

PAWS FOR EFFECT



*The PolyTrak
Newsletter
October 2008*

Volume 2 - Number 7
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WELCOME!

Hello one and all! We have had many new subscribers over the summer and we welcome you! You can of course add, remove or send us your comments or story ideas at any time by just emailing ptnewsletter@polytrak.net. The Newsletter has been noticeably absent for awhile. The staff was gathering information and reports regarding polydactylism as the discussion heated up around the acceptance of the Main Coon poly in TICA show rings. In addition Vonne of our staff had been preparing a special Issue, in place of our regular *“Paws for Effect”*, about Kazandra Holm Møller. <http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V2-TributeIssue.pdf>. Kazandra was a special person to many of us and her passing on June 3rd has left many of us saddened. PolyTrak extends our deepest sympathies to her family and close friends.

The gang at PolyStandard was anxiously awaiting the results of the Maine Coon Breed Section of TICA ballots. Unfortunately it did not turn out as hoped. The ballot was issued worldwide in early June and voting ended on the 16th of July. PolyTrak experienced a very busy time as Maine Coon Breeder and Fanciers flocked to our and other websites seeking information on polydactylism as a result of the pending ballot vote in TICA. A PolyTrak Staff member, Deb Brown conducted a workshop on the Maine Coon poly to the public, breeders and fanciers, as well as a special session with 25 current and potential TICA judges at Warwick, Rhode Island. At the same time she met with some inspiring young folks in the TICA Junior Achiever program. You can read more of her experiences in this Issue. And of course we will have some more “poly stats” this month.

In May we started a new feature. Each month we would like to feature a Maine Coon Breeder or Fancier that works with polys and has submitted to PolyTrak. We think you will find this interesting and informative. I think we

can all learn much from the many and varied breeding and show programs from many different parts of the world. Unfortunately we have had only one new potential story that we would like to feature in an upcoming Issue. We are hoping the interest would be here for many Maine Coon Breeders that are working with the polys to talk a bit about their breeding program and to share their experiences and knowledge of working with the polys. You may submit your own written story or you can just submit some information and quotes and we will help write it with you. Either way we welcome and encourage your participation and insight. This is your Monthly newsletter and we would like to feature information from as many people as possible. If you are uncertain how to go about this, just drop us a note at ptnewsletter@polytrak.net and we will get back to you with answers to your questions or more information about being featured in *“Paws for Effect”*. We are also considering a special show issue featuring upcoming shows and the experiences of show people around the World.

So now is the time to sit back read and enjoy the October Issue of *“Paws for Effect”* (albeit a bit late).



WaterCoons Silver Surfer of Hei Sejrcoons



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TICA MAINE COON BREED MEMBERS REJECT POLY ACCEPTANCE

On the afternoon of July 31st members of PolyStandard were notified by the TICA EO (Executive Office) that a recent ballot issue (the Advancement of the Maine Coon poly to Championship Status) was turned down by the Maine Coon Breed members of TICA. The Official written results were reportedly were mailed on the same day and should have been received by group some time ago.

The vote was 146 to 70. Although a bit of setback, it appears it has in no way lessened the resolve of the PolyStandard group to seek full acceptance of the Maine Coon poly. The group is already at work on the next proposal for acceptance. As one member stated: *“This last run was practice... this time it’s for real Polydactyls for Championship 2009”*.



Watercoons Nighthawk P In The Air of DemiCoons

POLYSTANDARD GROUP

May was a month of progress at the PolyStandard group. June was a month of trying to inform and educate the many that have inquired and asked questions. This was done in spite of the few radical non poly supporters that launched a noisy but ill-informed campaign against the Ballot Issue. And July was a month

of anticipation and not so patient waiting for the results of the ballots. The voting closed on July 16th and on the 31st verbal notification was received that the ballot had been defeated by a margin of 146 to 70. The final determination however was to be in the hands of the Board of Directors of TICA. This is because the request for acceptance involved incorporating a New Trait in the Maine Coon Breed Standard. The “new trait” of course is the allowance of extra digits or polydactylism. In the governance of TICA there is a Standing Rule that calls for a maximum of 5 digits in front and 4 digits on the rear for show purposes or Championship Status. This rule applies not only to the Maine Coon, but to all breeds that are accepted for Championship Status. The rules also allow for exception to this rule in the form of a Board Approved Standard. The TICA Board of Directors must approve the change to the Maine Coon Breed Standard. This same situation arose several years ago with the acceptance to Championship Status of a New Breed called the PixieBob. So there is precedence for the request.

