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## 17 January 2008

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17 January 2008 Okay, so I stopped writing in my diary. Sue me! I think I got a bit overwhelmed with Will & Grace. Let's catch up... ..I haven't had many dealings with such young kittens. I'm learning a lot, but every day proves there's more to know. I didn't know that teeny weenie kittens don't really have litter box habits. After boiling the sheets from the shit-soaked bed and scrubbing the floor and lugging the 50lb dog crate into the foster room, I ended up locking up the kittens with their food and pan, so they'd start to get the hang of what they needed to do. I really felt guilty, but I also realized if I didn't get them properly trained, they'd fail in their new home and that would be BAD. So I had to just suck up feeling bad about it. For the next day or so, I would open up the crate and let the kittens have play time and love time. I just love to watch them run around. They're so clumsy and resilient. I want to keep them from tumbling off the bed, but I know they don't learn if I do that, so I only jump in when I think they could be in serious danger. They both loved to snuggle up on my chest, as I sat back on the bed. Their purrs were so loud, for such small creatures. They'd play and nip at each other, then groom or just cuddle, while I watched from barely a few inches away. I noticed that Will was always extra clean. I wondered if he was having problems with the litter pan because his back end was always wet (though clean). As the kittens settled down on my chest, Grace did a nose dive into Will's naughty bits and started to suckle! I really don't want to say anything further about this because the eeeewwww-factor is extremely high, but to share the experience to save others is the only reason I say; she was sucking his balls and wouldn't stop, regardless of how many times I moved her away from him. She was determined to suck his sack 'til there wasn't anything left but a bare spot. Now I was faced with separating them from each other and hoping they'd had enough time to have learned their litter pan habits, since one would be in the crate and one would be outside of it. Each had a litter pan. If they didn't use it, well it would be bad. I'd have to have Monica remove one of them for their own good. Being so young, at only about 5 weeks, it was unfair for them. I had to keep them apart and train Grace to NOT go suckin' her brother's junk! Monica told me she never heard of that happening before, which of course made me think that maybe it was a one-time deal. Thinking back on it I realized that Will's rear end always looked wet, from day one, so this was a problem to ask the Vet about. We found out that sometimes this happens when kittens are separated from their Mother too soon. The drive to suckle is strong and doesn't go away, even though the kittens were eating solid food. If Grace kept up her antics, it could possibly kill and certainly cause great damage to Will that would end up requiring surgery to correct. From that day on, the kittens had to be separated at all times, unless I was in the room with them to supervise. Great. So I kept the kittens apart and I hated it. They cried. A lot. They didn't want to be apart and it stressed them out. At least, for the most part, their litter pan habits had improved. All I had to do now, was give it time and make sure I carved up the day so that each one had the same amount of time locked up in the crate. I didn't want just one to be locked up all the time. It wasn't fair and they both needed a chance to run around the room and stretch out. Every day I spent as much time with them, so they could be together. Every day, eventually, Grace would want to settle down on my chest with Will and her junk-radar would go off and she'd nose dive into Will's ass. I'd move her, cover his rear end with my hand or a towel and it seemed to help. If she didn't see it, she wouldn't go for it as much. She'd still try to dive under my hand, but I'd tell her, NO! and try to distract her. Before I knew it, they were old enough to be spayed and neutered. As they grew bigger and more playful, the desire for suckling diminished. Their next step was to go back to Monica's home where she shows the kittens to potential adopters. This is the point where I cross my fingers and hope they can stay together. They're so young, still, only 9 weeks old. They shouldn't be alone, but a happy home is our goal, so whatever happens, happens. Right after they recovered from their surgery, Will & Grace were adopted together! Charles & Henrietta I didn't have [Charles & Henrietta](#) <sup>[1]</sup> for very long—maybe a week or so. They are short haired tuxedo cats (black and white) who both have [FIV+](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. It's not a death sentence and, in fact: "Very young kittens may occasionally show "false positives" for FIV, because of the transfer of antibodies from a mother cat in the womb. It is suggested that these kittens be tested again at age 6 months. On the other hand, a