

# CAT TALES

## FRIENDS OF CATS, INC.

Vol. XXXXIV No. 1

San Diego County, CA

Winter 2017



## Poe's Journey



Poe and her five siblings were born on the streets of Ocean Beach in the summer of 2015. They were brought to Friends of Cats, which quickly placed them with foster parents, since the tiny kittens needed immediate neonatal care.

It was evident early on that Poe was the runt and was failing to thrive, an all-too-common problem with foster feline litters. Her siblings quickly outgrew her. Poe was only five ounces at five weeks of age, and it was obvious she was fighting to stay alive. But there was also a noticeable problem with her ability to eat. Although she took the bottle with enthusiasm, she spit the formula back up through her nose. As her foster parents tried their best to deal with this complication, a new feeding method using syringes was attempted, which met with success.

The Shelter's veterinarian, Dr. Christine Wilson of Steele Canyon Veterinary Clinic, diagnosed a cleft palate and recommended that Poe be fed through the syringe until she was a year old, at which time surgery could be performed to correct the defect. Poe was spayed at six months of age, and while she was under sedation, Dr. Wilson examined her mouth thoroughly and discovered the extent of her deformity. Photos were taken, and a veterinary surgeon was consulted, who concluded that this would be a difficult operation requiring a highly-specialized oral surgeon. Cleft palates in kittens are rare, since the kittens generally die early on from malnourishment or are euthanized. Surgical treatment of the condition is uncommon, and not all surgeons are comfortable with the procedure. So the search for a specialist began.

The foster parents' daughter, who worked at an out-of-state vet clinic, began reaching out to various veterinary teaching schools, including Purdue University and Colorado State. A Friends of Cats member who was a major donor for Poe's surgery suggested Irvine Hospital, since she had excellent prior experience there. All were consulted, as well as an oral surgeon in Encinitas and another vet in La Jolla. In the end, Poe was the one who made her choice known—during her consultation at Pacific Coast Veterinary Dentistry and Oral Surgery in Encinitas, this otherwise shy kitty became animated and feisty, boldly exploring the exam room and interacting in a friendly manner with both Dr. Brigden and his associate, Dr. Tjepkema. They examined Poe and concluded that her surgery would be a difficult challenge. Although they had performed many cleft palate surgeries on dogs, they had only treated one other cat, whose condition was not as severe as Poe's; in fact, they did not know of anyone else who had attempted this type of operation on a feline. Both surgeons explained in detail their plan for surgery, the associated costs, and the anticipated scenario for recovery. They determined that surgery could wait until one foster parent could take time off to stay at home with Poe during recovery.

Surgery took place on December 19, 2016, at which time an esophageal tube (e-tube) was placed in Poe for feeding, running from the outside of her neck, through her esophagus, and into her stomach. The procedure—which entailed cutting her palate and folding it over to cover the cleft—went well. Poe's foster parents

*(continued on page 3)*

# Friends of Cats



## Our Mission Statement

To maintain a Shelter for homeless and unwanted cats with the goal of placing all healthy cats into loving, adoptive homes while providing a sanctuary for cats that are terminally ill, considered unadoptable, or whose owners have prearranged for their continued lifetime care. In a nurturing, rehabilitative environment, we ensure the health of all cats entrusted to our care, promote spaying and neutering, and resort to euthanasia only as a matter of compassion for cats whose terminal illness causes suffering.

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## Cat Tales

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*Cat Tales* welcomes your photos, letters, and stories, as well as queries regarding ideas for articles. Please send to us at: [cattales@friendsofcats.org](mailto:cattales@friendsofcats.org). Images should be high-resolution for publication. We reserve the right to edit or condense content due to space limitations or for clarity.



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Mary Susan Howard

*(One in an occasional series of profiles of our many dedicated volunteers at Friends of Cats.)*

### How did you first become involved with Friends of Cats?

I had been looking for some time for an opportunity to volunteer with animals, in a caring shelter environment with some flexibility as to hours. My search led me to FOC and it's been a wonderful fit for me.

