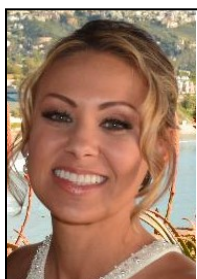




LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As the holidays and year-end approaches, I am inspired to reflect on the changes this year has brought to Blue Bell.



In my last letter, I listed some of the projects planned for 2024 and would like to share updates with you. We completed the flooring renovations in both the Bertha Yergat Cottage and Anderson-Wentzel House. This was no small achievement, as the project spanned two months and required careful planning to ensure minimal disruption to the cats. The new flooring enhances the home-like feel with its wood-plank pattern. It's also durable and much easier to clean than our old floors. Our new cat furniture is under construction and we expect to install it by the end of this year. The website redesign project encountered delays, but we are on track for a launch at the end of November. Our website is not changing and will remain bluebellcats.org.

We have also faced challenges during the year. To operate this sanctuary we need a team dedicated to achieving the best possible quality of life for the cats. However, we continue to experience staffing

shortfalls. Caregiving and cleaning seven days a week, 365 days a year is a monumental job. It is also not an easy job and it requires a unique combination of skills and personality, making these positions difficult to fill.

In 2024, we lost several of our long-time feline residents with big personalities. Rusty and Cozy's memorials were featured in our Summer Newsletter. Inside this edition are the memorials for Coco, Laguna, Little Guy, Angie, and Midge. All five of these cats lived at Blue Bell for eight or more years. Laguna was here for an amazing 12 years and Little Guy was the last of the cats entrusted to us by our friend and benefactor, Dorothy Palmer. There are no words for how much we miss them, but we know they are at peace across Rainbow Bridge.

Thank you for supporting our mission to offer loving and compassionate lifetime care for senior cats whose owners can no longer care for them. Every day is truly a miracle at Blue Bell.

Wishing you and your families all the best this holiday season and always,

Jenna Genovese-Mikula, Director



Main room of the Bertha Yergat Cottage before (left) and after (right) the flooring renovation.

MEMORIALS

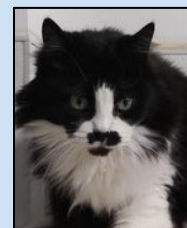
COCO, 19 We lost our tough puff, Coco, on May 21. She came to Blue Bell on October 28, 2014, with Sweet P (RIP 2018) after their owner passed away. The first note in CoCo's chart is, "Very adorable, sweet kitty, not scared." She certainly wasn't shy, and while she could be sweet at times, those of us who knew her best knew her spicy side too. And her demanding side! Coco was a tiny tortie with a lot of 'tude and a big personality. She had the best appetite, always meowing loudly to let us know when it was time to eat. She LOVED chicken and would often eat 3-4 plates (if we didn't stop her!). For many years she was the unofficial "greeter" in the Lower House. Whenever Susan or Jenna gave a tour, Coco would prance up to the visitors and rise on her tippy toes like a ballerina to make sure everyone noticed and admired her. Visitors would often remark on how beautiful she was and pet her. When they stopped petting her to look at the other cats, Coco would tap them on the shoulder or back as if to say, "Ahem, I was not done with you yet!" Coco had gastrointestinal issues since 2018. Sometimes her frequent vomiting and diarrhea were controlled with medications and other times she had flare-ups that were challenging to treat. Despite her incessant appetite, she gradually lost weight. By the beginning of May 2024, she was slowing down, urinating outside the litter box, and eating with less enthusiasm. She was quiet on her last day and spent most of it in bed. Jenna and Joyce took her to the vet late in the afternoon and she crossed Rainbow Bridge to be reunited with her owner.