Ultimately the final decision lies with the TICA Board of Directors. Since Advancement of New Traits by means of a modification of a Breed Standard is a matter of the wishes of Breed Section a formal ballot is issued by the TICA Executive Office. Ultimately the success of or defeat of the measure lies with the Board of Directors. Although the past votes of the Board of Directors has not been researched to a great degree, it appears the Boards in the past have historically based their votes on the wishes of the Breed Section members.

This vote by the TICA Board of Directors was the final step of the entire acceptance process that began last Spring. On August 28th at the Annual Board meeting of TICA, the Board voted to not allow a Board Approved Standard for the Maine Coon Breed Standard...thus completing the process.



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This vote however was following a short presentation to the Board by Deb Brown of PolyStandard and a small contingent of other members of the group. The TICA EO had granted a brief appearance by PolyStandard before the Board at their annual Board meeting. Following Ms. Brown's talk to the Board, the MC Breed section vote was upheld by the TICA Board of Directors. Ms. Brown said after the meeting, *"Although I was disappointed by the fact that the Maine Coon poly would not be in the Championship Ring, in May of 2009, I was heartened by the Board's ratification of the wishes of the MC Breed Section. This highlights an important principal of democracy and that the voice of the people are heard and heeded by the Board. Democratic fairness was sadly lacking during the time of the voting along with undue influence and it is good to see the Board listen and support their Membership."*

Editors Note: A written copy of the presentation by Ms. Brown before the TICA Board of Directors is contained later in this Newsletter



Booneland's Ghyta P (F4)

PolyTrak

857 cats listed.
Is yours?

(As of October 1, 2008)

CHAMPIONS!

(By Deb Brown)

June has been a particularly busy month for me. I had the pleasure of visiting the Massachusetts area and staying with a dear friend, Cathy Petty and her family. The main purpose of the trip was to attend the Mysticats Cat Show in Rhode Island, and I was privileged to speak at the Judges School about the Maine Coon Polydactyl. As usual with my trips, there never seems to be enough time to do and see everything. But this leaves open the planning of future adventures and seeing friends again.

We all know when attending a cat show there are classes and ribbons to be won. We hear of the Champions and the "Grands", and delight in seeing these great cats in the ring. For me these are the Champions of June 2008. They didn't win any ribbons but they did show the true spirit and heart of Champions...

Northeast Junior Achievers

What a great bunch of kids. **WOW!** These young people went full tilt all weekend and covered a lot of ground in a short time. From the first minute we walked into the show hall you could see these kids on the move. They had a raffle table set up, a food booth, cats to show, cages to set up, judges and clerks to help out, parents to run for and 95-degree heat with full humidity. They even went around selling their wares from benching area to benching area. A great bunch of young entrepreneurs! They were smiling, laughing and having a great time. When things needed to be done or someone was short handed these young people were there helping. Most times not even waiting to be asked.

It was very interesting to watch them with their cats. No doubt in anyone's mind the love they have for the animals. But they also had the skills and knowledge. They watched their rings, groomed their cats and kept a careful



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eye on some of the adults that got chatting and may have missed a ring call ha ha ha. 😊

In this day and age when we hear so much negative about young people, it is like a breath of fresh air to see an event like this. And their actions were appreciated. From getting cats to the ring, filling in as stewards, or getting someone a cold drink, they were there. If there is ever an area to support in cat clubs, this is it. Check out your region and support these young people. <http://www.ticaja.org/>.

