

## FRAZIER'S STORY

*Part 1 – penned in January 2004*

The woman was becoming more and more demanding and Gail was tired of answering her calls. It had all started the previous week when this lady had left a message to say that she was homeless and living in her car with her family of rescued cats....

An all too familiar story huh? Yes – we hear it all the time, and it is never easy to say no and to turn a blind eye and not to think about the plight of millions of these poor animals. This particular case was disturbing as some of the cats were very, very old and would never stand a chance of life elsewhere. As Gail hesitated and her voice wavered Diane knew she had finally won and her eldest children would be safe from the jaws of certain death.

The following day they arrived at BrightHaven. Squeaky, Fuzzy and Blackie moved into the BrightHaven office, where they were given adjoining beds under Gail's desk from where they could watch the world go by and get used to this fascinating new place.

Fuzzy and Squeaky being brothers and already twenty years of age, were nonplussed and quickly ventured forth to explore their new territory and meet all their new brothers and sisters. Although their guardian had cared for them since birth and they loved her dearly they were well used to living as part of a large and transient animal family and were delighted to meet their new extended family. It soon became apparent that "Fuzzy" and "Squeaky" were not entirely comfortable with their names and felt a little silly amongst their new friends. The family gathered to think of new and suitable names for the group and as he heard the suggestion "Frazier" being made – Fuzzy jumped up and declared it would suit him just fine as he had always considered himself a star! Squeaky agreed upon the dignified Sidney for himself and Blackie was delighted to become the very feminine Lucy.

*"That got that fixed" the three of them thought as they yawned and fell asleep that night*

Frazier just adored his new life and threw himself into it with gay abandon. It became apparent very early on that Frazier was not an entirely normal cat. He loved to have fun and to play crazily and often – so often that he even needed an imaginary friend with whom to play!!! They raced around the house together often, playing madly by day and also sometimes at night, much to the disgust of some of the other more dignified senior residents!



*Life was good for Frazier and his family. They were happy.*

This crazy twenty-something year old cat was delighted to find that there were often visitors to BrightHaven, who were always amenable to his games, however they very soon realized that Frazier also loved leather and denim and loved nothing more than to sharpen his claws on any unsuspecting denim clad leg – or on a beautiful pair of leather shoes!! Many painful gasps were to be heard at BrightHaven that year as Frazier continued his pursuit of fun to the max!!

Early the following year Frazier was sad to learn that his baby sister Lucy (a mere seventeen years) was diagnosed with asthma, a debilitating condition, and she didn't seem able to join in their games so often any more. Still – there were plenty of humans to play with, and Lucy had always been a whiner he thought, and he knew she would receive the very best of care.

Some weeks later Frazier found himself listening carefully to the humans talking about Sidney's leukemia – confusing, as Sid looked well and Frazier reasoned that there really could be nothing to worry about. In

fact several months later Frazier was proved correct when it was announced that Sid was again entirely well, the strange sounding illness had gone away another excuse to play and party at BrightHaven!

*Life was clearly still great.*

About this time Frazier seemed to develop a cold in his nose – never much, but always lots of sneezing and stuff that flew from his nose. He certainly wasn't going to let that cramp his style and just ignored the symptoms. After all his new family often spent time on the telephone with someone they call Dr Chris and then they gave him medicine that had no taste.

*Frazier felt terrific.*

The family moved to Northern California in 2000 and gosh that was such a fun and very exciting time. There were new places to explore; new folks to meet; new beds to snuggle in. The garden was a great place to chase imaginary friends in too – Yes of course Frazier's friend made the move too and the two friends were often to be seen dashing around the house and garden in mad pursuit of each other! Lucy and Sidney were always close by watching their crazy brother with perplexed expressions and there were both new human and animal friends appearing often. No time to dwell on the strange hard lump appearing on his face.....someone would sort it out.

