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From the Director:

Dear Friends~~~

AWAN reaches out to our supporters by mail only twice a year. We never sell or share your names. You have been generous and wonderfully warm. We're in our 21st year of alleviating the suffering of animals, and YOU have made that possible. Please know how grateful we are! Please let yourself feel proud.

For each newsletter I write an introduction and try to let our friends know, from my heart, what this work means. I try to keep the tone up-beat and never burden you with detailed accounts of the misery and cruelty groups like ours attempt to counter. Because you are sensitive, caring and informed, you already know more than one should have to about the suffering of animals.

Perhaps it's the season, this longing for the solstice to usher back the light, that impels me to share some darker thoughts this year. It seems that almost every AWAN call I take includes a phrase like, 'my husband / child / wife/ parent has cancer;' 'we have to move and I can't find a place we can afford that permits pets;' 'he / she / I lost a job and the health insurance that went with it;' 'my cat / dog / parrot / rabbit needs treatment and I've just filed for bankruptcy;' 'there's an injured cat with kittens in the barn and I can't catch them.' It's getting to me. I wish I could fix everyone's life.



My heart breaks with the pain and with my inability to do more. Well, there is no shortage of suffering; and there appears to be no end to it in this life, either. Nothing new.

That said, I rejoice in the efforts of all who at least try to alleviate suffering where they can. Here's the deal I offer: if you help AWAN, AWAN will carry on helping animals. We'll support feral colonies. We'll help with vet bills. We'll pay for as much spay and neuter as we can. We will do our best to connect guardians with what their companions need as long as we possibly can. Thank you. Have courage. Take good care of yourself as well as those who look to you for their protection.
Helen Mendoza



AWAN THANKS BRILLIANT ARTIST, DIANA BRYAN, FOR DONATING OUR FABULOUS LOGO! CHECK HER SITE FOR SOME AMAZING TREATS

Diana Bryan is an internationally published award-winning artist whose cut paper illustration has appeared in many publications including Ms. Magazine, the N.Y.Times, Rolling Stone, Connoisseur and many others. Her art has also been exhibited in museums and galleries as giclee prints and laser cut steel sculpture including the Smithsonian Museum. She also translates her art into animation and murals. She lives in Saugerties, N.Y. with Bob and many cats where her sculpture can be seen in a large barn-like studio. She works with many environmental and animal rescue groups. Her web page is www.dianabryan.com.



SOMBER YEAR'S END REFLECTIONS

It is not so much that 2009 has been a dark year, but that it has been a darkening one, leading naturally to foreboding with respect to the one(s) to come.

The imperative, then, would seem to be one of opening more boldly to the interior luminosity so as better to become an unselfconscious source of illumination to a dimming world.

With the expectation that many others also will be so doing, that, perhaps, is the hope we can believe in.

Let's celebrate!
Anon.

WILLOW UP IN A TREE:

One day I returned from doing errands to find my much loved 13 year old, indoor, cat no where to be found. Apparently, Willow had found a hole in a screen, enlarged it, and ventured out to chase who knows what. Following the game, a more threatening who knows what probably chased her high up a 60 foot tree and when I heard her calling me from up above, she clearly wanted my help in getting her down. My first attempt, with an 8 foot ladder was far too short. So, I called my handyman who tried, but was taken aback by her out of reach height, and terrified hissing. He yelled to me that he would shake the branch so she would fall or jump to a lower one. She did but it was a long, hard fall.

When I got her inside on my lap, she passed out. Our vet said she was severely injured with small chance of recovery. He advised that she might be better put out of her misery versus trying with little assurance, at a cost of over \$1,000. I just couldn't give up on her without giving her a chance to survive. So, after the initial \$1000, plus additional expenses, including weeks of IV fluids, Willow is now fine and happy. The vet said it was little short of a miracle.

