



# Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

## Purr-fessional Street Walker

When Rebecca and her daughter, Johnna, son Ian, bunny Lyric and their pit bull, Mylee, moved into their rental home, they did not realize they were intruding!

A seemingly ageless feline (Ms. Purr), adopted years ago by a previous renter, considers the home hers, and she has outlasted the last three renters. Purr's first owner packed up the household goods, the cat and moved two blocks away. But, the woman had to continually return and retrieve the cat — over, and over and over!

It was obvious Purr was not happy about the move! She had a purr-fectly plausible reason for staying. She was not leaving her self-appointed street-greeter job, so she repeatedly took the shortcut through backyards to her old home to purr-form her daily "meet and greet" and infuse lives with sunshine and joy. This was her kingdom, and the reigning queen was not leaving!

Everyone who walks by the rental knows Purr because she approaches mothers pushing carriages, students on their way to school, men walking small dogs and, well, everyone who strolls by. If you don't know her name, someone passing as you bend to pet the demanding cat will formally introduce you.

I have been petting and talk-

ing to Purr for years. The gracious queen expects it, and I enjoy it! Purr must have a degree in psychology, because after everyone's brief interaction with her, she has them walking away smiling. She intentionally lifts her subjects' moods.

"We've never met this beautiful-social Himalayan cat's original owner," said Rebecca.

Our dog had to adjust to Purr. Mylee sits on one side of the screened door and gazes at Purr on the other. Mylee doesn't growl, and Purr does not hiss. They actually entertain each other. Mylee shows a little jealousy when we feed Purr!"

The cat initially caught Rebecca off guard. They'd been living in the house for three weeks when she phoned the landlord worried about the friendly "homeless cat" hanging around. The landowner explained that the cat "Comes with the house!" and that all the previous renters have cared for her.

Purr's name changes with each renter. Currently she is known as 'Fuzzy Boots' because of her Persian fluffly pantaloons that look like she's wearing boots," said Johnna.

The family is fully aware that their shameless purr-fessional street walker solicits food and love from neighbors; shockingly "... all the way down to the church!"

"Our friends also love our rental cat," said Johnna, "be-

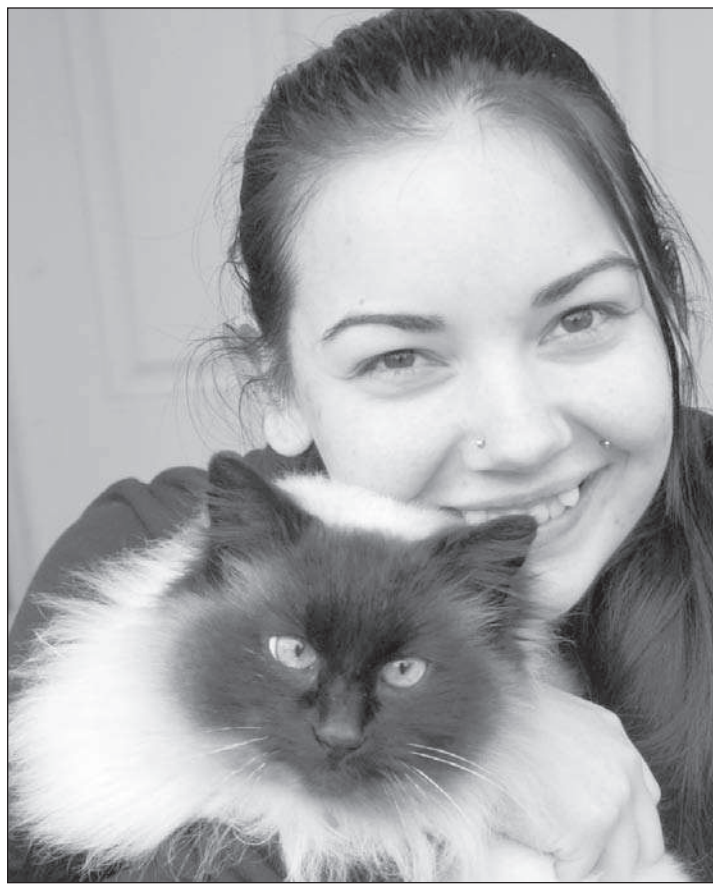


Photo by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

**Johnna holds Cottage Grove's purr-fessional street walker, Fuzzy Boots. The notorious celebra-cat welcomed Johnna's family's to their new rental home!**

cause she happily greets them just like she does the people walking down the street. One friend who does not like cats admitted, "This gorgeous cat is awesome and loaded with charm." He's right!

Once Fuzzy Boots sees an approaching subject, she jumps off the porch, walks down our sidewalk, then down the street's sidewalk for her royal greeting! She thinks everyone is here to serve/pet her...and they do, because she rules our street! As 'queen' of the neighborhood, Fuzzy rules with a soft paw,

but if you don't stop to pet her, she reminds you of your duty by playfully nipping innocent ankles.

One time a little girl walked by and, of course, Fuzzy went to give and get her love. The little girl asked, "She's so beautiful and nice — can I have her?" I said, "Sure" but 20 minutes later, Fuzzy was trotting back up our sidewalk, (just as I knew she would!). I greeted her with, "Welcome home, Boots!"

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# ODFW: Don't release pet turtles in the wild

A 10-pound snapping turtle recently found at the Yoncalla Water Treatment Plant is a good reminder not to release pet turtles into the wild. It's illegal, and it's harmful for Oregon's two native turtles, the Western Pond Turtle and Western Painted Turtle.

Snapping turtles, red-eared sliders, and map turtles are not native to Oregon and are often illegally bought, sold or traded in the state. These are the most common pet turtles but are prohibited by law in Oregon because they are invasive species.

ODFW biologists say invasive turtles compete with Oregon's native turtles for food, basking sites and nesting areas. Many grow bigger and lay more eggs than our native turtles, and some even predate upon them, hatchlings in particular.

Turtles can live 40 to 100 years and are often released into the wild when people lose interest or tire of caring for them. Pet turtles often suffer from eye, shell or respiratory infections, and these pathogens can be spread to native turtles.

"Turtles take a lot of care and have special diet and habitat needs to keep them healthy," says ODFW Conservation Biologist Susan Barnes. "Turtles also carry salmonella, which can make people, particularly children, very sick."

Anyone finding an invasive turtle can turn it into their local ODFW office. Use extra caution when picking up a snapping turtle, however; they can and do bite. Pick snappers up by the back of their tail, not the sides, as their neck is long enough to swing about half their body size.

This time of year, female turtles are moving to nesting areas. Rick Boatner, ODFW Invasive Species Program Manager, has some advice.

"If you find a native turtle crossing the road, pick it up and put it on the side of the road in the direction it was heading," Boatner said.

The Western Painted Turtle and Western Pond Turtle are both classified as "critical" on Oregon's Sensitive Species list; state law prohibits killing them or taking them from the wild. Our native turtles are also identified as priority at-risk species in the Oregon Conservation Strategy due to declining habitat quality and fragmentation, pollution and competition with invasive turtles among other reasons.

ODFW tracks native and non-native turtle sightings and asks the public to help by reporting online.



Courtesy photo

**This 10-pound snapping turtle was recently found in a Douglas County water treatment plant.**

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