

Funds needed to upgrade our shelter!

Animalfriends

August 2015 O F C O N N E C T I C U T

SOPHIE'S KITTENS FIND FOREVER HOMES

In early March of this year, AFOC Director, Judy Levy, mentioned to me in a phone conversation that there was a pregnant cat in a feral colony located in the back of a lumber yard where she shops. I offered to take her if AFOC could manage to get her. Judy was successful and brought her to the vet to be checked before dropping her off to me. The vet thought she was only about 10 months old and this could be her second litter! We named her Sophie.

Not having fostered a nursing mom and litter for a while, I did some research on-line on how to go about it. One key piece of information I learned was that kittens who were gently handled by people 15 to 40 minutes a day during the first seven weeks are more likely to develop larger brains. They are more exploratory, more playful, and better learners. I was determined that these kittens would be all that they could be, to make wonderful loving companions for someone their whole lives.

I set up a quiet room in my house for Sophie and kitten-proofed it. She gave birth two weeks to the day after I took her in, on March 25th. One baby was a grey and tan tabby stripe. The others (four) were all the same black/sable brown color. I did not disturb the nursing mom for the first two weeks. At that point, my boyfriend and I began to handle, cuddle and kiss the babies for short intervals, a few times a day to start. As they grew, the babies came to look forward to us coming in to visit them. We sat on the floor with them, played with them, let them climb all over us and, when they tired out, they curled up in our laps for a nap. As they slept, I sang lullabies to them.



My five babies lazing in the sun

At four weeks of age, they went to the vet for a wellness visit. While at the vet, I mentioned to her it was hard to tell the four musketeers apart, being as how they were almost identical. Her solution was to shave a spot in the fur of each in a different location. Thus was born Right Shoulder, Left Shoulder, Right Flank, and Left Flank.

I read that socialization with as many different people as possible was important for the kittens to love humans. I began to pester my family, friends, and neighbors to come over and spend time playing with them. You could see the babies little minds working whenever a new person came in the room. It was like they thought "Oh boy! Another nice human to climb all over, sleep on, throw the ball for me, yeah!" Meanwhile, AFOC began to advertise the kittens were available for adoption.

Left Shoulder and Left Flank (a.k.a. Sasha and Lydia)

The first folks to visit me were Cathy and Kevon. They were a charming couple who had recently lost both of their older cats after 16 years and were ready to adopt again. Cathy fell in love with Left Shoulder right away. Kevon was taken with Left Flank, who was the instigator in the bunch. The first two left the nest on May 30th.



Sasha & Lydia in their forever home

continued on page 3

Right Shoulder (a.k.a. Chloe)

The third kitten to go to her forever home was Right Shoulder. Kathy and Jerry were looking for a kitten to be a companion to their young grandson who lived with them. Right Shoulder, the sweet shy girl in the litter, was the perfect fit for them.

Right Flank (a.k.a. Blackie)

A nice man named Lou came to see the two remaining kittens a few days later. He had a 12-year old black cat already and wanted a black kitten to share their home. My remaining black kitten, a male, was just what he was looking for, and Right Flank went home with him.

Tiger (a.k.a. Leo)

Kaylan is a lovely young woman who wanted a companion for her male cat, Sebby. When she came to see Tiger, he climbed right in her lap and stretched out at home. It was love at first sight!



Leo & his big brother watch a cat video on YouTube

She sent me this:

“Leo was a ball of energy when I first met him, just wanting to play. But, when I looked into his eyes, I knew that he could be a cuddle bug, too! Within days of taking him home, Leo and Sebby bonded. Now, they play together, eat together and sleep together. He is

exactly what I was looking for, for myself and for Sebby. He is a precious cat with a lot of love, energy, and spunk. I could not be happier.”

It was bittersweet to see each of my babies leave for their loving forever homes. I even shed a tear or two. But the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment I felt, knowing I had done my part to give these kittens the best chance at happiness that I could, made it all worthwhile. I *really* enjoyed receiving emails later from each family who adopted, with photos of happy kittens. It made me smile every time!

HUGE thanks go to Pat Hirschy, AFOC Adoption Coordinator, for her tireless efforts to bring to my home the nicest people you could wish for.

Sophie is now spayed and living in the AFOC shelter. She is safe and cared for.

