

Remembering Fluffy

revised June 2, 2026

This story is still under development. It is mostly finished except for some clean-ups and any more things that I might remember about Fluffy.

Fluffy was a Manx cat that I found outside my house when he was about 4 weeks old. I always knew that someday this would happen and someday it would probably happen again. Most of this was written after he died. I started writing some things when he was young and well. After Fluffy died I tried to remember every precious thing he did. Some details here serve to help me to remember Fluffy as completely as possible. Here is his story.



This is the first picture I took of Fluffy the day I found him.

About 4:30 A.M. on Monday, October 28, 1996 (exactly four years after Itsy joined the family) I was awakened by a squeaking sound outside. It sounded like a small bird, but I knew it could not have been this late in the year. The squeaking continued as I got up at about 7:00. I knew something was in trouble and I had to see what it was. I went outside and heard the squeaking coming from my neighbor's driveway. I went over there and could hear but not see the source. Then this tiny little kitten charged at me from across the driveway and hissed and snarled and batted his front paws on the driveway at me as if to impress me. His mother had disappeared and he was calling for her and very distraught. I could see that he had no tail and first thought he must have been injured. I picked him up and he did not make much fuss, and I then carried

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him into my house. If I had not taken him, he would surely have died that day. It is likely that he would have been run over when my neighbors went to work, or the neighborhood dogs would surely have found him. I fixed him up with food, water, and a towel to sleep on and left him in a pet carrier while I went to work that day. He grabbed the door from the inside and shook it as if to say, "let me out."

That evening when I got home from work, I took some pictures of him. He now stayed with me as if I were his mother and it was difficult to get far enough away to take the pictures. For the rest of the week, he lived in the pet carrier. He did not like being in there and would squeak and shake the door. In the evenings I would take him out to play.



This picture was taken during his first week in the house.

I checked around the neighborhood, but no one had lost a kitten. One neighbor had found the kitten a few days before and had put it in deep box on her front porch for his safety. But his mother apparently got him out. In the Spring and Summer of that year the Manx cat that was surely his mother passed through my yard on occasion. A few times I was able to pet her. He strongly resembles his mother except that he is a little lighter and a little browner. I did not know what became of his mother until the Summer of 2001 when I discovered that some neighbors up the street had taken her in along with a kitten or two in the fall of 1996. I then saw

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his mother in their living room. She looked a little different from what I remember - she seemed darker and her fur looked a bit longer. But it had been five years and memories often falter.

On Saturday, November 2, I took him to the vet to be checked out. I was not really looking to get another cat but by this time I had decided to keep him. The vet figured that he was about 5 weeks old which means that his birthday is around October 1. He came home from the vet with a clean bill of health and was now an official member of the cat family.

For the next few weeks, I kept him in the master bathroom during the day and let him out when I was home to supervise any interaction between him and the other cats. I put plenty of toys in there for him and he was very happy.

I fed him some special canned food for kittens I got at the vet. It took him several weeks to learn how to eat. He would try to suckle the food and get his face all in it and end up a complete mess. Finally, he figured it out.



Sleeping with his lion puppet.

He had two fluffs of hair on each side of his face that I thought would develop into long fluffy hair. So, I named him Fluffy when he had been with me for about two weeks. As it turned out the fluffs disappeared. But his little stub tail did become fluffy - it even fluffs up into a round ball when he gets spooked. I tried to get a picture of this but was never able. Over the years Fluffy

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was given a number of nick names; Fluff, Fluff Wuff, Fluffy the Wuffy, Fluffer, Fluffer Wuffer, and Fluff Wuffer. Two other nicknames were Little Bit and Little Bity Bit. I sometimes called him the littlest putty tat since he was the smallest cat in the house although when Bitsy came, she was probably a little smaller. When I called him that he seemed to disagree - it was as if he wanted to tell me that Bitsy was the littlest putty tat. Later I shorted that name to just Put-Tat. The most common nicknames I used were Fluffer and Put-Tat. I often called him Put-Tat as that was his special nick name. Sometimes I would say to him, "How's my little Put-Tat?"



Fluffy was never afraid of Spooky and loved to eat with Spooky.

One Saturday morning when I was feeding the other cats their usual weekend canned food, he made a beeline to join in the other cats. I quickly rescued him. One evening when he had been here several weeks, he got to Spooky's food dish first. Spooky hissed at him and he left but when Spooky settled down to eat, Fluffy swatted Spooky's tail twice as if to say, "take that and that." Fluffy was very feisty and was not scared of anything.

