

Laguna Woods Globe

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CITY COUNCIL



Annie McCary, left, president of the African American Heritage Club and the new mayor of Laguna Woods, appears with Frankie Maryland-Alston in front of the club's Kwanzaa display at a celebration Friday, Dec. 19, in Clubhouse 3. McCary was chosen by the City Council as mayor and will hold the post for a year. PHOTO BY MARK RABINOWITZ

McCARY TAKES GAVEL AS NEXT LAGUNA WOODS MAYOR

By Daniella Walsh
CORRESPONDENT

Laguna Woods has a new first. After voters elected an all-female City Council in 2024, the city now has its first Black mayor, a woman to boot.

Village resident and Mayor Pro Tem Annie McCary took the helm on the dais Dec. 17, chosen by her colleagues to serve the next year leading the council.

Having grown up in the Jim Crow South, McCary said she "could not have imagined a moment like this."

"Opportunities were limited and expectations were often set for us by others. What guided me then — and still does — is a deep belief in dignity, perseverance and service," she said in an email Monday, Dec. 22.

"As a woman of color, I do recognize this moment is both significant and historic," she added. "I stand on the shoulders of my family and those who came before me, and I am deeply grateful to this amazing community."

For Councilmember Carol Moore, McCary's appointment as mayor is important in other ways.

"Having an African American as mayor is

significant, for it exemplifies the diversity of the community," Moore said. "Having qualified individuals from diverse backgrounds makes for more thoughtful policy."

Councilmember and former Mayor Shari Horne took another approach.

"Yes, she'll be the first African American mayor, but she's a human being

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FOSTERING

Little acts of love change lives, one cat at a time

By Beverly Elwell
CAT CLUB PRESIDENT

In 1971, the Leisure World Cat Club burst into being, established by Jackie Loomer.

Before moving to Leisure World, Loomer and her husband, a U.S. Army general, traveled continually and finally settled in Riverside. A lifelong cat lover, Loomer became president of the Riverside County Humane Society and ran an animal shelter there.

By anyone's standards, Loomer led a rich and meaningful life. In 1987, when asked by an Orange County Register reporter about her secret to success, she replied, "I think the basic thing is to be kind to animals and be decent and thoughtful of people. Help them both as much as possible. That's where my joy in life has come."

I reflected upon this while listening to people describe their experiences

as foster parents for cats at a recent meeting of what has become the Laguna Woods Cat Club.

Fostering animals requires so much more than providing shelter. A foster becomes a health care professional, a breaker of bad habits, an appraiser of everything that goes in and comes out of a cat, a protector of anything breakable, a master puppeteer of cat toys, and finally a true friend who is willing to let the fur baby go off to the promise of a forever future.

At the meeting, no regrets were spoken. The room filled with warmth as each foster related moments of sweet surprise and laughter and joy — the satisfying reward for all of those little acts of love.

Fifty-four years later, I think Jackie Loomer would be proud of us. Her legacy of kindness continues.

See **Pages 10 and 11** for tales about cats and their fosters.

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CAT CLUB

Foster cats live in homes for a while but in hearts forever

Cat fosters talk about the joys and rewards of taking care of their little charges, and of the mysterious bonds that connect the cats and their humans.

SARA WILLARD

What is it about fostering? Well, for me, it's the opportunity to have a relationship with a new cat. And they're each a bundle of surprises.

From the first acquaintance — whether with a shy, very quiet kitty, or a boisterous, bouncy one — each cat brings its own quirks and lovely subtleties into our lives. To me, it's a gift quite unlike any other.

It's always so rewarding to come home to the kitty who is waiting and greets me. I like the experience each cat brings with his or her own habits, personalities, and likes and dislikes — they are so individual and charming. Even a cat with problems or special needs is a gift because you know they sense you are caring for them in ways they can't do for themselves.

I grew up with cats in the house, and my brothers and I to this day love to have cats in our lives, thanks to our parents. There is a special bond with a cat that is not necessarily explainable to others — it's something between the cat and myself that is indefinable.

I confess I'm a bit of a pushover when a new cat opportunity presents itself. So, fostering cats who need a bit of loving and care between their previous owner and their new prospective adopter is a nice fit... (when my own kitty sees fit to accept a new stranger).

MARNIE KIEFER

I love fostering cats because it gives them a safe and loving place to land while they wait for their forever homes. It feels amazing to know that I can make a



Marnie Kiefer



Suzanne Stowe



Dolores DeMayo



Wendy Levin



Pat Huff



Audrey Pekarek



Randi Reybroek



JoAnne Huston



Larry Broadmoore

difference in an animal's life even if it's for a short time. Every foster I've cared for has left paw prints on my heart.

