

February 15, 2003 Issue

Cat Tales



As I sat down at my computer keyboard to write this issue of the web-e-zine, I began to think of my experiences living with cats. My intent was to include a wee bit of information in my column, and then use the body of the newsletter to relate the painting process that goes along with the subject. As is common, when you have cats, the whole thing got out of hand. These following experiences are just the "tip of the iceberg", as it were, of the whole feline agenda. Yes, I love to do portraits of cats. I adore catching them in repose; actively pursuing a wind-up toy; or primping their lovely appearance. Sometimes they are at their best when looking out of a window, fully alert, wide eyed and poised.

I have discovered that cat lovers love all cats. Although they may be partial to a particular breed, or even a favorite color, feline folks will enjoy the "full menu". So too, I, when I begin to paint these elusive creatures, look for any and all the traits that I admire, and convey that in pastel on paper for cat enthusiasts everywhere.

Next Issue: The Industrial Landscape

Cats, of course, are smart, crafty, loveable and maddening. They woo their way into your good graces, and reject you just when you want to show them off to your new neighbor. They complain, pout and lie. "Feed me!" they will demand. "I haven't eaten in three days!", (And you just opened a can of food this morning.) They will rule the home as any foreign monarch. The instant some smelly old dog sets foot on the front step, however, they will scat for the nearest dark, high place and glare in silence as you try to explain that the dog was at the wrong door, and you were helping the kid from down the street to round him up. Never mind the coaxing. His (her) majesty will treat you like a stranger for the rest of the day. They will stalk around from room to room, their noses drawn back in disgust as if the invading canine had marked every nook and cranny of their domain.

"They will stalk around from room to room, their noses drawn back in disgust..."

If you have ever lived with a cat, you know how cunning they can be. Suppose it is time to leave for a quick trip to the grocery store. (In this case, the food is for humans, and cat food is definitely not on the list.) You want to put the cat out and set the security alarm. (As soon as you leave, your precious pet will gallop throughout the house setting off every motion sensor in the entire building. I believe they can actually open doors and pull down ladders to the attic!) So you try to locate Puss. Now, usually a ball with a bell inside sends them into ecstasy, drawing them from their hiding places. No response. Ah! The hum of the can opener works every time. Still, the cat remains in hiding. Not so much as a tiny squeak can be heard. You search all the last

known hiding places, even some that they haven't discovered yet. So, you give up, bypass all the inside sensors and do your shopping. When you return three hours later, you are greeted with a smug grin accompanied by a whiney "Well, what did you get for me?"

Cats are certainly loveable. There is no one who would deny that they have their own habit of meticulous cleanliness. When a feline brushes its magnificent silky fur coat against your arm or leg, and looks beguilingly into your eyes, you find it nearly impossible to remember the quirks and tantrums so recently displayed. When you have settled into your favorite chair with a good novel; when you sit down at the computer keyboard to catch up on the e-mail; when you relax with a long anticipated bowl of your favorite of the 32 flavors; guess who is there to cuddle! Guess who wants to put its nose a quarter of an inch from yours and persistently remind you how very faithful and adorable it is! Who is it that purrs loudly in your ear as the "greatest television movie ever made" reaches a romantic hush?

"...guess who is there to cuddle!"

I have heard stories of heroic cats, that have saved their families from harm or certain death. I believe them. I have heard of cats that found their way home over hundreds of miles. That too is believable. I am privileged to have been favored by cats who chose me and my family to be their own. In return, I guess the only thing I can offer an independent creature like a cat, is a whole lot of love and the required amount of attention. Then I can sit back and enjoy the complexity that is the cat.

Carol Thompson

Featured Artwork

Cat Nap



"On a lazy summer afternoon the time is perfect (as is any time) for a 'cat nap'. But note! One eye is almost open and the ears are always alert."

Sitting Pretty



"I've been a good kitty. How can you tell it's true? Because I'm 'sitting pretty' to melt the heart of you."

Joey



"Joey is a Yorkshire Terrier. He thinks he's a kangaroo. He thinks he's a dancer. He thinks he's a torpedo. He thinks he's a marathon runner. He thinks he's very, very smart! He is! He is all that and more."