

They met, and fell in love...



They met in the hospital and fell in love. She was suffering from a serious illness; he worked as a volunteer Patient Comfort Specialist. One needing attention, one ready to give it... It was inevitable that the paths of these two souls would cross.

Doreen was hospitalized at Adventist Health and Rideout Hospital in Marysville and Skippy was doing his thing in the outdoor patient lounge. With his extra-large, polydactyl paws that were perfect for massaging the laps of patients he was always in demand. As soon as he and Doreen met, it was obvious: he kneaded her as much as she needed him. She couldn't help herself... She was in love.

Doreen recovered and was discharged from the hospital. Her friends came to take her home but unfortunately, Skippy was nowhere to be found. She had missed her opportunity to not only say good-bye, but to thank him. ►

Turns out Skippy was experiencing a hospitalization of his own at the Hathaway Surgery Center at FieldHaven. He had some minor neuter surgery after which he opted to go into FieldHaven's adoption program rather than return to the hospital colony.

At home, Doreen was feeling much better physically, though was feeling a bit blue from not being able to give Skippy a kiss good-bye....then she saw a video of his adoption profile online.

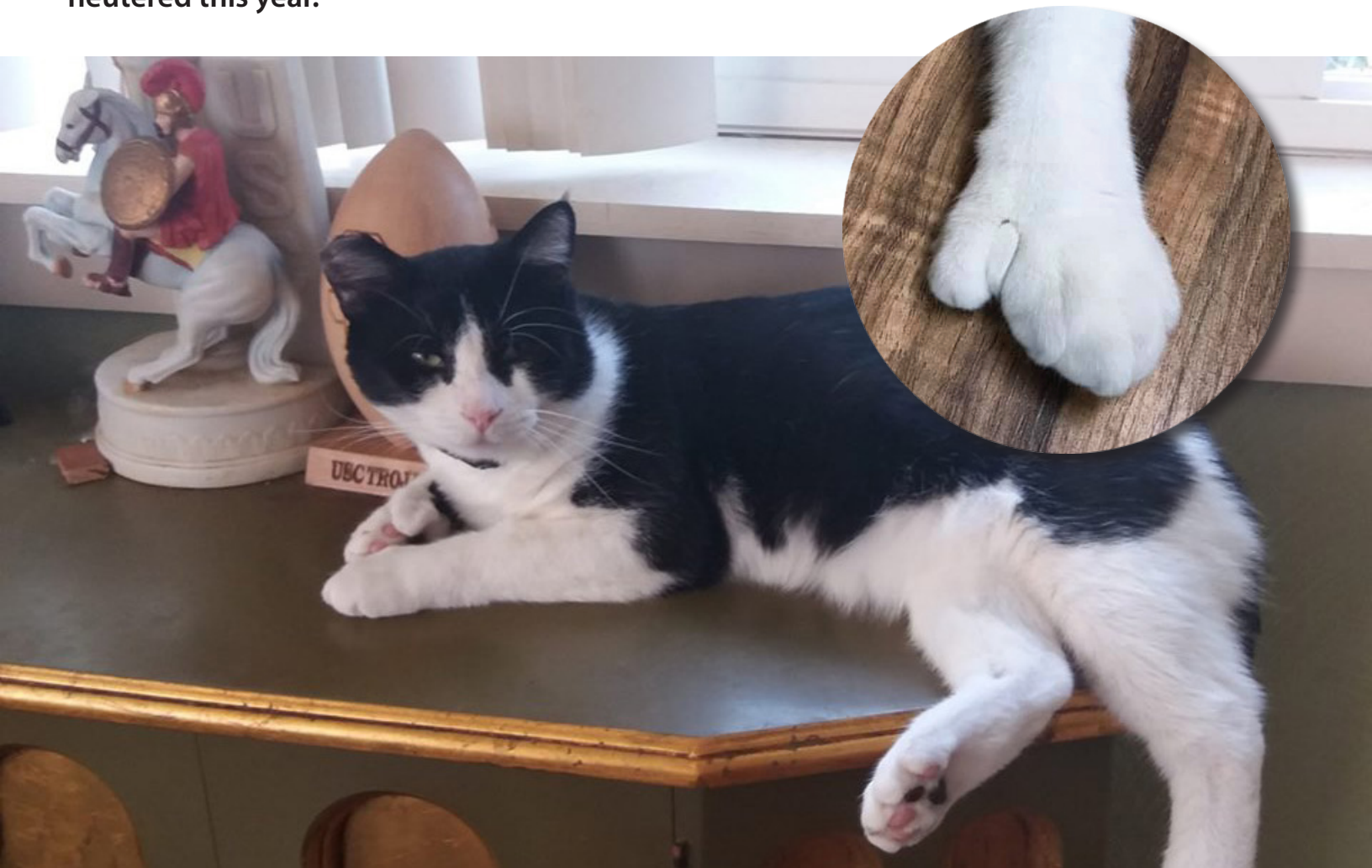
We received a message from her: "I WANT HIM". Doreen was waiting at the door of FieldHaven's Marketplace at 9:45, waiting for the 10:00 am opening; carrier clutched in her hand.