SUZANNE STOWE

I decided to foster cats because I had lost two 18-year-old kitties and my remaining Siamese rescue, Monty, was acting lonely. I chose the Cat Club because of my past involvement and the good work they do. I had fostered in the past, and it was a positive experience.

My latest foster was Josie, who turned out to be a foster failure. She officially joined our household permanently last year, and both Monty and I are happy to have her.

DOLORES DEMAYO

I decided to foster cats for the Cat Club because I was tired of my precious little kitties getting old and dying on me. As a foster, I still have to give them up after loving

them, but I know they are going to good homes where the people have been vetted. Their homes have been inspected, and I know they are going to people who will love them.

A big black cat named Silky, who I had recently, went to a young couple that still sends me pictures every now and again, just to let me know that she is still doing well. She always looks content and well fed.

WENDY LEVIN

I've always been fascinated by the beauty and calm presence of cats, so I've raised and loved many cats over my lifetime. A few months ago, my 15-year-old cat passed away.

I had decided that, when that day came, I would become a foster for the Cat Club. That way I would not have a cat who might outlive me, and I could enjoy the company of the various cats

that I would foster until they were ready for adoption.

I'm a relatively new foster. I fostered a senior cat, Rally, who was adopted, and currently am fostering an adorable kitten, Ebony, who was found — abandoned — in the Village (lucky kitten!).

TOM FROST

When my kitty of 13 years, Angel, passed away, I decided to foster instead of adopting. I'm glad I did. I helped 11 sweet kitties find loving homes. I have the Cat Club to thank for making that possible.

Each foster cat has been a mix of challenging and satisfying. My hope is that all my kitties go to their new loving homes and adjust quickly.

My last foster, Chloe, was memorable. She came to me with a scratching problem. I'm confident my work with her calmed that down. Finding her a good home took time, but the Cat Club did it.

I currently have Cali, whom I adopted. At 13 years old, she has lymphoma. After three times in the Cat Club foster program, Cali deserved a home for the rest of her life. She will become my longest foster. I'm sure the Cat Club will still need me after Cali is gone.

If you have the time, a home available and the disposition to foster, I highly recommend it. It makes me feel good to help the community I live in and love. Thank you, Cat Club, for the work you do and for bringing me Cali.

PAT HUFF

I really hit the jackpot when I agreed to foster a cat who turned out to be Jake. What a good-looking tuxedo I discovered in this very low-key cat! We are soulmates, I do believe. When it was time to put his picture out there for adoption, I declined and decided to keep him forever.

Jake is quite a talker and can go on and on for quite a while. Every morning, he comes in to wake me up. If I don't respond, he'll come back later.

I'm grateful to the Cat Club for bringing us together. The club does so much good for the Village and for the lucky felines in their care.

AUDREY PEKAREK

Around Christmas 2021, a friend forwarded an email from the Cat Club. Mao's owner had passed. The family needed a foster just until they could pick him up, but they were out of town for Christmas. My Calvin had passed sometime before, but I just could not bring myself to adopt anew.

Mao was a big (15 pounds) happy boy whose favorite thing was to lie on my chest and be cuddled. He was picked up as promised by his grateful family a week later. So, my foster journey began.

Since then I have fostered 11 cats of all types and personalities. All of them needed to feel safe and comforted from the trauma that brought them to the Cat Club. Some needed a little extra care — matted fur, ear mites, diet concerns. They were all adopted with the steadfast support of the Cat Club. I experienced cuddles, biscuits, play time and lots

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CATS

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of affection.

I'm frequently asked, "How can you give them up?" That can be really hard. My reward is being needed by the next little fur pal in need of a home to rest in.

JOANNE HUSTON

Five years after the loss of my beloved 12-year-old spaniel, I began to feel ready for pet ownership again when some friends suggested I consider adopting through the Cat Club. Ten-year-old Frida from the streets of Mexico via San Diego, then the Village, became available. I adopted her knowing she had a potentially fatal asymptomatic disease, and we bonded quickly.

What a little soulmate she was! Her time with me was full of playtime and purring and plenty of biscuit making. I have no regrets, though her time with me was less than six months.

Again, more heartbreak: however, this time it only lasted five months, not five years, before the opportunity to foster through the club became a perfect option for me.

Not only do I find my role as foster parent enjoyable, but it's also rewarding knowing that there are kitties out there who are in between their current situations (whether stray or relinquished to the club) and their permanent homes.

