

Winter 2006

CATS' AID NEWS

Published quarterly by Cats' Aid,
P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.
Web address: www.catsaid.org
Cats' Aid is a registered charity: no. 9769

Editor: Maeve Bradley

Everyone is welcome at the Cats' Aid Christmas Fair

'Give a cat a dinner'

Cats' Aid continues to care for many cats in permanent and temporary foster care and living in colonies around Dublin city and we also provide veterinary care for many of them. As you can imagine our food bills are considerable. So, once again, as part of our Christmas Fair, we will have a large box at the Cats' Aid stall where we invite people to donate tinned or dried cat food to help with our feeding costs. All the food collected in this way will be distributed to our foster homes and to those kind, caring individuals who, in all weather, travel to our various colony sites to feed the feral cats who live there. **PLEASE HELP TO GIVE A CAT A DINNER.**

Once again we ask you to support our popular Christmas Fair on **SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER** at the **Iris Charles Centre For Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4** from 12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m.

Our usual stalls **Gifts, Jewellery, Books, CDs, Tapes, Videos, Plants, Cakes, Wheel-of-Fortune** will be available. There will also be super prizes in our **Raffle** and lots more. Start your Christmas shopping at the Cats' Aid stall where we will have lots of merchandise: **Christmas Cards, Notelets, Mugs, Cotton Bags, Tea Towels, T-shirts, Pens, Car Stickers and Keyrings;** and **Cats' Aid gift membership** for those who have everything! We can revive you with tea/coffee and biscuits if you need a break.

SPECIAL ATTRACTION: Madame Zelda

This year at our Cats' Aid Fair we have an added attraction in the form of Madame Zelda! If you are wondering just what Christmas or the New Year might have in store for you then ask Madame Zelda. Madame Zelda can also help you get in touch with your inner cat Purrfectly good reasons to bring your family and

friends along to our Cats' Aid Fair. See you there.

APPEAL FOR STALL HOLDERS:

Would you have a few hours to spare to help run a stall and help with the clearing up afterwards? Any assistance would be very much appreciated and you can leave a message on our helpline (01-6683529) and one of the co-ordinators will get back to you. Remember any help you give will help the pussies.

Would you bake something for our Cake Stall? Cakes, pastries, bread, jams and preserves and other homemade goods are always extremely popular. Why not ask your friends to bake something? We are also looking for donations of goods to sell at our stalls: unwanted gifts, new items for the ever-popular Wheel-of-Fortune, books, plants, jewellery, unwanted CDs and videos. Anything we can sell will bring in much-needed funds for our work.

UNFORTUNATELY WE CANNOT ACCEPT BRIC-A-BRAC, ELECTRICAL GOODS, CLOTHES, SHOES, MAGAZINES OR FURNITURE.

Goods for donation can be delivered to the **Iris Charles Centre for Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount** on the evening before the Fair, **Friday 1 December between 6.30 and 8.30 p.m.** If you have goods to donate but are unable to transport them we will do our best to collect them from you. Please leave a message at 01-6683529 **NO LATER THAN Saturday 25 November (a week before the Sale)** and someone from the Sale's organising committee will contact you.

Publicity is always important so perhaps you would put the leaflet enclosed with your newsletter in your local shop, library or supermarket; or photocopy the leaflet and drop it in to friends and neighbours. It all helps to raise the profile of Cats' Aid and hopefully will encourage people to attend the Fair. We look forward to seeing you all on 3 December. **MB**

Pixie, Precious and Winky

Did you ever realise that sometimes things are just meant to be? My husband and I had often discussed the possibility of getting a cat, but always put it on the long finger because both of us suffer from allergies and we would hate to have taken on a pet and then have to re-home it because of that. Until suddenly one day my sister called me to say that she had found two baby kittens abandoned near where she worked, and would we take one. My husband's initial reaction was 'ah not yet' ... But of course my sister and I know what a softie he is, so one visit that evening from her with two little mewling bundles of fur and my hubbie was won over, and it was decided that we would take the little girl, and my sister would re-home the little boy.