ANGIE, 18 We unexpectedly lost sassy Angie on September 20. She came to Blue Bell on December 4, 2014 after her owner passed away. She was found outside at only 4-6 weeks old and we are very fortunate to have one of her baby pictures in our files. Despite being found so young, Angie was not well socialized with people. On her intake form, to the question "Does this cat like to be handled?" the answer was, "If she knows you only." That was the truth about Ang to her very last day. She would often meow and rub against your legs as if she wanted attention, then swat or try to bite you as soon as you pet her 2-3 times. Angie didn't care too much for her feline housemates either. There are many notes in her chart about her hissing, yowling, chasing and fighting other cats. She was a vocal cat with a loud and unmistakable meow. She LOVED getting a summer haircut and for days after would prance around the house, showing off her beautiful stripes (which were only noticeable after a cut) and her fluffy boots. She loved to sleep under blankets and inside pillowcases, making it sometimes difficult to find her. In 2020 Angie was diagnosed with a heart murmur. She also began having soft stools and occasional vomiting. She was too smart to eat meds in food and wouldn't let us medicate her on a regular basis, so we monitored and tracked her symptoms. On July 6, 2024 Angie (who had lived almost nine and a half years in the Lower House) moved to the Upper House with all the rest of the Lower House cats during the flooring renovation project. She was initially scared, but once she got comfortable, she really loved being an Upper House cat. Although she was settling in well, her weight dropped sharply over the summer. An exam at the end of August revealed significant progression of kidney disease. On September 19, she was given a mild sedative to enable us to check her blood pressure. Normally the sedative effects wear off in a few hours, but as the day progressed, Angie became more lethargic and had difficulty walking. The next morning she was unable to stand or move. Jenna took her to the vet and received the sad news that she was likely suffering from saddle thrombosis, a rare and suddenly occurring condition where a clot blocks blood supply to the back legs. The vet confirmed this condition was unrelated to the medications she received the previous day and that it was just bad timing. Although we were devastated by the news, we had to act quickly, and Angie was put to sleep in Jenna's arms.



LAGUNA, 20 She arrived on June 26, 2012, and lived at Blue Bell just over 12 years before passing on Saturday, July 27. She was relinquished due to a history of urinating and defecating outside the litterbox, and being nippy with children, behaviors that are common in a declawed cat. Initially, Laguna did not trust people so no one could pet, brush or handle her. She would swat, hiss, scratch and/or bite if we tried. In the summer of 2017, we discovered that the bones in her front paws had continued to grow after her declawing, forming what is called "ram's horns". Every step she took, every jump down, caused pain. No wonder she was grumpy and didn't want to be touched! She had surgery to remove the bone remnants and spent several weeks in isolation recovering. With her paws repaired, she was pain free for the first time in years. She started purring and playing, and late one night she suddenly climbed into Joyce's lap, crawled up her chest, and snuggled up to her neck. She was a changed cat in many ways after that, but her trust still needed to be earned. Laguna accumulated several health conditions over the years with us. She had high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, pancreatitis, IBD, anemia and a heart murmur. We were able to treat and manage her health issues, but given her age we kept a close watch on her quality of life. On Thursday, July 25, she was lethargic and did not eat. There was no improvement on Friday so we decided it was time for her to cross Rainbow Bridge. Joyce wrapped her in a rainbow blanket, held her in the sunshine one last time, and took her to the vet where she passed peacefully.



LITTLE GUY We lost our shy Little Guy on August 9. We are not sure exactly how old he was but estimate that he was 12-15. He was the last of the seven Palmer cats who came to Blue Bell in March 2016 after their owner, Dorothy Palmer (a member of our original Board of Directors), passed away at 102 years old! Little Guy loved his best buddy Big Boy (RIP 2022). They could often be found cuddling together on the small bed or on the bench in the main room in the Lower House. He also loved chicken, treats, and playing with a laser pointer. During the day when there was a lot of activity, he mostly hid under the small bed or in a cave bed or the beehive scratcher. Occasionally he would be visible during quieter times and sometimes would stay out, as long as no one got too close to him. We tried to earn his trust by going slow and interacting with him on his terms, but he never warmed up to being touched and petted. Little Guy came to us with an old injury that caused him to limp badly on his left hind leg. In November 2021 he was diagnosed with IBD/GI lymphoma. In September 2022, we began treating him with a medication that only needed to be injected once every 6-8 weeks and his condition stabilized for more than a year. Unfortunately in April 2024 he was diagnosed with diabetes and hyperthyroidism. We were unable to treat him for these illnesses and decided to let him enjoy the time he had left. On August 7, several volunteers noticed him walking around and meowing constantly for food. We gave him plenty of meals, but without insulin and medication for hyperthyroidism he could not absorb the nourishment. The next day he was quiet and didn't eat well. He was very dehydrated, and we knew it was time to say goodbye. He enjoyed one last chicken day before Joyce and Jenna took him to the vet to be put to sleep. We are glad he is reunited with his best friend Big Boy and his mama Dorothy!



