

Cat Diary's **Stray Cat Strut**

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STRAY CAT STRUT
How humans were lost, and then found.



From the readers of
CAT DIARY

Edited by
Mark Mason

Introduction

A lot is being reported in the news about stray cats these days. Most of it is not good news. Stories range from strays taking over abandoned buildings to cats overrunning entire cities. Municipalities around the world are trying to address this important problem. The methods they are using are as varied as the regions from which they originate. Riverside County, CA, reports that a mere 1% of stray cats that wind up at shelters are ever reunited with their owners. Owe that to a cat's independent nature; owners wait too long before they become concerned and call a shelter, which is often too late – the cat is usually put down after five days. To improve the odds, they plan to enact a mandatory microchip ID implant law so that shelter personnel can quickly contact owners to retrieve their lost pets in a more timely fashion, and to prevent those same pets from ever becoming full-time strays. Florida experts tout the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) method, applied to entire colonies of stray cats that would simply arrest their ability to populate. They would basically die off. In Wisconsin, the state's Conservation Congress recently shocked cat lovers around the world by proposing to allow the hunting of stray and feral cats. No method is quick or simple, but it's clearly a wake up call that there are things we can do to help the communities in which we live, and help those stray and feral cats who surely suffer interminably. You might help T-N-R stray cats in your neighborhood; you can make your own home and property less attractive to cats, securing garbage, cleaning up materials that might provide shelter; and if you feed animals outside, don't leave the food out overnight;

or adopt a stray. Animal shelters are open in just about every community, and you are a valued customer. You not only help relive the burden placed on the facility, you likely will save them from euthanizing the stray. Sometimes it doesn't take a visit to the shelter, sometimes the stray visits you. And as you read the stories inside this book, be warned, you will come to realize that we all handle being adopted by a stray differently. Sometimes the actions we take are clearly right and true, and sometimes you might have reservations about the judgment of the some of these new owners. But never question where their hearts lie, because it is clear they felt compelled to do *something*. And that, in itself, it right. Almost every story in this book will reveal that, ultimately, strays often make the best possible pets. How we get there takes many different paths.

Enjoy this celebration of stray cats who found happy homes. And if you would like to add yours, check out the address at the end of this book.

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Original "Two Cats" art by Lori D.Johnson
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Chance Photos by Mark Mason

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From Jill J. -- We had just returned home from a tail gate party following our son's last roller hockey game of the season. As we were getting ready to go into the house, a little *tortie* came up the driveway. She looked tired and hungry, but her face was just beautiful. Unfortunately, all I had to offer her was left over taco meat and some milk, which she readily enjoyed.

My son sat down on the driveway and shortly after that this precious little cat crawled into his lap. One look from me to my husband and he was off to buy the kitty litter. After attempts made to locate the owner were unsuccessful, *Bootsie* had a new home with us where she has enjoyed many wonderful hours lounging on top of the piano soaking up the sunshine that filters through the front room picture window.



From Chris W. -- We first saw our stray under our pine tree eating the bread I had thrown out for the birds to eat. He was about four months old. I told my husband that he must be terribly hungry if he is eating the bread. We put out some food for him and he ate it, but we couldn't get near him at all. There was a three-foot-rule with him. That was as close as we could get. If we moved closer, he moved away. We continued to feed him and he grew into a very large cat. It took *nine years* of feeding him twice a day before he let my husband come near enough to touch him. After that he would let us pet him and

eventually he would come into the house for a few minutes of attention, but we have to leave the front door open and the screen ajar – in case he got frightened – so he could zoom out the door and run away. He has no idea how to play with cat toys. If I jiggle a toy at him he attacks it. But he does love catnip and will drool all over the catnip toys. He is a very street savvy cat. He makes his rounds in the neighborhood and crosses our boulevard twice a day (lots of cars and buses). He knows to watch for vehicles and waits 'til it's all clear before he crosses the street. He lives outside and would be terrified closed up in the house. He is all black with big green eyes and weighs about 15 lbs. We were very creative in naming him: **Black Kitty** (pitiful, isn't it?). He comes to eat at 5am and 5pm – I think he has a little watch under his fur coat. So our stray **Black Kitty** has been our guest for the past 14 years and he is still going strong. I believe that is quite a long life for an outside cat!



Black Kitty

From Karen -- We became the family who welcomed a stray male kitten, a black tuxedo named **Piggy**, when he started hanging around the house next door a year ago. He stayed there two days and they refused to feed him – still, he refused to leave! My son saw him and asked about him. When

he found out it was a stray he brought it in the house and said, "Hey Mom, can we keep him?" What could I say, he won my heart immediately and earned the name *Piggy* because he was sooooo hungry, he would eat anything -- and everything -- in sight. He is now a quite large neutered male who still lives up to his name!



Piggy

From Donna -- When we bought our house three years ago we found it came with a built in stray. *George* was a feral cat who just hung out. I began feeding him on the porch and, in about three months, I was finally allowed to pet him. Last spring *George* showed up on the front porch one morning with a wife - a pregnant wife. *Asie* is definitely not a feral, she appears to be a kitty someone dumped because they didn't want to cope with her condition. In due course she presented us with four beautiful kittens that we found homes for, and then we hauled her off to the vet to prevent a reoccurrence. Last winter - the coldest week of the year, just before Christmas - we heard a racket on the front porch. My husband ran out to see *George* with a little kitten backed into a corner near the food. He as hissing and spitting. My husband reached over and picked up a little handful of fluff

and brought her inside. The female kitty looked to be about three months old and near starved. It was so cold we decided we had to introduce her into the indoor kitty herd, so she became our fifth inside kitty: **Henrietta**. She is just a little sweetie and has integrated quite nicely with the rest. Our household now consists of five indoor and two outdoor fur babies.



From Dianne -- My stray showed up in February, 2003. Since he was limping, Mom took pity on him and started leaving food and water outside for him, then in the garage near a warm blanket. Over the summer he gradually moved in, first in the basement, then, after the Vet checked him out, upstairs. Now he shares the house with the other five, though he still prefers the outdoors in nice weather.



From Mary P. -- Our orange and white bob tailed tabby with the beautiful blue eyes showed up at my back door over a period of months; when he came I always set him out a plate of food from my **Sheba**, a rescued Cornish Rex, and **Little One**, whose mother forgot her in a neighbor's yard when she was a week old. He usually brought with him an assortment of cats; there was a gorgeous pair of black cats with

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