From the start, Pixie was a joint effort due to the fact that she was newborn and needed three-hourly feeds. My sister and her fiancé were able to look after the weekly requirements for the first three weeks, while we covered weekends. At three weeks old she moved in with us, but took daily trips to the 'Kitty Crèche', where my mother ensured she had care during the day. At five weeks she was starting to run about, so she stayed in our kitchen with her vast myriad of toys, climbing frames etc., and grew to be healthy and (in my

biased opinion) the most beautiful little cat we'd ever seen. I had the most amazing bond with Pixie.... She would gaze into my eyes and I'd know that she felt loved and safe and was happy. We decided to keep her as a housecat because having grown to love her so much, I was determined that no harm would ever come to my little baby on the roads, or through eating poison etc. in the fields. Everyone who met her agreed that there was something special about her.... She was so trusting and adorable, she even melted the heart of my firm 'dog-person' dad, who would happily sit nursing her and stroking her. Unfortunately, despite every care taken and all the love we could give, it came to pass that Pixie was indeed special - too special for this world. She fell asleep in the bed between my husband and I on the night of her 8th week birthday, with not a care in the world and her usual bedtime play up and down the duvet, but when we woke the next morning Pixie was unmoving, just staring up at us from her catbed on the floor. After less than an hour had passed she had deteriorated so much that I rushed to the vets in hysterics. After one very tearful and anxious morning, the vets called me to say that a toxin had entered her system and due to the lack of strength in her immune system, she hadn't been able to recover and was lost. The culprit was a large flourishing houseplant in our living room. Leaving work in tears, my father and I collected her body, and I held her and stroked her for a while before we buried her under the apple trees in my parents' garden. I've never experienced such heartbreak. Even thinking of her now, and how much I loved her and miss her little face, brings tears to my eyes. After three days' of crying and not eating, my husband and parents asked me to contact Cats' Aid, to see if we might be able to give another little homeless cat the same shelter and love that we'd given Pixie when she'd been found. Initially, naturally enough, I was horrified, and told them in disgust that I could never replace my little Pixie. She was and always would be special to me.

Eventually, after much persuasion, and the feeling that perhaps while I couldn't replace my Pixie, maybe we could help another little

cat that needed a home, I rang Cats' Aid, and spoke to a lovely lady called Maeve (who understood exactly how I was feeling after losing my little Pixie) and said she had a little kitten in mind. The following night we called to the home of Julie in Co. Meath, one of



Cats' Aid's fosterers. Having spoken to her on the phone, she had mentioned that the little kitten, Precious, was actually currently best buddies with another little rescue kitten who'd been christened Winky because he'd lost one of his eyes following a car accident. We arrived at the house to find two beautiful little black kittens, one a bundle of fun and mischievousness, and the other a slightly forlorn and nervous little one-eyed boy who would only allow his foster mammy, Julie, to approach him.

Having told my husband the story of Winky's accident the night before, I was delighted when he agreed that we could take both of them (he really is a softie!), and were told by



Julie that we could take Precious immediately, and return for Winky later in the week when he had received the all clear from the vet.

That night we took a loudly meowing Precious home. I had a little cry when I took out my Pixie's things for her, but over the next day or so it became clear that she was an affectionate and lively little character who had no problem taking to us, and I also to her. Two days later we went back to collect Winky. The greeting that he got from Precious was amazing – when she realised he was in the cat carrier she literally danced for joy around it, running in and out to try to coax a very reluctant Winky out, and eventually launching herself onto him!

With firm instructions to my husband and visitors that nobody was to approach Winky or make him feel threatened in any way, we set about a routine of leaving him and Precious to run about and play undisturbed. While Precious clambered up to us for her cuddles, he would watch all displays of affection from a safe distance across the room with his one beautiful solemn green eye.

For us, watching the love story of Precious and Winky unfold has been a truly joyous experience! Initially my husband laughed when I began to sing 'Hello Young Lovers' from *The King and I*, but as he witnessed the rapturous cuddling and licking of the courting young couple, he too has come to the conclusion that by taking them both we have allowed a love affair to flourish!! With Precious being quite a

