

PAWS FOR EFFECT



*The PolyTrak  
Newsletter  
February 2008*

**Volume 2 - Number 2**

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*Maine Coon Polyductyl*



*International Database*



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2008 – Vol. 2 – No. 2

## WELCOME!

**H**ello everyone! It is another month and another issue of *“Paws for Effect”*. We welcome our new subscribers this month and hope that you enjoy this newsletter each month. For those of you that are new to us, we would love to hear from you. Share any comments, questions or opinions. Above all if you have an experience or story related to the Maine Coon poly, we would love to feature your story in *“Paws for Effect”*. The poly movement is growing by leaps and bounds with new poly supporters, breeders and fanciers each month. As always you can view any past issue of this Newsletter by clicking on the newsletter button on our main page and then selecting the archive issues link and choose which month or issue that you desire to view. All issues from our inaugural newsletter in January of 2007 are available here. The current issue is added near the middle of the month following release.

This month’s issue, we feel, you will find very interesting and informative. We received some great pics this month and Miriam talks of showing your polys in FIFé and Ken is thinking having beef liver banned from supermarkets of the world. **Huh???** “What does that have to do with Polys?” you ask. Well we are not really sure, but we are sure somehow he figures there is a connection, even if it is only in his mind. 😊 But one article this month we encourage you to read is, what might be the discovery of the first documented Maine Coon poly with true rear thumbs. Whether rear thumbs on polys occur has been discussed for sometime. It has been suggested that rear thumbs do not occur. There have been a couple of reports, but never any photographic evidence or documentation. But now we may have some very interesting finds. Check it out!

A Poly with rear thumbs...more 4WD polys than 2WD polys? New discoveries are made everyday. Stay tuned for the latest!



Diwilik's Wildrose P. Honeybush

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## A CALL TO SHOW YOUR POLY IN FIFé

(By Miriam Muller)

**A**s you perhaps have heard, there will be a big International Maine Coon cat show this summer in the Netherlands, organized by the RMC, the Dutch Maine Coon Club, which is a member of the FIFE Organisation.

The FIFE people are, I think, the second group of people we have to convince about our idea about the polydactyl Maine Coons.

Of course first we focus on TICA, but I think this is an opportunity we cannot pass by. There will be a large number of European Maine Coon breeders and fanciers to reach and to educate. And of course, this is a great chance to show them our Polys. I have talked to several Dutch Maine Coon breeders who would like to enter their cats at this show...but the more the merrier!!

In FIFE shows you can show your poly as any other purebred Maine Coon, but you will get a DQ. So there are no titles or ribbons to win, but you will get a written report with the judge’s opinion on the looks of your cat. Because our Polys will be judged in the same groups as their regular footed colleagues, we will have a good look at the developing of the type we are all working on.

And maybe it is a nice glimpse into the future when all Coons will be together at all cat



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

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shows everywhere, competing against each other and being judged as the beautiful Maine Coon cat they all are!!!



## 3 GENERATIONS OF POLY LADIES!

(Contributed by Cheryl Kinney)

**GRANDMA**  
Kinneycoons Bandit P (F4)



Blue Silver Patch w/White, Toes: 6-6-5-6, Born Oct. 16, 2003. She is retired and living in Houghton Lake Michigan. Details at:

<http://www.polytrak.net/database/dam/damdetail.php?id=020114040920>

**MOM**  
Kinneycoons Lavender P



Blue Silver Patch w/White, Toes: 6-6-5-5, Born November 23, 2006. Details at:

<http://www.polytrak.net/database/litters/litterdetail.php?id=2006112401>

**DAUGHTER**  
Kinneycoons I Don't Have a Name Yet P.



Blue or Blue Silver Patch w/White, Toes: 6-6-5-5,  
Born: November 12, 2007



*"He seems the incarnation of everything soft and silky and velvety, without a sharp edge in his composition, a dreamer whose philosophy is sleep and let sleep." – Saki*



## POLYTRAK FACT

As of February 1<sup>st</sup> there are 246 poly kittens listed in the litter-tracking program.