### How long have you been volunteering at Friends of Cats?

Since November or December of 2015.

### Do you have any favorite tasks associated with caring for the Shelter cats?

I love helping to socialize the cats—brushing, petting, playing [with them]. I believe it's important that they all have regular interaction with people, so that they are used to the attention and are ready to find their forever home. It's especially rewarding to work with those cats that are shy; to see them gain confidence to the point where they are ready to meet their human and go home with them is just wonderful. And for those who are in Lifetime Care, it's important to me to honor the faith their owners had in FOC that their companion would be loved and cared for, for the rest of their lives.

### Did you have pets as a child, and do you currently have animals at home?

Although I grew up in a dog family, I've lived with cats for most of my adult life. At first it was because cats were better suited to my busy life, but it wasn't long before I realized what terrific companions cats are. It's an ever-changing relationship (although I'm pretty sure they have the upper hand!) and it's always rewarding and fulfilling. Currently I have three cats, Mimi, Mickey, and Murphy, adopted together in 2002 from a shelter in the L.A. area where I was living at the time. Fortunately they have no problem sharing me with the kitties at FOC!

### Could you offer any advice for prospective volunteers that might help them make the most of their volunteer opportunity?

My first piece of advice is DO IT! Come on out to the shelter; you will find a community of caring staff and volunteers to make you feel at home right away. Then, spend some time getting to know some of the individual cats, building those relationships. I feel like this is most helpful for the cat's emotional well-being, and it puts you in a position to really help make the right match between a cat and a person looking for a new companion. There are so many wonderful animals and people at FOC. Every visit leaves me feeling grateful to be a part of it.

## Save the Date for



# Cinco de Meow

**Saturday May 6  
10:30 am–2 pm**



The extent of Poe's cleft deformity can be seen in this photo.

# Poe's Journey

*(continued from page 1)*

took her home. She immediately hid under the bed and would not venture out. So her foster mom spent that first night sleeping on the floor beside to her, watching for any sign of bleeding or nasal blockage.

Things were initially fine. But two days later, at 3:30 a.m., Poe began to hemorrhage from her mouth. Her foster parents rushed her to the pet emergency room for examination. By then the bleeding had stopped, but the doctor recommended keeping her under observation until the surgeon's office opened later that morning. Poe's foster parents were sent home to get some sleep, but sleep wasn't on the agenda since they were frantic with worry. When the call from the ER finally came, they transported Poe back to Dr. Brigden for a post-op exam, but he could not locate the source

of the blood and released her to her foster family, with instructions to call if there was any new sign of bleeding.

That afternoon, during a feeding attempt by her foster mom, Poe heard a noise that panicked her, and as she ran, the e-tube pulled away and out of her body. Her foster mom anxiously called the surgeon's office, which scheduled a return visit for the following day to reinsert the e-tube. After that harrowing incident, the next two weeks were uneventful, and Poe was more comfortable.

When Poe was examined by Dr. Brigden on January 6, he discovered some necrotic tissue in her palate, which had likely been the source of the bleeding. This disappointing news meant that Poe would need to have additional surgery.

At the present time, Dr. Brigden is requesting consultations with other oral surgeons for moving forward. There are several surgical procedures currently under consideration. One is to graft ground-up bone into her palate. Another involves removing her teeth on one side and folding over the other side of her palate. The third is the same cut-and-fold technique but without removing any teeth. All options under discussion take into account Poe's ultimate well-being and her best course for recovery.

Poe still has a rough road ahead of her, but she is well-loved by everyone at the Shelter, and FOC is committed to helping her through the next stage of her journey. The protracted course that lies ahead of her means that she will require long-term fostering, during which Friends of Cats is committed to covering her medical expenses. But to do so, the Shelter is in great need of monetary donations towards her second surgery, as well as for her ongoing care requirements. Friends of Cats would be grateful for any contributions to help us offset these costs. We would love nothing more than to give this sweet girl a chance at a normal life full of good health and happiness.

