

# Remembering Unknown Cat

Died Oct. 19, 2017

Believed to be in the three to maybe eight year range

I first saw this cat early in the week of Oct. 16 sitting beside my neighbor's driveway when I came home from work in late afternoon. Because of its black color I first thought that my cats had escaped from the house but a headcount revealed that had not happened. Over the next days I did not see the cat but heard squirrels fussing in the evenings when I was out so the cat must have been around.

On Thursday morning at about 6:30 I went out my basement door to get the Wall Street Journal and saw the cat by the steps just outside the door. The cat slowly snuck behind the large garbage can. I went back inside and made a plate of dry cat food and put it out by the steps and then went to get the paper. As I was coming back up I saw the cat eating. As I got close the cat again hid behind the large garbage can. Before I left for work that morning I checked the food plate and the cat had eaten about half.

When I got home that afternoon I checked the food plate and the half was still there. I knew something was not right because any outside cat, possibly a stray, would not leave any food left. I looked around the large garbage can and saw the cat on its side as shown in the picture. I first thought it was sleeping but a skittish cat would not be so calm. I checked and it was dead. I got my camera and took a picture. It had remnants of food in its mouth and a little had dribbled out the left side of its mouth on the concrete. You can see in the picture that its right paw was stuck in its flea collar although there was plenty of room so that could not have caused any choking. I think even a healthy cat would have had a lot of difficulty getting its paw unstuck. I can only imagine the frustration of the cat with its stuck paw. I easily was able to remove its paw. I put its body in a large plastic garbage bag and sealed it and put it in my basement until I could figure out either who owned it or bury it.

My first thought was that it had choked on the food. But as I think about it more I think something else killed the cat. The cat looked to be reasonably young. A young cat in good health would probably have run off when I went back inside to get the plate of food. But it didn't. Instead it hid behind the large garbage container. My thinking is that it was sick from either ingesting something bad or perhaps an encounter with a copperhead. Feeling bad, it was hiding. That is probably why it did not run off like a normal cat would have. If I had not seen and fed the cat I might have discovered it dead in about the same place perhaps a few days later when there would have been a bad smell. Maybe its illness contributed to it choking or maybe whatever was afflicting it finally killed it as it was trying to eat.

## Remembering Unknown Cat



*The cat as I found it Thursday afternoon.*

I checked around the neighborhood with the picture and no one had ever seen the cat. I did not think to check if it was male or female but somehow I think it was female since it only weighed eight pounds. I took the cat to my vet to see if it might have a microchip ID but it didn't.

I buried the cat in my backyard on Saturday afternoon at 2:20 in the area of the graves of cats that once lived with me. It is lying on its left side facing north. I put mulch on top of the grave and bordered it with landscaping bricks.

## Remembering Unknown Cat



*Unknown Cat's grave*

I will keep looking around the neighborhood and watch for any posted signs of a missing cat. Since it had a flea collar it must have had an owner who surely wonders where it is. Maybe someday I will be able to speak to its owner and know more about the cat. Then the owner can have closure knowing that someone cared and that the cat is decently buried. I took care of the cat in death with all the love as if it were one of my cats. Maybe someday I can put the cat's name in place of Unknown Cat.

I would like to know its name and anything about its past. My experience is that black and white cats tend to be very sweet. I had planned to put food out for it on occasion and perhaps make friends with it. I wonder if it somehow sensed that my house was special for cats. It could not have chosen a better place to die.