- 2 Kittens (0.8%) are 1WD
- 86 Kittens (36.4%) are 2FWD
- 7 Kittens (3%) are 2RWD
- 16 Kittens (6.8%) are 3WD
- 125 (53%) are 4WD
- 10 Kittens have unknown paws
- 232 litter kittens are from poly Sire
- 187 litter kittens are from poly Dam
- 13 litter kittens – both parents are poly
- 7 litter kittens have homozygous Sire
- No litter kittens with homozygous Dam



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2008 – Vol. 2 – No. 2

## STOP THE PRESSES... DOCUMENTED REAR- THUMBED POLY DISCOVERED!

(By Vonne Bode)

When we started the Database it was important to look into the paws a bit more for a better understanding. We knew about mitten paws and patty feet, but that was it. And when asking around, it seemed breeders working with polys didn't have (much) detailed data on the paws of their polys. Nor did any seem to have a clear idea of how to distinguish one digit from another. So this was really something we needed to get a basic idea of. Lucky enough we have the Internet 😊 so it wasn't hard to do some research and find the info we needed. And so the PolyTrak Digit Definitions were born. Of course we kept in mind that nature has it's ways, meaning that some day she could surprise us. 😊 But at least for now we had a clearer picture of what possible digits a poly paw could have, which is: a toe, dewclaw, thumb and a nub. Also the pads on the paws became more and more an important tool with each submission. In fact so important that we had to adjust the definitions during the time and remove some parts of it. Yes nature's fault. 😊

What we have seen so far, is that the different digits and pads on a poly are quite good to compare with the human hands and feet. If we look at the digit definitions, we see that a dewclaw only has one pad, the terminal pad (or 'fingertip'). A pad every digit has. An exception on this rule can be the nub. Then we have 2 other types of extra digits we can find on a poly paw: the extra toe and the thumb. Both have in common that in addition to their terminal pad, they've an extra pad. For the extra toe we call it a *plantar* pad and for the thumb I would call it the *palmar* pad. This last pad is comparable with the mouse of your hand (if you can

imagine that as a separate pad). The plantar pad of an extra toe will attach itself to the lobes making the standard plantar pad (this is the big pad that consists of 3 lobes attached/fused together, corresponding with the 4 standard toes).

For our sharp-eyed readers 😊, you'll notice that the standard plantar pad hasn't got 1 pad/lobe for each toe, but actually 1 less. 😊 Ok, so both have 2 pads in common. Another thing they have in common is that their terminal pads touch the ground. Which isn't the case with a dewclaw or nub. But then there are also some things that they do not have in common. As said above, the extra pad of an extra toe is on a different part of the foot-bed than the pad of a thumb. Another difference is that toes (also an extra toe) all grow in the same direction. Or better said, they're parallel to each other. This is also comparable with the last 4 fingers on our hand (assuming you're not polydactyl). 😊 This is contrary to the thumb. Sometimes it looks like the thumb is growing in the same direction as the rest of the fingers.



We see this also with poly paw when they're in a rest position. But if we take a closer look at the thumb, we see it's opposable. A good way to demonstrate this is to look at the palm of your hand and bow all your fingers towards the palm of your hand (like making a claw). Now you see



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2008 – Vol. 2 – No. 2

the 4 fingers are indeed parallel and going in the same direction, while the thumb is opposed to them.



Another difference you can see when you move your thumb, is that it grows from a different angle and is much more flexible than your other 4 fingers:-). With a thumbed poly front paw this is not different. The only thing you see with thumbs on a MC poly front paw is that they can vary in length.

So far the above is common for poly front paws. Now the back paws: A standard footed cat has 4 toes on the back. With a poly we've seen an extra dewclaw or extra toe(s) added to these 4 digits. Meaning, just like on a front paw, a dewclaw shows itself by having only a terminal pad and not touching the

ground. And an extra toe by having also a plantar pad that is attached to the standard plantar pad. What about thumbs?

