

Animalfriends

Winter 2014 OF CONNECTICUT

Homer, Heroic Blind 'Wonder Cat' Who Inspired Millions, Dies in New York at 16

Love isn't something you see with your eyes.

I first wrote that sentence almost exactly five years ago. It was part of the cover letter I sent to literary agents, hoping one of them would agree to represent a book I'd written -- a memoir called *Homer's Odyssey* about my blind cat, Homer. Homer was then 11 years old, a healthy five-pound dynamo of a cat -- friendly, courageous and fiercely loyal. Of all the things I'd learned from him since he'd first entered my life as an abandoned three-week-old kitten, fresh from the surgery that would save his life but forever rob him of his vision, this one, simple idea seemed to say everything.

From Homer I'd learned that even the most "imperfect" of creatures is capable of loving with a deep and perfect love. All they need is someone to give them a chance.

Now Homer is gone. He died a week ago today, in his own home, in his own bed, held in my arms. Homer was always a courageous fighter and a passionate lover. He even risked his own life to save mine, one terrifying Miami night, when he flung himself at a man who'd broken into my apartment while I slept, chasing the intruder out of my bedroom and all the way out the front door as I fumbled with the phone to call 911. As affectionate and delighted to meet new people as he'd always been, Homer -- lacking vision and therefore highly attuned to the varying sounds of my voice -- knew something was horribly wrong the moment he heard my gasp of terror. He didn't hesitate in that moment to fight -- as he always had, as he always would -- for the things and the human he loved.

But, in the end and after a prolonged illness, Homer was too tired to fight anymore. And I had to love him enough to let him go to sleep.

After being rejected by more than a dozen publishers, *Homer's Odyssey* was finally published in August 2009.



It became a *New York Times* Bestseller in both hardcover and paperback and then, eventually, an international bestseller as well -- published in 15 languages in some two-dozen countries and territories around the world. Homer amassed a Facebook and Twitter following large and enthusiastic enough to raise tens of thousands of dollars on behalf of other animals in need -- animals affected by the Egyptian revolution, the Japanese tsunami, natural disasters here in the U.S. and,

most significantly, on behalf of Blind Cat Rescue and Sanctuary in North Carolina, one of only two shelters nationwide specifically devoted to rescuing blind cats.

Alana Miller, Executive Director of Blind Cat Sanctuary, sent me an email upon learning of Homer's death. "Homer and *Homer's Odyssey* have made a tremendous difference in the lives of blind cats," she wrote. "Because of Homer and his story, many shelters no longer euthanize blind cats immediately upon intake, and we're seeing far higher adoption rates of blind cats. Please know that he's helped save countless lives." Homer was just one cat. One tiny, big-hearted, irrepressible, brave and loyal little cat. Who could possibly have foreseen that he would come to mean so much to so many? Those of us who work in animal rescue believe that every animal matters. We believe that every life -- no matter how small, or how steep the odds are against it -- can make a difference. Every animal who's given the chance to love and be loved can make someone else's life better; can fill up empty places in our hearts we didn't even know were there until they were full.

And, once in a great while, one tiny creature can have a spirit so big that it spills over and makes the whole world just a little bit better, and happier, and more inspired, than it was before. Even in the darkest places are small lights that can grow and grow until they warm us all.

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UNITED WAY

You can donate while at work by making a contribution to 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 many 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).



Judy Levy, Director
Jo-Ann Regan, Editor

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Homer - continued from page 1

Homer was one such light. I've always donated 10 percent of my royalties from *Homer's Odyssey* to organizations that serve abused, abandoned and disabled animals. To keep Homer's legacy alive, I'm establishing the Homer's Heroes Fund, which each year will donate a portion of the royalties from all my books to a shelter or rescue group doing outstanding work on behalf of "special needs" animals.

My most recent book, *Love Saves the Day* -- a novel narrated from the perspective of an opinionated tabby named Prudence (the best way to describe it is probably as *The Art of Racing in the Rain* for cat lovers) will come out in paperback October 22. In Homer's name, I will be donating to Blind Cat Rescue 100 percent of my royalties on all copies of the paperback, preordered or sold between now and October 27.