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Eating with Frisky.

Fluffy quickly joined the ritual of canned food on the weekends. He would use the den sofa to get up on the kitchen counter. This remained his method all through his life. While I would prepare the food, Stubby would be yowling with impatience. Itsy was up on the counter meowing too. Fluffy would try to join in the meows but all he could do was squeak. Every attempt at meowing sounded pitiful. He eventually gave up and just quietly waited for his food while vibrating his tail with excitement.

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Playing with one of his toys.

Fluffy was a very feisty cat. He definitely had Napoleon syndrome which seems to occur often in short people and animals alike - they use feistiness to make up for being small. I think Spooky was impressed with that and at times I think that Spooky wondered why Fluffy's tail was so short. Although Spooky would hiss and growl at Fluffy he was remarkably tolerant of Fluffy. Spooky even let Fluffy sleep on the bed. Towards the end of Spooky's life he even let Fluffy put his mouth around his neck and gently bite. It was clear to me that Spooky would have Fluffy take his place as top cat.

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Fluffy loved to go after Spooky's food.

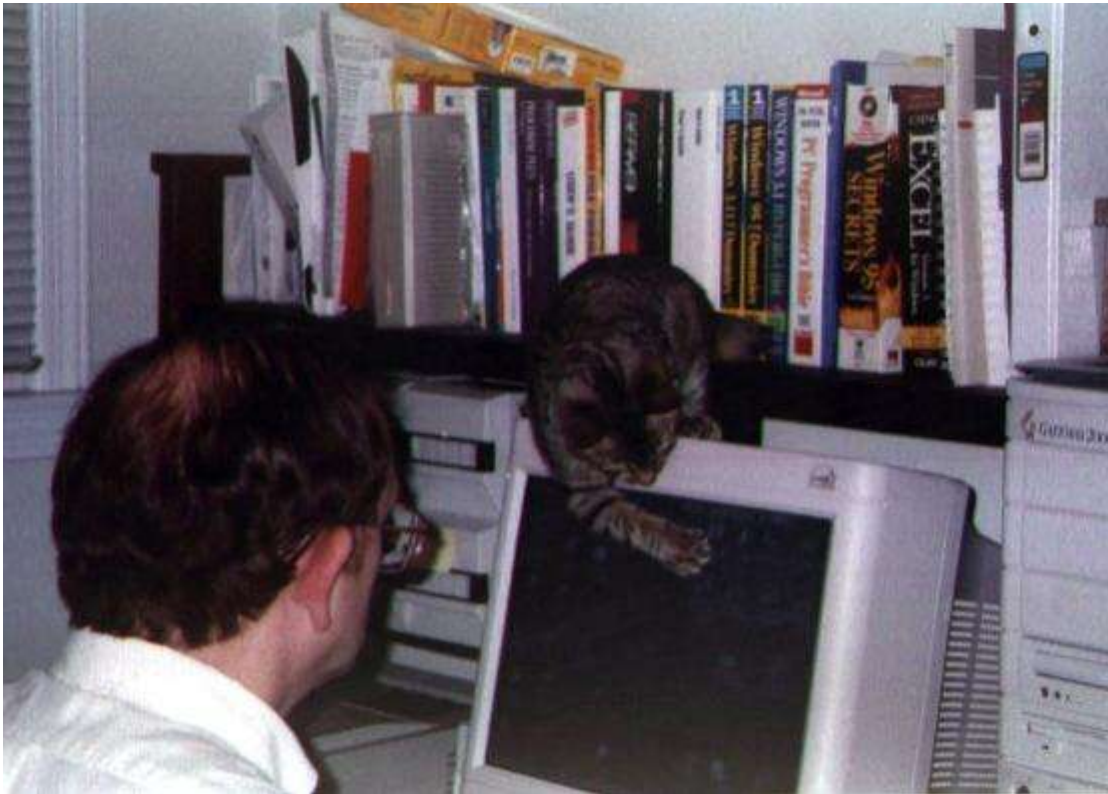
Fluffy was very protective of his food. He would not let any other cat or person be near him when he was eating. He would guard the double food dish with his front paws and would hiss, snarl, growl, and bat the dish with his front paws to make it clear to stay away. The other cats did not know what to think but they quickly learned to stay away. All I had to do was to put my finger near him and he would raise a big fuss squealing and growling. Even in his third year he still made a high pitch squeaking growl when anything got near his food. I sometimes would tease him by bringing one of the toy mice near him. It was so funny to see him fuss so much. He would swat the mice trying to run them away. I would sometimes put on the lion puppet and have it try to steal some of his food. Fluffy would squeal and growl and swat the lion puppet repeatedly. The only exception he made was for Bitsy. At first, he would growl when she got near his food dish but later he let her share the double dish with him. They also ate canned food and ice cream together on the kitchen counter.