Per Judy Levy, “This is not an unusual story. Rather, it is what we do, day in and day out. We take the distress calls, whether it be a pregnant feral or an abandoned or abused animal, and one way or another bring them into a safe haven. Heartfelt thanks go to *all* of our volunteers who work so hard to make this happen!”



Beautiful Sophie

Kathy

IN LOVING MEMORY

Barbara: A donation was made in honor of Barbara Morris.

- Janice & Bruce Vissoe

Alan: Donations were made in memory of Alan Whiteley.

- Cynthia & Robert Hines
- Lawrence L. Chick

Bob: Donations were made in memory of Bob Silcox.

- Marie Dudley
- Roseanne Hall
- Stephen & Barbara MacQuarrie
- Norman Wack

Ellen: A donation was made in memory of Ellen.

- Maria Anne Wilcox

Kathy Susan: A donation was made in memory of Kathy Susan Martin.

- Maura Kenny

Tina: A donation was made in memory of Tina Fitzsimmons.

- Alice Longstreet

Casper: A donation was made in memory of Casper, sister's cat.

- Sandra Gaillard

Chelsey: A donation was made in memory of Chelsey, dog of Brian Parent & Eileen Perkins.

- Mary & Marty Howe

Myakhg: A donation was made in memory of Myakhg, the best beagle ever.

- Wilhelmina Bergland

Blossom: A donation was made in memory of Blossom, our beautiful Springer Spaniel.

- David & Mary Ellen Bailey

Pumpy: A donation was made in memory of Pumpy.

- Dr. Robert Hamm

AFOC's ANNUAL BAKE SALE October, 2015

We don't have a firm date and we don't have a definite location(s), but we will be having our usual fall bake sale on a Saturday in October. More details will be available on the AFOC website after the date and location(s) are finalized. I'm going to see if we can reserve a date at the Stop N Shop in Simsbury and Granby.

If you can bake one or more items or know of another baker who would be willing to help, contact me, Ruth Woodford, at 860-676-0544 or by email at ruthw144@sbcglobal.net. If you don't bake but would like to help, let me know that as well. I'd love to add another person or two to the sales team; if we have at least four sales people, we can handle two locations, which should double the income to AFOC.

So get out your favorite recipes and whip up some cookies, brownies, coffee cakes or whatever your specialty is. Not sure what to make? We have found that cookies and brownies wrapped in small quantities are popular. Quick breads and small coffee cakes also sell well. Candy and fudge, which doesn't require refrigeration, are other items we can easily include in the sales table. Last year, we had jams and jellies to sell and they were popular.

Items should be wrapped and labeled in a manner that makes them easy to transport and display. Due to allergy concerns, please indicate if the item contains nuts or nut butter. If you are a gluten-free baker, we'd welcome some gluten-free items. Items suitable for diabetics would also be a great addition to the sales table.

Pick up can be arranged on the Thursday or Friday before the sale. I look forward to hearing from you at ruthw144@sbcglobal.net or 860-676-0544.



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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ADOPTEE STORIES

My Little Buddy

My story starts out sad, but has a very happy ending. I adopted two cats, Buddy and Daisy, a brother and a sister from the same litter, in December 2002. Suddenly, without warning, Buddy suffered a stroke and passed away in early April 2015. Daisy immediately started to show signs of depression; her life-long companion was no longer around. So, I went looking for a kitten to be her companion. As a West Hartford resident, I was aware of Animal Friends of CT. In fact, just a few weeks earlier, my sister adopted a kitten (BoBo) through AFOC, after her cat of almost 21 years passed away.

I immediately fell in love with the photo of Matt. Matt, as he was known, spent his early months outside in Avon near the Avon Arts Center. A very nice woman was feeding him there. He received the moniker Matt due the fact that his hair was so matted down. At the Avon vet, he was given a lion's shave to get his fur under control. I didn't realize this until I went to meet him since only his face showed in the photo. I called Judy at AFOC, who didn't take much convincing that I was a dedicated pet parent. She arranged for me to meet George, an AFOC volunteer, at the Avon Vet Center. When I walked into the room with him and my mother, Matt leapt up to my shoulder from the floor and wrapped himself around my neck. George commented how that was atypical of Matt and he actually never saw a cat react that way. "That's a match made in heaven," he said. My mother told George that the reaction was more about me than the cat. Buddy reacted the same exact way 12 years earlier. Cats know when they find the right human more than humans know when they find the right cat. It was then and there that I decided Matt's new name would be Gilligan, as he was my "little Buddy." For classic TV fans, you should get the reference. Gilligan has held true to being my little buddy, embodying Buddy's habits, such as trying to go fishing and lounging in the sun with his sister. Although Daisy didn't take to Gilligan right away, they are getting along better now and are able to eat their meals together. Unfortunately for Daisy, all Gilligan wants to do is play and Daisy is past that stage of life. That does not stop Gilligan from trying, though.

