “two-for-one” adoption fee for family groups / bonded pairs of cats on the April 14/15 P.A.W. weekend. We would especially like to give our kitties who have been in foster homes for a very long time, a chance at a permanent home. If the cost of two adoption fees is preventing you from adopting two or more bonded kitties, now is the time to adopt! Save hundreds of dollars in vet fees by adopting this weekend, and give two cats a loving forever home. [E-mail](#) us for more details.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS - APRIL 14/15 ADOPTION PROMOTION - CONTINUED

View our adoptable pairs / family groups below:



Aminah





## URGENT CASE / FEATURE CAT(S) OF THE MONTH - FOUR SEASONS FAMILY



The Four Seasons Family have had a rough start in life, and now they urgently need a home by June 1st.....

Automne, the mother, was only a kitten herself when she gave birth to her kittens, Printemps, Hiver, and Été. The kittens were born in not very nice conditions outside, and sadly little Été passed away. They have since been moved to several different foster homes (through no fault of their own) due to unforeseen circumstances.

Now their current foster home needs them to find a permanent loving home by June 1st. There have been several adoption requests for them, which had to be declined because they involved de-clawing the kittens; Hungry and Homeless Cat Rescue has strict policy against de-clawing. Both mother and kittens are very bonded to one another, and ideally they would all be adopted together.

Do you, or anyone you know, have room in your home and in your heart for this sweet little family of three? Please read their [profile](#) for more details.

## EDITORIAL

### WHY DECLAWING A CAT IS ABUSE



Declawing is the removal of a cat's toes to stop scratching where it is not wanted.

Yes, you read that right: to remove a cat's claws requires removing the toe to the first knuckle. They are not fingernails, they are directly attached to the bone. It is not a simple operation, and it has serious consequences. It is **not** just *declawing*, it is toe mutilation.

For this reason, it has not caught on outside North America, and is illegal in many countries, including: the UK, Scandinavia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bosnia, Serbia, Malta, Turkey, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Israel. More countries are outlawing it every year.

Declawing is not painless. Aside from the incisions, during the recovery period the cat has to walk on injured paws and scratch in the litter box. If any of us had our toes amputated, we would be in a bed or in a wheelchair before undergoing a significant period of physical therapy. These are not options for the cat.

Complications from the surgery are common. One study showed that 50-80% of declawed cats had complications, including: infection, excruciating pain, damage to the radial nerve, reopened incisions, hemorrhaging, lameness, joint problems, regrowth of deformed claws inside the paw, chronic back and joint pain, and behavioural changes including biting and refusal to use the litter box.<sup>1</sup> Another study found that 20% of declawed cats suffered lifelong limping as a result.<sup>2</sup>

More telling, 33% of declawed cats suffered permanent behavioural change that lead to almost 30% of declawed cats being surrendered to shelters for rehoming or euthanised for persistent behavioural problems.<sup>3</sup>

This does not take into account the dangers faced by a declawed cat. Even if s/he is an indoor cat, there is no guarantee s/he will never get outside. Once out, s/he is defenseless against dogs or other animals that might attack. A declawed cat cannot hunt or climb. Inside, s/he is at much greater risk of falling and breaking bones.

All this to protect the furniture or the curtains? There are many far less draconian ways to protect your décor.

Cats scratch not to keep their claws sharp, as most people think, but to remove old claw material so the claw does not grow into their paw, and to keep their spine and joints limber. Every pet store sells a huge range of scratching posts and pads, along with catnip spray to make them enticing. It does not take long to teach a cat to use the scratching post: a couple of demonstrations is usually enough.

If you buy a scratching post, sisal is more attractive to cats than carpet. Recycled cardboard products are available, too, and cats know what to do with cardboard! Our three cats are sisal scratchers, two are also cardboard scratchers, and only one likes carpet scratching. When we ran a shelter, sisal was by far the most popular scratching material with cats.

Combining an available scratching surface – or two or three – with aversion training is effective. Training need not be physical: a loud noise when the cat starts scratching where it is not welcome, or picking him/her up and putting him/her at the scratching post is usually enough to make the point after a few times.

If you are determined to blunt your cat's claws, get a claw clipper and learn how to use it. Cats take to claw clippers better if you start when they are kittens. If you are not confident, get the vet to teach you how to do it.

For the fashionista, there are vinyl claw caps, in a range of colours and designs, that are put on the cat's claws with non-toxic glue. They last about a month before being shed with the aging claw sheath. One brand is Soft Paws, but there are now others on the market.

Declawing is elective surgical mutilation that has life long negative consequences for the majority of cats who undergo it. In most of the world it is defined as abuse because the pain it imposes on the animal is far out of proportion to the benefit to the owner. There are many humane alternatives to declawing, and no responsible adoption organisation will allow adoption by someone who intends to declaw.