I've since learned that AWAN found a nationwide organization of arborists specializing in rescuing cats from trees. It's too late for me, however, I'm pleased to pass along the name of this treasury of cat loving tree climbers. Keep it on file. You never know when your best efforts just fail to keep your cat safe. Jill

CAT CAN'T GET DOWN FROM TREE? DON'T PANIC. HERE'S HELP:

The Cat in the Hat is a funny children's story, but a cat in a tree can be a frightening tale that features frantic humans and a petrified feline. Perhaps, situations like this have been brought to your attention and you were not sure where to refer people for help. While most cats will come down on their own, when one won't, here are the resources to turn to.

Limber Tree Services has several experienced climbers on staff and is your local resource for cat rescues within eastern Ulster County. If any of your clients, patrons, friends, or any other cat owners finds themselves in need of this service, have them call us and we will be there.

Contact your friends at our site <http://www.CatInATreeRescue.com>. It is a web site recently set up by a fellow arborist for people who have a cat stuck in a tree and are looking for a professional climber to help them get it down. Limber Tree Services is listed on this web site as are other climbers around the country.

In Eastern Ulster Co., NY

call: 845 594 5033

Save this and pass it on!

Beverly Hills, LA Councils Ban Declawing of Cats

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Two Southern California cities have voted to ban the declawing of cats, joining San Francisco and Santa Monica which recently outlawed the practice. The Beverly Hills City Council voted 5-0 Tuesday night to approve a declawing ban, except in cases of medical necessity. The Los Angeles City Council also gave final approval to a similar ordinance Tuesday. Officials in both cities say they wanted to pass the ordinance so it can take effect before New Year's Day 2010, when a state law bars cities and counties from regulating the practice of veterinary medicine. The California Veterinary Medical Association opposed the declawing ban, saying pet owners should be responsible for declawing decisions in consultation with their vets. The city of West Hollywood outlawed declawing in 2003.

IT CAN AND SHOULD BE DONE

Warmest Thanks, Dr. Leighton

Dr Leighton of South Peak Animal Hospital in Woodstock is still, after so many years, donating a free spay for AWAN cats each week. He and his excellent staff know the problem and are part of the solution. THANKS!!!

Dear AWAN,

Thank you for helping me get my teeth taken care of. The vet told my mom that if my teeth weren't cleaned soon, I could lose some. I'm very happy to say that my pearly whites are now sparkling, and the vet said that everything in my mouth will be fine. I'm getting to be an old guy, and this makes me very happy! A special thank you to Helen for being such a caring & helpful human.
Meow & Purr, Bebop



CELEBRITY CAT FLASH

<Beverly Hills, CA.>

...New York City... The latest MEOW is from trendy Manhattan eatery CATZ's DELI. Spotted there: Hollywood feline darlings CHESSY and JAQUI who were munching a little chopped mouse liver with some pusstrami on rye. The pair was overheard discussing a very tasty tidbit about Chessy's current project-in-production with ACATAMY AWARD winning director MARTIN PAWSESE. Quotes Chessy: "I love working with Marty because he really knows how to think outside the litter box". Jaqui gushed about her leading man: "I've seen some of the rushes and Chessy looks really handsome – just like CLAWED RAINS in CATSABLANCA!"

When interviewed, the starry-eyed kitties were willing to list some of their all-time film favorites for the fans. Jaqui purred "We enjoy the great cinematic masterpieces like BEN FUR, CITIZEN MAINE COON, WHISKERING HEIGHTS and RAGING BULLDOG". Chessy added "The best are exciting movies like FERAL ATTRACTION, also 70s horror classic CARRIER not to mention Alfred Hitchcock's TO SCRATCH A THIEF. We always look for certain actors such as KITTY CARLISLE, LAUREN CATCALL and anything with the MANX BROTHERS".