In addition to finding Gilligan to be a little shaven kitty when I met him, I also found out that he had herpes. It was explained to me that herpes was common in kittens that came from mothers without proper vaccination. I was also told that a herpes breakout will only tend to occur if the cat was under



stress. I knew then that Gilligan would very likely never experience an outbreak, since he will never have to endure stress in my home or want for anything. He leads quite the life, playing and eating. I can't truly say



sleeping just yet; he is a very active kitty. He and his sister have new matching luggage, as they travel almost weekly to visit their grandparents on the other side of town. My dad likes to call Gilligan "The Flash" for how fast he can run around. My mother gets annoyed at Gilligan trying to get into everything in the kitchen, but she loves him dearly and gets worn out playing with him and his myriad of toys. Days after Gilligan leaves, she is still finding toys under furniture.

Gilligan's fur has grown in nicely and he enjoys his nightly brushings. He will never be Matt again. He has the pinkest nose I have ever seen. He shows no signs of his herpes, sneezing and runny eyes. He leads a no-stress life. One trait he does not share with Buddy is friendliness. Buddy was only able to be petted or held by me. He was very possessive. Gilligan, on the other hand, will jump into anyone's lap. He has done this with my parents, my sister, my brother, my niece and nephew. He does this to play; he doesn't have to be bribed with food. He is quite loveable. He's adorable and he knows it.

So, thank you kind lady at the Avon Arts Center who took care of Gilligan through the winter and thank you, AFOC, for all you do to help cats like Gilligan find good homes like mine.

Elaine, Daisy & Gilligan Kotler

Happy for the First Time Follow-up

When you last read about this handicapped cat in the May newsletter, she was very reluctant to be touched. Boy, have times changed. She rushes to me as soon as she hears me up in the morning. Now, all she wants is to be petted and cuddled. We're best friends now and she's with me constantly. She knows I go out once in a while, but she waits patiently until I return. Then, she's right back on my lap. I couldn't ask for a better friend. When I got her, she was so shy the only thing she wanted to do was hide in closets all the time. I never imagined that we would have evolved to this point..

Adopting her was the best chance I ever took and we are both really happy.

Noreen

In March, I had to say goodbye to my kitty of 20 years. She was a huge part of my adult life and I was fortunate to share her with my husband for the last 10 years of her life. Replacing her was not even considered at first, but the loneliness was unbearable. I started looking for a new kitty to adopt on Petfinder.com. Many kitties were cute, but nothing caught my eye until I saw Bodhi. He was an adorable little boy with a cocked face and an unusually dark striped tail. We got in touch with AFOC, Inc. and went to visit him at the shelter in New Britain on March 21st, the first day of spring. It was snowing. My husband, Rob, and I were instantaneously charmed and amazed at how friendly and loving he was. Pat spoke very well of Bodhi. So, he came home with us that very same day. We renamed him from BoBo. Bobo means clown in Spanish. It's much more fitting than the enlightened follower of Buddha. He truly is an entertaining clown.

We've gone through some health issues: worms, fleas, and the Bartonella virus. A few months of antibiotics and he's now a healthy young man. He had his first birthday July 20th. We were away at the time, so my parents cat-sat BoBo and were thoroughly charmed by his antics. We've learned to get used to his moods; sometimes he's playful and sometimes he just wants to be alone. But, he's our little furry friend. We're very grateful to AFOC for taking in BoBo and caring for him until his perfect set of parents came to take him home.