It's been hard to come to terms with my grief in the week since I lost Homer. I still don't quite know how to *be* or move or sit in my home without Homer in it -- without him following me down the hall, or curled up in my lap, or resting on my left knee as I sit at my computer to write. It feels as if I've lost some essential part of my body -- some part of me that isn't there anymore, but where I still feel what doctors call "phantom pain," because my mind keeps trying to send nerve impulses there, refusing to accept that that part of me is gone.

But even as I mourn Homer's death, I celebrate his life. Who could have foreseen 16 years ago, when I first adopted him as the tiny kitten nobody else wanted because he was blind, all the lives he would touch, all the people who would love him, how much of a difference his life would make?

Homer was the world's cat. In just the few days since I let his fans know of his passing, I've gotten thousands of emails and cards from across the globe -- Japan, India, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Poland, Brazil, Russia and South Africa, as well as the U.S. I've heard from retired Marines, from soldiers serving overseas, from men and women of the clergy who've used Homer's story in sermons and homilies, homemakers, cancer survivors, shelter volunteers, ten-year-old children who've written about Homer for school reports. I've gotten letters from people who read *Homer's Odyssey* to their elderly parents in nursing homes and from people who are blind themselves and appreciate a story that lets others know that just because someone is blind, that doesn't mean they're not "normal."

Perhaps Homer's life is best summed up by the blind Greek poet I named him for in this passage from *The Odyssey*, written over two thousand years ago: *No one has yet been so fortunate as you have been, nor ever will be, for you have been adored by us all.*

But, first and always, Homer was my cat, my little boy, my "Homer Bear." I may have been his eyes in this life, but he was my whole heart.

Vaya con dios, my love. My great love. The world was a better place for your having been in it, and a sadder one with you gone.

Gwen Cooper

ADOPTEE STORIES

In September, 2010, we rescued a cat from Animal Friends of CT. His name was Edward, age 2. Since then, we have grown to love our domestic male cat. He is truly a big part of our family. We changed his name to Cody, it seems to fit him.



Cody has a daily routine, just like we do. When the routine gets changed, he is not happy. Cody likes to have breakfast when we do, enjoys play time, running around the house, playing with his toy mice, etc., and even stalking us, going after our feet, playing hide and seek from room to room/hallway.

Cody enjoys being brushed, pampered and also being the center of attention. In the evening, he expects to sit on my lap and then settle down for an hour or so watching TV with us and napping. Then, once we are asleep for the night, he will cuddle up at the foot of our bed for at least a few hours. In the morning, it's rise and shine at 6:00 a.m., ready for breakfast and the beginning of a new day.

Cody has captured our hearts. He is lovable, playful, curious, and full of energy; the best cat we ever had. Every day we laugh at something he does.

Thank you for placing the ad in our local newspaper because that is how we found Cody. Here is a photo of Cody. He is very happy and proud.

Carolyn and Michael

Hello Animal Friends,

Annie is one of five dogs and her mom that you saved several years ago in Hartford. She was posted on Pet Finders as part Shih Tzu and Boston Terrier. She is the most loving dog we have ever had. She sleeps with me and has her own pillow. She lives with Zoe, our Brindle Boston Terrier, and they really love each other. At dinner time, she dances on her hind legs and people say she should be in the circus. Thank you for all the good care you give to all your animals.

Sincerely,
Bob



LIFE WITH MOCHA

I got Mocha at the end of May and it didn't take her long to make herself at home. Every morning when we get up, she walks to the porch door. She waits patiently for me to let her on the porch, where she goes to her favorite spot to watch for chipmunks and birds. When she gets tired of that, she comes in to eat breakfast, but it doesn't take her long before she's out on the porch again, enjoying her favorite past-time, critter watching.

Out of the corner of her eye, she spots a chipmunk. She becomes so excited, she moves sideways and paws at the sliding door, all the while her tail is moving a mile a minute. When she's done, she jumps on her favorite chair and catches some zzz's in the warm sunlight.

Mocha has a very special place in my heart since the death of Moo, my other kitty. I would be lost without her. Thank you Animal Friends for my precious Mocha.

