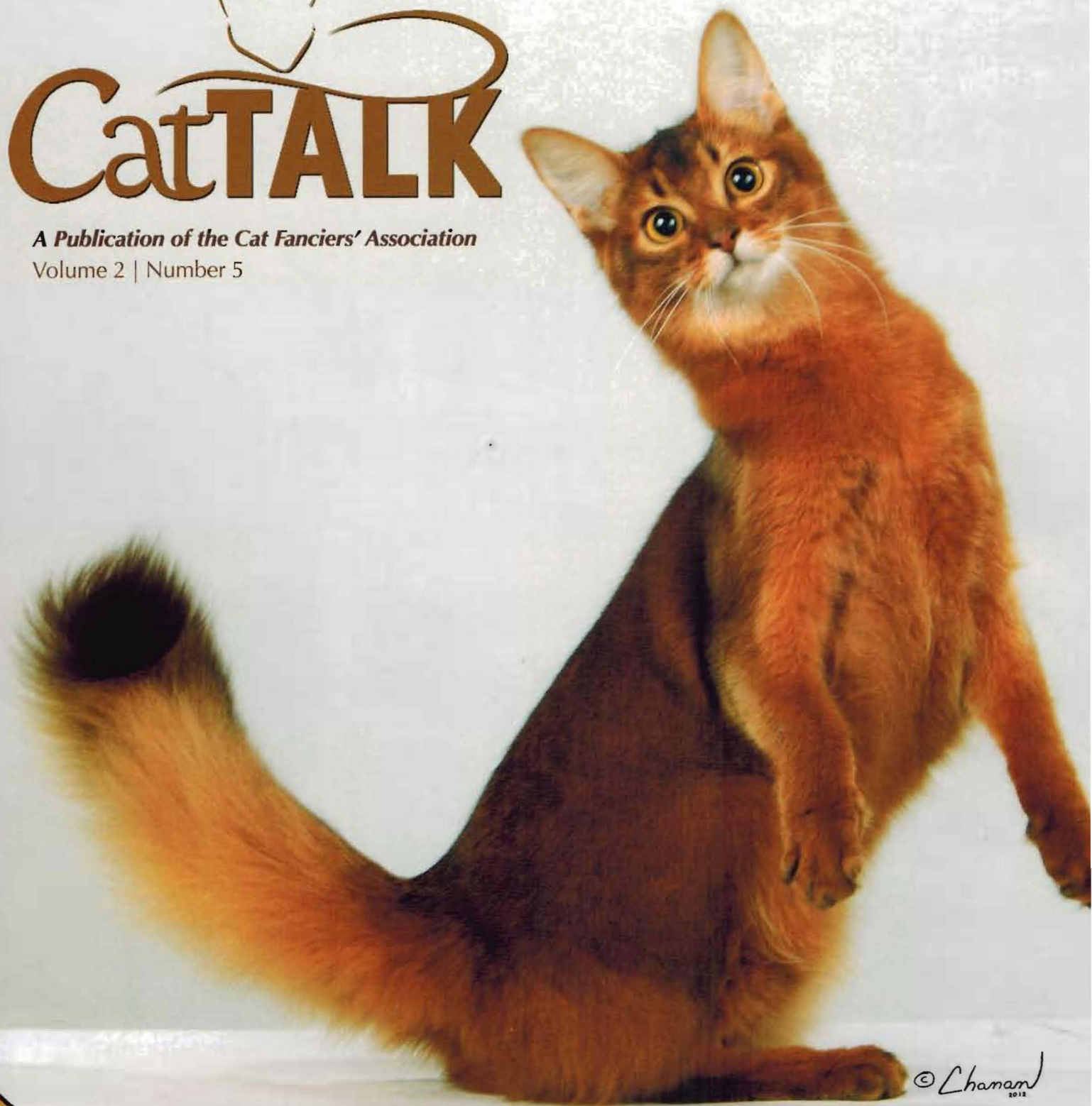


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GC NW Kikapoos Belle of the Bald

The Sphynx is one of the most talked about breeds in the cat fancy. Who would have thought that this breed would have had such an impact on cat lovers around the world and would have gained such popularity that they have been named one of the top 10 favorite cat breeds! They garner attention wherever they go, and the show hall is no exception. CFA accepted them for competition in championship class in February of 2002. Since then, the Sphynx has achieved multiple National and Distinguished Merits Awards, even Cat of the Year!

The curious, sweet nature of the Sphynx has captivated the hearts of many. Those who are merely curious soon succumb to their spell once they lay hands on a Sphynx! People love to touch them, and those that are reluctant to do so immediately are won over by the soft, supple feel of their warm bodies. While the look of the Sphynx may be what draws one's attention, it is their personality that keeps it. Their disposition and companionable nature are a surprise to those who have only seen them on television as scowling, grumpy and scary. That rendition couldn't be further from the truth, as the Sphynx is one of the sweetest and gentlest of any feline breed I have met. It is really no surprise that some Sphynx have had no trouble passing the rigorous criteria and training as Delta Certified Therapy Cats!

Sphynx lovers describe themselves as being owned by the cat instead of visa-versa. "I'm just glad that, when we remodeled our kitchen, I opted for one large sink versus two divided sinks because my two [Sphynx] girls have made it clear that watching the water flow down the drain is a full-time job best served by two!" A companion cat full of mischief and cuddles, they are also intel-

ligent and curiously comical. A true Sphynx lover cannot have just one – most people have two and sometimes a few more.