negative FIV test will indicate a strong possibility that the kitten does not carry the virus." C&H were a bit shy, but I managed to get good photos of them. Oh, I never mentioned that part of my volunteer duties are to photograph incoming kittens so we can create ads for them on [Petfinder](#) <sup>[3]</sup> and on our web site. I like to show a good overall shot, but if I can, I also love to get shots of the kittens flying through the air, chasing after a toy or doing other super-cute-make-you-barf things. Charles & Hen found a great home together, too! Yay! Charlotte, Panda & Lilah Oh be still my heart. What a trio of cuties! These little babies were trapped, feral kittens, just a few weeks old and seriously adorable. This was one of the first litters I was told to name. I had to come up with something quick, so I chose [Charlotte](#) <sup>[4]</sup> for the chubby calico/tabby and [Panda](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and [Lilah](#) <sup>[6]</sup> for the dangerously cute short haired tuxedo kittens. Panda was a big boy. When he grows up, I know he'll be huge. Although they were all skittish, in time they began to warm up to me. Sam and I both spent time with them, encouraging them to come out to play and to sit in our laps for nap time. I admit I was in love with little Panda and I was determined to see him be adopted with his sister Lilah. The two of them were like bookends. They would turn their heads the same way at the same time. They were always together and always affectionate to each other. Lilah didn't have the confidence her brother had and Charlotte was very timid, but a chubby little fur ball I couldn't resist holding. This, too, was one of the first times I was asked to do the first round of adoptions. Monica had been contacted by a lady who was going through a nasty divorce. She'd promised her kids they could have a kitten to make up for all the tough stuff they were dealing with. I wasn't sure this was the ideal situation for a skittish kitten. A new home, turmoil, stress...ack! Monica and I both decided that it probably wasn't a good fit, but I'd meet with them since we'd ok'd their background check. Later that night the woman came to my home with her young children, who were about 7 and 9, respectively—a boy and girl. The mom told her children to be careful and I asked them to talk quietly, at first, so the kittens wouldn't be too scared. Of course, right away, Charlotte ran and hid. Panda and Lilah jumped into a covered cat bed and backed off. Both kids weren't bothered at all and

decided to just go after the kittens. At first I was nervous that they'd get bitten by being too rough. The boy wanted Panda right away and I just didn't want that happening unless he went with Lilah. The mom said that they could only afford to take one kitten and they knew that right away. The more this woman spoke, the more I realized I wasn't going up against some sort of emotional, shut-the-kids-up, attempt at adoption. Clearly, she had thought about this, knew what she could handle and her promise was only to her daughter, so her daughter had to chose. Her son was not happy about that and started to whine, but Mom held firm. I was rather impressed. What most impressed me was this little girl. She was gentle and sweet with the kittens and right away pulled Charlotte out from under a small table. She spoke to Charlotte quietly and stroked her fur. Charlotte settled down and didn't try to get away! I told the girl that she should only adopt Charlotte if she really really sure she liked her. Her reply: "I already love her very much!" I almost burst out into tears right there. It was so heartfelt. How could I not let these people adopt this kitten? They already had a cat who liked other cats-something we didn't know about before. Things really felt right. The boy wasn't thrilled. He really wanted Panda, but the decision was made. I gave them some alone time to make sure, then Mom and I filled out the paperwork. A few days later I heard from Monica that Charlotte was doing very well and had decided she liked sleeping with the little boy on his bed each night! Go figure! Lilah and Panda were adopted, but sadly, not together. Lilah's family had another cat who passed away suddenly, just a week after Lilah arrived. The family adopted another one of our kittens. Too bad. If the timing had been different she could have been with Panda. At least everyone got a home and though I miss little Panda very much...you know how it goes..I'll get another to love soon. Just before Christmas... Jolly & Bennigan I almost made it. I almost took in 50 kittens this year! I had no idea!!! Gives me lots of joy to know I was part of the journey to a loving home, for so many. It'd been a few weeks since I had any kittens. With the cold weather, comes a big slow down in rescues. We rarely see kittens from December to about March. It gives us a chance to re-group, do more fundraising and make plans for events for the following year. I was seriously jonesing for some kittens. Did I have to beg?! Monica, bless her heart, had had a very tough summer and fall. We