Lisa

Who's the Lucky One?

My family was heartbroken when our beloved cat, Spunky, died from intestinal lymphoma in May of 2012. We had adopted Spunky from AFOC seven years earlier and he was truly an exceptional cat. It took us some time to get over this loss and whenever one of us mentioned adopting a new cat, the majority always answered that it was "too soon." We held that position until the spring of 2013, when we learned about the rescue of mother cats May and June and their new born kittens, rescued from the streets of Hartford by a wonderful veterinary technician, who came across a man attempting to sell the kittens to passersby. She purchased the mother cats and their kittens. They all came under the protection and care of AFOC.

When we saw the picture of the kittens on the AFOC web page, we knew that it was time to adopt. We picked up our new kitten in June and, because of the events surrounding his fortuitous rescue, we named him Lucky. Since then, he has become a member of the family and we enjoy watching him confront each new household adventure. When Lucky is not sleeping on a lap or watching birds from the family room window, he is playing with his favorite toy, a straw. He particularly likes the straws we bring home from Burger King. Lucky gives us so much love and joy. We often ask, "Who was the lucky one?", Lucky or us?

Jack

IN LOVING MEMORY

Margaret: A donation was given in memory of Margaret Zins.

- Betty Zins Reiber

Helen: Donations were given in memory of Helen Casey.

- Joseph Casey
Helen & John Goodwin

James: Donations were given in memory of James Fentner.

- Amanda Nall
Jo Anne Kokofsky
Stewart Issac

Judith: Donations were given in memory of Judith Browne.

- Nancy & Lawrence Huston
Sandra Presti

Nancy: Donations were given in memory of Nancy Huston.

- Carolyn Lind
Felice Goldman
Freda & Leonard Schwartz
Joan & James Hickey
Janet Davis
Charles & Barbara Anthony Jr.
Michael & Constance Jacobs
Joan Cooper
William & Donne Huston

Phyllis: Donations were given in memory of Phyllis Zins.

- David & Rhea Vibber
Celia Moffie
Vaugh & Audrey Pengelly

Shirley: Donations were given in memory of Shirley Philips.

- Edith Heeber
Thomas & Suzanne Horrigan

William: Donations were given in memory of William Janowetch.

- Beverly & Myron Halpin
Deborah & Roger Gaulin
Chelsea Debay
Debra Debay

Buddy: A donation was given in the memory of Buddy, pet of Lisa & David Martino.

- Joyce Lance

Annie: A donation was given in the memory of Annie, cat of Judy & Mark Janas.

- Joyce Lance

Benjamin: A donation was given in the memory of Benjamin, beloved poodle of the Parsadanov Family

- Melinda Alexander

Bentley: A donation was given in the memory of Bentley to Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Harder.

- Constance Mazzarella

Teddy: A donation was given in the memory of the cat, Teddy.

- Sandra & Philip Fry

Ursula: A donation was given in the memory of the cat, Ursula.

- Barbara & James Vicino

Mike: A donation was given in the memory of the dog, Mike.

- Sally Pascus

Helen: A donation was given in the memory of Helen, much loved cat of Maria Battaglia.

- Ellen Koch

Simon: A donation was given in the memory of Simon, beloved poodle of Jeri & Barry Mazel.

- Joyce Lance

Tiz: A donation was given in the memory of Tiz, cat of 18 years to Joan Brodeur.

- Lorraire & Michael Brodeur

Sophie: A donation was given in the memory of the Korris family dog, Sophia.

- Lori & Jeff Sard

Brooksie: A donation was given in memory of my dog, Brooksie.

- Ursula G. Korzenik

A donation was given in the memory of the beloved pet of Nicole Juno.

Matthew Pasternak

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Darlene: A donation was given to acknowledge Darlene Smith's 50th birthday.

- Christopher Varney

Sasha: A donation was given to acknowledge Sasha's birthday.

- Virginia Glienke

William: Donations were given in honor of Grandson William Oliver.

- George Oliver
Molly & Bruce Loudon
Lauren Hangland

William: Donations were given to acknowledge William Oliver's birthday.