A few more choice pics from their list:
TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD (documentary)
CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF (action-adventure)
DANCES WITH WOLVES (musical)
THE DEER HUNTER (thriller)
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW (crime drama)
ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (suspense)
THE CAT PEOPLE (sci-fi)
WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT? (mystery)
FRITZ THE CAT (foreign)
WAG THE DOG (comedy)
DUCK SOUP (culinary classic)
THE PINK PANTHER (technicolor extravaganza)
BRINGING UP BABY (very talented leopard!)
SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (pre-sound epic)
OCTOPUSSY (everyone loves BOND!)

LATEST WORD: Chessy and Jaqui, who both had key roles in last year's ALLEY CAT MILLIONAIRE and the remake of THE FAST AND THE FURRIEST, will soon be returning to Tinseltown to cement their paw prints on the CATWALK OF FAME – at a choice spot right near GROWLMAN's SIAMESE THEATRE!

'Til next feeding time...keep your paws clean and don't stop purring, kittens!

The difference
between
saints and sinners is
that
sinners can be
forgiven.

Old Possum



PETS AND SECOND HAND SMOKE:

Here's one of those bits of info we sort of knew all along but, perhaps, never put into words. Second hand smoke can cause all sorts of health problems for any animals exposed to it. It's not much good for human animals, either, especially the young ones. If you still smoke, don't expose others. Remember: Many toxins remain in fabric and on surfaces. It's not just the air that is dangerous to others. Hope you'll clean up. [I've sworn to a couple friends who still smoke that I'll never remind them how much I would like them to give it up. So that's it.]

ADOPTING A DOG:

After all these years of doing this work why is it no one has ever called to ask if we can direct them to tough breed of dog in need of a home? You may already know that the shelters are jammed full of pitts, rotties, dobies, shepherds and mixes of the same. Every year such dogs are abandoned, tortured, surrendered, warehoused, and euthanized by the millions. Greedy, unscrupulous, unregulated breeders have flooded the country with dogs with physical and emotional problems that make them largely unsuitable as family companions. Those who could successfully join a family are tarred with the same brush as those bred for fighting or 'protecting' people engaged in illegal professions. Home insurance can be impossible to buy. Neighbors object. And... accidents really can happen.

While those breeders wait for their slot in an inner circle of hell to open up, every effort should be made to shut them down by [almost] any means possible. If you are able to share your home with one of these 'difficult' breeds, you will have no trouble locating a vast selection. Be sure to have the dog evaluated by a compassionate, experienced canine behavior expert. Consider hiring a trainer to accompany you. You wouldn't buy a used car without having an expert evaluate it, would you? You're no victim. Blessings on you!

If you are looking for a smaller dog or a specific breed, here are tips. You aren't likely to find a small dog at your local shelter. Rather, call area vet offices to ask about dogs being surrendered. You'll generally get medical records along with the pet. On line there are two good ways to look. Go to petfinder.com and search the postings. If you favor a specific breed, search on line for the organization devoted to that breed. Almost all have a section for adoptions of animals being surrendered. Often the group actually screens both adopters and owners, cutting down your chance of making an unfortunate choice. Sad to say, I've been hearing negative things lately about Craig's List as a place for connecting with animals.

Meet the dog before agreeing to adopt. Be sure you get up-to-date vet records. Make sure your agreement is clear as to returning the dog if there is a problem. A good rescue group will give you a serious 3rd Degree. Welcome it! This means they really care about making a solid, loving placement.

Remember: spay or neuter any dog or cat you adopt as soon as age and health permit. Rescued animals are THE BEST. If you adopt a rescue, you are helping reduce the number of animals killed every year. Donate your money to your local rescue group or shelter rather than paying it to some breeder. SAVE LIVES!

FERAL BEAUTY

Historically, many of the most maligned and misunderstood animals are the animals who human beings have not been able to successfully control or exploit. Cats are among these animals who have long been the target of superstition, misinformation, contempt and myth. Cats became a domesticated species some 10,000 years ago, but they retained some of the key traits of their wilder ancestors. These traits are more pronounced in domestic cats who are not well socialized to humans - the ones we call feral cats.

