



# Island Cats Mews

Volume 14 Issue 1

## Countertop Cowboys: Puddy Tat Perches



AARGH! The cat's on the counter again! Cats love to be in high places to explore and to feel safe. When scoping out territory, cats think vertically versus humans who think horizontally. Climbing is a natural cat behavior and it may not be realistic to think that you can stop it. However, you can cater to your cat's natural behavior as well as protect your counters

by offering a place that kitty *is* allowed to climb onto. Most pet stores have a great selection of window perches, cat trees, or cat condos that can be your cat's very own special place. This is especially desirable in households with other pets or small children. Just as every household has dad's special game-day Lazyboy, so do cats desire (cont. pg 2)



## Favorites Corner

Get to know us as we get to know you and your cats. Here's our fave places to eat—watch out, you may have to put your travelin' shoes on!

- Dr. Marshall:** Blue Bayou (*New Orleans Square*, Disneyland)
- Dr. Monahan:** Elliot's Oyster House (Seattle)
- Dr. Gross:** Moghul Palace (Bellevue)
- Amy:** Elliot Bay Brewhouse & Pub (Burien)
- Cheryl:** The Two Marys (the Czech Republic)
- Cindy:** Any chinese restaurant
- Dana:** Café Venus, Luna Park Café (W. Seattle)
- Hayla:** Bamboo Garden (Seattle)
- Greta the Cat:** The food closet (Island Cats)

## Dental Daze at Island Cats

The feline community has become increasingly concerned about the statistics showing a decrease in preventive dental care for cats. Dental health is an area in cats that is often overlooked, or put off until it cannot be ignored due to severe pain or health risk. People often wait until symptoms such as decreased appetite, foul odor, increased neediness, or trouble eating present themselves. Bacteria and tartar build up in cats' mouths which cause bad breath, periodontal disease and gum erosion. It then spreads internally affecting organ function. The bacteria is also groomed onto cats' coats, which we then pet with our hands every day. Island Cats doesn't want to see cats reach this point of discomfort before seeking intervention. They would like to work together with cat families to get mouths healthy *before* they become severe. To support this goal, they have restructured their preventive dental packages to significantly decrease your family's cost while also incorporating more diagnostic screening that improves cat's care. Island Cats has done this to encourage families to choose preventive therapy for their cats rather than putting off care until it is more complex, uncomfortable and expensive. The new preventive dental packages, ranging from \$235—\$275 are (cont. pg 2)

"It is our mission to prevent health problems and oral pain for every cat. We want that choice to be convenient, affordable and accessible to every family."  
—Gary Marshall, DVM

### Inside this issue:

<i>Countertop Cowboys: Cat Perches</i>	1-2
<i>Dental Daze at Island</i>	1-2
<i>Quarterly Staff Favorites / Recommendations</i>	1
<i>Economical Cat Care</i>	1-2

## Weathering the Economic Storm

In our current economic times, cat owners may be looking for ways to reduce costs of care. Watch that some cost-cutting measures don't become more expensive in the long run. Here's some tips to keep cat costs down:

- Rotate toys before buying new ones. Like small children, cats bore quickly. Take your cat's toy away then reintroduce it later to renew interest, especially with "fishing pole-style" toys. (cont. pg 2)

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## Weathering the Economic Storm

(continued from pg 1)

- Watch the treats! Is your cat tricking multiple family members? Treats shouldn't be more than 5% of a cat's diet. Stop excessive treats to cut food costs and decrease obesity-related conditions.
- Groom your cat at home regularly. Benefits include increasing your bond, improved coat, and less time/money spent at the groomer. With the added attention you will notice abnormalities sooner and seek intervention before a problem gets big and expensive.
- Don't skimp getting low-cost foods. Feed as high quality as you can afford. Low quality foods have less nutritional value and are high in "fillers." Cats on low-quality foods often need more to be satisfied which eliminates its initial savings. Poor diet can also lead to problems such as diabetes, obesity, and arthritis causing hefty vet bills.
- If your cat is on a prescription diet, DON'T STOP! A relapse in your cat's condition can be very expensive. If your cat is stable, talk to your veterinarian about whether there is an over-the-counter diet that will meet your cat's special needs.

## Puddy Tat Perches

(continued from pg. 1)

an uninterrupted "safe spot" that is all their own. Multiple-cat households should have "Lazyboys" or perches for each cat.



Your best bet is to ensure that your cat never finds anything to eat or play with on the counter. If she does find a reward, she believes it will be worthwhile to climb up and explore again.

Also, if climbing on inappropriate things gets your attention, it may become a form of attention-seeking. She jumps up, you yell, she jumps down, you chase—what an awesome kitty game she's invented!

If your cat has already found a treat on the counter, you may have a difficult battle ahead of you. Most of us don't start out perfect, and have already contributed to creating a kitty monster. What do we do now? Start by playing more with your cat so she gets her attention-seeking needs met in other ways. Start feeding your cat on her own perch (making it more desirable than *your* perch). Put catnip on it as an attractant. Make countertops aversive to your cat. The aversion must be remote (not from you) otherwise your cat makes a negative association with you and not her actions. Use "booby-traps" to cause a consistent and harmlessly unpleasant experience. Examples include scat mats, noise-making motion detectors, or the SSSCat Automatic



SSSCat Deterrent  
www.ssscat.com

Cat Deterrent—a device that senses your cat's presence, makes an audible warning sound, and sprays a jet of mist to startle and cause your cat to move away. Combine aversions with positive rewards. Praise or treat for "right" behavior when your kitty's on her perch. Be creative and remember to "think like a cat."

Suggested reading: Pam Johnson-Bennett's Think Like a Cat: How to Raise a Well Adjusted Cat. (available at Island Cats or any bookstore)

## Dental Daze (continued from pg. 1)



nearly half to one third of what dental prophylaxis used to cost. Island Cats' manager, Amy Koeniger shares, "during these uncertain times, it's heartbreaking to tell a family that their cat is in a state of urgency that requires \$700—\$1000 of dental surgery. It's not always preventable depending on the cause of a cat's problem, but when it is, you feel frustrated for not having provided care sooner." Island Cats now offers free oral evaluations to all cat patients when they check in for boarding. They can also be scheduled at any time during regular business

hours with an Island Cats technician, who will review your cat's dental health, note areas of risk, and if needed, put together a care plan for your family. According to Dr. Gary Marshall, Island Cats owner, and cat lover, "cats are stoic about pain and often don't show outward signs until it has become extreme. We want to prevent health problems and oral pain for every cat. We are going to make that choice convenient, affordable and accessible to every family. I would rather perform routine dental prophylaxes in four cats than, at comparable time and expense, perform a single cat's gingivectomy or root abscess repair if the pain could have been prevented." What can you do at home? For regular maintenance, Island Cats offers OraZn Gel a flavorless gel with easy application, the ever-popular Enzadent Chews, or a dental diet such as Hills Prescription Diet T/D, fed by itself or as compliment to your cat's regular diet. For tooth brushing, watch an online how-to video at <http://islandcatsvet.com/library.aspx>. Don't hesitate to ask about your cat's dental health today!