If you are interested in helping end this abuse in Canada, there is an online petition at:

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/183/022/603/>

Cathrine Lowther

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1 Tobias, K.S. Feline onychectomy at a teaching institution: a retrospective study of 163 cases. *Veterinary Surgery*, 1994; 23:274-280

2 Bennett M, Houpt KA, Erb HN. Effects of declawing on feline behavior. *Companion Animal Practice*, 1988;2:7-12

3 Houpt, *ibid*.

### Commercial Cat Treats - The Addictive Poison Pill For Cats ?

The first three ingredients in a common commercial cat treat include Chicken By-product Meal, Ground Corn and Animal fat. Other ingredients include dried meat by-products, rice, wheat flour and corn gluten meal.

By-products are NOT meat; they are left-over pieces of an animal not fit for human consumption. Meat ingredients are optimal for your cat; left-over animal parts are not. Grains provide little to no nutrition for a cat.

These treats, on average, provide 2 calories per piece. Some ingredients are not recognized as an essential nutrient by the AAFCO cat nutrient profiles. These treats contain low-quality ingredients and fillers which are not only unhealthy for your cat, but can be harmful; corn and wheat, for example, are known allergens in cats.

**Why are they addictive?** Dr. Letrisa Miller, a feline veterinarian, writes that when dry foods are made, they are sprayed with proprietary mixtures of palatability enhancers. These often include chicken fat and salt, in addition to the company's secret proprietary ingredients. It is like the coating on snack foods for people, such as flavoured potato chips. The palatability of such foods contributes to the growing problem of obesity in pets and should not be mistaken for a good thing. It causes cats to over-eat and convinces them to eat things that they normally would not have in their diets. It can turn cats into "feline dry food addicts", a term coined by veterinarian Dr. Lisa Pierson.

**A healthy alternative?** Catnip, a piece of baked or roasted chicken (without any flavouring or salt), or a piece of steamed fish (with no flavourings or salt) make a great treat! If you want the convenience of a packaged treat, the first three ingredients of Wellness Pure Delight Turkey and Salmon Jerky, are turkey, salmon and dried chicory root. Turkey and salmon are real meat, which is very important for your cat's health. Dried chicory root maintains digestive tract health and function. Other ingredients include cultured whey, which provides quality amino acids such as lysine, leucine and threonine and a good source minerals, vitamins, beta-glucans and mannans. The lecithin is essential for normal fatty acid transfer in cells.

**The difference between the two packaged treats?** Wellness Salmon Jerky contains over 90% of pure meat jerky and limited all-natural ingredients, which are beneficial to your cat's health. Temptations and other commercial treats contain grains harmful to your cat's health and well-being.

Most products in the grocery store marketed as "cat treats" are actually just meat-flavored cereal.

### Wet Vs. Dry Food – What's Best For Your Cat?

Diet is the brick and mortar of health. Veterinarian Dr. Lisa Pierson writes that cats have a better chance at optimal health if they are fed a quality canned food diet, instead of dry kibble. "What you feed your cat(s) can pay big dividends over their lifetime and very possibly help them avoid serious, painful and costly illnesses. An increasing number of American Veterinary Medical Association members, including board-certified veterinary practitioners, are now strongly recommending the feeding of canned food instead of dry kibble." ["Transitioning Feline Dry Food Addicts to Canned Food", Dr. Lisa Pierson: <http://www.VeterinaryPartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&A=3041> <http://www.catinfo.org/> ]

Cats have a unique biological makeup which makes them true carnivores. In their natural environment, felines survive solely on animal-based proteins (from meat and organs) and would be eating a very high protein, high-moisture content, meat-based diet with a very small intake of carbohydrates (approx 3-5%).

Cats have no dietary need for carbohydrates and they can actually be harmful to a cat's health. Think of it this way – you wouldn't see a feline hunting down a corn field or rice plantation for food in the wild!

**The three major negative issues associated with feeding your cat a dry-food only diet include:**

- too high of a level of plant-based protein (in comparison to animal-based proteins)
- the amount of carbohydrates is much too high and definitely unnecessary
- water content is far too low

## CAT HEALTH TIPS - CONTINUED

These major factors can all contribute to several painful and life-threatening diseases and illnesses such as Feline Diabetes, Kidney Disease, Cystitis (bladder inflammation/stones/crystals), Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Obesity, Hepatic Lipidosis (Fatty Liver Disease) as well as many other health problems.