Congratulations Junior Achievers for a job well done. Keep up the good work. You are our future and it looks like you are off to a very good start. Stand up and take a bow. **You are all Champions!**

Here are a few of the kids I could get to sit still for a quick picture.



I think at one time or another we have all been to shows where Mother Nature cranked up the heat. This was one of those times. A few days prior to the show it was about 65 degrees F. Nice, cool, easy to live with. Then all of a sudden the temperature went sky high and it was a shock to everyone's system. Cats included. I can tell you that being from a cooler climate, this was a shock to my system.

This skyrocketing temperature also adds an extra twist for the show manager. We all have seen the hundreds of little things the manager does through out the show, but at this show there was the added task of ice, cold drinks and keeping everyone satisfied. I watched Rene Knapp tackle this added challenge. No mean feat. But she did so with grace under pressure. Unfortunately she also had to deal with an accident in the parking lot. People were sent to hospital, the police, a thousand questions and her own personal concern with the people involved. This second day of the show being hotter than the first was taking its toll on everyone. She handled everything perfectly. For two days she made sure people were as comfortable as possible and the show ran smoothly.

This was the first time I had met Rene. She was delightful and greeted me with a smile and when I left I held an admiration for her. She was still going strong when we left the show hall. Another Champion for the day.

Sunday, the second day of the show, everyone was really feeling the heat. Saturday the building had its own natural cool during the day. As the heat progressed, even through the night the building warmed up fast, and walking in Sunday morning you knew it was going to be a hot one. And as we all know, the doors are closed. As show people and spectators we had the easy task of waiting for rings to be called, sitting with a cool drink, a quick trip outside for some fresh air, and very little exertion. Not so for the judges. From 9:00 in the morning until 5:00 or later in the afternoon they were getting cats in and out of cages. Everyone was sticky and covered in cat hair at one time or another; even the cats were getting lethargic. But the judges kept going. One judge in particular was having difficulty by the end of Sunday. She was located in the hottest corner of the building. But her stoic determination kept her going. Cool cloths; help with the cats, fans, what ever relief that could be provided was. And this lady kept



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on going. The New Traits class was her last ring. We were all starting to get a little concerned for her health. Our group with the Maine Coon polys was approached and we were asked if we minded forfeiting the ring, the last class in this ring. We were all in agreement; it was time for this judge to get into a cooler environment. When the judge was advised she was currently doing her last ring and New Traits would forfeit, she would have none of that at all, and was emphatic she was going to do the polys! And she wasn't taking no for an answer. We scrambled and got the cats to the ring and Connie Webb finished her day with the Maine Coon Polydactyls. Her dedication, determination and professionalism were something to be admired. Possibly my Grand Champion for the day!

Saturday I first saw the Junior Achievers in action, made the acquaintance of Rene in the morning, then at dinner that evening Connie Webb and some of the other Judges attending the show. I knew I was attending with the controversial topic of the Maine Coon polys. But each and every one was open-minded and I was made to feel at home. The Judges School was a wonderful experience. It was great to hear the perspective from the other side of the table and some of the trials and tribulations they go through. They don't always have an easy job judging. After the evening was over, there was a small get together. Again I was made welcome in this group of people I had only ever seen from a distance. I cannot thank them enough and I hope to be able to attend this show again.

This Mysticats show was another opportunity to meet some of our PolyStandard members. LOL this is the part I really look forward to. Dawn Lovell, her husband and two great kind (JA), Bev Fontaine and her husband, my host Cathy Pettey and Sadie, and numerous other people heartily supporting the Maine Coon polys. I can tell you it just doesn't get better at a cat show when you are in a group of friends. As the show progressed we received

information that the "fear mongering" of the polys was in full swing by another TICA member attending. The stories were non-poly related but as we all know, if someone says it and is in a position to be listened to, people take it as gospel. This is where our group came to the forefront. Regardless of the derogatory statements, we held our heads high and proudly took the Maine Coon polydactyls to their rings. Funny how the ones with the negative remarks were nowhere to be seen. I guess they didn't want to expand their education beyond their ignorance. So in my opinion I was in the presence of Champions. People firmly dedicated to a cause, and willing to stand up and let people know it!