When Fluffy was just old enough to run, Itsy would paw at him to get him to chase her. They took turns chasing each other. Itsy loved it. Then Fluffy (who is a biter) nipped Itsy in the back leg. She yelped and the play was over. As Fluffy grew up he would also paw at Itsy to play and she would hiss at him and even swat him.

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I used the lion puppet to spar with Fluffy. This was his favorite game. We would get on the bed, and I would put on the puppet and crawl the puppet towards Fluffy and have the puppet make faces at Fluffy. Fluffy would lunge and the puppet and maul it. When he was a kitten, the puppet was much bigger than he was. Later he was finally bigger than the puppet. I would have the puppet sniff his hind legs or tail. Fluffy would hiss and growl at the puppet and then maul it by grabbing it and kicking it with his hind legs. He would bite the puppet ferociously. Fluffy really loved his lion puppet. I used the puppet in playing with the other cats long before Fluffy was born. Fluffy often slept with the puppet and even carried it around the house. At times he would even try to mate with the puppet - biting its neck and stepping his hind feet while purring. He would sometimes squeak while playing with the puppet.

I also used the big stuffed white cat to attack Fluffy in the den. Fluffy would counter attack and maul the cat. The white cat was always bigger than Fluffy so it was easy to pin Fluffy down. Fluffy hated to lose and would growl and hiss.



Helping me at the computer.

When he was a little kitten, Fluffy would often sit on my shoulder while I worked in my office. He would also chase the mouse cursor on the computer screen.

When I adopted Bitsy in November of 1998, Fluffy got very mad at me. He would snarl and swat at me anytime I tried to pet him. Within a few days Fluffy and Bitsy became very good friends

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and remained friends until Fluffy died. Fluffy then forgave me for bringing Bitsy into the house. Fluffy and Bitsy would often play chase and attack games. Fluffy was stronger and always won. The only time Bitsy would win was when I would hold Bitsy. Bitsy does not like to be held, and she would charge the first cat she saw when she got loose. All the cats learned to slip out of the room when I picked up Bitsy. For a long time, Fluffy would hold his position so he was her target. She would run over to him and bat him and he would run off. Later he would disappear long before I put Bitsy down. Fluffy would often mock maul Bitsy by jumping her and flipping her down and grasping her and biting her neck while kicking her with his hind legs. He never actually hurt Bitsy. Bitsy would get mad sometimes because she hated to be held.



Sitting on the bed with Spooky.

Fluffy often comes to the living room to watch and listen as I play the piano. For a while Fluffy would go wild and run full speed throughout the house batting every cat toy on the floor while I played "The Flight of the Bumble Bee." Fluffy liked to chase the reflection off my watch band while I played the piano. He would get on the mauve chair to my left and attack the spot on the wall. This was a favorite pastime.

Fluffy loves canned food and often goes to the kitchen counter when I go to the kitchen in hopes of getting some. I put ice cream in my coffee and one day when Fluffy was only a couple of months old he took an interest in the ice cream. I gave him just a little and he liked it a lot. I now must feed him ice cream every time I get it out. It does not matter where he is in the

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house. His radar ears or a sixth sense tells him that the ice cream is out, and he runs very fast to the kitchen counter. I only feed him about a quarter teaspoon at a time since I am sure it is not good for him, but he likes it so much.

Fluffy also took an interest in Chili Cheese Frito's corn chips when he was a few months old. He would be right with me every time I got them out and I had to feed him some or he would pester me until I did. He also liked Pepperidge Farm cheddar cheese goldfish crackers. He would swat one out of my hand if I did not give him one. For a while he liked popcorn but later lost interest. I thought about changing his name to Frito when he was young.

Fluffy loved to sit on top of the den chair and look out the den window at birds and chipmunks in the yard.