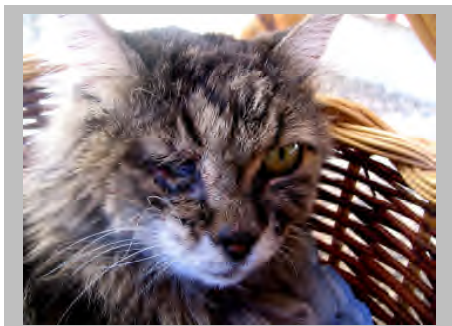


*Life was still very good*

Suddenly it was time to sit up and take notice. Humans kept appearing and talking about him with worried frowns and the old funny word cancer kept being mentioned. Dr Chris prescribed new medicine and still the lump kept on growing. One day it burst and all was well for some time, until the lump became more than one and then they were all over his face. He found it a little strange how sad some of the humans were and how some of the visitors didn't seem to love him quite so much and want to play games together any more.....Once again Dr Chris pulled "one out of the bag" they said, and the family sighed with relief,

*whilst Frazier continued happily playing!*

About this time it became clear that all was not well with Sidney, his so sweet, most dignified and congenial gentlemanly brother. Sidney had liver problems which he fought bravely for many months, during which Frazier and Lucy kept close vigil, but to no avail and one sad day, whilst Lucy licked his face and with Frazier and all the human family in attendance sweet Sidney left this earth to move to a different layer and start his new life. Frazier decided then to honor his brother by moving to sleep in the human bed in the place that Sid had taken as his own. The night that Sidney 'left' Frazier slept in Richard's arms and tried to comfort this wonderful human as he grieved for his close and much beloved friend.



The days sped by and they were mostly good. Some days it was hard to breathe properly and some days it was easier to stay in bed. The food was just as wonderful, as were the games he played with his real and also his imaginary friends. Lucy still coughed lots but she had grown very fat and happy he was delighted to see, and they chatted often.

*"Life is still just a huge bowl of cherries!"*

In the last months Frazier's tumors have played hide and seek across his face and forehead to take up root over his left eye.

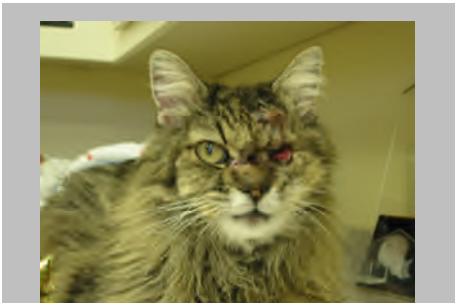
The lump gradually engulfed his entire eye and we despaired for, not only his sight, but also his very eye too. Frazier cared not and continued on as though nothing was different. He had a life to live don't you know!! Through all the turmoil this wonderful man retained his huge sense of humor and endured the many face cleansings – not to mention the proddings and pokings!



This photograph, taken in 2004 showed Frazier's face at last at last improving, with his tumors subsiding in size to show fresh pink skin in places. Most amazing was that as the swelling and discharge decreased over his left side, his actual eye, which had been missing for many months, could be seen again. If one held the tissue open, one could see the old unwavering glance of his left eye as it stared back at you! – still completely intact!

Those days Frazier napped just a little more and ate just a teeny bit more too!! Perhaps he played a little less crazily with his best and imaginary friend, but once invited still rose to any occasion,

to chase through the house happily in pursuit of his favorite past-times: a new pair of jeans or an expensive pair of leather shoes. *"There really is only one way of getting those claws sharpened properly"* he reasoned!!



*"How very lucky I am" – he thinks*

This charming, bright eyed and sensitive 'young' man who must have been the oldest of souls has taught all the BrightHaven humans some very clear lessons in life.

By human standards he looked pretty bad. His fur shone like glass and his beautiful eye shone brightly to match, but his sadly misshapen face was often to be seen oozing blood or pus – not an easy sight for most to bear.



There were times when humans could be heard muttering such things as "Should he be put out of his misery?" or "Oh my goodness that looks just dreadful", but Frazier taught us by his sunny attitude to each and every day of his precious time here on earth that one must learn to think deeper and look beyond the outer surface and see deep into the happy place beneath, where contentment and peace dwell. Perhaps it is a test, as only the truly enlightened can see the invisible and understand that the perception is the reality.

Frazier told us that life was beautiful still for him and full of happiness and that he and Lucy still had much to do. He would make plans to move on to his next beautiful life, where Sidney and his other long gone friends would be waiting, as and when the time came. For now though he would play on in the sunshine of his golden years enjoying each moment in and of itself!!!!

For any one of us our next moment may be our last here - better to have left having enjoyed oneself than to carry forward regrets.

*Frazier – Part 2 - continued February 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 in his memory.*

**Frazier** – a 34 year old cat-hero with a facial cancer, who refused to die.

Frazier went into death throes many times and even stopped breathing many times, before he returned to life to try again. Frazier fought death so many times that it became a joke that he would start to die in the afternoon and by night, would be requesting a second plate of food.

