

CAT FANCY Reader Letters

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Deuce the cat was adopted on Halloween. Halloween Gift

I may have sent this to you earlier, but I am not good with the computer, and this letter is important to me.

Last Halloween, we were given a wonderful gift. It was a cold and rainy evening when I heard my husband pull into our driveway. I waited, and when he didn't come in, I went to check on him. I found him sitting on the steps with the sickliest little kitten I have ever seen. Its eyes were matted shut, and it looked like it was ready to cross the Rainbow Bridge. We brought the kitten in, cleaned it up and the next day I took it to the veterinarian.

Now, I'm looking at a huge Somali sitting on my lap. I think again of that night. His name is Deuce. Mainly because a quirk of Mother Nature gave him — two tails, a huge red plume and a tiny little one at the tip. He's my big boy. After he was fixed, he grew and grew and grew. When I look at him I think in wonder of last Halloween and thank his mother for giving me such a good friend.

Byrl Warren, Pelzer, S.C.

Cats are Pets, Not Pelts

So, people love their cats. Why is it, then, that some are pets while others are pelts? How people can shamelessly wear a coat made of bobcat or minx is beyond me. Bobcats, minxes, leopards and other big cats are the relatives of our domestic house cats. They need to be treated with the same love and kindness that we give to our cats.

Killing animals for fur is heartless and cruel. The fur trade is an awful industry that should not be allowed. Boycotting fur products like fur coats can make a big difference and can help save our big cats. Remember that they are our cats' ancestors!

Helena Duncan, Cottonwood Heights, Utah

Cat Dies After Rabies Vaccination

Recently, I took my 9-year-old Maine Coon cat to the veterinarian for a rabies vaccination. After a thorough examination, the vaccine was given. Immediately, my cat started breathing heavily. My veterinarian attributed this to stress.

However, within 36 hours, my beautiful cat was dead. I was wondering if any of your readers have experienced a similar situation after their cats received rabies vaccinations.

Connie Schwede, Slatington, Penn.

Non-Huggable Cats and Other Similarities

I am a lifetime cat person, and a friend of mine recently began sharing her copies of CAT FANCY with me. Some things in the July issue caught my attention:

1. The non-huggable cat. I have one of those, too. She came from a "disadvantaged" background, also. I used to have a male cat that was deprived in his youth. He didn't like to be picked up, either, and sometimes would bite if I tried to pet him. I read that when cats lick each other, they lick on the head. So, I began petting him on the head, not coming at him from in front of his eyes, but from behind. Eventually, he got so that I could pet him. But, I never could pick him up or carry him around. He was very devoted, though, and I could do most anything to him by way of "doctoring" him, for example giving him capsules. I would run warm water over the capsule for a moment to "slick it up," and then he would swallow it without fuss. He had a very long tail, and he would walk along beside me while I held onto his tail. He seemed to enjoy it.
2. The women whose cat bites her on the head at night. My cat started doing something similar at night this year. He would tickle me with his whiskers when he wanted to be fed. I began keeping a dish of dry cat food on the bed beside

me, and that seemed to work.

My present cat also tickles me on the face with her whiskers, even though there is cat food there in the dish on the bed. But, she needs a pet or two in order to eat. Two bites, she has to have another pat, two more bites, etc. Who's running the show? Obviously not me.

This same cat has very sensitive skin. She was covered in scabs when I took her in. I had a terrible time getting rid of them. She was allergic to flea venom, over and above the usual discomfort caused by flea bites. Using flea drops on the back of her neck helped a lot, but she was evidently even allergic to one kind of flea drops! She acted like she was scalded for the first two days after I applied the drops and she scratched for the entire month before I could use a different brand. Advantage seems to be the best brand in her case.

Betty Skeels

A Declawing Alternative

Whenever the topic of dealing with the fore claws of our feline friends arises, only two alternatives are discussed. First is the classic surgery in which a cat is declawed by severing the cat's "fingers" at the last joint. This routinely is condemned as cruel by some. The second is to try to find ways to patiently train what can be very destructive animals by using a cat tree — not the most aesthetic addition to many homes' decor. However, there is a third option that at least one veterinarian offers here in Honolulu. This consists of electrocauterizing the cat's nail beds, thereby destroying the germ cells responsible for renewing the cat's claws. Electrocautery requires general anesthesia; however, within a few hours of the procedure, you wouldn't know the "patient" had any surgery performed — there are no bandages, no apparent pain and no visual mutilation to the cat's paws.