Fluffy loved to hassle Frisky. Fluffy learned this from watching the other cats give Frisky a hard time. Fluffy learned that Frisky feared him and would attack and chase Frisky. Fluffy was intrigued by Frisky. If they ended up together on the window perch in my office, Fluffy would just watch Frisky for a long while and then suddenly swat Frisky in the head. Frisky would then hiss and growl at Fluffy. Fluffy always found this to be entertaining. When I brought Frisky to my office he would go to the top of the bookshelf. Fluffy would then stand on the window perch and look at Frisky which made Frisky very mad.

Fluffy was intrigued with water. When I took a shower Fluffy would come in to watch when I first started the water much like Itsy did. Sometimes he acted like he wanted to get in the shower but that part of him that avoids getting wet would overrule. He seemed to really wonder why I would get so wet. About the time I would get in, he decided that this was too wet for him so he would leave. He would come back to swat at the towel when I dried off and to swat at the hair dryer cord. He would try to bite the cord, but I would blow the air on him and he would stop. In the mornings he liked to get up on the counter and watch me while I brushed my hair and shaved.

When I was in the den reading the newspaper or something or perhaps watching television, Fluffy would often get on the right top pillow of the sofa where I sat on the left side. He would either watch me or sleep. When he was younger, he would swat at my hand as I reached around to turn the light on or off. I would often sneak my hand over and touch him on either his tail or paws. He would then swat at me and sometimes growl or squeal. Any time he got mad he had a rising squeal that would later turn into a growl.

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Eating at his favorite spot in the corner.

Fluffy liked to get up on my office desk to watch me work. He would also sleep there too. He would swat at me if I tried to move him a little out of the way to get to something. He would swat at anything that moved. I would sometimes goose him with my pencil or pen, and he loved to fight it. Sometimes I would goose him with a ruler which was long enough so that he could not reach my hand. I would touch his paws and fluff tail. He was very protective of his tail and would get very mad at the ruler. If I opened the drawer he loved to check out what was inside looking for anything that could become a toy. But other times I would pet him and rub him under his chin. I would rub his nose when he slept. He loved this and his tail would wiggle back and forth with approval. Sometimes he would briefly purr. The last time I heard him purr was a few weeks before he died.

Fluffy loved to play with milk carton rings. He would bat them all over the kitchen and carry them all over the house. In the mornings he would stop eating breakfast if he heard me open a new carton of milk. He would watch for me to toss the ring to the floor and then he would chase after it. Often, I would roll the rings on either the kitchen floor or the den rug. He would swat them down as they came by. One game was for me to collect several rings and then he would sit in the den floor and wait for me to roll them. The goal for me was to get one past him before he could swat it. He won this game nearly all the time. Sometimes the game was played using Ping-Pong or other balls. He loved to show me how fast he was.

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Fluffy loved to play with potholders - especially the woven kind. He would go to the kitchen and find one and carry it to the den and toss it up in the air repeatedly and maul it. He had a lot of fun doing this. There were two potholders that he would maul. One was yellow and the other was blue. He would chew on these and claw them so that many of the woven strands were ruffed loose.

Fluffy loved to play with ice cubes. He would run to the kitchen anytime I got ice out or dumped some ice from a glass into the kitchen sink. He would bat the ice cubes around the sink trying to get one to the floor. He often succeeded and then would bat the ice cube around the floor until it was gone. Often, I would toss an ice cube into the sink just for him to play with.

Fluffy loved to play with most any toys. One toy that he really liked was a white feather toy on a stick. This one seemed to have much more attraction than all the other different feather toys. I would get this toy out and swish it past him and he would swat at it with great determination to catch it. He would get hyperactive trying to catch it. I would swish his tail with it, and he would squeal, growl, and hiss at hit. When he would finally catch it, he would take it out of my hands and carry it in his teeth to some spot in the house and then proceed to maul it. He would be growling as he carried it. I would take it from him and then repeat the game. He would try to shred any kind of feather toy that I got. He would really go wild for a feather toy on a string that is swung around from a stick. The feathers rotate making the noise of a bird flapping its wings. Fluffy would jump up as high as he could to catch the bird. Fluffy loved to play with Itsy's ball in a track toy when he was younger.

Perhaps Fluffy's favorite toy was my laser pointer. Anytime he heard me opening the desk drawer he would run into my office hoping to see the spot. He would chase the spot very energetically. He would watch the spot on the wall or ceiling trying to figure out how to get it. He would chase the spot up the wall on a corner. Sometimes I would move the spot in a circle around Fluffy and he would run in circles chasing the spot until he was dizzy. In the den he would chase the spot until he was panting.