- Jacob Winnie
Kevin Kolodziejczyk

Sharon: A donation was given to acknowledge sister-in-law, Sharon Zeitz' birthday.

- Kenneth Zeitz

Jean: A donation was given to acknowledge sister-in-law, Jean D. Festa's 60th birthday.

- Katherine & Brian Donohue

Augustus: A donation was given in honor of Augustus and his best friend, Mr. Beans.

- Elaine & Paul Dinto

Dr. Tom: A donation was given in honor of Dr. Tom Morganti.

- Nicola Rubinow

Dr. J: A donation was given in recognition of Dr. J. Baujin, Artistic Dental Medicine.

- Joann Segalla

Marvin & Willis: A donation was given in honor of Marvin & Willis Lams

Pet Emergency Kit Recommendations

Living in the Northeast brings many wonderful and beautiful seasons. As last year, we were 'blessed' with an October storm which impacted our daily lives in our ability to feed, clothe and shelter our human and four-pawed family members. If you have already made a pet emergency kit then kudos to you for being prepared. If not, then we'd like to make these recommendations (in part taken from the ASPCA website):

1. 7-10 days' worth of canned (pop-top) or dry food (be sure to rotate every two months)
2. Treats and favorite toys
3. Bottled water or containers of tap water: 7-10 days' worth for each person and pet (store in a cool, dry place and replace every two months). Suggest one gallon per day per person/pet.
4. Disposable litter trays (aluminum roasting pans are perfect)
5. Litter or paper toweling and scooper device
6. Liquid dish soap and disinfectant
7. Disposable garbage bags for clean-up
8. Pet feeding dishes
9. Extra collar or harness as well as an extra leash
10. Photocopies of medical records and a waterproof container with a two-week supply of any medicine your pet requires (Remember, food and medications need to be rotated out of your emergency kit—otherwise they may go bad or become useless.)
11. A traveling bag, crate or sturdy carrier, ideally one for each pet
12. Flashlight and extra batteries
13. Blanket (for scooping up a fearful pet)
14. Recent photos of your pets (in case you are separated and need to make "Lost" posters)
15. Especially for cats: pillowcase, toys, scoopable litter
16. Especially for dogs: extra leash, toys and chew toys, a week's worth of cage liner.

Do you have other suggestions? If so, please send them to newsletter@afocinc.org and we'll publish suitable suggestions in our next newsletter.

BONDING WITH MARABELLE



Some retired empty nesters get wanderlust and want to travel all the time. We were looking for a way to enhance our daily routine at home. Our friends have two very cute little dogs and we were smitten. We began to look for a dog of our own. We found Marabelle's picture on a website and adopted her through AFOC. She's an adorable two year old Shih Tzu. We brought her home in August and life here is hardly ever dull.

We have all completed a family companion class, which the veterinarian recommended. The three of us bonded immediately, but we needed some strategies to help her adapt to her new life. She's enlarging her circle of doggie and human friends. The positive reinforcement and treats really help to build up her trust.

If you are in our neighborhood, you will see us out and about. We have red coats, even Marabelle! We will be sure to wave and she will wag her cute little feather tail.

Patricia

I'M IN NEED OF A HOME

Dottie is a sweetheart with a broken heart. She came to us about two years ago expecting, but unfortunately, none of her kittens survived. She is a stunning black brown tabby whose colors are striking. She totally enjoys looking out the window and is completely mesmerized by the birds at the shelter's feeders. You could say she is a dedicated bird watcher. She is still as playful as a kitten and enjoys it when people participate with her. Dottie is very active and can amuse herself easily. She is not a lap cat, but is always ready to play. She is a beautiful girl with a very friendly personality and a totally independent soul. For more information, call the shelter at 860-827-0381.



ROSIE & SAM'S FOREVER HOME

I called Animal Friends of CT because I had a wonderful cat, Tiger, that I adopted 12 years ago from this organization. He fell ill, and within 12 hours, he had to be put down because of complications. I was very upset. The next day, I called and inquired about adopting again. I have the space and love for two cats, if there were two who had to go together. I was told to contact Barbara, who explained about Sam and Rosie. My mom and I arranged to visit them on Friday, November 1st.

