

PAWPRINTS

The Newsletter of the Lethbridge PAW Society

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Friendship is Not Always the Goal

All of the cats the PAW Society rescues go into foster-homes, pending their adoptions. Since we can never be certain of when these adoptions will occur - or if they will - the great majority of the cats will be integrated into the population of cats already in the foster-home. There are a few exceptions, for those with behavioural or medical issues that make isolation necessary. These cases are, however, rare.

Therefore, almost all of PAW's foster-cats must meet at least some of PAW's other foster-cats. Because of the very limited number of foster-homes, the new in-take often must integrate into a relatively large population.

This article is not so much about how to integrate a cat. That subject requires at the very least an article of its own; to be fair, it should be given a series of them, or perhaps a book.

But it is important to understand what the goal of integration is, as much as how to arrive at it. Many might assume that success depends upon the new cat becoming friends with all of those already present. This is certainly an ideal, but it is hardly realistic.

Time and again, the Society receives calls from the

public wanting us to take in a stray cat who has been found. Sometimes the reason the caller cannot herself foster the cat cites hostility between the new cat and the resident feline. 'They hiss', is a phrase that is often heard, or 'they don't get along'.



Older cats will often let youngsters get away with what would not be tolerated in others.

This reaction by the established cat is perfectly natural. Consider the human equivalent. A person comes home to find that his spouse has invited a stranger to live with them. The returning family member has not been consulted in the matter. Rather, he finds this stranger sitting in his chair, watching his television, reading his books and even eating his food. Furthermore, the stranger smells funny and there is no indication that he will be leaving any time soon. This is pretty much the scene that confronts a resident cat when a new foster is introduced.

It's true that, due to methods of integration, the new arrival is frequently not seen or permitted to mingle with the others right away. But this does not lessen the effect on the established felines.

Integration can be of a short term or a long duration, depending largely on the cats involved. But, if successful - and this usually involves a sizeable portion of luck - all the cats will eventually be able to live together.

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Sometimes real friendships develop between cats who were initially strangers.

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Friendship is Not Always the Goal *(continued)*



Hissing isn't the end of peaceful co-existence...



...even when two cats think so.

This is where the point of this article is seen: the cats don't have to like each other to live together. Friendship, comradeship, companionship; these are very desirable goals, but if the results fall short of these, the integration is not then a failure. The goal is, really, peaceful co-existence.

As a concrete example, we may take one of PAW's foster-homes which has, we will estimate, six cats. Within that household, there are three felines who get along very well ('the gang'). Of different ages and backgrounds, they nonetheless are friends. They often play together, one chasing a second, then that second wrestling with the third, then all four venturing into a room the door of which has been opened after being closed.

Another cat is a loner who prefers her human's company to any cat's. She dislikes one of the gang, tolerates another member and sometimes plays with the third. But there is much hissing, even so.

A fifth cat, has some animosity toward all the others,

yet the degree of feelings varies from one cat to another. Nevertheless, this cat usually stays in the comfort of a bedroom to which other cats come and go. There is, again, much hissing, and even some whapping of paws.

The sixth cat remains in isolation most of the time, though the others are sometimes allowed into her sanctuary. But her integration is on-going.

As one may see, only in the gang is there the ideal result of friendship. There will likely never be more than tolerance from the fourth, and from the fifth, not even that. It is hoped to find her a home as an only-cat. Yet, even she can live among the others. During the day, the foster-guardian is at work, and all the cats but the one still undergoing integration associate freely. There is little love, but there is community. There is peaceful co-existence.

Hissing from cats when they meet for the first time is natural and expected. It might be suspicious if it were not heard at all. It may disappear with familiarity, or it may continue. But hissing, growling, even physical altercations are not signs of a failed integration. One must always be vigilant until one is certain, but even the closest families argue now and then.

Cats, like humans, are sometimes forced to live in close quarters. And like humans in such situations, cats normally find a modus vivendi by which to live. And the one they usually find is peaceful co-existence.



More adoptions coming!
Read about them in next month's PAWPrints!

The New PAW Calendar Arrives Soon

The new 2026 PAW calendar will soon be available for the public to purchase. Though its debut will be a week or two later than has been usual for the Society's calendar, we think it will be worth the wait.

The calendar is traditionally ready for buying at our annual book sale. That event this year was, however, quite a bit earlier than is normal. Therefore, the first event at which you will see the calendar is our bake sale, on November 21st, at Centre Village Mall.

But we want plenty of the calendars sold by then! So they will be on offer at four locations around Lethbridge: **Highlands Pet Hospital** (2550 Highlands Road West); the **Jasmine Tea Room** (1112, 6th Avenue South); **Cupper's Coffee and Tea** (1502c, 3rd Avenue South) and **Analog Books** (322, 6th Street South).

The calendar costs \$15 per copy, and is extensively illustrated with photos of PAW cats who have found their permanent and loving homes. The superb pictures are, as in past calendars, courtesy of Photography by Tanya Plonka.

The theme this year? Well, if you've ever wondered what businesses cats might set up if they were commercially minded, you will be able to get an idea by consulting the PAW Society Feline Business Directory (ie. the 2026 calendar).

Calendar updates will be found in upcoming issues of *PAWPrints* or on the Society's Facebook page.



...And the New PAW Website, too



The new PAW website will be operational the first week of September.

The site is found at the address **pawsociety.ca**, rather than **pawsociety.com** (note the change in suffix). The look is very different than the old site, and the site will contain some new features. One of the advantages is that the site is much more compatible with cell phones; useful as many people these days use their phones to search the internet.

Though the site will be running, there will be continual work done on it, updating adoptions and adoptable cats, adding or refining features. The site is run on a different management system than the former site; the PAW volunteers will be in some ways learning as they go.