### **Quick facts with respect to water intake for felines:**

- In the wild – percentage of normal prey that is water: 70-75%
- Canned food diet: approx 78% water
- Dry food only diet: 7-10% water

Many of the fatal diseases that affect the feline species involve the bladder, kidneys and urinary tract. Remember that the urinary system of every living creature requires water cycling through it to maintain optimal health. Because cats do not have a strong thirst drive outside of what they are provided in their food, most cats who are on a low-moisture, dry-food only diet are constantly in a state of dehydration. This is why it is so pertinent that they ingest a diet rich in water. Carnivores, such as our feline friends, have to eat meat - not grains - and also are designed to consume water with their food.

Aside from the lack of water content, most commercial dry cat foods contain 35-50% of the calories from carbohydrates (although it can be higher), whereas high-quality canned food contains only 3-5% of the caloric intake through carbohydrates.

In their natural environment, a cat has absolutely no need to ingest any carbohydrates or grains – they are sustained by protein-only. Most people do not understand that a diet high in carbohydrates (as found in dry foods) can cause terrible problems with their cat's blood sugar/insulin level (leading to Feline Diabetes). Dry food also provides a diet rich in plant-based proteins, when a cat requires animal-based proteins to be at optimal health.

### **Quick facts - worrisome trends with dry-food:**

- The protein that is found in dry food has often been cooked at a very high temperature for a long period of time – this "drying" process causes a drastic reduction in the nutritional value of the protein sources found within the food.
- Words such as "natural", "holistic", "premium" or "vet recommended" do not necessarily mean that the contents within are of high-quality.
- The phrase "indoor only" is simply a marketing gimmick.
- Most, if not all, of the coined "prescription diets" sold in vet hospitals are not created with a carnivore's optimal health in mind (many contain soy, wheat, corn and by-products).
- There have been many past recalls of dry cat food (due to contamination with deadly chemicals, bacteria, salmonella, storage mites, rancid fats and other toxic elements).

Dr. Pierson writes that one reason that cats like dry food so much is because the pet food companies "do not play fair when manufacturing this sub-optimal food source. They coat the kibble with extremely enticing animal digest sprays that are pleasing to a cat - making a poor quality diet desirable to the target animal."

Veterinarian Dr. Peter Dobias wrote an article entitled "Why Commercial kibble pet food companies do not deserve your business." In it, he observes a rise in serious chronic diseases including allergies, autoimmune conditions, organ failures, early arthritis and mobility issues, stomach bloats and pancreatitis.

Cats, by no means, should ever be fed a dry-food only diet as their means of sustenance. This type of diet is highly detrimental to the animal's health and well-being. Many health problems that cats face are due to their owner's lack of knowledge when it comes to a healthy, feline-friendly diet and can be avoided through proper nutrition and a species-appropriate eating regiment.

Please note - dry cat food should NEVER be soaked in water to turn it into a "wet food." Dry food often has a high bacterial content and often contains mold. There have been many deaths of dogs and cats from eating mold mycotoxins, vomitoxins and aflatoxins that often contaminate the grains found in dry food.

Remember, cats are carnivores. They need meat and water - not grains and carbohydrates - to live a long and healthy life.



## YOUR STORIES - FORMER "ORPHAN KITTENS" - LUCY, MAX, & OLLIE



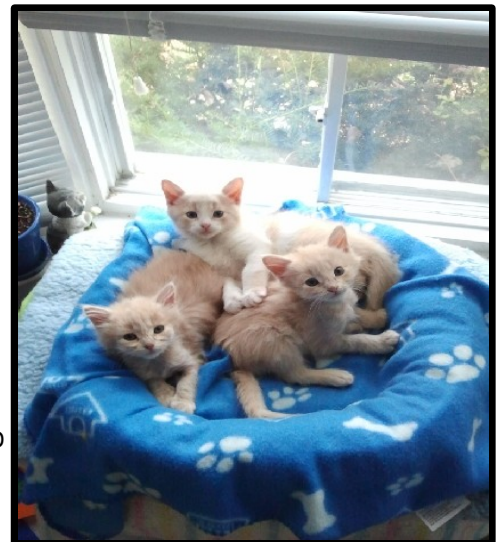
Last November, I decided that I'd like to get a new kitten since one of my beautiful older cats had passed away. All of my cats have been from rescue groups so I googled the Rescue groups here in Ottawa. The "hungry and homeless" rescue group appeared so I decided to go to their website and scroll through their kitties needing a home.

The first words which caught my eyes were "Orphan Kittens"! I immediately clicked on the words and oh my goodness I couldn't believe how sad the those three little "Orphan Kittens" looked. Their noses looking skinned, their fur was gone and they looked as if in shock --it broke my heart and I knew I had to find out more about them. So after emailing the group, I got all the information and was off to see these little ones in person at their foster home. They were so adorable! All three were playing and eating and looked so much better than the first pictures I saw. It was obvious that these little ones were being so well taken care of, first by the Vet who had treated them and then by the foster Mom who was now taking care of them. Their names were Little Orphan Annie, Otis and Oliver.

