

INTERNATIONAL

UK 1.50/CANADA \$2.25
MARCH 1984 \$2.00

CAT FANZINE

*****ALL FOR STATE
560876 DNT 1309A096 841L SAMPLE
TOM DENT COPY
CAT FANCIERS ASSOC INC 03&CH
1309 ALLAIRE AV NJ 07112
ASEBURY PARK
ODC00411

THE WORLD'S MOST WIDELY READ MAGAZINE AND KITTENS

**How to Hold
A Conversation
With Your Cat**

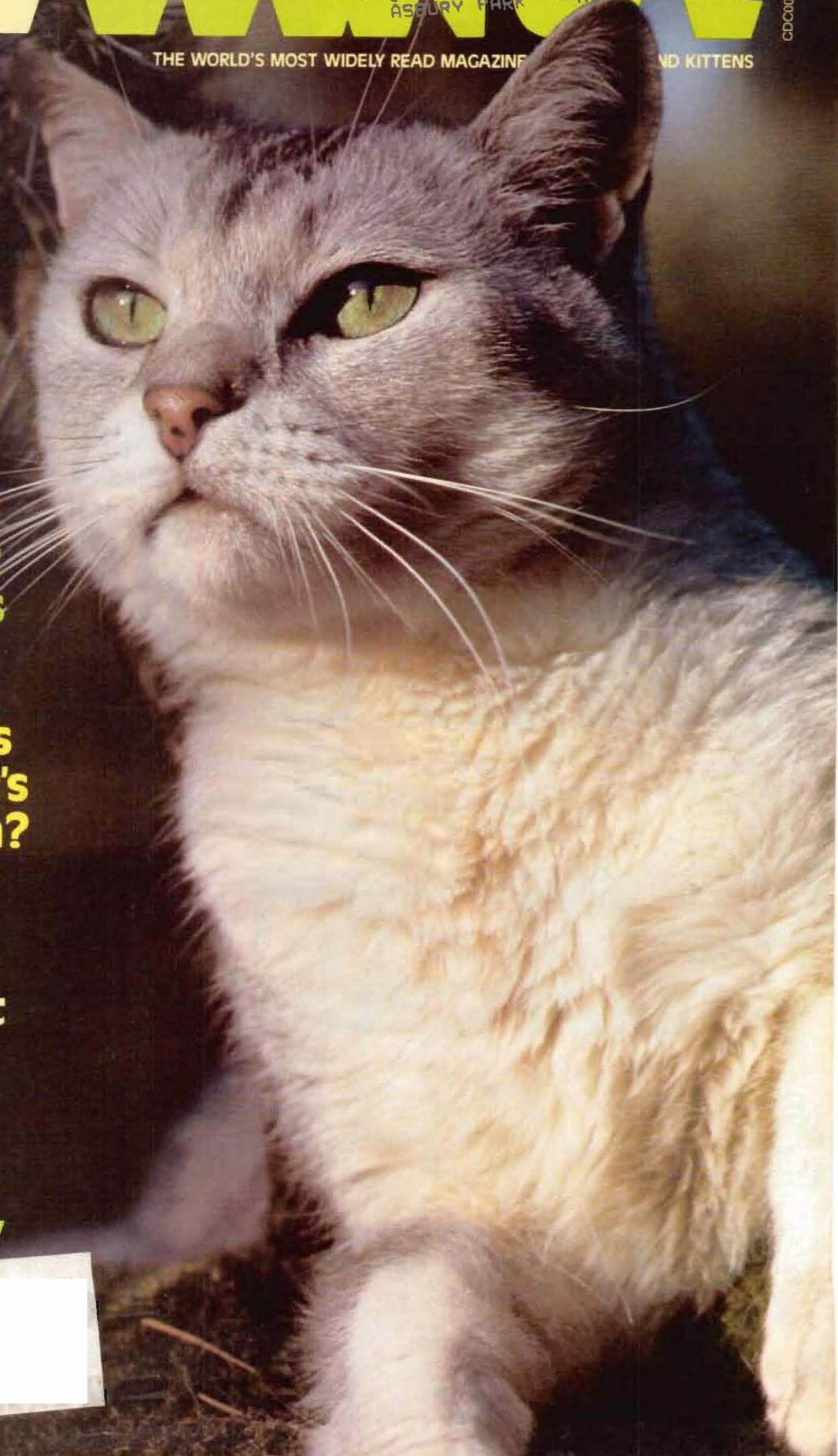
**Why Your Vet
No Longer
Treats Kitty
Like a Dog**

**Cat Scratching:
Readers Report
On Curbing This
Bad Habit**

**Mystery Writers
And Cats: What's
The Connection?**

**Make Your Cat
An Inexpensive
Scratching Post**

**At Nepenthes
Cattery: Abys
Lounge on the
Dock by the Bay**



The Cats of Nepenthes

This spectacular Abyssinian cattery is truly one of a kind.

by Sandi Franklin

WITH A sudden burst of speed, the small, furry creature sprang from its hiding place, darted between the legs of its would-be captors and bounded across the street to yet another alley.