Here's what Doreen told us. "I saw that video and said to myself, 'that's him'. I showed my friends the video and they recognized him too. It's amazing he's back in my life. He's going to have a good home; he's going to be spoiled rotten. He was good to me, now it's time for me to return the favor."

Skippy is now "Troy". He and Doreen are busily preparing for their first holiday season together.

When we caught up with Doreen and Troy recently, she shared Troy's feelings about their story being featured in our newsletter: "He says that he is honored for being included. He didn't add 'humbled' because there's nothing humble about him. He thinks he owns the world and in this house that's pretty much true."

For years there have been large colonies of stray and feral cats at Rideout Hospital which are cared for by several employees. They have been TNRing as many cats as possible but now with the help of FieldHaven's Hathaway Clinic, many more have been spayed and neutered this year.



A mound of grey ash, wearing a flea collar...

By Stephanie Szymd
Adopted by Martha

How any of these cats were found defies the imagination, the badly burned ones, too weak to cry out, huddled, alone, in the midst of the most destructive fire in California history. But found they were.

Martha came to UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine on November 13th 2018. Five days after the Camp Fire broke out in Paradise, California. A small black cat wearing a flea collar, her burn injuries so severe she would remain in the hospital for months.

Martha had a fan club; thousands followed her story on Facebook, calling her "sweet baby," many saying they would take her. Yet, as the months wore on, compassion fatigue set in and Martha got lost in the process, her 15 minutes of fame was over.

Ours was a small fire in 2017, just ten thousand acres. But 50 racehorses would lose their lives that day. Hiking in to my home past the road block, I saw others running toward the training center. Grabbing a face mask from a local cameraman, I ran too. Bearing witness to that horrendous tragedy, walking through herds and herds of terrified horses, staying until dark doing whatever I could, feeling the same overwhelming sense of helplessness as everyone else.

A year later I was having lunch with a girlfriend in Sausalito. Driving back to Berkeley where I now live, I couldn't see the Richmond Bridge. I knew exactly why, the only question was where and how bad.

I'll never know what possessed me to check in with FieldHaven Feline Center, a shelter I had worked with during the Camp Fire recovery effort. There was a picture of Martha with the caption, "The last of the badly burned cats from UC Davis," the one left behind. All those animals I couldn't save, all the death I witnessed, came flooding back. Martha was one of us, a fire survivor; She was coming home, with me.

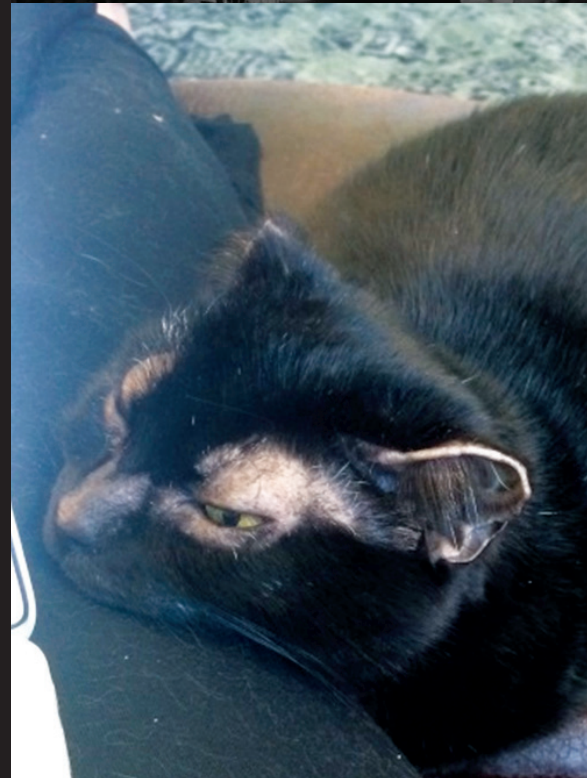
Ours is a quiet life, Martha's and mine. Two older women enjoying the same wing back chair, drinking coffee in the morning, a glass of wine at night. There is an almost a telepathic sense of understanding between the two of us, our interactions an unspoken dance of pure love, nothing expected, no goals to attain.