Reports from pet owners consistently remind breeders how much their lives have been impacted by these little miracles of Mother Nature. "... I'm fairly certain both Paul and I would save the cats in a fire before we'd save each other. ...Love you, Paul. Mean it. Where are the cats?"

The Sphynx received its name because it shares a likeness with the ancient Egyptian Sphinx sculptures. The Sphynx easily engages in a regal pose that can rival most models of the Egyptian version. The simple pose reveals its great strength from the show of rippling muscles that overlay this medium boned feline. The musculature is obviously discernable, as nothing is hidden beneath body hair. "It is just an amazing thing to see" exclaimed a veterinarian in scientific scrutiny, "all the muscles and even blood vessels are right there for you to see – simply fascinating!"

Unlike most breeds of cats with coats, the Sphynx has no protection against the elements. A hairless cat must be protected and, although there is usually a fine chamois-like coat over the skin of the Sphynx (they are required only to have "the appearance" of hairlessness in show), it is not enough to protect the cat in severe weather. Therefore, precautions must be taken to protect this "boutique" feline breed! The pet owner, as well as the breeder, should take caution when allowing a Sphynx time outdoors. Providing a confined area such as a screened porch or an open yard surrounded with a proper cat fence is a good way to let the Sphynx have outside time safely. However, they will sunburn, so visits to the outside must be in shade, or in the early mornings and late afternoons.

According to recorded history, hairless cats in North America have been observed in various parts of the United States and Canada, most notably in the 20th Century. In fact, the hairless genetic mutation has most likely occurred in nature for many years all over the world. But it wasn't until certain breeders decided it was a genetic trait worthy of denotation that the breed began to develop with the help of human intervention and selective breeding. Most of our first

This kitten (two photos) is a 7-week old F-4 from a domestic shorthair. Her head already shows a beautiful ear set, a well-defined, squared muzzle, with sculpted cheek bones and a long tapering tail. Her body is strong, with good boning, and her skin is soft and supple. Her feet are well knuckled, giving the appearance of walking on cushions.



The Mysterious, Magical Sphynx

recorded natural mutations point to those people in North America who began development of the Sphynx as we know it during the last half of the 20th Century. There are other breeds which have been magically produced by Mother Nature from spontaneous mutations, as with the Sphynx. The American Wirehair, the American Curl, and the American Bobtail are several that come to mind. In each of these breeds, cats were selectively chosen with an eye toward type and vigor, and the development of a breed worthy of being recognized as an official show breed.

Because the Sphynx has been developed over a relatively short time period there have been a few glitches along the way, but most are considerably minor issues which are easily worked through with good animal husbandry and programs where diligent pedigree work is a primary focus. The result is a hearty and healthy breed!

A good Sphynx breeder is a serious breeder, with an eye towards genetics and proper outcrossing for hybrid vigor. As with most new breeds, most pedigrees can be traced back to only a handful of cats, and this can create a limited gene pool. For this reason, CFA, and the Sphynx Breed Council, have worked together to allow for an evolving breed. Therefore, outcrossing to the domestic shorthair and the American Shorthair exclusively are tools used to introduce hybrid vigor to the Sphynx.

Because the Sphynx is still a developing breed, the written "standards" for our breed are relatively broad. The Sphynx is still a work in progress! Diligent and careful breeding in any outcross program is extremely important to our breed. Concerns that we will lose type which we have taken so long to achieve is of less concern to the diligent breeder. It is obvious that, when done correctly, type will follow in the generations to come, but the pedigree becomes invigorated when we introduce unrelated genetics to our gene pool.

The 2011-2012 Show Year in CFA was a winning year for the Sphynx in kitten class. Three Sphynx kittens made Top 25 in kitten class as National Winners! Three kittens with three looks, but where are the differences really?

These three girls are all excellent representations of the breed, and any differences only reflect on each one's strengths. All three cats have excellent ears, and bodies. Their tails are long and tapered, and their heads are shaped in a desirable "modified wedge." The cheekbones are well defined, and their eyes are open and lemon-shaped. All three kittens' conformation is excellent, and their bodies show a well-muscled rump with strong hind legs. All three have beautifully soft, supple skin. The differences lie in the more subtle areas and nuances such as the exact shape of the ears, and the texture of the skin, length of the body, etc. It is the fine-tuning in the breeders' eyes (and ultimately proven by the judges' discretion) that define differences with these three kittens.

The deportment of each of these kittens in the show hall was exceptional! In each picture, we see their pride when posing for the camera.



Whereas Belle shows off her beautifully formed rump, Rainey cops a typical regal Sphynx pose. Penny Lane engages the camera with intense curiosity while showing off her lovely ears!

We capture our love of the breed in photographs, and so we admit as breeders, that the chosen poses reflect what we may treasure most about our cats. All of these National Winners had the wonderful personalities which we, as breeders, dare to dream about. Each one loved every minute of the four months worth of showing it took for them to receive their National Wins! The Sphynx is a new breed that is here to stay! Its upsurge in popularity was realized at the 2009 Meet The Breeds event in New York City, where thousands of people came to see this curious feline, and the "fashion show" which has since become an iconic part of this annual event. Sphynx love to wear clothing, and people love to dress them. After all, as celebrity Whoopie Goldberg stated of the breed on "The View" after seeing them in 2009, "Of course they get cold... They're naked!"

GC NW Skinzin Penny Lane of Mericat



GC NW Pinupcats Over the Rainbow