The cat's pursuers, Joan and Alfred Wasthuber, were clearly no match for the swiftness and cunning of this fleet-footed feline. Nor had they fared better against the animal's many "cousins"—the countless strays that inhabited the alleys and streets at the foot of San Francisco's Telegraph Hill.

The Wasthuber's motive for cat-snatching was honorable. They wanted a pet, so why not catch a homeless animal and lavish it with love?

Today, some 15 years later, Joan laughs at their attempts to abduct "one little stray for a pet." As owners of Nepenthes Cattery in Vallejo, California, the couple is now surrounded by cats. Their facilities, designed by Alfred, who owns his own architectural business, have been acclaimed by cat fanciers from all over the world, and their Abyssinian breeding program has produced more grand champions than any cattery in the history of that breed.

Joan looks upon her inability to capture a stray as "a fortunate stroke of failure." After weeks of enticing, cajoling, chasing and grabbing at cats in the street, the couple acted on a suggestion offered by one of Alfred's clients: "Why not check out a cat show for a pet?" There, they saw their first Abyssinian. "It was love at first sight," says Joan.

Before long, the couple was deeply involved in the cat fancy hobby. They entered shows, experienced the exhilaration of success and became increasingly interested in the breeding techniques used to produce top-quality Abyssinians. In 1971, they

purchased their first breeding female and embarked on a program to establish a bloodline of consistent excellence.

To do so, the couple found they needed to remodel their home—and their lives.

"We lived in a penthouse on Telegraph Hill," Joan explains, "and it just wasn't suitable for our expanded number of cats."

With this in mind, the Wasthuber's remodeled property they owned in Vallejo. Located on a private strip of land (a former fishing village), the house and cattery are built on a huge dock extending over the water of San Pablo Bay. The view is magnificent, with the nighttime lights of San Francisco twinkling on the distant shore and the massive outline of Mt. Tamalpais towering above the horizon.

Separate quarters for male and female cats have been designed to allow maximum room for roaming and exercise. "Abys are like lions," says Joan. "They constantly pace about when confined. Alfred and I feel that cages are inappropriate for them."

Their solution was to build what could easily pass as an attractive guest house for the females and kittens. A studio, complete with sofa, hanging plants, bookshelves and soft lighting allows the animals to roam and play in a homelike atmosphere. Individual rooms off the studio are partitioned by ceiling-to-floor wire mesh doors, providing separate wards for imminent maternity cases, nursing queens and kittens, and breeding females during their seasons. There is also a small kitchen for food preparation and a bathroom for the times Joan stays overnight to keep an eye on delivering mothers.

Male quarters, located on the opposite side of the dock, feature individual screened rooms and a view of

the garden and bay. For ease in cleaning, laminated plastic walls and vinyl floors have been installed.

Even though the quarters are spacious, the Wasthubers feel strongly that the animals need a change of environment and should not be confined any longer than necessary. From early morning until dark, they release the males and females in rotating shifts to run free on the dock and boat slip, climb on the pilings or sun themselves alongside the built-in swimming pool.

The daily routine at Nepenthes begins at daybreak when Alfred, an early riser by choice, puts on his "chef's hat."

"My husband doesn't normally do much in our kitchen," Joan says, "but he does love to fix and serve the main meal for the cats."

The morning cuisine includes a mixture of raw beef and lean horsemeat, yogurt, tomato juice (to keep an acid urine), animal fat, vitamins, and a calcium mixture for kittens and pregnant and lactating queens. Occasionally, the chef adds lamb, chicken, roast beef or raw egg yolks for a change of pace.

Joan specifically recommends that pet buyers not use raw beef or horsemeat as she does.

"We buy it in huge quantities from a commercial source equipped to flash-freeze it at temperatures much colder than normally possible," she explains. "This kills the bacteria and parasites that can cause real problems in animals. The average pet owner doesn't have access to meat that's processed in this way."

Lunch and dinner consist of canned cat food with a sprinkling of dried food. Ten minutes after the meals are served, the plates are taken up, "and they're always empty," says Joan. "We've never had any feeding problems or needed to coax our animals →

to eat. They learn early on that if they don't eat it now, they'll have to wait till the next meal."