Shortly after I started my trip I received the news about the passing of Kazandra Holm Møller in Denmark. Although this news was expected at some time it was still very hard to hear. One always hopes...

I had the honour of meeting Kazandra, first in Hanover, Germany for the TICA Annual, and then again in Hellevoetsluis, Holland, for the Cats and Tulips Show. What a wonderful gracious lady. Her easy smile and sharp wit won over many people and she was delightful to be around. Shortly after the Annual, we received word from Kazandra that she was terminally ill. This news was delivered with the most positive outlook I had ever seen. She had accepted her fate but wasn't going to let it interfere too much with her remaining time. Over the course of time you could see she was taking care of things and keeping us informed of her progress. Again with a spirit I can honestly say I have never seen before. When I last saw her in Holland she was telling me how life was good. She had her cats and delighted in the new homes they were going to, her shows, her clerking, and all the opportunity to enjoy what she loved. At this time you could tell her health was failing but never a negative word about it. Just enjoying life, and dealing with adversity in her own way.



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Kazandra has been the topic of many conversations. Every one stating their admiration of this fine lady. Her strength, her grace and her friendships will always be remembered. A feeling of loss went around the world with her passing, but we all had the great fortune of knowing her.
The Truest Champion.

Good Bye Kazandra. Godspeed. You are missed.

Deb



WaterCoons Pas de Deux P. of Tascoons

*A cat can climb down from a tree
without the assistance of the fire
department or any other agency. The
proof is that no one has ever seen a cat
skeleton in a tree.
- Unknown -*

THE CANDIDATE SPEAKS

Editors Note : The original headline for this story was to be *The CandiateS Speak*. The TICA Maine Coon Breed Committe positions (7 positions) are up for re-election beginning later this month. Following the submission for Acceptance of the Maine Coon Polydactyl to the

show ring and Championship Status, numerous allegations and observations has been made by some about the proper handling and the conduct of of the vote and the whole procedure. The measure was defeated by the Breed Section membership and it was thought that the issue was done an over with. However the furor appears to continue....even to the point of becoming a campaign platform issue over polydactylism in the Maine Coon. The staff of *“Paws for Effect”* felt this is creating a large division in the Maine Coon community of TICA and that the 14 candidates vying for these 7 positions needed a forum where they could freely state their position and ideas. *“Paws for Effect”* compiled 3 questions that addressed the concerns of some. Polydactylism and the “Acceptance” vote were deliberately not mentioned, since we felt that the vote was completed and it is time to move on the future of the Maine Coon and how a newly elected Breed Committee could fairly represent and respect the views of all Breed Section members without regards to personal bias or agendas. *“Paws for Effect”* mailed each of the 14 candidates, the 3 questions, and asked for their answers by October 5th. They were told all answers would be published unedited without editorial comments so that potential voters could better understand the views of these potential candidates. Of the 14 mailings *“Paws for Effect”* received only 5 acknowledgements of receipt of the mail when requested. Further only one actual response was received. We thank this candidate for her willingness to speak to our subscribers and her response is included later. The lack of response to *“Paws for Effect”* questions was due to a directive by a current Committee Member advising candidates that their views and goals should not be made in outside venues, but limited to the confines of the Breed Section message area and that their views on polydactylism should be addressed as part of their platform for election. Interestingly the views sought in this closed group were subsequently published on a public website of a non poly supporter. 😊



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With this rather lengthy Editor's note on the background of our attempt to get the honest feelings of potential candidates as well as their ideas for the future, following are the results of our somewhat less than successful effort.

END Editor's Note.

A total of 14 Maine Coon Breed Section members had filed by July 31st for seven positions on the Maine Coon Breed Committee. Seven of these people will take Office in the New Year (2009).

