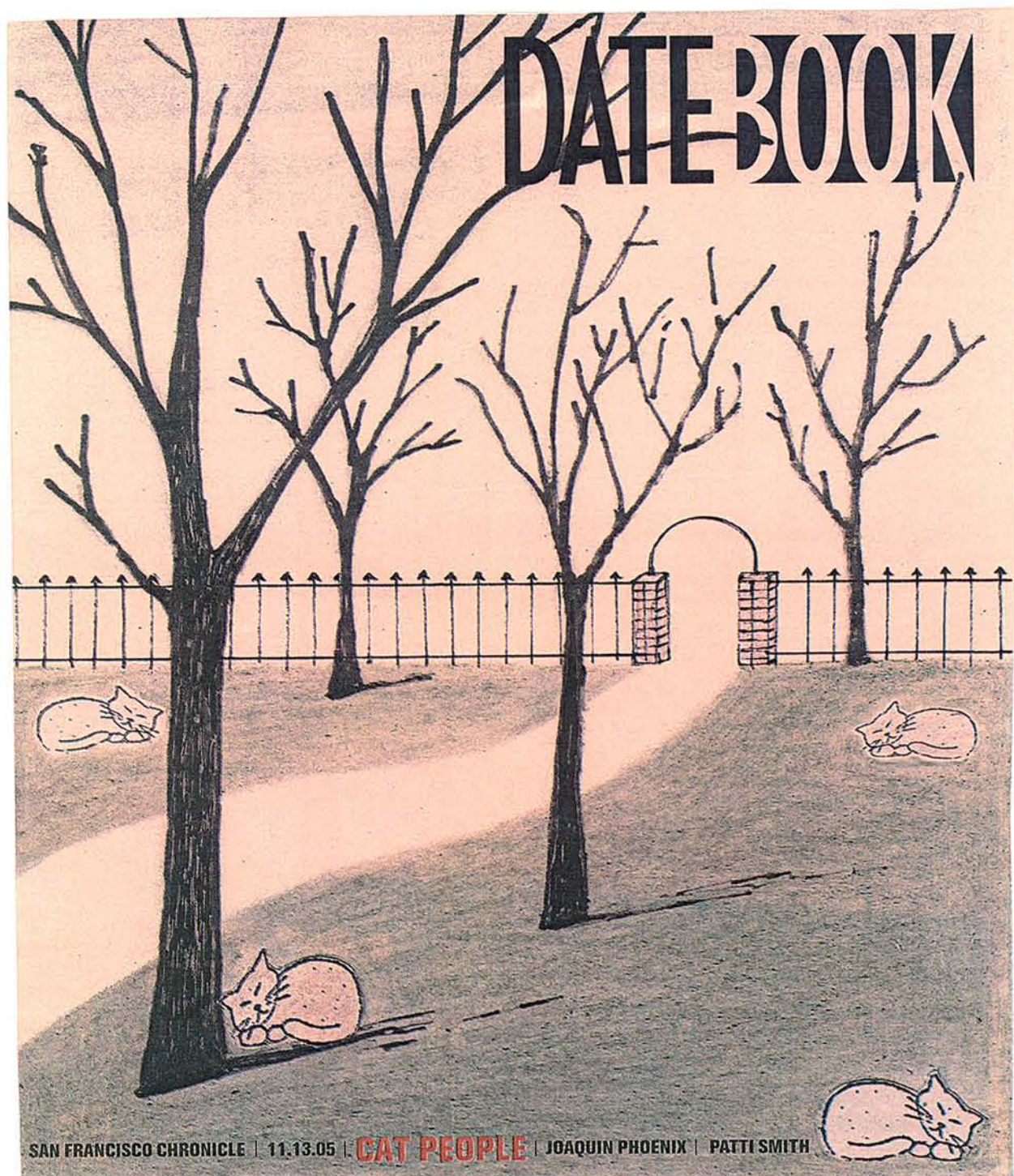


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SUNDAY



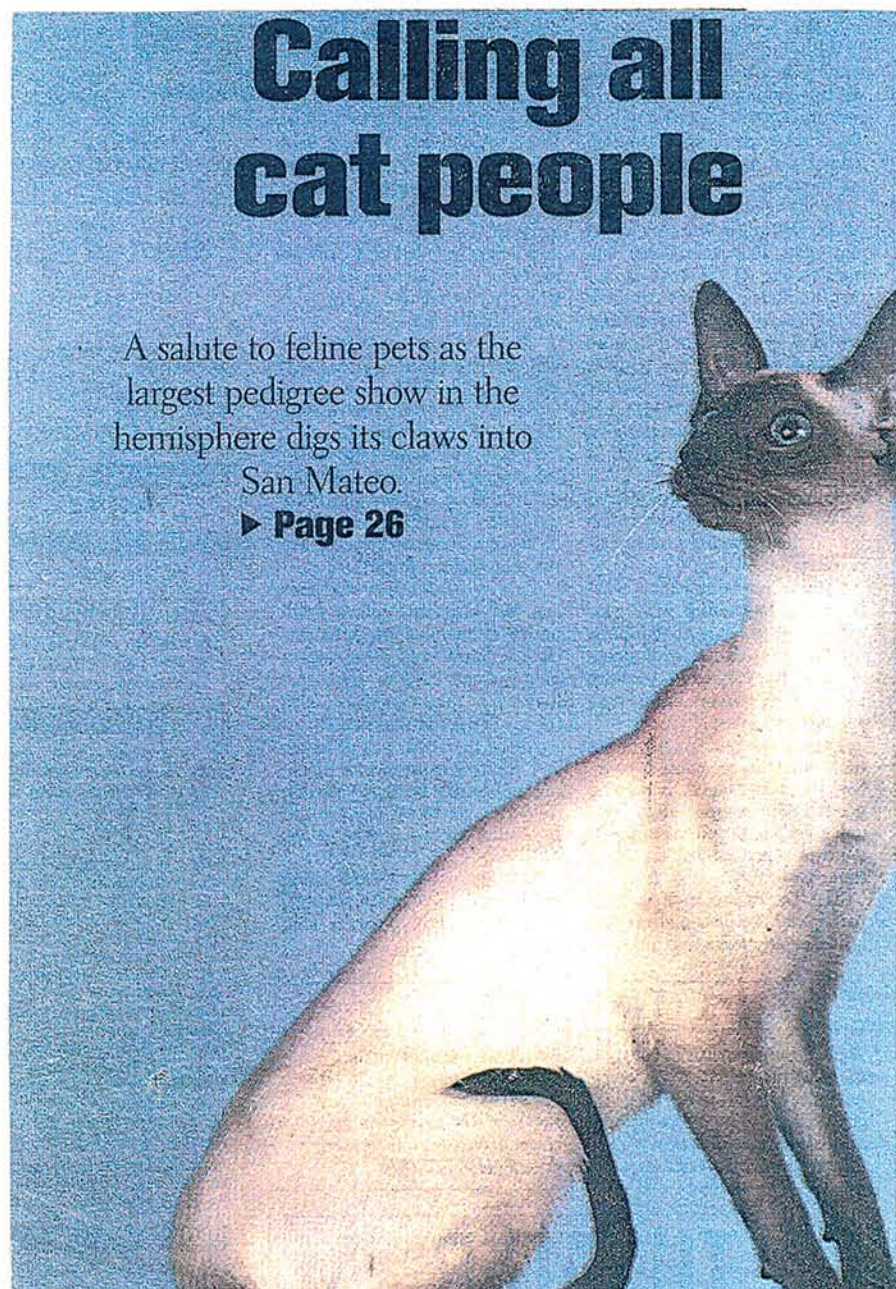
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE | 11.13.05 | CAT PEOPLE | JOAQUIN PHOENIX | PATTI SMITH

DATEBOOK

Calling all cat people

A salute to feline pets as the largest pedigree show in the hemisphere digs its claws into San Mateo.

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WELCOME

IT'S RAINING CATS AND ... MORE CATS



After the Pink published its second dog-themed issue, we braced for the growls and hisses from the other team. Well, cat people, it's your turn: On the eve of this week's huge Cat Fanciers Association International Cat Show, we sent Delfin Vigil in search of the clowder (Google it) of cat tales that begins on Page 26.

While preparing this issue, I came across this recipe for gross but hilarious (and reportedly delicious) kitty litter cake from www.cyber-kitch.com. There are dozens of variations on the Web. Enjoy!