It surprises me that this procedure is not offered more widely. The classic procedure is comparatively crude with a significant risk of infection, as the cat limps about for days with tightly bandaged claws. Electrocauterizing is much more humane and probably is easier to perform after a little practice. Perhaps more veterinarians would offer this service if it was requested by educated consumers. For those considering having their cats declawed, I am sure that your cats would thank you if you insisted on a less invasive procedure.

Michael P Rethman DDS, MS, Kaneohe, Hawaii

Litterbox Fix

My red Persian cat has been eliminating feces on bedspreads and rugs for years, in addition to eliminating in the litterbox. I could not figure out what the problem was. I was at my wit's end because I change her litterbox twice daily and switch out the litter once a week. I use unscented litter, etc. She is a happy and friendly kitty, so that was not an issue. What finally realized that she did not like the rubber mats I placed outside her litterboxes for her to rub her paws on. I got rid of them and placed a soft rug underneath the litterboxes, and the problem has eliminated itself. (Pardon the pun.)

It wasn't the litterbox at all. She had turned to the bedspreads and rugs because she did not like the rubber mats and preferred to clean her paws on soft surfaces! I highly recommend this fix!

Susan Mitchell, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Reiki for Cats

I'm writing to respond to the article "Traditional vs. Alternative Medicine" in the July issue of CAT FANCY. I feel compelled to respond to the information presented about Reiki in the article, which I feel is misrepresentative and inaccurate. Part of the problem is that the author obviously is not trained in Reiki for animals, and therefore is unfamiliar with methods and approach. She did not interview anyone I have worked with, and I'm well-connected to the animal Reiki professional community throughout the world. I'm dismayed by the portrayal of Reiki, especially since this is a lesser known holistic modality, and for many readers this may be their first exposure to Reiki as a possible therapy for their cat.

I'd like to respond point by point to the inaccuracies presented in this article:

1. "The energy involved has yet to be identified." If you study quantum physics, you will learn the scientific underpinnings that describe what is going on with Reiki. Yes, it is a new science and has a long way to go, but there are many leading

scientists working in the field of energy. The statement above leads the reader incorrectly to think that Reiki is some kind of unique, unknown type of energy, rather than explaining that it is just energy in general.

Reiki means, literally, "spiritual energy." The word refers to the energy that makes up all things in the universe. In other words, it is the energetic substance that physicists talk about and study. Reiki the system, on the other hand, refers to a Japanese system created by Mikao Usui in the late 19th and early 20th century. The original purpose of the system was spiritual development, but in modern times the emphasis has evolved as a system of energetic healing, utilizing specific Japanese meditative practices and breathing techniques.

2. "Practitioners state that they manipulate energy flow through the patient..."

First of all, practitioners do not consider themselves vets, so would never call the animals "patients." They are not healers. They are practitioners. This is an important distinction as it relates to the above quote from the article. Practitioners first ask permission of the "client" or animal, asking if they would like to participate in a Reiki session. Then, they set their intention that they are open to facilitate the flow of energy for the highest good of the cat for whatever they are open to receive, or nothing at all. It is completely up to the cat to receive the energy.

Practitioners do not diagnose and do not need to know what the health issue is. The nature of the energy is that it creates and supports energetic balance as a whole for the animal on all levels, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. In a sick animal, the illness would be considered, energetically, to be an imbalance of some kind. By setting your intention and then sitting in a meditative Reiki space, the practitioner simply creates a possibility of rebalancing. The animal then chooses whether or not to take part in.

There is no manipulation of energy beyond setting the mental intention to become an empty vessel through which Reiki can flow to the animal, if the animal is accepting. We don't send the energy here or there, or heal this or that problem. We simply create a healing space where healing possibilities exist.

3. "Sessions should not last longer than 20 minutes, as it might exhaust the patient or cause lethargy or vomiting."

In my experience, the average length of treatment is 30 to 60 minutes. The energy cannot exhaust the patient, as you can't "overdo" Reiki. Reiki only works to support energetic balance within the animal in whatever amount they are open to. It's nothing you can force on the animal. Reiki never can do harm, including causing something like lethargy and/or vomiting. I'm speaking from my own experience of treating thousands of animals of many species for the last 10 years, and also I've never had a student report an experience like this, and I've taught hundreds of students all over the world.

I hope this helps clear up what Reiki is and what it is not. In my experience, Reiki is such a wonderful and beneficial modality for cats, I would hate to see your readers be scared off from trying it because of incorrect information.

Kathleen Prasad, San Rafael, Calif.