

California Cat's Claim Most Unusual

Sandy the Abyssinian's foray into the dryer nets her Veterinary Pet Insurance Co.'s monthly award.

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Sandy, from Irvine, Calif., suffered bruises and a broken rib after sneaking into the dryer. An Abyssinian cat named Sandy from Irvine, Calif. just might close out this year with a prize as a result of being trapped in a dryer.

Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. (VPI) will consider Sandy for its annual Hambone Award, named after a dog who got trapped in a refrigerator and ate an entire ham waiting to be released.

Sandy's owner, Brandan Vanderpool, said the cat's trouble came as a result of that classic characteristic of felines: curiosity.

"Sandy's not afraid of anything," he said. "She'll come right up to dogs and she won't back down. She's really curious and she wants to know about everything. So it was no surprise that she found the dryer inviting — it's a dark place and she had to sneak in. She knew she wasn't supposed to go in there and she knew we weren't watching."

Seconds after turning on the loaded dryer, Vanderpool and his wife heard a loud repetitive thumping noise and knew something was wrong. They immediately stopped the dryer and opened it to find a frightened Sandy.

"We went to urgent care, where they took X-rays and did a full check-up," said Vanderpool. "They only found a couple of bruises and one broken rib. We were lucky that we caught it right away. They kept her overnight to make sure that she didn't have any bruising on the brain. That was the part that scared me, but it turned out she was fine and we were able to take her home the next day. She was just fine, as if nothing happened. The only difference is that she now stays away from the dryer."

Vanderpool's claim for Sandy's dryer incident was one of more than 80,000 claims VPI received in August. Vanderpool's claim was considered along with other uncommon medical claims submitted in August and selected by VPI as the most unusual for that month.

As the most unusual claim submitted in August, Vanderpool's claim will be placed in the running for the 2010 VPI Hambone Award. Each month, VPI employees nominate the most interesting claim submitted and in September 2010 will ask the public to vote for the most unusual claim of the year.

Honorable mentions in August included a Cocker Spaniel that stepped in a mole trap, a Labrador that ingested a pin cushion, a Pug that ate several toy blocks, a dog that swallowed a crab, a cat that survived a 20-foot fall, a dog snagged in the eyelid by a fishhook, and a Labrador that received multiple cuts while chasing ducks. All pets considered for the award made full recoveries and received insurance reimbursements for eligible expenses.