KITTY LITTER CAKE: 1 spice cake mix · 1 white cake mix · 1 large package vanilla instant pudding mix · 1 package vanilla sandwich cookies · green food coloring · 12 small Tootsie Rolls · 1 new kitty litter pan · 1 new plastic kitty litter pan liner · 1 new pooper scooper.

Prepare cake mixes and bake as directed (any size pans). Prepare pudding mix and chill. Crumble cookies in small batches in food processor, scraping often. Set aside all but ¼ cup. To the ¼ cup crumbs, add a few drops green food coloring and mix with a fork. When cakes are cooled, crumble into a large bowl. Toss with half the remaining cookie crumbs and the chilled pudding. (Mix in just enough of the pudding to moisten.) Line new kitty litter box, add mixture. Microwave three unwrapped Tootsie Rolls until soft. Shape ends so they are no longer blunt, curving slightly. Repeat with three more Tootsie Rolls and bury in mixture. Sprinkle the other half of cookie crumbs over top. Scatter the green cookie crumbs lightly over the top, to look like the chlorophyll in kitty litter. Heat three Tootsie Rolls in the microwave until almost melted. Scrape them on top of the cake; sprinkle with cookie crumbs. Spread remaining Tootsie Rolls over the top; take one and heat until pliable, hang it over the side of the kitty litter box, sprinkling it lightly with cookie crumbs. Place the box on a newspaper and sprinkle a few of the cookie crumbs around. Serve with a new pooper scooper.

Next week: Holiday movies.

Joe Brown, Sunday Datebook Editor

ADOPTION: ADORABLE OPTIONS

Even Santa Claus has a tough time getting through customs these days, so it's a good thing the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is around to help holiday shoppers stuff their stockings with four-legged gifts.

Friday through Dec. 26, the SPCA presents its 19th annual Holiday Windows at Macy's or Union Square. You know the scene — cozy-looking living room scenes populated by homeless cats and dogs that even the biggest Scrooge with the worst pet allergies couldn't resist adopting.

Fortunately, the SPCA offers a reality check before accepting yours. "We've got a basic two-page questionnaire for you to fill out that should cover all the requirements for adopting," says Kiska Icard, who helped handle more than 200 cat adoptions at Macy's last year. "And then we'll need proof of a residence that accepts pets."

Adoption fees are \$80 for kittens, \$100 for cats and \$155 for dogs. The cats come with all their shots and free medical assistance for 30 days. All pets can be returned for any reason within the first year (within 60 days, you get your money back). But the impulse-only and on-second-thought adopters seem to be filtered out by the strict SPCA adoption rules.

"We just want to make sure it's a good fit for the people and the pets," Icard says, "and each year it fits more and more."

— Delfin Vigil

COVER STORY

CATS

This world is going to the cats.

Well, this week, anyway: More than 800 fur balls and their besotted owners are headed our way for the 18th annual Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show — the largest pedigreed cat show in the Western Hemisphere — which takes place Friday through next Sunday at the San Mateo County Expo Center.

And cats have finally caught up with dogs: According to a 2005 survey by the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, there are 90.5 million cats in the United States, compared with 73.9 million dogs.

So stop resisting: Check out the assortment of kitty literature on these pages, and join the meow generation.

PUREBREDS: WINNING IS IN THEIR BLOOD

BY DELFIN VIGIL

Loving all of your cats, whether you've got two or 12, is easy. Giving them all good names — that can be a problem.

"Believe me, I've tried everything," swears Cerro Martin, a breeder of Maine Coon cats who is competing in the Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show in San Mateo on Friday. She's had too many cats to count in 13 years as a breeder.

"I thought it would be easier to stick with themes — you know — name a certain litter after colors and another litter after famous people and another after geography. But then ... I just gave up," sighs Martin, reaching over to pet Joe, her old-day stud cat, responsible for three grand-champion kittens and counting.

With nine finicky, attention-needing roommates sharing her East Bay home, Martin can't rely on mnemonic devices to maintain her sanity. A glass of wine, however, might do the trick.

"You can't take cat shows too seriously, although believe me, some people do," says Martin, who has a criminally cute Maine Coon cat named Max (R.I.P.) to blame for her "hobby."

