

Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Magic's miracle



PHOTO COURTESY MARYELLEN ANGELSCRIBE

Sharon and Vic with their miracle cat Magic

Sharon and her husband, Vic, raised seven daughters and a foster child, but today their lives "are all about our animals."

Seven years ago, they went to a pet store to buy some aquarium fish. Vic also looked at the adoptable cats, and instead of fish, they left the store purr-oudly carrying Mew-fasa. A year later, they returned to the pet store again looking for fish. Somehow, they missed the small print that there was a big cat adoption drive that day.

Sharon fell in love with a beautiful black long-hair kitty, Magic, caged with an orange tabby, Simba. When they discussed adopting the black cat, the staff suggested that the couple also adopt the orange kitty.

The couple looked at each other, grinned, and left with both Magic and Simba.

"We were happy with our three fur babies who were allowed to go outside. Magic was extremely friendly and went up to anyone, even strangers. But one day, he didn't come home. We drove all around looking for him, but we couldn't find him."

The heartbroken couple were paws-itive that he had been stolen. Nevertheless, they constantly searched lost internet cat boards and humane shelters.

For the next four years, while driving, they kept a vigilant lookout for their cat. The black felines they saw never checked out to be Magic. They were convinced they would never see him again, yet they never broke the habit of stopping and checking out black cats.

One day, a microchip company phoned Sharon and asked, "Do you own a black cat called Magic?" Someone had found her cat twenty miles from home and on the other side of the river!

"I was ecstatic and cried," said Sharon. "They told us which shelter Magic was at and when Vic arrived home with Magic, I cried all over again. It was pure joy seeing and holding him again. (Magic, that is, but Vic is a charmer too!)"

When Sharon put kibbles and kitty treats down, as much as the cat tried to eat them he kept dropping them. Sharon realized that he couldn't chew, so she gave him canned food, which he ate like he hadn't eaten in days (and he probably hadn't). They are taking him to a vet for his teeth. Many starved cat's teeth rot and fall out which appears to be what happened to Magic.

There were some things about Magic that Sharon had forgotten like sitting with the tip of his tongue sticking out. He likes sticking his wet nose against her face, giving her head loving head butts, and he purrs so hard that he drools.

"Magic is happy to be home," said Sharon, "and he and his kitty siblings are getting along. He is NOT happy that we aren't letting him outside because I'm afraid of losing him again."

During Magic's world travels, Sharon and Vic adopted Shelby, a 160-pound St. Bernard. Poor Magic is trying to figure out if Shelby is going to eat him, but the dog's calm nature is winning over the "new" family kitty.

"I think that, in time, they will be best buds," said Sharon, "because each day they are sitting closer to each other. We are so happy to have Magic home. We are thankful to the microchip company, the shelter staff and the family who recognized that Magic was a stray and took him to the shelter."

TIPS

On dark evenings, place a flashing light onto your dog's collar so vehicle drivers can spot you and your dog, and if your dog runs off you can easily see which way it went. You can also purchase a lighted leash or carry a flashlight for visibility.

What is your pets story? angelscribe@msn.com "Follow" Pet Tips 'n' Tales at facebook.com/PetTipsandTales. Humane Society for Neuter/Spay Assistance Program. (541) 942-2789

Pacific Power tips on bill savings

PORTLAND, Ore. -- The colder it gets outside, the more energy it takes to keep your house warm. No one can change that basic equation, but there are steps you can take to keep energy bills from giving you the chills.

"You may not change your thermostat, but when temperatures fall, the difference in temperature between the outside and the inside grows, and so can your energy usage," said Barb Coughlin, Pacific Power's vice president for customer service. "Being smart about your heating can go a long way towards keeping your energy bill low."

Here are tips you can use today to battle cold weather:

- * Set your thermostat as low as comfortable, aim for 68 degrees. When you are asleep or out of the house, lower the temperature by another 10 degrees and this will reduce your energy usage by about 10 percent.
- * Use space heaters sparingly

and safely. Running a 1,500 watt portable heater 8 hours a day for 30 days can add an extra \$30 to a monthly power bill in winter.

- * Close drapes and blinds. Closed drapes and blinds can help your house stay better insulated and reduce energy use.

- * Avoid the temptation to bump up the thermostat when it gets colder. That won't get you to your desired temperature faster, you will just make your furnace run longer and use more energy.

- * Improve your home's heating and cooling systems by cleaning or replacing furnace filters and scheduling routine system maintenance to help air flow through the system more efficiently. Move furniture that is blocking intakes or heat registers.

You can save even more energy by taking a longer range view of your energy use. In Oregon, Pacific Power teams up with

Energy Trust of Oregon to offer energy efficiency consultation and cash incentives to upgrade your home and save energy and money. Visit bewattsmart.com or call the Energy Trust toll free at 1-866-368-7878 to learn more about qualifications and services.

Another step is manage winter bills is to switch to Equal Pay. Under Equal Pay, energy costs are averaged out over the year so bills are more predictable and manageable. Customers can enroll in Equal Pay online at pacificpower.net/equalpay, via the Pacific Power mobile app, or by phone at 1-888-221-7070.

"The sooner you call, the better for Equal Pay," said Coughlin. "If you wait until the higher bills have already come, your average will have gone up, too. This program also helps if you have high cooling costs in the summer."

SLMH earns grant to help kids

Cottage Grove-based South Lane Mental Health has received a \$10,000 grant from the Elizabeth S. Holden Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation to expand its school-based therapy services for students in Cottage Grove and Creswell. Therapists are available at 12 school campuses in both districts to assist students of all ages.

South Lane Mental Health's mission is to restore hope and renew lives through compassionate mental health services, support, and advocacy. In addition

to school-based therapy, South Lane Mental Health's services include: outpatient counseling, crisis response, medication and case management, Intensive Community-based Treatment Services for Children and families, an outpatient recovery program, and a foster home and supported living services for adults with persistent mental illness. South Lane Mental Health provided services for more than 2,600 people last year. To learn more about South Lane Mental Health, visit www.slmh.org.

The phone number is (541) 942-3939.

The mission of The Oregon Community Foundation is to improve lives for all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. The Foundation works with individuals, families, businesses and organizations to create charitable funds — more than 2,000 of them — to support the community causes they care about. Through these funds, OCF in 2016 awarded more than \$108 million in grants and scholarships.

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