Leah

My name is Floe Weinstein and I was lucky enough to adopt what many knew as, "the storm drain cat." She was rescued by an off duty Hartford police officer from a storm drain in Hartford. The kitty, only eight weeks old, was found in good condition and named Duckling, because of the quacking noises she made. I had been checking the Hartford Animal Shelter Facebook page every day for almost two weeks in search of an animal to adopt. One morning, I checked the page and came across Duckling, the cute little eight week old kitten rescued from the storm drain. I knew from the



moment I saw her picture that she would be mine. I immediately e-mailed the shelter, commented on the post and called. I called and e-mailed for two days straight, but being that she was shown on various news stations,

I knew there would be tons of interest. Finally, a volunteer from the animal shelter e-mailed me, asking if I would be able to meet at the hospital where Duckling was being treated for a minor respiratory problem. I jumped and screamed with excitement. From the moment I saw Duckling in the animal hospital, I fell in love. She was so sweet and playful that I couldn't have been more excited. I picked Duckling up the following week and she has been a joy ever since. I decided to name her Trap, which fits her spunky personality perfectly. She loves to play and jump everywhere. Trap is an absolute joy and I am so lucky to have her!

Tag Sale Update

The AFOC tag sale took place the last weekend in May. We had great donations and lots of happy customers. Total monies raised and donations came to \$4147.00. Thanks you to the many wonderful donors who brought some very nice items for us to sell and many of whom travelled long distances to do so. Thank you, also, to the First Church of Christ, Simsbury, who donated their tag sale 'leftovers' and the Boy Scouts, who transported these items to our tag sale site. Thank you, also, to Paine's, who provided a dumpster at a deep discount and to Pickin' Patch, who donated flowers and was such a supportive neighbor during the sale.

The tag sale is impossible without the volunteers who donate hours and days before, during and after the sale. Thank you to Ruth Woodford, Ed Paquette, Donna Neary, Marianne Heymann, Sandra Pouliot, Nicole DeLong, Jerry Hikel, Eileen and Taylor Perry, Barbara Korzendorfer, Carmelo Aresco, Julie Blackmore, Karen Wendhiser, Lauren Fisher and Rise Cappadona.

Unfortunately, many of our past volunteers are no longer able to participate in the tag sale, for a number of reasons. In order for us to continue this event next year, we need new people to come out and help. The tag sale is a community event which raises money, of course, but also brings much needed awareness of AFOC and its mission. I am asking more of our Animal Friends to please volunteer in the future. Please email me at akoiv1@hotmail.com or call me at 860-833-7674 for more information or to offer your services. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Anneliis Koiv

THE SPOKESCAT & HIS BUDDY

By Julie Blackmore, as told to T.J. Banks

O'Malley came first. His mom, a pregnant stray, was found near the Animal Friends of Connecticut facility in New Britain. Shortly afterwards, she gave birth to the very Siamese-y O'Malley and his Ragdoll sister. I fell in love with him. So my fiancé, Keith, and I got him as a gift for our dog, Luke, who adores cats.

Twitch, a mostly black kitten with a white bib, was found by the side of the road. He had a head tilt so severe, his rescuer thought he had rabies. She brought him into the Avon Veterinary Clinic for an evaluation. It turned out that the tuxedo kitten had a polyp in one ear -- his left -- and was deaf in both. The woman kept bringing him once a week for head-tilt evaluation; then she decided to relinquish him.

I started bringing O'Malley into the clinic to keep Twitch company. They were both just babies, and they bonded very quickly. At one point, I had to separate the kittens because one of them was having surgery. I still have a picture of them holding paws through the bars of the cage.

Twitch soon emerged as a personality in his own right. Whenever Judy Levy, the director of Animal Friends, needed to know how new cats got along with their own kind, we'd put them in with him. Twitch loves other cats. (He even loves dogs and people, once he gets to know them. It just takes him a little time.) He was, and is, a total love bug. We began calling him "the spokesperson" at the clinic.

Eventually, Twitch came home with us. We still have to keep watch over that left ear: if he has trouble eating, then we know that the polyp's back. I have to clean his ear once a day and do a thorough cleaning once a week. He doesn't have eye whiskers on the left side; his regular whiskers are shorter on that side, too.

The bond between Twitch and O'Malley has remained strong. They love chasing each other around the house. One night, while O'Malley was resting on the bed, Twitch let out a mighty wail. (His wails are a lot louder than your average cat wails on account of his deafness.) O'Malley's ears perked up; he got this "gotta go" look on his Siamese face and jumped off the bed to go look for his friend. He found the tuxedo cat and began reassuring him, the way any good brother would. At least, that's how it felt to me.

We call Twitch and O'Malley "soul mates." These two were meant to be together. Have you ever met a cat who would go looking for another because he's in distress?



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

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