A feral cat is not a wild cat. A bobcat or lynx is a wild cat. Feral cats are domestic cats just like our companion animal pets, except that feral cats are, to varying degrees, untamed. They are cats who have a strong fear of humans and cannot be easily handled. They are elusive and will often flee or hide when approached. Some are former house cats who were abandoned or lost, and who over time have become afraid of people. Others are cats born into feral colonies who have had little or no contact with people and therefore have a natural fear of them. Feral cats are neither tame nor wild. They are the innocent casualties of human negligence caught in a limbo place between two worlds - for which humans alone are responsible.

As is nature's way, feral cats have made the best of a bad situation in adapting to the circumstances they've inherited. Exiled to the fringes of neighborhoods and communities and often labeled as a "nuisance animal", these cats are among some of the most sensitive, intelligent, resilient, hardy, resourceful and loving felines. While they might not be social towards people, they share very deep bonds with each other and have strong connections to their colonies. Sometimes referred to as "homeless cats", feral cats actually have a profound sense of home. Their home is each other and the territories where they live.

A subject of argument surrounding these animals is the belief that feral cats are responsible for killing off large percentages of birds and smaller wildlife species. Cats are carnivores and they do hunt, but statistics indicate (resources listed below) that the primary cause of dwindling numbers of birds and wildlife species is the result of a loss of habitat created by people, not cats. Also, truly feral cats are not recreational hunters. Recreational hunting is specific to human beings and the companion animals who live with us. Animals who need to hunt to eat, or who must manage their energy to survive the elements and protect themselves from predators, do not have the luxury of expending energy necessary for survival on

hunting for fun. Feral cats who are being fed by people may sometimes be the exception to this may older feral kittens playing at learning how to hunt. Still these cats are still less likely to do much "play-hunting" if their biological focus is on managing energy to survive.

The greatest conflict that people have with feral cats is overpopulation, which can happen very quickly when cats are not spayed or neutered. This problem is not the fault of the cats - they can't help that they reproduce. It is also not the fault of people who find themselves with feral cats showing up on their property and don't have the resources to spay/neuter. An unsplayed female cat can have two litters (sometimes 3) of kittens in the course of a year. Each litter has approximately 3-5 kittens but sometimes as many as 7. Kittens are born in the spring, summer and fall. For the average person who may happen to find a feral mother cat and kittens under the porch, it is no simple task to have all the cats spayed/neutered, let alone socializing them and placing them in adoptive homes, if that is even an option. Even the most devoted animal loving folks rarely have access to the kind of funding and consistent resources (time, money, have-a-heart traps, shelter) needed to address a feral overpopulation without the help of animal rescuers or spay/neuter assistance organizations.

Feral cats are not really candidates for rescue and relocation, unless they are in crisis, because the shelter system is not the most compassionate option for them. According to Alley Cat Allies, cats entering into traditional shelter systems have only three possible outcomes: being adopted, reunited with their human family, or euthanized. Feral cats are unsocialized to humans and they have no human family to claim them, meaning that the only possible outcome for them there is death.

Those who would lobby for the killing of healthy feral cats to 'eliminate' them altogether should know that wiping out whole populations or large numbers of animals is never an effective solution for any overpopulation. Such cruel and drastic measures are not only inhumane but in fact, only serve to make matters worse, as they create an effect whereby the numbers of the population actually increase, as nature abhors a vacuum.

The only workable solution to reducing feral cat overpopulation is TNR - trap, neuter, release (see article on TNR by Cheryl in the AWAN Newsletter). General information about TNR - how to do it, where to go for assistance and what is involved - is available through animal rescue groups and animal advocacy organizations, a few of

which are listed on the resource links noted at the end of this piece.