MIDGE, 17 We said goodbye to our beautiful calico queen on September 23. Midge first came to us from the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter in 2014. She was adopted, but her owners returned her to us in 2016. She was an affectionate cat who enjoyed being brushed and hugged. She had a funny habit of drinking water by cupping it in her paws. She was also an adventurous cat and loved to be outside on the catios, rain or shine. During the last few months of her life, Jenna took her on many walks in the gardens. Midge had several health issues including hyperthyroidism, kidney disease, pancreatitis and anemia. She also struggled with chronic urinary tract infections and painful kidney stones. Despite treatment for these conditions, her weight began to decline in December 2023 and it continued to drop over the next few months. By September, she was very weak and not eating so we knew it was time. We made sure Midge had a great last day. It was sunny and Jenna took her for a garden walk in the morning. Then she hung out in the office (*continued on page 3*)



NEW RESIDENTS

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, 13

We welcomed this adorable dilute tortie on June 14. Her owner had a terminal illness and arranged her placement with us. Sunshine acclimated quickly in her suite, but she arrived just before we began the Lower House renovation, so she was moved to a large enclosure on our Upper House patio in July. Within a few days we were able to leave her enclosure open so she could explore her new home. Sunshine gets along with the other kitties as long as they give her space. She has a cute habit of standing on her hind legs and reaching her paw out in an effort to solicit pets, and she follows the staff around asking for treats.



KENNEDY, 13, a striking torbie

(combination tabby/tortie) came to us August 11. Her owner had a change in living situation and was unable to take Kennedy with her. When she first arrived, Kennedy came right out of her carrier and explored every inch of her suite. She introduced herself to staff members by affectionately rubbing against their legs. A friendly gal, she is curious and vocal. However, she is easily over-stimulated and is not a lap cat. Kennedy acclimated to the community in about a month and now enjoys spending her days snoozing in the sunshine or her favorite cave bed on the patio. We are thrilled to have this spicy addition to our family!



KATRINA, 14; ANNIE, 16; STAR, 10; NOIR, 15 & TREASURE, 12 (pictured clockwise,)

were placed from the same home on August 24. Their owner loves them very much but can no longer care for them herself and always planned for them to retire at Blue Bell. Sweet Katrina and chatty Annie are very social girls. We moved them to the Upper House a month after they arrived. Katrina loves to play and is still testing out every bed in the house to find the perfect spot. Annie enjoys sitting by the window and watching birds in the morning, then taking an afternoon stroll around the house and patios. The three boys, Noir, Star and Treasure, are bonded and remain together in the Lower House. Fluffy Noir is outgoing. He loves to be pet so much that he drools when his head is scratched. Star is shyer but allows us to be near him. If we slow blink at him he will blink back. Treasure is the most shy of the group and usually prefers to stay hidden in his cozy corner spot. One of our volunteers is spending extra time with them to help Star and Treasure feel safe and comfortable in their new home. The boys get along well with other cats and we have been opening their door at night to give them time to explore the rest of the house when it's quiet.



MEMORIALS (continued)

for a few hours until Joyce arrived to take her on another walk where she chased a lizard, tried to catch a butterfly, and drank from the tri-level fountain. When she got tired, Joyce held her in the sunshine, and she fell asleep until it was time to go. Midge purred all the way to the vet. She was happy to be with Jenna and Joyce, loved until the end.