When we arrived at the shelter, Sam was shy and jumped back into his crate. Rosie was friendly and inquisitive toward me and mom early on. After petting Rosie awhile, I sat on the ground and Sam came over to me. He let me pet him around his neck and he started purring. After going back and forth from Sam to Rosie, I was sure we could make a great home for them both. We picked them up on Saturday, November 2nd. They settled in my family room at first. After several days, I moved the food out to the kitchen. Sam is still a bit shy, but has explored the house. Rosie is everywhere. They are both a joy to everyone who has met them. Rosie does not hiss at Sam at all anymore. They play together and nap on the couch next to each other. I have a fireplace and Rosie loves to sit in the warmth of the fire. Sam loves to sleep on the couch or my bed. They are eating well and playing on their new cat terrace. They are both very loving and happy.

Thanks,
Penni



Rosie sitting on the counter

TO OUR READERS

If you are receiving duplicate copies of our mailings, please let us know at newsletter@afocinc.org and we will make the appropriate change.

Thank you,
AFOC Staff



Raisins are not for dogs.

I love summer barbeques and picnics with friends and family, but as a veterinarian they are one of my worst nightmares. I see a lot of pets that are sick after getting into something they shouldn't have during an outdoor feast with human food. Unfortunately, many people lose their pets to what I like to call "picnic poisons." With spring approaching, it's important to educate yourselves on the do's and don'ts of picnicking with your pooch.

We love having our pets be a part of the outdoor fun, because after all, they are part of the family. But as we become wrapped up in the excitement of the festivities, it's easy to lose track of what our dogs and cats are up to. Our pets are not only great at finding food, but they have had 10,000 years to perfect their begging methods as well. While picnic guests mean well when offering tasty tidbits to our cats and dogs, our pets do not know to refuse foods they shouldn't eat. So it's important for us as their caretakers to be well informed, and to be sure our guests are informed as well.

So let's talk about the most harmful:

Grapes, Raisins & Currants

The consumption of these fruits causes acute kidney failure in dogs. If you discover that your pet has ingested grapes, raisins, or currants, call your veterinarian immediately – this is an emergency.

Caffeine

Our pets are more sensitive to the effects of caffeine than we are. While 1-2 licks of coffee, tea or soda won't likely cause harm, ingesting moderate amounts can easily cause death in a small dog or cat.

Chocolate

Chocolate is a pet poison. Just remember – the darker the chocolate, the more dangerous it is. While a few M&Ms or a small drip from a 'smore accident may not cause harm, a large helping of chocolate cake or a pan of brownies is toxic for your pet.

Alcohol

While it may seem funny and cute to give the pooch a sip of beer, even small amounts of alcohol can cause life-threatening toxicity in our pets. And it's not just drinks, but

alcohol-soaked desserts like rum cakes and others that can poison a cat or dog.

Onions, Garlic, Chives & Leeks

Many dog treats contain garlic –but it's such a small amount that it's negligible. However, if a cat or dog consumes a pan of sautéed onions, garlic, or leeks, there's going to be trouble. These vegetables cause red blood cell destruction which results in anemia. Ingesting even 0.5% of his/her body weight in onions or garlic can be fatal for a dog. And cats are even more sensitive.

Fatty Table Scraps

Meat scraps, butters, oils, etc. can cause pancreatitis in pets and should be avoided.

Corn Cobs

Corn cobs are not toxic, but they cannot pass all the way through the digestive system and will get stuck in the intestines causing a potentially life-threatening obstruction.

If you have discovered or suspect that your dog may have ingested any of the potentially toxic foods mentioned above, it is important to note three key components; How big is your pet? What/How much did they ingest? When did this occur? Then call your veterinarian or poison control with that information.

My best advice is to keep pets on a leash or indoors while there is food around. This will prevent them from either being fed or lapping up something that might ultimately kill them. But keep in mind that while it seems like there are an awful lot of no-no's, there are actually many human foods that are healthy and safe for our pets. Those include:

Apples

Peas

Green beans

Popcorn (plain – no salt or butter)

Carrots

Sweet Potatoes

Zucchini and summer squash

Winter squash

Ice Chips (Freeze cubes of diluted beef or chicken broth for a real frozen treat!)