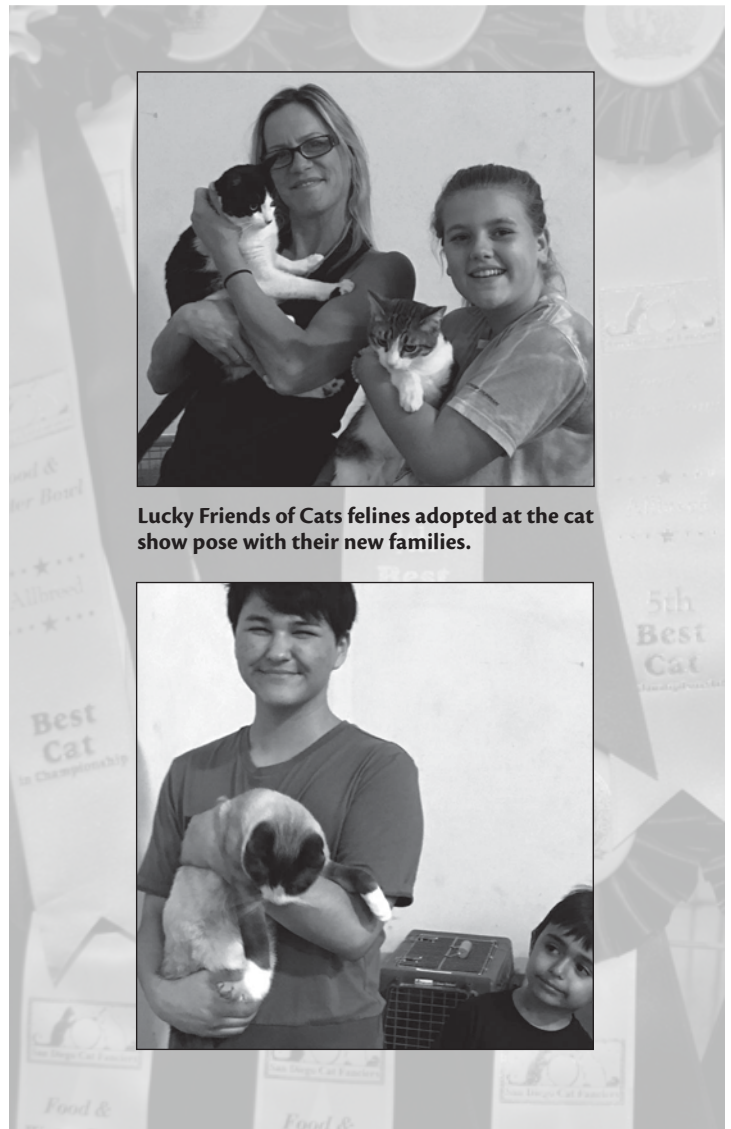


Poe as a kitten in summer (left) and fall of 2015



Judges Gary Veach (top and middle) and Vicki Nye put pedigreed cats through their paces.

The San Diego Cat Fanciers' Food and Water Bowl was held at the Del Mar Fairgrounds on January 28 and 29. This annual event is one of the largest cat shows on the west coast, with over 400 cats of all breeds competing in 8 rings with 8 different judges. Friends of Cats has had a long association with the show and attends annually as part of the local network of rescues and animal welfare groups. This year, five Shelter cats were with our volunteers at the FOC information booth—and all of them were adopted! One of those cats, Ned, an 8-year old black-and-white shorthair, became our number one star as he scooped up awards each day while competing in the Household Pet category. With his mellow demeanor, Ned aced the competition like a pro. His haul included several merit ribbons and also colorful rosettes for 15th Best Cat, 11th Best Cat, 9th Best Cat and 6th Best Cat over the course of the two-day show. But the very best prize Ned won was a loving home. Scheduled to compete in all 8 rings, Ned was scratched from his very last competition round on Sunday afternoon in order to head home with his new family—with his awards in tow. We are so proud of Ned, and thrilled that this gentle boy found a wonderful home.



Lucky Friends of Cats felines adopted at the cat show pose with their new families.



During Sunday's competition, Ned heads off to the ring for Household Pet judging.