CLARENCE was a beneficiary of our Community Cat Fund and came to us from the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter on November 24, 2021. He was found as a stray, so we don't know exactly how old he was, but we estimate he was at least 15 years old when he passed away on July 12. He adjusted to life at Blue Bell quickly and got along well with other cats. We moved him to the Upper House in January 2022 and he could often be found cuddling with, sitting near, or getting neck bites from his housemates. Tiger W, Joey, and Haggis were his closest companions. Clarence was sociable and friendly with people too. He often sat in volunteers' laps. He loved to be petted but hated to be picked up. If he sat on your lap you had to sit with him until he decided it was time to move on; otherwise, you risked his wrath! He loved to be out on the patios in the sunshine and enjoyed catnip parties too. He also had a habit of "taking short walks on the beach," i.e. sitting in litter boxes. Towards the end of his life, Jenna took him on several garden adventures. He explored confidently on these walks and figured out how to return home when finished. Clarence struggled with chronic ear infections and had a cancerous mass in his right ear. In October 2023 he was diagnosed with severe heart disease and had a dangerously slow heart rate. With treatment he stabilized for several months until July 2024 when he stopped eating and became very weak. Joyce and Jenna took Clarence to the vet where he passed peacefully. We know his buddy Tiger W (who also died from heart disease) was waiting for him. We don't know what his life was like before Blue Bell, but Clare-bear loved his life here, and his life was full of love.



DOTTIE, 13 left us too soon and unexpectedly on September 5. She arrived January 10, 2024 after her owner passed away. Her owner's daughter placed Dottie with us because she knew her parents would love Blue Bell as a home for their cherished companion. She was sweet and affectionate from the start. She came right out of her carrier, meowing and head butting. By the evening, she was rolling on her back, playing with catnip mice, eating and using the litter box, all signs that she was comfortable in her new home. Within a few weeks she was exploring the Lower House and getting to know her new roommates. Her favorite place remained the tall cat tree that came with her. Dottie moved to the Upper House in May and quickly integrated into the community there. She made special friends with Sparrow, who loved to sit at the bottom of Dottie's cat tree. On August 31, she didn't eat and vomited yellow liquid several times. By the next day she did not improve and her abdomen felt distended so we took her to the emergency vet hospital. An ultrasound revealed intestinal thickening, enlarged lymph nodes, and an abnormal spleen, all possible signs of cancer. Dottie remained hospitalized until September 3 when she returned home to Blue Bell. She was isolated to monitor her inputs and outputs closely since she was still not back to normal. We continued supportive care and were encouraged when her appetite appeared to have returned on the morning of

September 5. However, later that morning her breathing became rapid and shallow. Jenna rushed her to the vet where we discovered fluid was building in her chest and that she was severely anemic. The vets thought the prognosis was poor given the rapid decline in her health and that the kindest thing for Dottie was to help her pass. Jenna stayed with her as she crossed Rainbow Bridge. We were sad to lose her, but happy to know that she is at peace and reunited with her owner now. A necropsy confirmed she was suffering from an aggressive form of GI lymphoma.



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Registered Non-Profit 501(c)(3)
Tax ID #33-0246182

Our Mission:
The Blue Bell Foundation for Cats offers loving and compassionate lifetime care for senior cats whose owners can no longer care for them.

Remember: Use www.goodsearch.com as your search engine, and www.goodshop.com for your online shopping. Simply name us as your charity.



Scan the QR code above to donate online!

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Cats are sponsored to help offset the cost of lifetime care. However, our operating costs continue to increase and your donations help fund expenses. These expenses include veterinary bills, medications, staffing, food, litter, utilities, facility maintenance and improvements.

Donations received from the newsletter (including Gifts of Love) go specifically to the "Community Cat Fund." Please refer to our website for more information and a detailed description of all giving opportunities. You may arrange for your donation to be applied toward one of them.

*A huge **thank you** to all our compassionate supporters who understand our mission and the need for our existence.*

Enclosed is a "Gift of Love" in the amount of \$ _____
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For: (Please Specify)
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