Lettuces

Blueberries

***About the Author:** Corey Shagensky, DVM, is Dr. Corey Shagensky, founder and owner of Progressive Animal Wellness (PAW) in Avon. He has been practicing veterinary medicine since earning his degree from Cornell University in 2004. He is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, the Avon Chambers of Commerce, and the Connecticut Alliance for Business Opportunities. His areas of particular professional interest include dermatology, endocrinology, oral health, and preventive medicine. Connect with PAW on Facebook and Twitter, too.*

A VOLUNTEER'S LABOR OF LOVE CHICO



The call came one day early March. It was Judy from AFOC. She asked if I could taxi one poor cat from one vet to another. I had done this a few times before and only brought one kitten home with me, even though my heart said to bring them all here. This cat was a gray and black tiger with fur pretty much only around his head. He was pathetic! Every bone stuck out of his little frame and even an untrained eye could tell that he was very ill. Our trip to the other vet was uneventful as opposed to my other "passengers" who wailed as if I had caught their heads in the car door. I dropped Chico off and waited for Judy's call to let me know his diagnosis. It seemed that poor Chico was doomed. He had a host of problems, including a previously broken back. Some deranged person had kicked him so hard that three vertebrae had been broken. This news saddened us, but did not surprise us, as Chico had been removed from a neglectful home in the first place. Judy was distraught because his life expectancy was about four more months. Chico was deemed unadoptable and was sentenced to live his remaining days at the Avon vet where he would receive wonderful, loving care, but live in a cage.

My heart went out to the little guy knowing that he had never had a loving home, so I surprised myself by blurting out "I'll take him." In mid - March, an odd looking specimen of a cat joined my other three handsome dudes for his final forever home.

The going wasn't easy. My three were leery. The calico, being her usual feisty self, swatted him immediately with her front paw. Poor Chico, who had been declawed and was barely able to stand, just looked back. The other two just walked around him sniffing. He soon was somewhat tolerated and eventually became one of the group.

His daily regime was daunting. He received insulin twice a day for his diabetes, a medication to keep his brain tumor from growing, a diuretic to keep fluid from building up in his system and plenty of food to gain weight and stabilize his frail body. Then there was the

ever present problem of not exactly remembering to use the litter box.

On the flip side, Chico was forever grateful. He was my lap cat, my ever present shadow and the stealer of my heart. I fell in love with him immediately. When I sat down, he was right in my lap. We had bonded!

Four weeks went by and to everyone's amazement, not only was he still here, but he had gained weight, his fur was growing in, and he was finally playing with his cat toys. This went on for an amazing six and a half months. He had a home where he was wanted and loved.

One night in August, his breathing became so labored that there was no more help that any vet could give him. He died peacefully in my arms as I held him tight and told him one more time that we loved him.

Thanks to Judy, Animal Friends, and all the Drs. And vet techs that did not give up on him. He finished his life in a forever home with all the dignity that a cat deserves.

WE ALL MISS YOU CHICO.

Elizabeth

From the Kitchen

Cheesy Dog Cookies

Makes: 3 dozen

Ingredients:

- 2 cups All-Purpose flour -- unsifted
- 1 1/4 cups cheddar cheese -- shredded
- 1/2 cup Vegetable oil
- 4 tablespoons Water -- (4 to 5)

Preparation & Cooking

Combine everything except water. Whisk in food processor until consistency of cornmeal. Then add water until mixture forms a ball. Roll it into 1/2" thickness and cut into shapes. Bake on ungreased cookie sheets about 10 min. (depending on size of shapes) at 400. Cool and store in refrigerator.

CAT CRACKERS

Ingredients:

- 6 ounces of undrained tuna
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 cup water

Preparation & Cooking

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Measure all of the ingredients into a bowl and mix thoroughly with your hands. Roll out to 1/4 inch thickness and cut into treat sized pieces. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake for about 20 minutes or until golden. Let cool. Give to your cat and watch them gobble it up.