Well, earlier documentation online about polydactyle writes about reports of hind thumbs, but these were never documented. And one person who claimed their cat had a hind thumb, but when taking a closer look at the received picture of this back paw, it showed perfectly clear this extra digit was a dewclaw. It was also said that a poly couldn't have a thumb on the back paws, since this is structure-wise not possible. And we've taken this assumption as part of our digit definition, but have always said, until proven wrong. 😊

Now I totally agree that a thumb, like we see on our own hands, is indeed structure-wise not possible on the back paws. But what if you've an extra digit on a poly back paw, that isn't a dewclaw, nub nor an extra toe and that has a separate (palmar) pad in addition to the terminal pad?



Well this is what I saw on the TICA show in the Netherlands when we had a large group of polys in our bench area. I went to have chat with all poly owners and explained to them what I saw when looking at their poly's feet. One of these polys was Liza Jane P Van Siduroy. This red poly is a 4WD and symmetrical on all 4 feet! On top of that, she had an extra digit on each back



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2008 – Vol. 2 – No. 2

paw, and this digit had a separate (palmar) pad. So this digit was not a nub, dewclaw nor an extra toe. Meaning, if looking at the possibilities, this could only be a thumb!

Ok, NOW HOLD ON! I know what you think...this, was structurewise not possible...right? And my answer would be YES and NO. If we compare it to the thumb on the front paws or with the thumb on our own hand, it's indeed not possible to have a thumb so flexible and growing from a different angle on the back paws. But all the other categories do match with the definition of a thumb only. Now if we look at our own feet, and try to see them as back paws 😊...we could say maybe our big toe was really our 'back thumb', which has adjusted itself structure-wise over decades to what it is now. Why shouldn't this be possible for the cat? The back thumb on this cat clearly looks different from front thumbs but this only due the fact that the front paws and back paws are structured differently. 😊 So as I see it.... we have the **FIRST DOCUMENTED MC poly** with back thumbs here!!!!!!!!!!



**TLC Polycoon's Alma P (a.k.a. Polly)**



**Owned by Tiny Scheffmann**  
**Toes: 7/6/5/5**



*Prowling his own quiet backyard or asleep by the fire, he is still only a whisker away from the wilds. - Jean Burden*



## PERSONAL OPINION

(By Ken Bussard)

**D**o you like Maine Coon polydactyl cats? I think they are great cats and enjoy having these great guys and gals running around the house. Because I personally think they are great cats then that would be a good reason to have them accepted in the show rings for championship status...right? – WRONG! So if you are in the 10-25% minority of show people that personally do not like the polys then they should be banned for everyone...right? – WRONG!

I love a good steak (please no email lectures on eating right and proper diet 😊) The last time I checked, good steak came from a cow. I hate liver...but guess what? – the liver can come from a cow also. The fact that I don't like liver could be an opportunity for me to start a worldwide campaign to have it banned from every Grocery Store and Meat Market.

Now, since there are plenty of people that like liver, I better come up with a good reason to have liver banned. I could tell people that cows don't normally have a liver and that any cow that does is defective. I could start a paranoia campaign to say that eating liver causes warts on the end of your nose. I could say that if the Bull has a liver and the Miss Angus also has a liver and you breed the two together you will get calves with three legs and they will keep falling over and bruise my good T-Bone steak. And further I could say that any cattle rancher that does this is irresponsible and should be publicly flogged at the OK Coral (hopefully before the Cattle Rancher's Association got together and came after me with a libel lawsuit – and a hot branding iron). None of these reasons have an ounce of truth to it, but if I gave myself an important title (maybe: President of the World Laboratory for Studies into Beef Liver Maladies), I could probably convince a few unsuspecting liver lovers.



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2008 – Vol. 2 – No. 2

I could keep shouting this nonsense from the rooftops and sooner or later I might be able to convince a few that cows with livers are a bad thing. Hopefully I could do this before the men in the white suits loaded me up and carried me off to a nice place where there are pretty flowers, butterflies and someone to help me with my medications.

