

Pumpkin

by Sandy

On Wednesday, November 13, 2024 we suddenly lost Pumpkin, our 9 year old orange Maine Coon cat. He was lying on a chair, fell off and was gone in a few minutes. I guess it was a good way to leave, but it's left a big hole in our hearts and a very quiet house.

We got him from a breeder who we since learned had bred many cats with future health problems, but Punky seemed very healthy and energetic. He was a pushy cat, rather than the pussy cat his predecessor, Jamesy, had been. He may have thought Bad Boy was just another name we gave him because he heard it very often! But he had a lot of character and was entertaining, if frustrating.

He didn't like toys much and actually gathered them into a pile behind a door. But he loved strings and chewed them in pieces quickly. That wasn't too great when the strings were shoelaces or the strings on the hood of a sweatshirt or jacket (ask Rob about that one!) I hung strings from the doorway to the kitchen and replaced them each time he chewed them off.

Probably his favorite activity was drinking running water from the bathroom sink faucet. He'd jump up eagerly and wait for the water to start dribbling out. Before he drank, he would smell your face then settle in for five minutes or so, his very long tongue constantly flicking out to catch the water as it fell.

A favorite thing about him was to watch him lying on the floor, purring away. No one could seem more contented. He was registered as Purring Pumpkin because of his constant loud purr. He loved being petted, mostly when standing next to your chair and would purr away as you scratched him. He would jump on my lap when I was sitting at my desk, but never just lay down and relaxed.

More than any other cat I've had, Pumpkin meowed with emotion and inflexion. Sometimes his meow asked a question, sometimes gave a command, sometimes was a greeting, and sometimes just sounded like he was sad. He often engaged in normal conversation. And he always greeted people who came to the door, whether he knew them or not.

Some of his "games" were not very lovable, like bushwhacking me (never Dick) on the way back from the bathroom in the middle of the night. Occasionally he even drew blood and didn't seem to have learned to keep his claws in, as he should have playing when he was a kitten. So, at three AM I'd arm myself with the spray bottle to ward off attacks. I might not miss that stress too much!

But the night he made a very early AM escape through a kitchen window in a storm and was gone until 7:30 at night foreshadowed the pain we feel right now. We hung posters in the post office and corner store by midmorning and drove around in the rain multiple times, calling him. I'd give anything to see that dirty little face peering through the porch window today! We took

the swamp rat directly to a warm bath and he was happy to be in it. I imagine cowering in muddy ditches in the cold rain wasn't very pleasant.

So now, here we are. He was our last cat, so life will be less complicated. No spray bottles in the middle of the night, litter boxes to clean, Motel 6's only if we stopped on the way up or down, toilets to keep covered so he would indulge his Maine Coon instinct to play in them, yelling at him when he attempted to chew shoe laces or electric cords. But not the pleasure of his unique company either. A sad goodbye to our uniquely lovable Pumpkin! We miss him!