Joan, who owns her own interior design business in San Francisco, has found the cattery so engrossing that she has cut back her office hours to three days a week. When she does travel to the city, she cleans the male quarters and empties litter pans before going to work. On those days, a woman comes to clean the female quarters, release the cats in shifts and feed them lunch and dinner.

"It's really great," Joan remarks with a smile. "By the time Alfred and I get home, all the chores are done and we can sit back, enjoy the cats and give them the attention they love."

Abyssinians, according to Joan, require very little grooming. Brushing and combing is avoided "because a brush damages the ticking, and a comb flattens the coat and takes out live hair." Once a week she "wet-combs" the animals, stroking them briskly from head to tail with dampened hands. This builds up friction that removes dead hair and leaves the coat with a lustrous sheen.

The Wastlhubers' breeding program is timed to avoid an overlap of litters. This allows more time to keep a close watch on the progress of new kittens and eliminates having to separate older litters from younger ones until vaccinations are complete. Controlled breeding has been easier since one of their grand champion males, *Nepenthes Dubonnet*, was altered. *Dubonnet* lives in the female quarters, and although sterile, has remained active at mating with queens in heat. This takes the queens out of their cycle without breeding having taken place. When breeding is desired, the Wastlhubers isolate the female for the stud of their choice.

"Doobie (*Dubonnet*) is a marvelous animal," Joan says proudly. "He roams about the female quarters like a doting father, watching over the kittens and guarding his territory. He thinks they're all his females, all his kits, and he's absolutely in his glory."

The Wastlhubers have had several show and breeder cats that, because of age, had to be altered. They've kept every one of them.

"Right from the beginning, we thought of our animals as pets, and that hasn't changed," says Joan,

shrugging her shoulders. "When our cats get older and have to be neutered or spayed, we just can't bring ourselves to sell them."

With part of their cat population consisting of altered animals, the Wastlhubers cannot keep kittens of "maybe" quality. An animal must show extraordinary characteristics they wish to incorporate into the *Nepenthes* bloodline before they decide to keep it.

"We simply have to be selective," Joan explains. "Abyss are enormously affectionate and people-oriented. They need a lot of individual love and attention, and if we have too many cats, we can't provide that for them."

When it comes to selling their kittens, pet-quality animals are released for sale no earlier than 12 weeks of age.

"So many people want the younger kittens, just after they've been weaned," Joan laments, shaking her head. "They don't realize that kittens aren't people-oriented at that age, nor have they had their required vaccinations. By 12 weeks, they're stronger, the stress of moving is no problem, and they show no shyness."

She has observed that when kits are first out of the box, they're very friendly with people. By 7 to 8 weeks of age, however, they're interested only in wrestling and cavorting with littermates and are extremely shy around humans. The pendulum swings back to an interest in people around 11 to 12 weeks, and at that time Joan believes they are ready for the adventure of a new home.

To prepare kittens for their new homes, the Wastlhubers begin handling them right from birth with daily weigh-ins and health checks. Once out of the box, they start meeting other cats for brief periods each day, and by 8 to 9 weeks they're allowed to explore a bit of the outdoors and come into the couple's living room for some "people attention."

Breeder-quality kittens are kept until 5 months of age "to be sure the quality is there." Joan believes that selling and buying breeding cats is an exchange of trust—an agreement to preserve and improve upon the breed. Thus, *Nepenthes* never sells to novices, nor parts with kittens until satisfied that the animals are going to a good environment.

"Buyers who want breeder-quality →

Is your cat hooked on grass?



When cats eat grass or indoor plants they may be trying to lubricate their gastrointestinal tract. They feel nauseous and need relief. After all, your philodendron doesn't taste any better to your cat than it would

to you.

Petromalt® is the world's leading remedy for relief of nausea, vomiting, constipation, and hairballs. People who love their cats have used it for years with confidence.

50¢

Save 50¢ on Petromalt

50¢

Mr. Dealer: Please redeem this coupon on one package of Petromalt. We will reimburse you the face value plus 7¢ handling charges for each coupon redeemed in accordance with the conditions of this offer. Offer void where tax

restricted or prohibited by law. Cash value 1/20 of 1¢. Unauthorized reproduction of this coupon is prohibited. Expires Dec. 31, 1984. Mail to St. Jon Pet Care, 24002 Frampton Avenue, Harbor City, CA 90710.

50¢

50¢



Nepenthes Cattery is built on a huge dock extending out over San Pablo Bay. There are separate quarters for the males and females on either side of the main house in the center.

