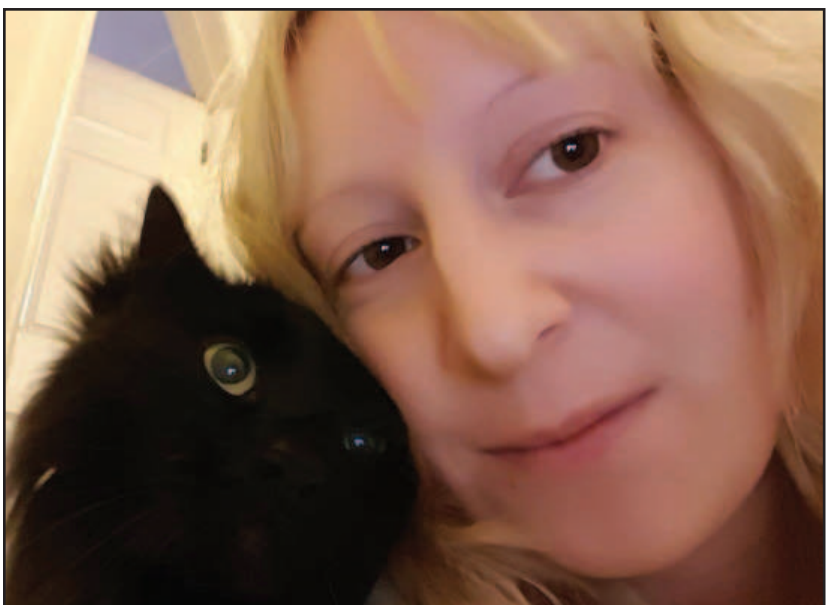




Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Surprise cat



Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe" has seven stories published in Chicken Soup for the Soul books. Three humorous ones appear in both "My Very Good, Very Bad Cat," and "The Cat Really Did That?". British journalist, Carla, discovered pet columnist Mary Ellen while reading the books and followed up by an writing an article on her and her famous swimming cats for the international Catworld magazine.

Like Mary Ellen, Carla's passion for cats also led her into the world of writing about felines.

"I wanted to write for a living, so I took an at-home writers' course," said Carla. "I love cats so I wrote about their history from Egyptian times through to modern day. These amazing creatures have been worshipped, feared, and loved as pets while retaining their independent-quirky nature which is part of their appeal."

Carla began her writing career by sending articles to dif-

ferent magazines. But her passion was always centered on cats, so she focused on their behaviors to help pet parents take better care of their cats' needs. Her dream came true when she was hired as a writer for Great Britain's purrs-tegious Catworld Magazine. Today, she writes on anything related to cats: promoting cat welfare, wild cat sanctuaries, and debated popular questions such as whether cats should be outdoor or inside pets.

"I love teaching people, all over the world, what is best for their moggies (British term for an alley cat; a mongrel; a feline with no discernible pedigree) and promoting small organizations who are working hard ensuring that cats live the lives they deserve," said Carla. "I would never have had this opportunity if it wasn't for my own cats. By quietly observing their behavior I come up with fresh ideas for each article. When a cat chooses you, it's an hon-

or. They are not pack animals and don't need companionship. Therefore, when a cat loves you, it is truly special."

Carla currently has one cat, Salem, which was rescued from an abusive situation. The kitten was a few weeks old, short-black furred female with a bad case of the cat flu. Once in her new home, she quickly revealed a fun-loving, crazy-quirky, character.

"She ran around the house chasing and stalking everything, in between sneezing fits," laughs Carla. "We administered an eye ointment because her eyes were constantly running and we fed her a healthy natural diet to gain weight."

Salem, named after the mystical kitty in the TV Series, "Sabrina the Teenage Witch", was once described as a short-haired black female, yet when they took her to be spayed, the vet insisted on neutering "HIM" instead!

And Salem was not done with surprises!

"As he grew so did his fur!" said Carla, "He is definitely not a short-haired cat! His fur is so long that he struggles grooming himself. He spends ages rolling around on the floor licking himself and sporadically flicking his head trying to get all the hair out of his mouth!"

Today, he is unrecognizable from that emaciated kitten. He's a stunning lad, with a fluffy

mane that could rival a lion's mane and he sports a tail like a magnificent feather duster! We expect our surprise cat's DNA would reveal Siberian Forest cat due to his size, and tendency to chatter and trill when he wants something."

When not cuddling with Carla, Salem runs around their house "like a mad thing!"

"The other day, as I climbed the stairs, Salem followed me," said Carla. "He was chatting away when suddenly his eyes glazed over, he tensed, that crazy-cat' look took over and he shot downstairs like a thing possessed. It took me ages to stop laughing!"

Mary Ellen's cat, Miss Wings, wants to know if Salem meows with a British accent?! May he and Carla continue to educate and inspire others around the world for years to come.

TIPS

Carla's tip is, "Your pet communicates with you via its body language. By observing its paws-ture, swish of a tail, slant or blink of an eye, you will learn everything you need to know about what they want and feel!"

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No arrest in zombie house fire



By Caitlyn May
cmay@cgsentinel.com

The Feb. 12 house fire that lit the debate on zombie houses in Cottage Grove is still under investigation. According to Cottage Grove Police Chief Scott Shepherd, the department has a person of interest but no arrests have been made.

The house on Adams Ave. has been vacant for years and part of the small army of zombie homes—houses that have been abandoned by their owners, usually due to foreclosure—in

Cottage Grove. On Feb. 12, a shed on the property caught fire and threatened the tree lines separating the property from neighboring houses. At the time, Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers said there had been a handful of arson cases in the city and shortly after the fire, the police log kept by the department reported an individual confessing to the crime only to be ruled out after questioning by law enforcement.

The fire sparked a call to action from neighbors who said the house, and those like it, posed a danger to the community. Just weeks before the incident, the city council voted to allow the city to take possession of a separate zombie house located on 6th St. after the house

became a public health hazard. Squatters had been living in the home without water and city officials reported a rat infestation so severe, an employee with the company contracted with the city to exterminate the pests grew ill at the scene.

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