Contrary to popular misperceptions, feral cat overpopulation is not caused by a handful of crazy cat people. If it were that simple, it would have been easily resolved by now. It is a magnified consequence of a larger irresponsibility by the human community as a whole, in neglecting those animals who humans made dependent long ago, only to later abandon. There is no quick fix in reducing the numbers of "unwanted cats", just as there is no quick fix in increasing the number of people to care about animals. It is a process. Humane education, spay/neuter, coming together to help with hands on assistance, and simply acknowledging the special relationship we share with these cats in our backyards, offers an opportunity for compassion, connection and coexisting with peace and respect.

Regardless of what our personal opinions about feral cats may be, our greatest resource for helping them and resolving problems related to their overpopulation begins with making an effort to see them more deeply. If we can expand our understanding and include them in the circle of life we value, we will begin to appreciate the true beauty of who they are. I have often wondered if perhaps one of the reasons feral cats are so reviled by people could possibly be because in some unspoken intuitive place, we envy the freedom and independence with which they live their lives, a freedom we have lost. If that is the case, then they are our teachers and we have much to learn.

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye. Men have forgotten this truth but, you must not forget it. You become responsible forever for what you have tamed."
(from "The Little Prince" by Antoine Saint Exupery)

The following links to organizations are among some of the available websites that offer helpful information about feral cats.
Alley Cat Allies www.alleycat.org
The Animal Spirit www.theanimalspirit.com
Cats Unlimited www.catsunlimited.org/feralcats.htm
Feral Cat Project www.feralcatproject.org
Humane Society www.humanesociety.org
Neighborhood Cats www.neighborhoodcats.org

This article was contributed by A.W.A.N. volunteer Big Purr. The opinions expressed in this piece are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of A.W.A.N. or its individual members. For comments or questions Email BigPurrMeows@gmail.com





CHERYL'S STORY

In 2000 I took my cat to be neutered through a local rescue group. While there I saw cats in traps and asked about them. The Trap Neuter Release [TNR] system was explained, also that they needed volunteers. It all made sense! Even though I was working 2 jobs, as I still am, I started working with them.

My initial nervousness disappeared when they trained and supported me and went with me on a few trappings. The first cats I trapped in Highland were scrawny and sickly but I trusted that our work would greatly improve their lives. Cats in the colonies are much healthier now!

The rescuers got a discount from the SPCA. We just paid out of our own pockets. Eventually I connected with AWAN and was authorized to use their account for spays and neuters and vaccinations. With this help I was able to do many more. They also help sometimes with food for the feral colonies.

When the members of a feral colony are neutered, the colony's population stabilizes and gradually reduces. Killing the cats, as some advocate, doesn't ever do that.

Over the years I have met some great folks who are 'hooked' on helping and devote a lot of time to TNR. Some are able to foster and socialize kittens born in the colonies so we can adopt them out to responsible, loving homes. We neuter them when they are old enough. When I checked my records a week ago, I saw that my friends and I have done TNR for 804 cats. Just think what our part of the Hudson Valley area would be if we hadn't.

If you donate to AWAN, you will be helping promote and expand this kind of work making the lives of feral cats so much better. If you would like to participate in TNR, call

679 7849. = ^ .. ^ =

Please and thanks!

A PRESENT FROM YOUR CAT: TROPHY, SNACK OR TRIBUTE ?

It's hard not to feel mortified when your beloved feline pal and bed mate proudly struts up and deposits some mangled little critter which happily scurried or fluttered just minutes

before. First thing to know: this is not behavior which lends itself to change. Bell the cat; don't put up bird feeders if she goes out; plug up mouse entry ports with Brillo pads. Sure. Maybe. Experts differ on the roots of this behavior. I think all are true and depend on the cat and his mood of the moment. You may be seen as the tribe leader, to be honored with a prize from the hunt. In that case your friend may well expect you to give praise and share the snack. More power to you if you can bring that one off with your customary panache. Female cats are thought to bring prey to their humans as if they were kittens in the nest. They hope to train you. I think this may be why they play with the hapless victim: to stun it for easy transport to the young and to keep it alive / fresh for maximum nutrition and for training purposes.