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Laying on his back being cute.

Often, I would catch Fluffy. He generally did not like being held and would squirm and kick with his hind legs to get loose. He was very good at squirming. I would lay him on his back on my legs and hold him such that he could not scratch or bite me. I would then pet his head, and he would squeak and do his best to bite me. He would finally start growling at me so I would put him down. He would use his hind legs to try to kick me but mostly he ended up kicking himself in the head. When he was very little, he would repeatedly kick himself in the head when I held him. Later he learned to mostly avoid his head. Fluffy loved to be petted around the head and back but nowhere else. He would get really mad and squeal and growl if I touched his tail or paws.

When I slept on the den sofa and used the blue blanket, Fluffy would make a nest in the part of the blanket that was on the floor. He loved to sleep there. I could not see him as he was completely under the blanket. When I got up I would have to be careful not to step on him. Sometimes when I pulled the blanket there was a resistance due to Fluffy. I would wonder what was holding the blanket until I realized that it was Fluffy.

A typical workday would begin with Fluffy sleeping a bit to the left of my feet on the bed. Fluffy would usually get up first and play or roam around the house. He would make his usual grunting noise when he jumped off the bed. When I got up he would usually be sitting by the west window curtain or by the hall door. Sometimes he would just sleep in on the bed. He would usually be somewhere near me as I got dressed. He would often hop up on the bathroom

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counter to be close as I brushed my hair and shaved. Then when I was finished, he would run to my office where the food dishes were, and I would feed the cats. While I was making breakfast in the kitchen he would usually wander in. I think he was hoping for some canned food. Bitsy had started a tradition of getting a piece of deli turkey before I left for work. Some time ago, Fluffy decided that he should get some too. He would sometimes come over to where Bitsy was or sit by the stove and wait for me to give him a piece. Sometimes he would carry the piece to his perch on top of the den sofa to eat it. When I left for work, he was usually somewhere in the den and watched me leave. Sometimes after I closed the basement door, he would start pawing the door as if trying to open it. When I got home, he was very excited to meet me in the den and when I started to the back of the house he would race ahead of me hoping over any other cat in the way to be first to the food dishes in my office. I would then feed the cats.

Fluffy had a way of standing on his hind legs and raking his paws on a door he wanted opened or his reflection in the mirror on the bedroom dresser. When he got up on my desk he would often rake his paws on the desk as if cleaning it before he settled down.

Fluffy was very curious and could be very sneaky. When he was interested in something that he knew was not meant for cats, he would usually sneak around while keeping an eye open to see if anyone was watching. He would slink around very slowly and pretend that he was not interested in the very thing he was interested in. When he was close enough, he would sneak a paw out to touch it.

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Eating his favorite breakfast on the kitchen counter one Saturday morning.

On weekends when I slept late Fluffy would sometimes walk up to my face and purr and then go back towards my feet and sleep in too. Other times he played with his toys. When I got up he watched me real close. The moment I started towards the kitchen he would run full speed ahead with a bunny hop and be up on the kitchen counter when I arrived. He was anxious to get some canned food. His tail would be vibrating, and he would step his hind legs.

When I worked in my office, Fluffy would either get up on my desk or sometime sit in the floor. Any cat that walked near him would be swatted.

One day sometime around February or March of 2000, Fluffy slipped to the basement as he sometimes would when I opened the door. I think I may have been loading Spooky in the car to take him to the vet. I intended to catch Fluffy and put him back upstairs before I left for work but forgot. I remembered at about 8:30 at work that Fluffy was still in the basement. I knew he must be scared so I came back home and parked the car outside and came into the basement door. Fluffy was sitting at the top of the steps by the den door squeaking in terror like the morning I found him as a kitten. He was very glad to be back upstairs. He did not slip to the basement for a long time after this.

I had cooked a turkey about March of 2000. While it was cooking the cats stayed really close to me and would meow when I went to the kitchen. I gave them various pieces of the turkey. Fluffy

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would get beside me while I was handing out pieces and trying to swat each piece for himself. I gave Fluffy a fair size piece which he carried away a bit. He then started growling like a dog to keep any of the other cats from even thinking about taking it from him. He would bite the piece of turkey and shake his head. I had cooked turkeys in the past and Fluffy always loved this treat. I think he felt like a real cat catching its prey.