But you can't be too prepared. As part of her precision training for cat shows across the country, Martin begins by identifying the physical and personal traits of the male and female kitten contenders. It's not just about meeting the standards of perfection detailed in the Cat Fanciers' Association and the International Cat Association's judging guidelines. Beyond breeders' desired sizes of noses, faces and other features, Martin believes, genetic screening is good for the health of cats.

"One of the major reasons for fatalities in cats is related to the size of their hearts," says Martin, who volunteers at UC Davis, where she arranges ultrasounds for cats. "If anything looks out of the ordinary, that cat needs to be neutered or spayed."

Lucky cats with a heart like Joe's get to have some fun in Martin's downstairs living



Cerro Martin's Maine Coon cats will take part in the Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show.

"Afterward," says Martin, "the girl usually will turn on the guy and go after him. You know, get him to go away until she needs him again."

Being sexy will only get you so far in (cat) show business, Martin says. "To be a grand champion, you have to be easygoing and happy to be handled by the judges, don't you, Suzy?" Martin asks Suzy, who has been "granded" four times. Once the kittens Martin has bred are done nursing, she introduces a game called "Let's Play Judge," in which she walks around the house with the cats, stretching them and poking around their heads. Martin will tune her television to cartoons at full volume to get the cats used to the noise that they'll hear at cat shows.

Believe it or not, brains are not needed to win this beauty contest.

"Actually, the smarter the cat, the less likely it will be a winner," explains Martin. "You need a cat who isn't thinking but who is just happy to help and loves to play."

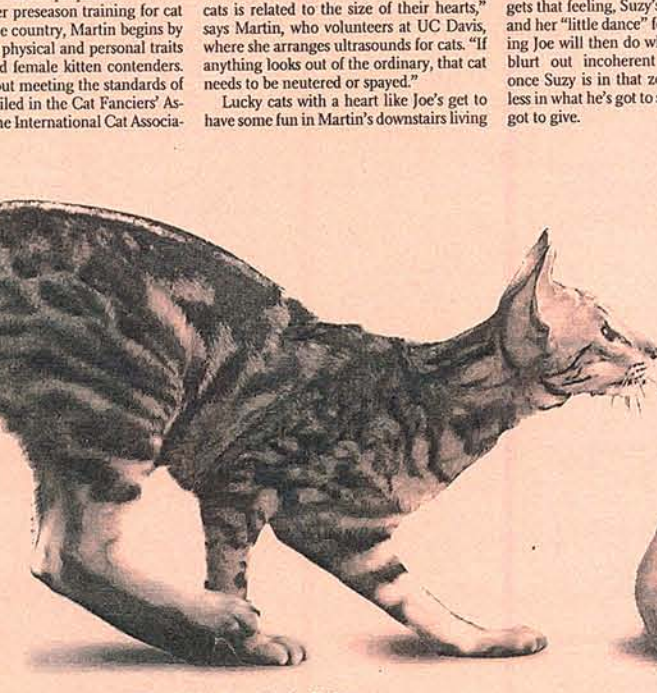
The 18th Annual Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show will feature more than 800 pedigreed cats. Friday-next Sunday at the San Mateo County Expo Center, 249 S. Delaware St., San Mateo. \$8-\$10. (877) 232-7469. www.cfa.org.



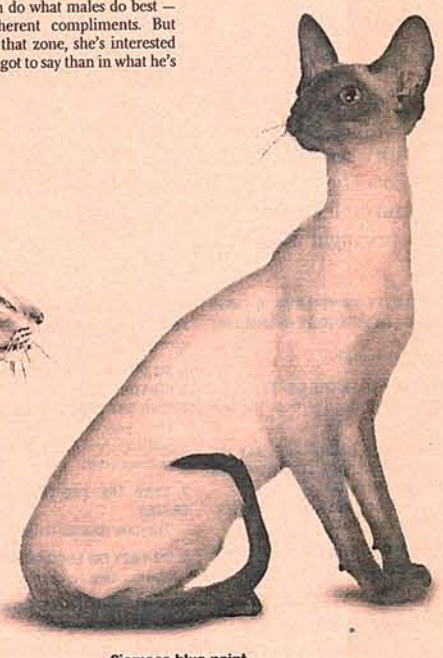
Brown mackerel tabby © JIM COLE



Black Persian © J. B. HENNING



Silver tabby Oriental shorthair © BILLY



Siamese blue point © CHANAN