FLATBREAD BENEFIT MAY 13

This year's benefit will be held on Tuesday, May 13 with Scot Haney once again hosting the event. It has been a huge success over the past 5 years and a chance for many of our members to get together and have a great time. I will not be going door to door asking for donations this year; therefore, I need your help.

I am asking each one of you to get one donation that will be auctioned off during the evening. It can be anything. In the past, we have had many gift certificates from restaurants, gas stations, and other retail outlets. We have also had a certificate for teeth whitening from a dentist, a bicycle, and home-made pottery. Easy donations are gift cards that you bought or received and never intend to use, a gift that you received and have no idea what to do with it, or something that you bought by mistake and cannot return. If each one of you would ask your employer, friend or business that you frequent to give a donation of a product or gift certificate, we will have enough items for the auction. Of course homemade items such as gift baskets, quilts, and paintings also sell well. I can send you a tax donation letter for anything that you donate.

I am guessing that if you are approaching a person or business that you know very well, a letter of introduction would not be necessary. But if you would like one, please let me know the name you would like it written to and I will type one up for you.

Please help this year to make the benefit a success. You can reach me at LlylacLama@aol.com

George

AFOC TAG SALE

It's never too soon to start organizing all those treasures you don't need any more because the Tag Sale will be here before you know it! Donors can start dropping off donations on May 1, 2014 at the tag sale site at 159 Nod Rd., Weatogue section of Simsbury. Please do not bring any donations after Thur. May 29. The sale is planned to run Fri., May 30 2-7PM, Sat., May 31 8AM-5PM and Sun., June 1 8AM-5PM. AFOC members are also welcome to shop Thur., May 29, 10AM-5PM, which might be a great time to coordinate donation drop off with shopping!

Please donate only those items which are in very good or better condition. We cannot accept used clothing or shoes, mattresses, very large furniture, appliances or exercise equipment. Please do not leave anything containing gasoline or freon. Items can be left in one of the garages; doors remain closed for security. If you feel you would have difficulty opening a garage door, please arrange for a drop off time and I will be glad to assist. Unfortunately, we cannot pick up donations.

Please feel free to contact me via email at: akoiv1@hotmail.com or call me at 860-833-7674. Please consider volunteering for a few hours or a few days! I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Anneliis Koiv

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Obviously, if you are reading this Animal Friends of Connecticut (AFOC) newsletter, you enjoy and love animals and are probably wishing you could help each and every one of them. Well you can and it won't cost you any money. If each of you would take just one donation canister from AFOC and ask a local business that you frequent, if you could place it at their checkout counter, you would be amazed at how much money you could raise for each and every animal under AFOC's care. All you need to do is call 860-827-0381 and ask AFOC to mail you a donation canister. After receiving it, ask and place it at a business that you already support then check on it every couple of weeks. Count the paper money, bring the coins to a bank or business that offers free coin counting and then send a check or money order to AFOC. That's it!!! It's simple to do and so rewarding knowing that you can and are helping all the animals being cared for by AFOC.



This is a photo of Leo the cat sitting on Santa's reindeer greeting customers at the Garden Barn Nursery in Vernon, CT. The Garden Barn has two AFOC donation canisters at their check-out counters. A big thank you to Garden Barn and Leo!!

As you already know, AFOC is a non-profit, no kill, all volunteer organization dedicated to saving injured, abused, and handicapped dogs and cats. Donations are the only way AFOC can provide food, shelter, and much needed medical care for these animals.

I have been a volunteer for AFOC now since November of 2006 and have raised over \$14,000 for them by placing donation canisters around my local area. I hope you will too. Just one donation canister can make a big difference in the lives of these neglected animals.

Please help by calling AFOC at 860-827-0381 or e-mail them at afoc@afocinc.org.

I would like to thank the following businesses for allowing me to place an AFOC donation canister at their checkout counters and for their customers for donating and making a difference in an animal's wellbeing.