DON'T SCOLD OR PUNISH! In that moment you are dealing with an animal more wild than domesticated. Just do your best to show gratitude and don't make a big deal of disposing of the carcass. You have been honored.

Dogs, on the other paw, generally have no intention of sharing their kill or the lovely soup bone you delivered.

Don't try. If you want to get something away from a dog, bring an irresistible treat or toy, get his attention and interest, and throw it as far as you can before grabbing his prize. I've been told of one Golden Retriever mix who brings field mice to her mom. Well, what can I say? Bailey lives in Westchester.

*** WINTER PAIN ***

Do you feel more body pain as autumn winds down? Does your cat or dog have trouble jumping in the winter? You're not imagining it.

Because the atmospheric pressure that strengthens the natural suction that keeps joints in place is higher in warm months, when the pressure is lower, in winter, joints are not as well oriented.

Winter storms bring low pressure and your and your pet's joints feel a painful tension. So you turn up the thermostat and put on extra layers and nothing really helps. You're not imagining it!



Vaccinations:: Side Not Taken -- Advice Offered

I sort of wish this were the place to open a debate about vaccinations or even offer my personal opinion. For many reasons it is not. Each of you must do the research and make up your own mind. Talk about a can of worms! No way am I opening that one. What I want to offer is a suggestion that you look into a homeopathic remedy, Thuja, to be administered after vaccination. It has a reputation for counteracting harmful side effects while not interfering with the intended effects. Before using this remedy, consult a homeopathic practitioner or visit a couple websites devoted to homeopathy. This will instruct you as to potency, timing and frequency of dosage as well as inform you as to possible detox effects. It is possible that Thuja is effective in reversing conditions caused by vaccinations given years before, conditions which have become chronic and fail to yield to treatment. I give this advice without making any claims for homeopathy in general or Thuja in particular. Check it out if you are interested.

IF THIS SAVES YOU ON DENTAL BILLS, HOW ABOUT SENDING A NICE % TO AWAN?

Especially those of us who reach 'a certain age' or have poor dental habits or just bad luck eventually hear the dentist or oral hygienist declare that our gums have a bunch of pockets, some rather deep. The tooth chart is marked, the number totaled, and a truly jaw-dropping cost estimate is given. Shock, shame, awe, fear, panic, loathing. Yikes! Maybe a second or third mortgage.

Breathe. There's a real chance you can beat this!

Get a good water pick and a pint of oral grade hydrogen peroxide [not the food or industrial grade stuff!~!~!] Buy a bottle of Alkalol [available at Nekos pharmacy on N. Front St. in Kingston] or a mouth wash from the health food store that contains menthol, eucalyptol, oils of mints, etc. Make sure your toothbrush has one of those funny little rubber things. That's all you need. Costs under \$100.

Twice a day, without fail, do this: Fill the water pick's well with half warm water and half 3% peroxide. Really go after your gums and between your teeth. Use

the higher pressure, if that's comfortable. When you have used up that solution, fill the well with warm water and Alkalol or mouth wash. Repeat the cleaning process. Please don't swallow any of this stuff. A couple times a day, massage your gums thoroughly with the rubber tooth brush thing.

Keep this up as best you can until your next dental exam. Don't do less than 2 weeks; a month or more is better. When you begin to get really bored or annoyed, think about the cost estimate for that proposed dental surgery. Think how you will LOVE the dental surgery! Shudder! Your next exam may, if all goes well, be a true revelation. Your dentist may express amazement or suggest that the records of your last exam must have been wrong. In any event, you may suddenly feel yourself to be newly rich and free of impending surgical delights.

Now, that's the point at which I ask you to remember where you learned of the technique. Pen, checkbook, heart filled with gratitude. Please send AWAN a generous tax deductible donation. Thank you. Bless your glowing, pink, healthy gums!