Fluffy loved treats. He would stand on his hind legs and even swat them out of my hand if he could not reach them. If I tossed a treat across the floor, Fluffy was the first cat to it. Fluffy would often steal treats that the other cats had caught. If any cat came close to him while he was eating a treat, he would swat them on the head. A favorite game that all the cats liked was for me to toss a treat across the den. Each cat would try to be first to it. Fluffy won often and even when another cat won, Fluffy would usually swat the treat away and take it for himself.

When Scaredy Cat came into the house in May of 2000, Fluffy was scared of him at first and would hiss and run off. Later, Fluffy would run up to Scaredy and swat him. Scaredy would roll over and put up no fight. Fluffy gradually accepted Scaredy but would often swat him to remind him of who was number one cat in the house.

After Spooky died in June of 2000, I noticed that Fluffy seemed to be losing weight. It was not that much loss, but he was distinctly thinner. Bitsy also looked thinner. I commented on his weight loss at his annual checkup in January 2001. Fluffy had lost about a pound and a half from the previous year. The vet did some blood tests and discovered that Fluffy was in the early stages of kidney failure. His calcium level was also high.

The vet put Fluffy on a special dry food diet made by Purina and called NF for kidney Failure that is low in protein. He also gave me some canned food to try. Fluffy did not like the canned food but would eat the dry food although he did not like it as much as the normal dry food. I fed Fluffy the special dry food on the kitchen counter separate from the other cats. It is interesting that Fluffy quickly learned that this food was special for him. Although he would run to my office like always to eat with the other cats when I put the usual dry food out, he would follow or run ahead of me to the kitchen counter where I put his special food out. He would settle down and eat that. Teensy developed a liking for his food and would finish off anything that Fluffy did not eat. For variety, the vet gave me a sample of the Science Diet equivalent but Fluffy did not like that at all. For several months I only rarely fed Fluffy and the other cats the usual Fancy Feast seafood on weekend mornings. But I finally decided that since Fluffy liked it so much and since the amount that I fed him was small that it really could not hurt him. I wanted him to be happy. So, the weekend tradition began again.

I took fluffy back to the vet every few months during the year for more blood tests to see how he was. The tests showed only a slow rise in BUN and creatinine. Fluffy was very active and

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happy and ate well. The vet said that it was likely that Fluffy could live several years before the kidney deterioration became serious. It was a mystery as to why Fluffy's kidneys were failing when he was so young. His vet told me that the most likely explanation was a congenital defect. We never suspected that kidney stones were the culprit.

Fluffy's Illness

The following chronicles the last two months of Fluffy's life. I think that it is important to remember the details so that I never wonder if something different could have been done to save his life. I felt from the beginning of this that Fluffy's days were very numbered.

Thursday, December 6, 2001: About 6:00 that morning while I was still in bed I hear Fluffy squeaking in distress, and he ran into the bedroom and vomited water rather violently. Afterwards he seemed to be fine, so I did not worry about it.

On the following Saturday and Sunday mornings I noticed that he did not eat as much of his favorite canned food. He otherwise seemed fine. He sat and slept on his pad on my desk on Sunday morning and early afternoon while I worked. About 2:00 that afternoon he went into the bedroom and was staying to himself in the corner. It was obvious that he was not feeling good. He was licking his mouth every few seconds as something was bothering his mouth. His breath smelled very bad. He was not interested in eating or playing.

Monday, December 10: I took him to the vet to see what was wrong. They discovered that his BUN and creatinine levels were off the scale of their instrument. They gave him IV fluids. Fluffy spent the night there.

Tuesday, December 11: Fluffy's blood levels were still off the scale. I brought Fluffy home from the vet that afternoon after I left work. When we got home Fluffy was very happy and his tail vibrated with joy. He only ate just a little of his canned food. He was interested in but would not eat any treats. I gave him some catnip which he ate but had little response to. He would play with toys that I put in front of him but otherwise did not want to be active. He tended to stay by the water bowl. By 9:00 he had become withdrawn. I gave him a little ice cream at 10:00 and he licked it a little but did not eat any.

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Sleeping on my desk with his lion puppet.