1. Elektra Hammond
2. Michael Hammond
3. Elizabeth D. Flynn
4. Liz Hansen
5. Kim Tomlin
6. Laura Cunningham
7. Jennifer Sable
8. Susan Milburn
9. Ryoko Doi
10. Jan Dell
11. Blair Milburn
12. Elaine Weitz
13. Gordon M. Pugh
14. Dawn Lovell

Each candidate was asked the same 3 questions:

QUESTION 1:

If elected how would you handle a ballot issue that you personally did not like, but was put before the Breed Section for their own personal views and vote? To what degree to do you feel it is incumbent on a elected Breed Committee member or Chair to recommend or attempt to influence a private member's vote or opinion using your position of leadership?

QUESTION 2:

TICA is a Worldwide Organization in many Countries around the World. If an issue were to come before you from one or many of

these other areas: Would you treat it with the same degree of validity and importance as issues that may arise only in the USA or issues that you personally felt were not to your liking?

QUESTION 3:

Please provide any thoughts or ideas that you may have to make the TICA MC Breed Section more representative of all members and a place where all may work together for the betterment of the Maine Coon.

We received the following response from our request (Thank You for your answers):

#1. All members of the breed section have the right to voice their opinion on a given subject, including the committee members and the chair. However voicing those opinions should be done wearing the "Maine Coon breeder hat" rather than the "Committee Chair hat". All politicians use their political position to influence voters; that's just the nature of the beast, and I don't really have a problem with it. But the distinction should be made as to which hat the person is wearing. The Committee Chair's position should be as a facilitator of discussion amongst the section members. That does not mean however, that they should not be allowed to express an opinion as a breeder. In the recent situation perhaps a more politically correct way to express one's self would have been in separate e-mails making it clear (through a disclaimer?) that the opinion expressed was that of the breeder alone and did not reflect those of the committee.

#2. I'm not sure why this question is being asked. I'm not aware of any bias for or against any region when it comes to breed issues. I also haven't seen any issues come before the breed section that I thought had no validity. Regional influence shouldn't



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enter into the discussion unless something that is being addressed has legal implications that might vary from country to country. As for issues not being to my liking, that's why we have a breed section that votes. No one person can determine the outcome. What matters most is how a decision affects the breed, not an individual's personal agenda.

#3. I would hope that all members of the breed section would work for the betterment of the breed, understanding that not all members will agree with exactly what that is. But if you want better representation of the members you need to have a balanced breed committee. I personally don't think there should be more than one person from a household/cattery allowed to serve on a breed committee. It would be nice to have members from several regions, perhaps based on the number of cats shown in those regions. Unfortunately not all regions have breeders who have submitted their names. Also unfortunate is that some of the names on the list are people who are unknown by other regions. I think a few years' experience in breeding is a huge plus just in knowledge base. I also suspect that personal agendas are the reason for some of the names on the list, and I find that disturbing.

I personally would like to see a breed committee that actively promotes the Maine Coon breed. One that is involved in perhaps sponsoring some seminars, making sure that we have our breed booth at the Annual and at Regional Awards shows. I know Bobbie Tullo is working on a mentoring program for TICA (I have volunteered to serve as a mentor and/or advisor); it would be nice to have one within the breed as well.

The breed committee's purpose is to serve the breed section. All issues that concern members should be open for discussion. All members (yes, even the chair) should be allowed to voice their opinion. As long as the

dialogue is open and all are allowed to have their say we can attempt to make informed decisions. It is incumbent upon the section members to educate themselves, but it is also imperative that those promoting an issue attempt to educate others as well. And in the end we do well to remember that our cats are what is the most important in all of this, not any one issue.

Jan Dell
Woodpile Maine Coons
"Cats That Chat"



RW Woodpile SGC Snap Crackle N Pop
AKA "Crackle"

*Cat: A pygmy lion who loves mice, hates dogs, and patronizes human beings.
- Oliver Herford -*



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POLYTRAK FACT

As of October 20th there are 608 kittens listed in PolyTrak born as part of a polydactyl litter. 335 of these kittens listed are polydactyl.