boisterous young lady, it is truly wondrous to watch Winky allow her often relentless wrestling tackles on him for hours on end, only to then gaze at her adoringly when she has finally worn herself out and fallen asleep beside him. Watching him tenderly wake her by licking her naughty little face while she stretches and yawns has made us realise that with her, he was able to adjust to life with us quickly, whereas if he had gone to a new home by himself, he may still be cowering under the sofa, afraid to move out among people. Winky is now coming on in leaps and bounds, seeming to realise quickly that he could trust us, and will now jump up on my lap for cuddles and love just as Precious does. It brings joy to my heart to see that from cowering under the couch he's now confident enough to approach us without fear. They won't replace my beloved Pixie, who will always have a special place in my heart (but they have made their own special places) and I truly believe that Pixie will be waiting for me at Rainbow Bridge, but seeing how we've been able to help Winky to trust again, and also the true joy that he and Precious have in being together, has made us feel that little Pixie was most definitely special, she was sent to us so that we could learn the joy of giving a home to a little cat in need, and I believe that she is now looking down on Precious and Winky, happy that they're now enjoying the care and love that we were once able to give to her. SO'R

(Editor's note: Precious is one of four kittens born to Jenny in the care of Cats' Aid. All four kittens got wonderful homes and Jenny, a beautiful young cat with a delightful personality inherited by all four kittens, has now relocated to live with the Editor and five other felines - but that's another story! MB)

The Legend of the Rainbow Bridge

(reproduced here for the benefit of anyone who has not heard of it – it was new to me and brought tears to my eyes. Editor)

Just this side of heaven is a place called the Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigour, those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing: they each miss someone very special to them who had to be left behind. They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His or her bright eyes are intent: the eager body quivers. Suddenly he or she begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, legs going faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face: your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together.

Author: Unknown



The Cat's Prayer

Don't try to discover my secrets,
Because I have in me a sense of mystery.
Don't insist to caress me,
Because I have in me a sense of modesty.
Don't humiliate me,
Because I have in me a sense of pride.
Don't abandon me,
Because I have in me a sense of loyalty.
Know how to love me,
And I will know how to love you,
Because I have in me a sense of friendship.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 18 November at 2.00 p.m. in the **Iris Charles Centre For Older People, Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4**. All members welcome. The **Grand Prize Draw** will take place at the end of the AGM. Remember the deadline for receipt of raffle ticket counterfoils is **Friday 10 November**. If you haven't already returned them please send them in immediately. Thank you all for your continued support. **MB**.

Just a bit of tom(cat)-foolery: little known feline ailments

Part 2: Irritable Lap Syndrome

Symptoms: The cat appears unable to settle comfortably on laps, instead treading, kneading, arranging itself, fidgeting, vocalising, getting up and turning around, falling off lap and getting back on

again, attacking magazines, newspapers, computer keyboard, telephone etc.

Treatment: Immediate treatment is essential. Drop whatever you are doing (literally if need be) and give 100% attention to the sufferer, otherwise symptoms may escalate and become quite distressing to the lap-owner. Only prolonged attention will cure an attack of Irritable Lap Syndrome. Like Collapsible Legs (to be discussed in next issue), this syndrome is incurable, although attacks may be effectively treated as and when they occur. **MB**

Birthday Girls

Caitriona and Emily celebrated their birthdays recently. They generously donated €300.00, received in lieu of gifts, to Cats' Aid. Many thanks, Caitriona and Emily, from your feline friends for your generosity and thoughtfulness. Both are now junior members and maybe, in a few years' time, they will come and help at a Sale. **MB**

Photo Competition

An entry form is enclosed with each newsletter. The closing date is Friday 9 February 2007. Start taking photos of those lovely pussycats. **MB**

CATS' AID CORE GROUP

Maeve Bradley
Maureen Bristow O'Connor
Muriel Davidson
Zarah Davidson
Lesly Field
Doreen Grant
Margaret Hopkins
Deirdre McCormick

Lorraine O'Conaill
Penny O'Donovan
Valerie Owens
Eileen Penston
Cyrileen Power
Rita Walsh
Eileen Warren
Ann Woulfe

CATS' AID HELPLINE:

01-6683529: messages for Cats' Aid may be left on this number.

The helpline is checked daily.

CATS' AID ON THE WEB:

www.catsaid.org

Would you like to see your rescued cat's story featured in the *Cats' Aid News*? If you enjoy reading the stories of rescued cats in the newsletter, then why not let everyone else know about yours? Send us your feline tale along with a photograph and we'll be delighted to publish it. Please write to: The Editor, Cats' Aid News, P.O. Box 2874, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. It would be a big help to us if you could enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of your photograph. Alternatively you can email your story and photographs (marked for attention of the Editor, Cats' Aid News) to: catsaid@gmail.com **MB**