The goodbyes are still there, they always will be, but there's a joy that comes from knowing the Cat Club fostering program has placed another precious kitty into her loving forever home.

JOLEEN FITZGERALD AND HAROLD POTH

We have had the pleasure of fostering two cats through the Cat Club — a large, older orange tabby named Bubba and a 2-month-old tiny tabby named Tiny Tim.

Bubba adjusted to our home very quickly. From the beginning he was very gentle and loved to be played with, brushed, petted, but only by the mistress of the house, Joleen, who was seriously considering adopting him. He was always very skittish with me.

He was adopted after two



Marcia Millar with Reddy. COURTESY PHOTO



Sara Willard with Daddy Longlegs. COURTESY OF SUSAN BROWN MATSUMOTO

months by a woman who gave him a great home which he quickly made his own. Everyone was very happy!

Found kitten Tiny Tim was the cutest little kitty who made our house into his race track. The first evening, he hid under the couch until we got him out. One of the early days he came into the kitchen and climbed up my pants to see what I was doing on the counter. When I removed him, he immediately climbed back up, so we repeated this dance until he got tired.

He wanted to be with us all the time, and he was fun to watch,



Harold Poth and Joleen Fitzgerald with Tiny Tim. COURTESY OF SUSAN BROWN MATSUMOTO



Tom Frost with Cali. COURTESY PHOTO

especially when he first discovered himself in a full-length mirror. It took a little while for him to figure out that the cat in the mirror wasn't going to touch him back.

He was adopted in about three months by a woman and her daughter, who had recently lost one of her cats. She also fostered a number of little kittens, which Tiny Tim took under his wing, since he had developed into a big brother. Another happy adoption for all concerned!

MARCIA MILLAR

Fostering is wonderful. My last foster was Reddy. And boy was he a

winner. Reddy warmed the hearts of many in the Cat Club with his bravery and love for everyone he met. Every person was considered a friend. But his life wasn't always easy.

He came to the Cat Club after living in a closet for we don't know how many years, and even in his first foster home. He adopted this behavior, we discovered, because he had untreated advanced glaucoma and was in great pain.

As horrified as our president, Bev, was, she approved the eye specialist's recommendation to remove Reddy's eyes. Amazingly, he never returned to the closet, and his personality shined.

Many thanks to the donor who paid for Reddy's eye surgery, for the Cat Club who paid his expenses, and to Bev for believing he could have a better life. Reddy gave much love to many of us, but he gave the most to me as I shared my home with him for several years. Fostering gave me that opportunity.

On Oct. 18, Reddy went to sleep and crossed the rainbow bridge, and he will truly be missed by all. I will be fostering again to be blessed by and to bless these precious cats.

RANDI REYBROEK

I've had the opportunity to enjoy the company of 16 furry friends. On five occasions, they arrived two at a time. Each experience was special in its own way.

Puff and Monty became my first

pair. Puff was blind, and Monty, her son, cared for her in a very beautiful and special way. Puff (more Siamese) was smaller, and Monty (more Maine Coon) was a majestic lion.

They would follow each other around and spoon while asleep. Sometimes Puff would show that she was still the mom (in charge) and let Monty know, but all would smooth over soon enough.

I currently have Riley. She has warmed up quickly, never hiding and following me from room to room — I'm in love already.

LARRY BROADMOORE AND JOYCE LAZARUS

When we were first shown Kylo and Milo, two surprisingly large, identical 10-month-old male kittens, I could tell that my husband was just as smitten as I was with their handsomeness, accented by striking, matching patterns of cool-toned stripes, dots, swirls and bands.

But I was taken aback when, about 15 seconds after meeting them, Larry made his way to me through the small knot of Cat Club volunteers in our foyer, and, nodding meaningfully, whispered, "These are very unusual cats!"

Well, I don't know how he knew, but despite being so high-spirited and mischievous that we had to put latches on all our cupboards and slide pins on all our closets, despite their furious stampeding through the halls all night and morning and championship-worthy fighting with each other, they have proven gentle and easy-going with us.

No biting. No scratching. They clearly communicate their needs and wishes with sweet meows or trills. We failed fostering by adopting them.

Kylo and Milo love to play! Their personalities are very different from each other, but they are bonded together as if with Gorilla Glue. And, unlike any cats either of us have ever lived with before, they are relaxed, confident and secure with us stroking them (after showing the proper respect) or touching their paws, stomachs or sides, and seem to become more affectionate every day.

Kylo and Milo were a bit intimidating at first, but, working together, we have found ways around most issues and we are so glad that they are here.