- 2 Kittens (0.6%) are 1WD
- 124 Kittens (38.2%) are 2FWD
- 7 Kittens (2.2%) are 2RWD
- 21 Kittens (6.5%) are 3WD
- 171 (52.6%) are 4WD
- 10 Kittens have unknown paws
- 310 litter kittens are from poly Sire
- 267 litter kittens are from poly Dam
- 24 litter kittens – both parents are poly
- 7 litter kittens have homozygous Sire
- No litter kittens with homozygous Dam

WHAT WAS REALLY SAID AT THE TICA ANNUAL?

Recently rumours and gossip have been flying along with accusations that Poly supporters were circulating a petition among Maine Coon breed members. This petition, along with signatures allegedly was to be submitted to the TICA Board of Directors asking to suspend the rules of TICA and have the Board of Directors override the Breed Section vote and ultimately allow Maine Coon polydactyls to be accepted for championship status. This gossip was attributed to the “buzz” at the Annual Show following the Annual Board meeting in Texas during August.

This gossip even led to a request/requirement from a current Breed Committee Member that all potential candidates address their feeling on polydactylism as well as a statement of whether they would sign or not

sign this petition that doesn't, nor ever existed. In spite of being told by a member of the Board of Directors that there never was a petition or a request to set aside TICA rules, the paranoia continues.

The Facts: TICA allows any member to request to address the Board of Directors on any topic. If approved this person is allowed to speak briefly to Board. The Board can also request info, if they desire from any source they deem appropriate.

Deb Brown of PolyStandard Group made such a request without any petition. The request was granted and she did in fact address the Board in August. There was no petition, nor was there a request to suspend the rules. *“Paws for Effect”* has a copy of the address to the Board and it is printed here. Although it is doubtful that those participating in this character assassination will not be comforted by seeing what was contained in this address to the Board, we do hope that others with clearer heads will see the speech for what it really was.

Advancement – Championship Status for a New Trait - Maine Coon Polydactyl TICA Annual Board Meeting, August 2008

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Deb Brown and I am here today representing a group of International Maine Coon breeders. I myself am not a breeder but a Fancier. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak on their behalf, concerning the acceptance of the Maine Coon Polydactyl for Championship Status. It is an honour to be here.

The International Cat Association (TICA) is the world's largest genetic registry of purebred cats. It encourages its members to be caring, responsible owners and breeders of cats



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who work together to promote the preservation of pedigreed cats and the distinct characteristics of individual breeds. The distinct characteristic of polydactyly, a valid trait, is already recognized and accepted by TICA. The only separation of the Maine Coon and the Maine Coon Polydactyl is whether they are accepted in the show ring. All of today's pedigree Maine Coon cats came from the original foundation cats on the eastern seaboard, and original foundation type cats are still surviving there today, poly and non-poly alike.

When founding the Maine Coon as a breed, the polydactyl was recognized as a historic trait that has been part of the Maine Coon heritage from the beginning of the breed. The MCBFA Polydactyl Standard stated: Our MCBFA Polydactyl Standard has been voted in by our membership, and the wording is as follows: "the Maine Coon Polydactyl Cat should conform to the Standard of the Maine Coon Cat, with the exception that multiple toes are allowed on either fore or hind paws or both."

When the time came to have the Maine Coon accepted as a recognized pedigree cat, the polydactyl trait was dropped from the standard. Some of the reasoning was: It is hard enough to get a cat recognized but with a trait that seems to be associated with barn cats or household pets, it is better to leave this until a later time when this trait will be tolerated. Others claimed it was a deformity and there was the "I just don't like it" opinion. At this time the genetics information was not available. So when the standard for the Maine Coon was developed, the polydactyl trait was voted out of the standard, but not out of the breed. The only reason to not include the polydactyl in the show ring was aesthetics and possibly prejudice of the time.

In the vast world of pedigree cats there are many breeds and many breeders. This diversity exists due to the great number of breed choices. Individuals will have likes and dislikes of coat, colour, disposition, tails, ears, size,

shape and ultimately digits. And each individual will chose one breed over another because of their personal preference. Over time breed standards have been modified to include, new or old traits specific to the individual breed. These changes are progress. The polydactyl trait of the Maine Coon is not a new trait, but a valid trait carried on by breeders preserving all aspects of the Maine Coon cat.