The Garden Barn, Vernon, CT
Geissler's Supermarket, Somers, CT
Ellington Animal Clinic, Ellington, CT
Agway of Ellington, Ellington, CT
Liquor World, Ellington, CT
Chuck Wagon Restaurant, Ellington, CT
Mark's Country Wine & Liquors, Ellington, CT

Karen Wendhiser, Volunteer

A MAN AND HIS CAT: DR. FREDERICK FEIBEL & HERBERT J. CAT By T. J. BANKS

He was walking through the wards at the Avon Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Feibel recalls, poking his fingers through the cage doors the way he always did. But this time, a white kitten with a Charlie Chaplinesque face “came charging up and grabbed a finger – no claws out – and hung on. Purred like mad.” The 87-year-old vet laughs. “After three or four times, I said, ‘I can’t leave this little guy here,’ so I hauled him home.” And that was the beginning of his fine, furry friendship with Herbert J. Cat, an Animal Friends of Connecticut rescue.



Feibel, who opened the clinic back in 1958, had always been partial to cats. Back when he was in vet school in Oklahoma, he and his wife Miller “had a cat – looked somewhat like Herb. She adopted us and presented us with a litter of kittens.” Puss Mama traveled from Oklahoma with the Feibels and proceeded to make herself very much at home, sleeping with them and scooting as far under the covers as she could go. But then Miller began to have “a real bad asthmatic reaction. The doctor tested her and decided that it was the cat.” So Puss Mama went to live with Feibel’s mother, and the household remained cat-less till well after Miller’s death in 2001.

Feibel was a little worried about introducing a kitten to his two older dogs at first. He needn’t have been. The moment he let Herbie out of the rec room, “the two of them accepted him. The big yellow Lab, he [Herbie] rubs his head on her head. Other times, he torments her: he chews on her tail, chews on her feet.” The vet’s voice trails off in laughter. “And the elkhound...he’s just totally in control. He goes by her and reaches up and whacks her.”

Yep, Herbie pretty much runs the show. His food dish is on the counter, away from the dogs, but that doesn’t stop him from joining his human for a more up-close-and-personal dinner: “I must admit, my wife would probably be upset, but while I’m eating at the table, he hops up there. And if there’s salmon or turkey, he helps me along...He doesn’t mind helping me out at all.”

Feibel’s laughing as he talks. In fact, he laughs throughout the entire interview. His joy in this cat is very real. “He’s so much fun, so much company, it’s just great for me to have him around.” If he’s relaxing in his recliner, Herbie doesn’t just walk over to him – he “runs across the room, leaps through the air, lands on my lap, and stretches across my leg. He has this perfect position he has to get in. He purrs away, and he’s happy to be there.” At night, when Feibel’s reading in bed, this scenario repeats itself with a few variations. Even though Herbie has “his own bedroom with a regular bed in it” (“It’s pretty classy,” the vet observes.), Herbie will suddenly appear, leaping over the bed and “stick[ing] his butt up into my face. So, at least five or ten minutes, I rub it down, and I’m patting him, and his motor’s going all the time.” And it’s not necessarily a one-shot deal: Herbie has been known to show up again in the middle of the night for another massage/work-out if he hears his buddy wake up.

He’s an indoor cat, naturally. “I worry about the coyotes,” Feibel admits. “I get shudders when I see out here [on the bulletin board] a note about a lost cat.” But Herbie seems to be OK with not going outdoors. He has a fairly busy life... stretching his claws and doing “his exercises” on the sofa...checking out noises around the old farmhouse...making the rounds of the upstairs bedrooms...and warming himself on the slate by the woodstove in the dining room.

They’ve been together three years now, and the camaraderie between them is titanium-steel-strong. “I’m so fortunate to get a hold of him,” Feibel reflects. It’s still “so funny” to him, the way Herbie “attached to me as a little kitten. There were four or five in that litter, and he ran over and grabbed that finger. Yeah, he chose me.”



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

Your gift is tax deductible.

We would be happy to talk with you about endowments, grants, gifts-in-kind, corporate sponsorship or other long-term support. Please call us at (860)827-0381

Animal Friends of Connecticut, Inc
P.O. Box 370306
West Hartford, Connecticut 06137-0306

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- I'd like to help. Volunteers please call 827-0381.
- I am interested in becoming a member. Please add me to your mailing list to receive the newsletter (new members only).

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