Is this what is happening with the Maine Coon polydactyl? In a less exaggerated form this is precisely what is happening to Maine Coon Breeders and Show People that are working with the polys. As more and more people learn of the poly and that the fact it is a naturally occurring trait that causes no known harm and it **is, was and always will be**, an integral part of the Maine Coon, it becomes harder and harder for the very small few (who make the most noise) to justify their closed – minded outlook and ignorance. But did you ever notice when these people are asked to document their positions there is no response and the room becomes so quiet the sound of your lonely poly in the corner purring becomes deafening? Another tactic to use when you don't have the facts to back your personal opinion is to shoot the messenger or the integrity and honesty of the source. Does anyone have any evidence that PolyTrak is twisting the facts or hiding less than desirable information? I think not! Are breeders and contributors to this study, withholding bad stuff about polydactylism because somebody might find out? Of course not!

A couple rather serious abuses of power with absolutely no factual backing to support their actions based on personal opinion have occurred recently. The first you may have read in "*Paws for Effect*" last fall involved the MCCC, a Cat Club in England. A local breeder there was sanctioned by the club's Governing Committee for importing a poly and violating their rule of breeding for a defect. They were challenged by the breeder and bore the brunt of a letter writing campaign asking where they got

information that the Pd gene was a defect. That is the last we have heard from them and they have now gone silent, but have made no attempt to right their wrong.

The second incident occurred just recently when a TICA Judge, railed against a Maine Coon Breeder who had entered a poly in the New Traits Division. He belittled the person in front of a large crowd of participants and the general public by bellowing: "*any responsible MC breeder would not do this to the breed and that "to purposely breed a defect was wrong and irresponsible"*". He not only publicly tried and convicted this person based on his own ignorance and personal opinion, he lumped over a hundred other Maine Coon Breeders working with polys into the guilty finding. His final parting shot of, "*well my opinion here is the only one that counts now doesn't I?* " puts him well ahead of the pack in my "Idiot of the Year" competition.

Maybe a campaign to ban Beef Liver isn't so far fetched after all. It probably has more factual basis than these two. In the big scheme of things though, this is rather insignificant. The Maine Coon poly has survived for a long time and it will take more than ill-informed Governing Council or an errant judge to get rid of the poly. 😊



Krammedyret Julie Pilgrim



# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2008 – Vol. 2 – No. 2

## Meet the Poly Posse

(By Miriam Muller)



**J**ust a few days before the Cats and Tulip TICA show in Hellevoetsluis, where we Poly people all would meet, India decided to give birth to her second litter. She had three boys and two girls. All boys are poly and both girls are non-poly. All in the spirit of the upcoming first poly-special ever, and because I go by the alphabet whit all my litters and had reached the letter P...the **Poly Posse** was born!

- Poly P. Power - A red and white boy, 4WD(6,6,5,5). A very sweet guy and very playful. He will be living at cattery Mainsign as a stud for their girls only.
- Poly P. Pride - A red 2WD(6,6,4,4) boy. No brother or sister dare come near while he is eating, but he is the dearest to people, he loves to fall a sleep in your arms. He will be living at cattery Fairyfantasy as a stud for their girls only.
- Poly P. Paws - The little cream and white 2WD(6,6,4,4) boy who stole my heart, but has to go...or maybe not...Perhaps he will stay after all, we haven't decided yet. He is so cute, but also the most fearless of them all. A little daredevil he is.
- Poly Wannabe - A high white black torbie girl. The moment she was born I knew;

she's MINE! Poly or non-poly, I don't care, I just love her looks and tortitude.

- Poly Phoney - A high white blue torbie girl. She is always making mischief with her brother Paws. What's that with the diluted colours? They both are a little crazy. She will be living as a pet called Pasja in a town nearby.



This is the most colourful litter I ever had and it will be so hard when they will leave for their new homes in a few weeks. They all have such unique personalities and they really are a wild bunch. It's not safe to sit on the couch with a cup of tea, they just run and jump all over the couch and don't even look if some one is sitting there. I have already had many paws in my cup of tea, good luck it wasn't real hot anymore. Yes, I really am gonna miss them, but how can I complain? The most precious of them is (are???) going to stay!!!!



That's a "wrap" for another month. We hope you enjoyed looking at this month's issue and that you will join us again next month and throughout 2008 for more of the latest news from PolyTrak. Let us know your thoughts. Visit PolyTrak at <http://www.polytrak.net> for the latest info. We would love to hear from you. Until next month:

## Bye for Now!