In the past there was a determined effort to eradicate this trait. It wasn't because of health issues. It came about by myth, hearsay and again the ever present "I just don't like it." There are many traits in other cat breeds that this can be said about, but it didn't result in the detrimental damage done to the breed as a whole. Natural selection has kept this trait going in the foundation cats on the Eastern seaboard to this date. It is only the acceptance to cat associations that have altered this breed. Was a disservice done to this cat by progress and recognition?

There is a great passion that surrounds the Maine Coon, and any breed for that matter. This is especially true of the Maine Coon breed section and the acceptance of the polydactyl trait. Times and tolerances have hopefully changed over the years, the genetics information has definitely changed. But there comes a time when we need to move forward and see the cat in the way it should be seen. A Maine Coon.

Today I would like to request that this board reassess the poll of the returned ballots concerning the acceptance of the Maine Coon Polydactyl for Championship status. This clearly shows that knowledge surrounding the polydactyl trait needs to be promoted to dispel old information of the past and introduce the facts we now know today. Acceptance should be seen as the way to educate. There are many breed section members that did not vote. We would like to suggest that this is due to the fact that they are neutral to the acceptance and have no objection to the inclusion of the polydactyl in



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the show ring. But for many they do not know or understand the polydactyl trait. Visibility in the championship show ring will promote the learning and education for all.

Acceptance of the Maine Coon Polydactyl is a personal like. Opposition to the polydactyl is a personal dislike. Breeding, owning or showing a Maine Coon Polydactyl is a personal choice. Polydactyly is a dominant gene. You need one to have one. There are no hidden polys or carriers. Just as those that dislike them have the same choice to not breed, show or own one. After 40 plus years of breeders and fanciers working with the polys with no major health or quality of life concerns from this naturally occurring trait, it becomes somewhat detrimental to have those that dislike, and have no everyday experience of working with this trait, pass judgment on this issue, especially in a genetically oriented association such as TICA with its worldwide visibility. There is a consolidated group of Maine Coon breeders around the world with polydactyls in their programs. They have been documenting individual litters and kittens in a database for over 2 ½ years. Again to provide factual information for those wishing to learn. Unfortunately there is great misinformation spread continuously, and embellished along the way. These myths and ill-fated stories have propagated over the years and have been passed down now for generations. Most concern domestic polydactyl cats where there is no care or control over breeding. There are no health or genetic issues associated with the extra digits of the Maine Coon Polydactyl. Maine Coon breeders have been successfully breeding and actively showing the Maine Coon Polydactyl in New Traits classes to educate, increase awareness and dispel the myths. Education is the key for the promotion and protection of this cat. Being seen and judged with its peers and having the higher visibility in the championship ring will create this awareness. Not only with cat association

people but the general public. Seeing is believing.

We respectfully request that all pedigree Maine Coons be in the show ring and be judged as a Main Coons regardless of digit configuration. No more emphasis should be placed on digits than eye colour. It is imperative that the Maine Coon Standard remains intact, with the addition of Polydactyl Allowed.

Through out this speech I have referred to the Maine Coon Polydactyl. It is hoped that some day the term polydactyl will be dropped and all the cats of this breed are referred to as Maine Coons.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Respectfully

Deborah N. Brown

That's a "wrap" for another month. This month's Issue is a bit long again, since a lot has happened over the summer and this fall. Hopefully we can bring you more positive news and get back to normal as most of us head back to the daily grind. Summer is over for most of us and we hope you had good and fun summer. For those subscribers in the Southern Hemisphere, spring is here and the best to all for your upcoming Summer. We hope that you will join us again next month for more of the latest news from PolyTrak. Visit PolyTrak at <http://www.polytrak.net> to see archived issues of "**Paws For Effect**" dating back to January of 2007. If you have any questions or comments feel free to email us anytime at ptnewsletter@polytrak.net. Have a great summer all! **And don't forget to vote if you receive a ballot.**

Bye for Now!

