"Gingi" April 19th 2008









There never was anything middle of the road about this boy! Gingi had a larger than life personality – not immediately obvious, but he was a leader. He charmed the ladies and incurred respect from the gentlemen! In years gone by, Gingi gradually acquired status – a quiet man – staying in the background but always there and always respected. When one was head-butted in pleasure by GingeBear – It made us feel a million dollars!

Gingi had been running the show here, with Beauregard for quite some time and despite poor health, doing a darned fine job of it!! You will see photos of him caring, oh so sweetly for Trevor, as he made preparations for his journey, and many have been filled with admiration for the cat who seemed to have it all!

Sounds like he was lucky? – in some respects for sure…but really quite the opposite!! A quick summing up will take your breath away:

It all began with the car accident in his 3rd year that left him with a metal plate in his pelvis and rendered him unable to go to the bathroom, as well as with chronic neurological problems in his hind end. His loving owner, Karl was unable to tend to his everyday incontinence, which involved the manual expression of both bladder and bowels. So, for 6 years Gingi became a blood donor at a vet hospital, during which time he was diagnosed with asthma, a pericardial congenital diaphragmatic hernia, and showed a positive FIP titer twice!

You are probably beginning to understand this boy's tough life by now, but wait – there is more to come…..

When the vet hospital changed ownership Gingi was no longer needed and was to be euthanized. Happily the clinic thought to notify Karl, who found us, and voila' – How could I resist?

Shortly after Ginger-bread-man (another of his delightful nicknames) arrived at BH he became deathly ill, was unable to be helped locally and rushed to specialist care, where it was found that his liver and spleen were wrapped around his heart and the most incredible and unforgettable surgery was performed to save his life by a mere squeak!!!









With great friend Sammi



With Trevor, Joey and Sam

Giving me courage -with Bentley



Always close to Trevor



With Dafne-Ann & Joey







Grooming Trevor

His immune system clearly beyond low by then, Gingi succumbed to the dreaded feline lymphacytic plasmacytic stomatitis next, and shortly thereafter lost all his teeth. Over the years his asthmatic condition worsened and, although tests were done, they revealed nothing, and his chronic bronchitis worsened.

SO!! – next, as I was palpating his tummy one day I found a HUGE mass. What could possibly be next I wondered? An ultrasound revealed a very rare and HUGE hepatic cyst, which was happily drained and thankfully did not return.

And so, against all odds, Gingi turned 17 years to become a leading BrightHaven miracle.

For the last few years Gingi had joined the ranks of those to offer love and comfort for the dying, beginning with dear Cassie in 2006 and most recently for Trevor, Bentley, Beauregard, Ginny and Simon.

When the last of the BrightHaven great "rat pack" leaders began his decline from physical health, Gingi stepped forward to help and, at 28 years young Beauregard was happy to accept!

Their team was not an obvious one with Beau sedentary in the center of the house and Gingi in a different area, but their teamwork was clear.

Those in need of chastising always ended up on the end of Gingi's paw! He was never given to fighting – but to actually slapping those who needed it, over the head – very hard!! With head lowered, his determination and anger very clear; most would walk away fast – or simply run!!! .

Lately I sensed a certain "Je n'sais quoi" about Gingi or "Ginger-bear" or "Ginge-Binge" or even "Gingerbread man". He wore a certain melancholy, sitting alone with a look of sadness on his face. Despite his coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing Gingi forbade sympathy – he needed it not.

During his last weeks he would sit on the couch in the evenings with me and cuddle on my chest after dinner. I told him it was OK for him to go, but also sensed he knew I did not really mean my words.

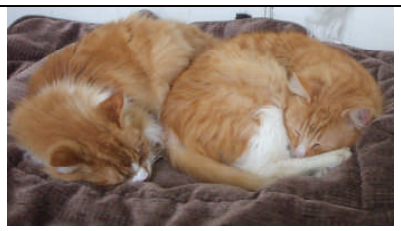


As Daf-Ann lay dying





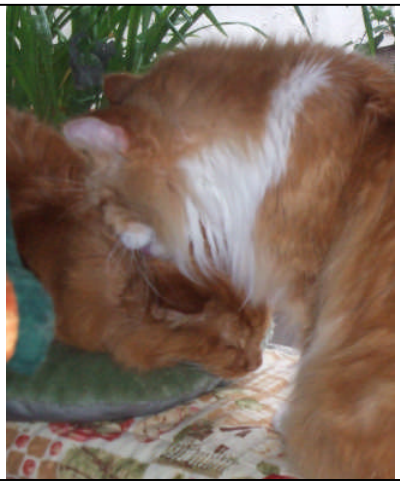
Cuddling with Vancouver















We have been touched by his constant, deep devotion and care-giving, when all the while his own body was signaling its time to leave. His loving care and concern for Simon, as he came to be surrounded in love through death, will be remembered by us all throughout this lifetime. I am so grateful to have pictures of those special moments.

Gingi filled my every moment of the last several weeks, showing us so very clearly even to the end that, although his life was hard, LOVE was all that mattered and for that reason he had no wish to leave.

During his last days, so many joined me in gratitude to be given the opportunity to return the gift of care to Gingi in his hours of need.
I know that he would wish me to send his special love and fare-thee-well messages to Karl, his ever loving owner, still broken hearted from their parting, and most especially during his final days, to June, who came almost daily to be with him and Debbie, Darleen and Mindy for their deep and loving care. Thanks also for the loving support to us both from our friend Dr Jeff (Levy), who tried so hard to give Gingi a taste of the good life.

Gingi's life was never easy, and his journey away from our world, the same. I cannot begin to say how empty and lost I am feeling this morning knowing I must go through a day without this brave dear man.

For me the emptiness of the days to follow will be vast, as Gingi has been a huge part of my daily life for so many years. Of course there are others who need me now and so life *will* go on regardless, but quiet for a while. As my darling slips into my heart to join his friends I have to wonder if the fabric of a heart can stretch to eternity to always accommodate just one more…….

"As my heart holds you just one beat away, I cherish all you gave me every day. For you are mine forever love, watching me from up above.
And I believe that angels breathe and that love lives on and never leaves. Fly me up to where you are beyond the distant star.
I wish upon tonight to see you smile if only for awhile to know you're there. A breath away's not far to where you are. I know you're there.
A breath away's not far to where you are."

Sheila Ganey