Ned does his best to charm Judge Rachel Anger in the ring. He succeeds . . .



. . . by netting his best award yet—a rosette for 6th Best Cat in the Household Pet division!



Ned meets admirers on his way back to the FOC booth.



Ned shows off his awards from the two-day show.



Ned wins the best prize of all—a new family and forever home.

# Thank You!

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## Monetary Donations

John Adoc; Robert Alden; All Cats Hospital; Mark & Theresa Allgeier; Ken Allgeier; Ronald Anderson; Bonnie Anderson; Shaun Appfel; Aquarian Soul; Muriel Arroyo; Art Laboe Foundation; Aki Atoji; Wendie Baker; Deborah Balok; Janice Barnard; Linda Barnett; Patricia Barnier; J. Blakeney Bartlett; Kandi Baxter; Lois Beland; Ursula Bell; Barry Berkov; Stacey Berlangiero; Patricia Berry; James Bigger; Sally Ruth Black; Diana Blanton; Margaret Bloisa; Paulette Bocian; Karen Borden; Stan Boyer; Diana Brotherton-Ware; Lloyd Burden; Bonnie Burgum; Lillian Burt; Lisa Butler; Garry Cannon; Melissa & David Carlisle; Janice Carvajal; Judith Castaneda; Tina Cerasoli; Sandie Cherry; Martin Chevalier; Devin Chubb; Patricia Clavell; Ron Clayton; William Coaker; David Coddon; Laura Cole; Elizabeth Comer; Livia Coming Peterson; Reanna Cook; Martchen Cooper; J. Steven & Lily Cowan; Carol Culkin; Mr. & Mrs. Walter Curry; Lindsey Davidson; Claudia Davis; John C. Davis; Fred/Donna/Dawn/Mancuso; Elaine De la Vega; Dana Denson; Renee Differ; Vera Dolansky; Suzanne & Johnny Dollar; Jenna Domingo; Ellen Donley; Patricia Donovan; Sherrilyn Dorworth; George Drain; Elizabeth Drees; Christina Durvis; Katie Edwards; Janette Elliott; Ann Ellis; Zita Emerson; Phyllis Enfield; Barbara Fabre; Ed Fleischer; Janet Fowler; Terry Fraenzl; P. M. Francis; Marilyn Fulton; Linda Garifal; Siv Garrod; Lori Gowie; Lynn Graham; Alice Gruber; Donna Guhl; Kate Gurney; Kathryn Gurney; Lisa Hancock; Happy Trails Carpet Service; Jacqueline Hart; Sue Heim; George Henderson; Linda Hitney; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hoffman; Rose Hoffman; Lawrence Houghton; William Huff; John Huish; Amelia Hunt; Fran Hunter; Ron Husges; Joy Hypnarowski; Catherine Jaffe; Ben Jaffe; Paul Jarosz; Patty Jencks; Lorren Jenson; Millicent Johnson; Connie Johnson; Constance A. Johnson; Mary Johnson; Michelle Johnson; Joyce Johnston; Kevin Judkins; Michael & Nancy Kaehr; Nancy Olmsted & Michael Kaehr Fund; Laurene Kallstrom; Ed & Gayle Kane; Brian Kantor; Lynette Kaplan; Glendella Karl; Yvonne Kenniston; John Kern; Katie Kern; William J. King; Jocelyn Kircher; John & Faith Kleven; Marnie Kline; Sandy Klipfel; Kathy & Bernice Klohr; Bernice Klohr; Kroger; Sally Krosky; Jill Kruse; Merrie Lamb; Marcia Lane; Glen Larsen; Marion Larson; Mr. & Mrs. Nick Lashchuk Jr.; Sheila Laurenson; Cathy Lemonnier; Jeannette Lenard; Barbara Lester; Belinda & Douglas Lester; Paul & Lea Levine Foundation; Abigal Lind; Susan Lindsey; Dorothy Little; Alicia Lortz; Celeste Loughridge; Birgit Luehrsen; Vicki Mabry; Kathleen MacMaster; Lillian Mahaney; Donna Mancuso; Barbara Manion; Molly Manner; Parween Maronesy; Ann Martin; Michael Mays; Robert McClellan; Susan McDowell; Dana McKenna; Loralee Merrill; Michelle Merrill-Long; Catherine Meyer; James Miles; Carol Miller; Derrick Miyao; Mary Mlekowski; Modern Day Mercantile; Roger & Betty Montanus; Sandra Morgan; Chelsi Murphy; Mary Neff; Lynn Noe; Courtney Norton; Todd Orr; Robin Parks; Nona Belle Paulsen; Frances Peregoy; Pet Hospital of Tierrasanta; Mary Lou Peterson; Amber Pierce; Christopher Pikus; Don & Carol Plath; Patricia Potter; Connie Pringle; Dale Redfield; Janine Roach; Emily Roberts; Joanie Rodgers; Janice Rogers; Michael Roll; Edward Rose; Sanya Rossini; Ruth Rudesill; Barbara Russell; Lois Rutherford; San Diego Cat Fanciers; Alan Scales; Jean Schevemann; Christine Schumann; Carrie Semik; Linda Sevier; Sylvia Shaffer; Jocelyn Shannon; Susan Sharkey; Barbara Showman; Stacy Sieger; Nora Siggins; Al Smithson; Terri Sonoda; Marina Sparks; Deidre Spruce; Michael