BrightHaven animal Reiki teacher, friend and author Kathleen Prasad came to do a photo-shoot for her new Reiki book (see Resources section) with her many BrightHaven animal friends and it was just a delight to see how Frazier, at that time clearly winding down to die, would not leave her alone. Frazier followed Kathleen and photographer Kendra Luck as they worked – or tried to (!! ) He insisted upon being

clear and present, although his gait was somewhat worrisome and wobbly to say the least. We remain uncertain whether he wished for Reiki or simply the publicity he so richly deserved.....!!!



Kathleen offering Frazier Reiki



A treasured photograph of Frazier with friend Ollie – spending a few minutes in the sun together in their last days.

Most days Frazier was able to eat alone from a plate, but other he preferred to be fed by finger or syringe: the same for water too. He tolerated and oft-times enjoyed the warm face-cloths which kept him spic-n-span and looking cool for his guests. In fact, and upon reflection, there was little that Frazier did not enjoy.

As his time grew closer and closer we watched in awe as his many cat and dog friends too, spent time near by. Frazier would lie happily on a huge comforter on the floor as he received his friends and would spend much time with them in silent meditation or communication. Frazier communicated his feelings well, even to us silly humans. As we would speak he would clasp our fingers tightly in his paws and clutch them tightly, much as a child. He gazed with his solitary eye deep into one's very soul and gave us silent encouragement and faith to take along our life paths.

*The word Guru has often been used for this amazing soul and who am I to argue.*

As in true animal tradition this man's last hours were devoted to humans as his cat and dog farewells were done and finished. Flame, his sweet and gentle cat friend lay dying slowly in another part of the house with his favorite human, Andrea, holding his paw tightly as she cried her farewell tears for him.

Finally it was Flame's time and we placed his warm, but empty of spirit, body, close to Frazier's in his bed.

We all sat around and prayed and Frazier finally made his decision with a sigh. I lifted him into my arms and we all leaned close, unbelieving – Could this finally be his time we wondered? The signs were all there – He sighed and craned his neck far back and I reached my hand carefully under him to help him lean.....He gave a little kick.....Hmmm.....Was this just another "test".....We had no way to know. We held and caressed him we talked of things nonsensical ...We laughed....We cried.....He would not leave.....How could our miracle man finally leave?.....No.....but here it came again.....and again.....and then he began to twitch as only the body can as the nervous system begins its preparation for the winding down time. We silently held him – the tears flowing like rivers from each and every person's eyes.

I honestly believe that there was not one of us present who truly believed that Frazier's time was finally here and when he lay limp in my arms, after his final kick as he leaped free of his old and injured body; we continued to sit in silence – stunned and unbelieving until a torrent of tears became our swift release as Susanna (our General Manager at the time) and I clung together.

In the final analysis Frazier chose to leave with sweet, young soul friend Flame – It is our belief that Frazier chose this time so that he could be there to help Flame complete his transition.

Frazier left his incredible mark on the history of BrightHaven.

Here are my words written in his memory:

## “FRAZIER”

1972 ~ 2006



I pondered long and hard on what to write about this amazing character, who has been responsible for making me, in part, who I am today. His life was the most amazing journey of all time.

After a four year battle against an aggressive cancer in his face Frazier finally died at the grand age of 34 years. Did the cancer take him from us? – I think not. Perhaps it was simply his time..?

Frazier taught us by his energetic and sunny attitude to each and every day of his precious time here on earth that one must learn to think deeper and look beyond the outer surface and see deep into the happy place beneath where contentment and peace dwell.

Frazier told us that life is always beautiful, full of happiness and that he still had much to do. He refused to make plans to move on to his next life, where twin Sidney and many other long gone friends awaited him, even trying valiantly to stand and walk once more on his very last day.

I have been honoured and humbled by the part of my life spent caring for this man, who lived each and every day as if it were his last. He has given me love, pride, pleasure, happiness and, without doubt a greater understanding of life.

For any one of us our next moment may be our last here and better to have left having enjoyed oneself than to carry forward regrets.

If I can even try to live my life half as well as he did his ~ then I will have learned his lessons well.

*Go confidently in the direction of your dreams  
~ Live the life you have imagined.....*

*Henry David Thoreau*

BrightHaven friend Sheila Ganey shared these beautiful words:

*He has made heaven sparkle like a diamond in the sun;  
Another light, not extinguished, but brighter than before  
Shining down from the heavens.*

And finally my favourite quote of all:

*“Because I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me,  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality”*

*Emily Dickinson*

February 13<sup>th</sup> 2006