took in a litter of sick kittens who turned out to have ringworm! The Animal Center had to go into quarantine and Monica had a very very difficult procedure to go through to keep from passing the infestation to her seven cats and to any of us! She really had a nightmare to deal with. Needless to say, after MONTHS of tests and re-tests, once she got the all clear, she wanted a break and didn't even want to think about taking in any kittens. Good thing I was being my obnoxious self, 'cause I got the next two cats. [Jolly](#) <sup>[7]</sup> was found on Christmas day. A little black haired stray, with a plush winter coat and small, close set eyes. He had a goofy looking face, but was very friendly and affectionate. A small kitten with plenty of spunk, part of the reason I had him was to give the other cat, Benny, a role model. [Benny](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, was the oldest foster I've had with The Animal Center. He's already 6 months old. Usually that's too old for our program, but Benny came in with a litter of feral kittens this past summer and never really came out of his shell. Although he was not aggressive, he was very skittish and timid. You could hold him and he'd purr, then tremble! I've never come across that, ever. The poor cat was literally terrified of us. The goal was to keep Jolly until he was adopted and work with Benny until the Spring. If he didn't come around, we'd have to consider releasing him back outside where we trapped him. I did not want that happening. He had been with humans for too long. We needed to get him to an adoptable state. I called in the big guns-Janice. She's our cat whisperer. She has a calm demeanor that relaxes just about any cat. Fortunately for me, she has to drive past my house every day on the way to pick her daughter up from school. We decided that Janice would come over as often as she could to work with Benny and help him gain confidence. It's very tough to turn a feral cat around when they're this old. It takes a lot of work. Janice began doing her magic. She likes to sing to the cats! She said that Benny liked James Taylor. So much for musical taste! Around that time I noticed Jolly sneezing...a lot. Jolly, the little feral, had such a lowered immune system from poor nutrition and being outdoors, that he must have picked up the dreaded upper respiratory infection. I called Monica and he was scheduled for a visit to the Vet. With my cat, Bob, here, who has FIV, it's important NOT to bring sick kittens into the house. Even though I keep the foster cats separate from my own cats, there's a risk of passing along disease. Now I had to not only wash my hands after visiting with the kittens, but I had to strip off and wash my clothes, too! I just can't have a house with seven sick cats. No way. I've had to pill them before and it was a nightmare of growling, hissing, and nipping. I eve had my Vet come over to pill the cats with me and it took THREE people to give ONE pill to our cat, Nora. What a fussybudget! So off Jolly goes. The Vet says; "yes!" to upper respiratory and, "no!" to pneumonia. Monica offers to keep Jolly, but I tell her it's bad for him to be alone and it's bad for Benny to be alone, too. I take the pills, liquid and NOSE DROPS for Jolly and just deal with it. Little Jolly doesn't like his meds. Try as I might, he has grown less affectionate. I can't spend as much time with him and Benny because it takes so long to disinfect myself after a visit, so I have to cut back to only seeing them once in the morning and once at night. This doesn't help Benny, either. As much as Janice does, I see improvement with Benny, but not enough. Neither of us feel he will come around much more, unless he's in a quiet home with an understanding owner. The thing is-Benny is gorgeous. He's a BIG silver tabby with striking markings. He has a LOUD purr and a very musical meow, which is delightful to hear. I think he'll never be super outgoing, but he will gain confidence, once he can be settled someplace right for him. After two weeks, Jolly isn't really improving. Monica decides she's had enough rest and that Jolly and Benny should go home with her where she can keep an eye on Jolly and get him back to the Vet for more tests. I feel like I've given up on them or let go too easily, but I also realize my own cats mean the world to me and I can't keep jeopardizing their health. Just as Monica comes to get the cats, two of my cats start sneezing. Their overall health is good and they stay indoors. I'm fairly sure they can handle having a cold since they're not showing any serious symptoms, just an occasional sneeze. It's good Benny and Jolly are going, but I wish they were leaving because they were ready for their new home. As of this writing, they're with Monica. Jolly is doing better and we're trying to find Benny a home. I miss having kittens, but I need a break. If I'm needed, I'm ready and if not, it's fine to wait. Before I know it, the phone will ring and I'll have another handful of kittens to love and lessons to learn along the way.

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