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*Pledge Club Members are a very strong and important part of our donation program. We are very much aware of all that you do. FOC staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and, of course, our kitties all extend sincere thanks for your generosity:* Rob Abrom; Elaine Barrett; Cecilia Berg; Barbara Blanchard; Karen Borden; David A. Bower; Terry Carpenter; Barbara Cefalu; Robert Clay; Heather Coate; Kathleen Coe; Carol Culkin; Suzzy Davis; Chris Degurse; Martha Evans; Richard & Melinda Fisher; Stephen Foreman; Rita Forshey; Catherine Frazier; Teresa Haas; Carole Harrison; Sue Heim; Helene Hoffman; Christine Hogan; Edward & Gayle Kane; Lynette Kaplan; Johnny & Rose Keene; Mary Kern; Jeannette Landis; Jean Landis; Katherine Lazzaro; Dave & Sally Loucks; Bob Martin; Dolores McPherson; Virginia Miller; Laurie Orange; Eileen & Joe Quarles; Patricia Ray; Sam Shepherd; Charlotte Spahn; Kathryn Stirlen; Kathryn Stirlen; Jan Turner; Julie & Jeff Walker; Jean West; Darlene Whorley

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### Donations in Memory of the Following People:

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# A Word About Friends of Cats

**FRIENDS OF CATS** is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to providing shelter and medical care for homeless cats. Once their health is assured, we find homes for as many of them as we can. The cats in our care are never euthanized except as a matter of compassion if they are terminally ill. We depend primarily on membership fees, donations and bequests to continue our work. Inquiries are welcome and we are always eager for new members. If you would like to join us or to make a tax-deductible contribution, please use the coupon at right. When you become a member of Friends of Cats, you will receive each issue of our newsletter *Cat Tales*.

### Shelter Location

15587 Olde Highway 80  
El Cajon, CA 92021  
619-561-0361

### Hours

Tues-Sun 10am-4pm  
Closed Monday

### Mailing Address

P.O.Box 1613  
Lakeside, CA 92040  
E-mail: [info@friendsofcats.org](mailto:info@friendsofcats.org)  
[www.friendsofcats.org](http://www.friendsofcats.org)

## Membership Coupon

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Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

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### Membership Status:

- |                                           |                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth: \$5       | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting: \$100   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior: \$10     | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting +: \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular: \$25    | <input type="checkbox"/> Life: \$1,000       |
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Contribution (non-membership): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pledge Club: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month for a minimum of one year.

**Mail to: Friends of Cats, P.O. Box 1613, Lakeside, CA 92040**

Membership does not guarantee acceptance of a cat by our shelter. Please call for details: 619-561-0361

Editor/Designer: Lydia D'moch

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