I went with the idea that I would probably adopt the little female kitten but soon learned that the female was a twin with one of the males so I then decided I'd take them both. But what about the number three kitten? He was Oliver and he was a bit stronger and healthier looking than the other two --so I decided to take them all home and foster Oliver. In a week's time, I had the "kitten nursery" all set up with new blankets, dishes, toys, etc and all three babies came home with me. It was quite difficult for the foster Mom seeing them go --she cried --so I promised her pictures and updates. This was the magical thing about the "orphan kittens" -- they were so adorable and had started life in such a tragic way that you just couldn't help but love and want to take care of them!

I did change their names to Lucy, Max and Ollie and they adapted so easily in their new home --loved running around, cuddling into warm blankets and playing with all the new exciting toys. But they especially loved looking out my windows and quickly discovered birds flying to my bird feeders. The three kittens would watch the birds for hours! It was really cute too because they always did (and still do) everything together --if one was eating, they'd all eat, if one was drinking, they'd all drink, if one slept, they all slept --the bond between them was so strong!

Then one evening a telephone call came from the rescue group asking to visit that night with a person who was perhaps interested in adopting Oliver. My heart sunk! I couldn't let Oliver go --the three little ones couldn't be separated -- the bond between them was so strong that taking one away would be heartbreaking for them all! Besides, I loved Oliver too much to see him go. So quickly I decided Oliver was staying and I officially adopted him!



When they all three visited the vet the same day in February, it was so difficult for me leaving them there knowing what was coming. Sadly Lucy had to spend the night at the vet's after her operation but Ollie and Max came home together. Incredibly you could see Ollie and Max looking around the house as if someone was missing. When Lucy came home the next day, she was so happy -- she purred and ran around rubbing the furniture and was greeted warmly by her brothers.

## YOUR STORIES - LUCY, MAX, & OLLIE - CONTINUED

It has been four and a half months since these sweet little ones came home with me. Ollie is now long-legged and slender (he is going to be a big cat) -- he loves to sleep under blankets and really enjoys his food, Max (Otis) is a longhaired beautiful boy with a huge plume tail, very fawn markings, is knocked-kneed and loves to play and carry a ball around in his mouth all the time. Lucy, well she is the most beautiful and loveable little girl --she loves to prance around when you talk to her with her plume tail straight up --she has been told so often how beautiful she is that she really knows it and she likes to show it. But Lucy is always ready and able to keep up with her brothers too!

When I look at them playing or when all three greet me at the door when I come home or when they snuggle in bed at night-time with me, I think about what their lives would have been like if they had never been found, taken off the streets and cared for by the Hungry and Homeless Rescue group. I am so grateful for all the volunteers with the rescue group who feed and take care of all the cats/kittens on our streets. It's because of their devotion and dedication that my three little "orphan kittens" were given a second chance at having a wonderful life! Now I'm their "Mom" and I'll make certain of that!

Sandy



## VOLUNTEER

If you would like to volunteer your skills, we are urgently seeking assistance from:

- Bakers for our April 14 & 15 bake sale! If you love to bake and would like to support our kitties, please [email](#) us to let us know what you are able to provide for the bake sale. We especially are looking for dog and cat treats / baked goods.
- Graphic designers and website designers
- Accountants / Bookkeepers
- Administrators
- Handy / "crafty" people who **sew** and **knit** catnip pillows, cat beds, cat toys, etc to be sold on [Our Shoppe](#) to raise funds for our hungry and homeless rescue kitties.
- Distributors of posters – we have a variety of adoption posters available for distribution in pet stores and vet clinics in your neighbourhood. Please [email](#) to receive the updated posters for distribution.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

Stay tuned to our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) for our latest rescue stories, pictures, and capers of our rescue kitties!

Contact us to post your rescue kitty's videos on our [YouTube](#) page.



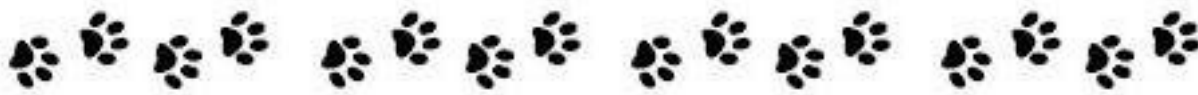
THANK YOU!



DONATE

Thank you for helping us to accomplish our mission of rescuing hungry and homeless cats in need of vet care, rehabilitation, and a loving forever home!

**We are accepting Airmiles points as donations - please donate your points to help our kitties.**



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