Further note: Here's a way to clean bacteria and other crud out of your mouth safely. Allot 15 minutes for this.

Take about a tablespoon of organic sunflower oil, hold it in your mouth and gently squish it around. Spit out a little if you need to during the 15 minutes. DON'T swallow.

Look at your tongue before and after. You'll be amazed how clean it is. The oil draws all sorts of gunk, visible and otherwise, to itself. You may find that small irritations clear up after a couple treatments. I don't want to make claims here and simply encourage you to think of the possible benefits in getting rid of mouth gunk once in a while. Smile, now. Remember the animals!



Photo credit: © Dion Ogust

Ann M. Martin's The Baby-sitter's Club to be Re-issued and Expanded

Scholastic, the global children's publishing company, will publish an original new novel in the beloved best-selling series The Baby-sitters Club® by acclaimed author Ann M. Martin, "The Summer Before." Scholastic also announced plans to re-issue new paperback editions of the entire original The Baby-sitters Club series starting in April 2010 with "Kristy's Great Idea" and "Claudia and the Phantom Phone Calls."

"The stories about children who discovered a love of reading when they read The Baby-sitters Club are the ones that have had the greatest impact on me as a writer," said author Ann M. Martin. "Writing about these characters and stepping back into the world of Stoneybrook was like having a reunion with old friends -- friends who truly haven't changed a bit. I'm very excited about introducing The Baby-sitters Club to a new generation of readers."

Ann M. Martin is a wonderfully generous, long term AWAN supporter. Many friends have told me how much her books meant to them growing up and that they have passed them on to their own daughters, nieces and young friends. Now these new editions will delight and help form a great new audience. We couldn't be happier for this good news!

About AWAN and How We Beg

This newsletter is reaching you over a month later than we intended. Long story and not very amusing.

I want you to know that we only reach out to our friends for financial help twice a year. Also, we never sell or share our mailing list... EVER. To me it seems abusive to set up good hearted folks who want to help a worthy cause so that they get flooded with mail solicitations.

My home mailbox needs a second story and the AWAN p.o.b. is choked with heart breaking pleas that I can barely endure. We won't do that to you, dear Friends.

When I sent off my first ever check to save a ..what?...fruit bat? snail darter?.. I had no idea how little peace I'd eventually have. The charitable groups don't have to respect the Don't Call lists, either.

You're safe with AWAN. We love you!



Well, Humans ~ ~ ~

Pulling this newsletter together has been quite a job. I hope you enjoy it and find it in your hearts to send us a nice check to help us keep on helping animals.

Now I'm going to have a long nap.
~ ~ ~ *Helen*

PS: Please remember to be kind.
Everyone you meet
is fighting a hard battle,
no matter how it seems.



CAT HAIKUS

The food in my bowl
Is old, and more to the point
Contains no tuna.

So you want to play.
Will I claw at dancing string?
Your ankle is closer.

There's no dignity
In being sick - which is why
I don't tell you where.

Seeking solitude
I am locked in the closet.
For once I need you.

Tiny can, dumped in
Plastic bowl. Presentation,
One star; service: none.

Am I in your way?
You seem to have it
backwards:
This pillow is taken.

Your mouth is moving;
Up and down, emitting noise.
I've lost interest.

The dog wags his tail,
Seeking approval. See mine?
Different message.

My brain: walnut-sized.
Yours: largest among primates.
Yet, who leaves for work?

Most problems can be
Ignored. The more difficult
Ones can be slept through.

My affection is conditional.
Don't stand up,
It's your lap I love.

Cats can't steal the breath
Of children. But if my tail's
Pulled again, I'll learn.

I don't mind being
Teased, any more than you mind
A skin graft or two.

So you call this thing
Your "cat carrier." I call
These my "blades of death."

Toy mice, dancing yarn
Meowing sounds. I'm convinced:
You're an idiot.