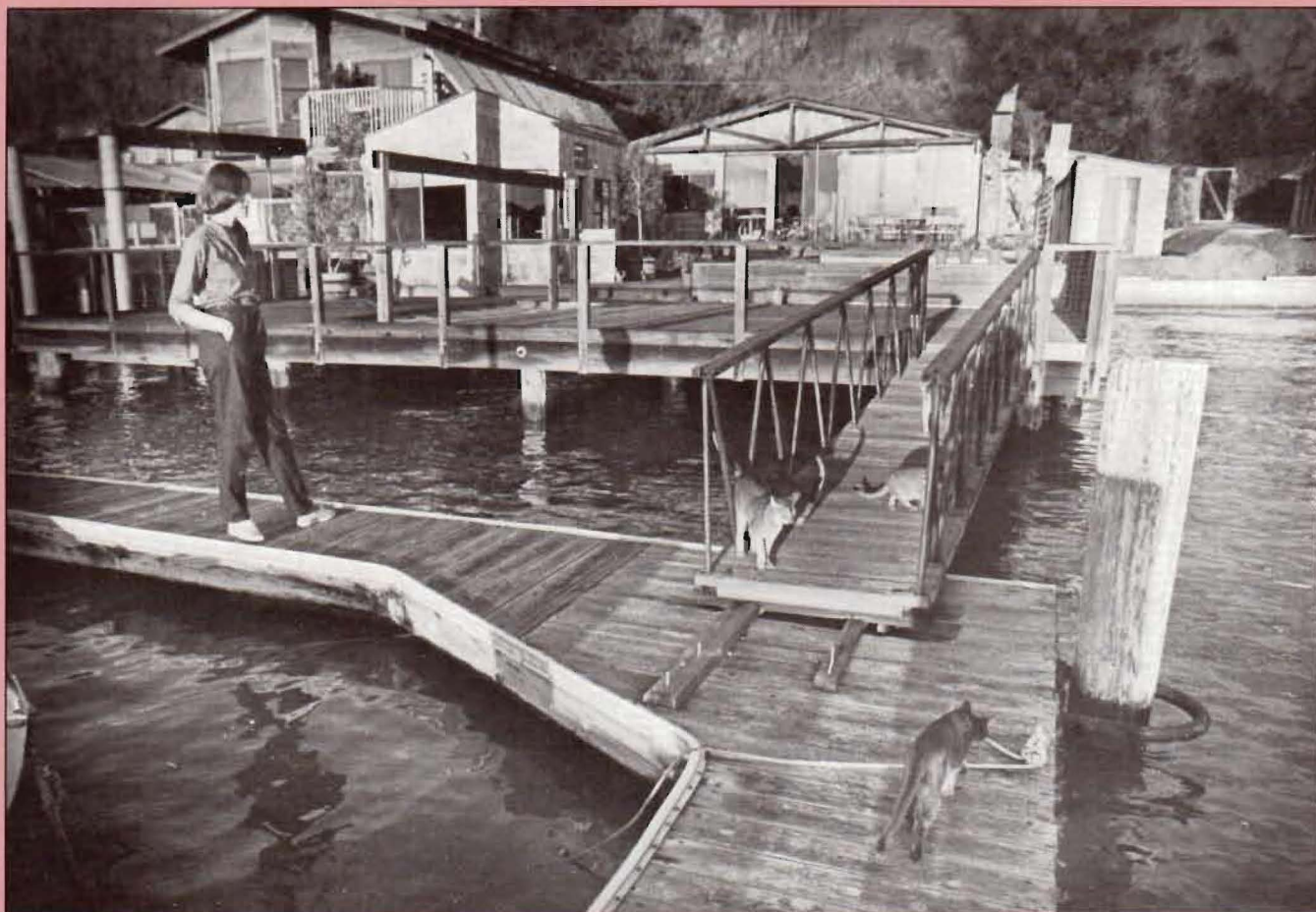


The Abys are not caged, but are kept in spacious, screened apartments, decorated with ribbons the cats have won at shows.



Nepenthes Abys are almost entirely free of respiratory problems, which one vet attributes to the abundance of fresh, moist air off the bay.

ON OVERLEAF: Grand Champion Nepenthes Akime enjoys the sunset. Aki, his call name, was CFA's best Aby and the ninth best cat in the nation in 1980.



Joan Wasthuber doesn't believe that Abys should ever be confined for long periods. Hers are allowed outside to roam the dock for several hours each day.



The Wasthubers limit the number of cats they keep because they believe each Aby needs a certain amount of personal attention, and they need time to provide that.



Nepenthes kittens are not sold until they are 11 or 12 weeks old. According to the Wasthubers' observations, they are not ready until that time to accept a new home.