One morning Martha had a nightmare. Twitching, as cats do, crying out, she awoke with a start jumping into my lap shaking, frantically licking my hand until she calmed herself. I've never been a fan of Phoenixes or Silver Linings. It seems so disrespectful. Survivors, be they animal or human, are more nuanced, more complicated. We share a sense of dignity. We fight to live, facing daunting odds, earning accolades worthy of our experiences, none of them "sweet babies."

Martha and I, we are interdependent. A small black cat with a flea collar, Martha is my life.



Stephanie and Martha began their journey together to their new home in Berkeley, California.



Picture Perfect Volunteers:

Tammie Ekkelboom and Deborah Selbert

Many people don't realize the vital part photography plays in the adoption process. Capturing the personality of a cat or kitten with an excellent photo also captures the attention of potential adopters online. FieldHaven is lucky to have two excellent photographers, Tammie Ekkelboom and Deborah "Deb" Selbert, who volunteer their talent to help cats and kittens find forever homes.

Tammie has been taking photos for as long as she can remember. Even at eight years old, she was in charge of the family camera. "I've always thought that photography is rather magical; to be able to capture a passing moment and preserve it forever always fascinates me. I'm obsessed with memories. I like to remember things and photos can instantly bring me back to a particular sight, smell, or sound," says Tammie.

After college, she received her formal, hands on training as a Crime Scene Investigator. But in 2008, Tammie decided that she wanted to do something more rewarding with her time. With a desire to help animals, she naturally gravitated towards a local shelter, but didn't feel a shelter was the right fit for her. "There were just too many cages and I knew my sensitive heart wouldn't be able to handle that for a very long time," she laments.

Luckily, Tammie found FieldHaven online, visited, and loved the feeling of the facility - even though it was just a trailer at the time. Since taking her first FieldHaven photos in April 2008, Tammie has photographed hundreds of cats over the years, from the tiniest kittens to the most frightening ferals.

Sophia by Tammie



Feral by Tammie



Bottle Baby by Tammie



Houdini by Tammie

Tammie says that her style of cat photography falls into two distinct areas: portrait and documentary. "I love portrait photography. To be able to capture the soul of a cat when it looks into my lens is a feeling unlike any other. Sometimes, it really feels



Deb had seen Tammie's amazing cat photos on FieldHaven's website and was excited to be able to continue photographing cats when she started volunteering. The two usually run into each other at Classics, Cats & Cabernet where they have "the best time," according to both photographers.

Tammie and Deb agree: "Cats and photography are the ingredients for a great day." The staff, other volunteers, and kitties of FieldHaven agree on the gratitude for Tammie and Deb. The passion they have for their work shows in every whisker, every wet nose, and every adorable face.

like we connect on a spiritual level, as if somehow they know that the image produced might equate to them finding their forever home." Documentary style provides a little more room for her to play. With her vision, Tammie is "hoping to tell a story; to inflict emotion. A prime example of this photography was when I was able to help document the Camp Fire Cats." Tammie loves to spend time at 2nd Chance Ranch, where she captures her elusive favorites, the ferals. "I have a soft spot for these cats and I want to capture them in such a way that people feel their fear, but also feel their love," she gushes. "True feral cats are such different souls. It's almost as if we exist on totally different planes as I'm crawling on the ground, lens point up, just trying to catch those eyes."

Deb Selbert received her first camera when she was 12 years old. Her first and favorite subjects were animals. Her love of cat photography started with a small batch of foster kittens eight years ago.

"I spent a lot of time trying to capture the personality of my foster kittens so that potential adopters could imagine them as part of their families. Since I generally foster under-socialized or shy kittens seeing them develop personalities and being able to capture their personality in a photo so very rewarding," says Deb.

While kittens are playful, adorable, and fun to photograph, Deb finds herself drawn to the adults. "Adult cats, who are generally at shelters longer, are the ones who really benefit from having great photos," according to Deb, who always tries to capture something about the cat that will make potential adopters want to come meet it. "For Ethan, it was the photo of him wearing a blue bow-tie that brought his new family to the shelter to meet him."



Darcy by Deb



Ethan by Deb



Zoe by Deb



**FieldHaven
Feline Center**
2754 Ironwood Lane
Lincoln, CA 95648
(916) 434-6022

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 316
SACRAMENTO, CA

For every Cat in Need, a Solution.

Peace of Mind Cat Guardian Program

Ensure your cat is well taken
care of in the event you
pass before your cat does.
Learn more at
FieldHaven.com/PlannedGiving



Kittens for *Christmas*

Kitten season didn't end this year.
FieldHaven has nearly 50 kittens
available for adoption who are looking
to find their forever homes before the holidays.
Find all our adoptables at FieldHaven.com/Adopt