Great thanks go to Audrey Audette, co-founder and treasurer of the Society, for her hard work in the site's creation. It would not have been accomplished without her.

If you would like to inquire about being a foster-guardian for a rescued cat, contact us at 403-328-6700 or email pawsociety@shaw.ca.

Editorial: The New Website

The PAW Society's new website is up and running. It can be found at pawsociety.ca (though the old address of pawsociety.com will send you to the new one, anyway.)

These days, a website for any organization that deals extensively with the public is a necessity. It's rather like a business location, a shop that people can visit to see merchandise and gain information. PAW no longer has merchandise available, and we certainly don't think of the cats ready for adoption as merchandise, but they take the place of such items for a rescue-group. The website is the principal venue by which our cats may be seen.

One of the reasons behind the move to the site is the decay of the old. It was not behaving properly, freezing up and preventing us from updating information. There was little progress to be seen in the adoption or in-take of cats because we were not able to make any changes.

This is more than a mere matter of convenience. I think that having a stagnant website might have made people believe that PAW itself is stagnant. While it's true that adoptions have been slow over the past few months and, while they appear to be likewise with a large number of rescue-groups, it may be that the few changes to the website - due to the inability to effect them - could have convinced the public that PAW itself is stagnant.

That is, fortunately, not the case.

Now that we can once again change, add and remove items from the website, it will be more current, a source not just of information but of news.

The new website will not only be easier to navigate than the old, but will have some new features. And it will be easier for those managing it to work with, as well. Now, there will be a period of adjustment on the operators' part, since the management system is different than the old one. But this will show that PAW is still a going concern.

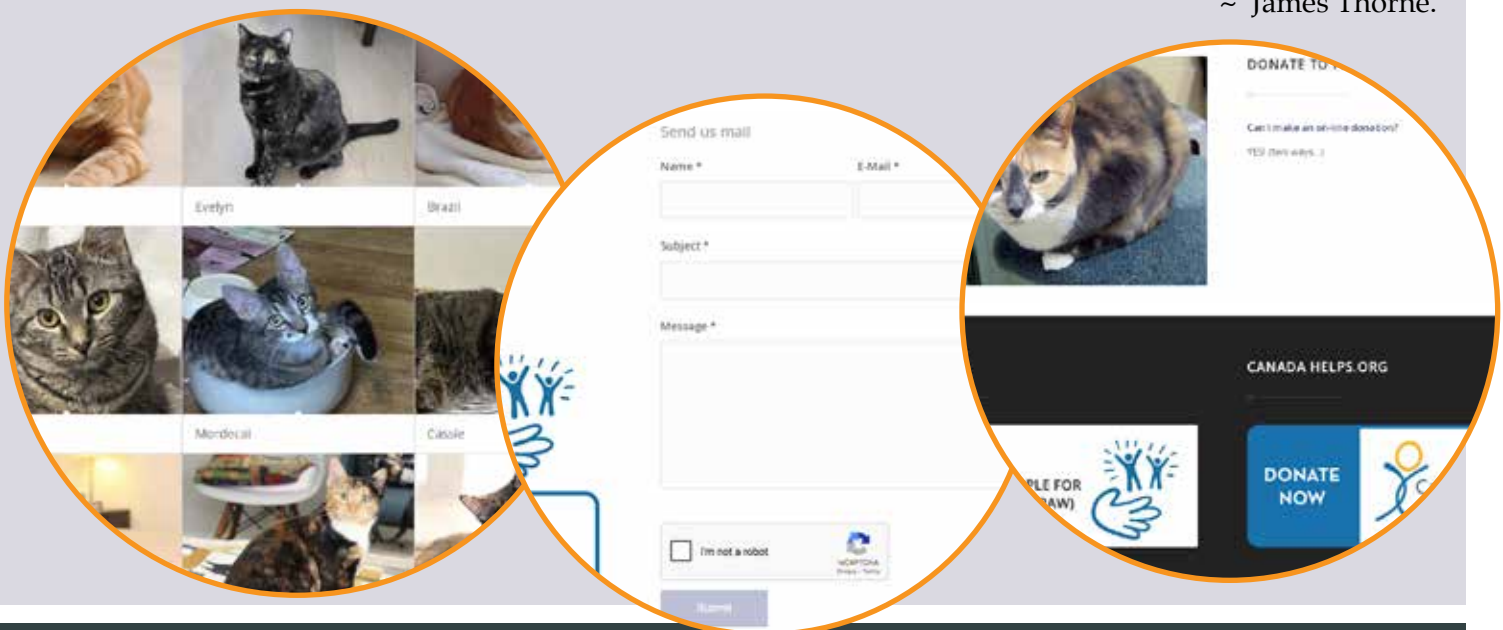
I personally like the look of the new website. I would say that it brings PAW's internet connection into the twenty-first century, but pretty much every internet connection is twenty-first century. Let's say, then, that we are now into that century's third decade.

It has a clean, orderly appearance, and gives an indication at first glance of PAW's purpose, while allowing access to all 'departments' of the site.

I would like to laud the work of Audrey Audette, the Society's co-founder and treasurer, whose decision it was to improve the website, and who worked with the designer. This work was not easy to maintain, since half-way through the re-construction, she broke her wrist. This necessarily meant, if not a delay, than a temporary deceleration in the progress.

But the work is done now, and the website is up and running. On behalf of PAW, I'd like to invite you to take a look. I think you'll be both impressed and pleased.

~ James Thorne.



Editor's Note: the staff of PAWPrints welcomes all comments regarding this and past issues, and suggestions for the benefit of future issues.