Wednesday, December 12: Fluffy was no better in the morning so I took him back to the vet. His blood levels were still off the scale. They continued to give him fluids. When I picked him up at about 5:30 that evening he seemed very perky and in good spirit. He was eager to walk around when he got home. He only ate a few kibbles of his special dry food. By 6:00 he had slowed down a lot. I gave him some catnip and he ate a little. I brought him his favorite feather toy. He promptly grabbed it and began mauling it as usual as he growled at it. Then I noticed some blood on the feathers. He lost interest in the toy. He slept on my desk as I graded final exams. There was a small crust of blood around his mouth. He would grind his teeth every few minutes. He looked very pitiful and was obviously feeling very bad. I was afraid that he would be dead within a day or so since it seemed that his kidneys had failed. I told Fluffy many times that I would do everything I could for a pussy cat.

Thursday, December 13: I took Fluffy back to the vet for more fluids. The only good news was that his BUN and creatinine levels had come down so that it was just on the scale of their instrument, but this was still a seriously high level. The results were back from a kidney function test that had been sent off on Monday. It showed perfectly normal kidney function which was puzzling. They also force fed him since he had not eaten in several days. Fluffy was very perky when I picked him up at 5:30. When we got home, he went to the bedroom and jumped up on the bed to sleep. He was alert and would eagerly watch the spot from my laser pointer. I let him

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sleep until about 9:30 when I gave him some Gerber Chicken and Gravy that had been warmed a little. He was interested but would not eat. He attempted to eat some of his favorite canned food but would spit it out since his mouth was bothering him. He would also try to eat treats but would promptly spit them out too. He clearly felt better.

Friday, December 14: Again, I took Fluffy to the vet for fluids. They cleaned his teeth and removed dead skin around the mouth ulcers he had. They also force fed him. Fluffy looked very good when I picked him up that evening. He was very interested in food, but when he tried to eat, he would stop because the food seemed to bother his mouth. He would eagerly take one of his favorite treats but would promptly spit it out. He played more actively with his toys. He spent time at his usual places in the house. I gave him about a quarter teaspoon of ice cream and he licked it all up. I warmed some of his favorite Fancy Feast fish and added a little warm water to it and he licked most of the moisture out but would not eat. He slept well during the night and was very alert in the morning.

Saturday, December 15: I brought him to the vet for more fluids. Another blood test showed more improvement. I went to the pet shop and got some Nutri-Cal. I force fed him some Gerber Chicken and Gravy in the morning and evening.

Sunday, December 16: During the afternoon, Fluffy ate some of his crunchy treats and some of his special kidney diet food. He even ate some of the other cats' dry food. He ate some of his favorite fish canned food although the amount was small. He even groomed himself for the first time in a week.

Monday, December 17: Again, I took Fluffy to the vet for more fluids. This time they said to bring him in only every other day unless he had problems. That evening he ate some dry food. He even ran around the house and played with his toys and was quite perky. He ate a little of his favorite canned food.

Tuesday, December 18: In the morning he ate some dry food. That evening he felt all right but was not as perky. He would eat only a little of his favorite canned food. I tried to feed him some Nutri-Cal but he does not like it.

Wednesday, December 19: In the morning he seemed a little slower. He did not eat or drink any water. I took him to the vet for more fluids.

Friday, December 21: I took him to the vet for more fluids

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Fluffy loved to bother Frisky.

Saturday, December 22: I took him to the vet for fluids. The hope was that he could go without more fluids until Wednesday. I rinsed his mouth. That evening I also force fed him.

Sunday, December 23: Before we left, I rinsed his mouth out. Then we left for the Christmas trip. A neighbor across the street would be coming over to feed and check on the cats for Monday and Tuesday.

Tuesday, December 25: Fluffy was the first cat to greet us when we got home that afternoon. He ate some canned food and was active.

Wednesday, December 26: Fluffy ate just one morsel of canned food but ate a little bit of Meow Mix. It seems that his mouth is bothering him more. I took him to the vet for fluids and evaluation.

Thursday, December 27: For the first time in a while, Fluffy indicated that he wanted some ice cream. I gave him half a teaspoon which he eagerly ate. He would not eat any canned food but would eat Meow Mix. He would eat crunchy treats but not soft treats. I rinsed his mouth out.

Friday, December 28: I took him to the vet for more fluids. That evening he had more energy. He still ate only a little of his canned food but would eat Meow Mix and seemed to prefer it. He still preferred crunchy treats to soft treats. He was the same both Saturday and Sunday.

Remembering Fluffy

Monday, December 31: I took him to the vet for more fluids. His general condition seemed to be improving.

Wednesday, January 2: I took him to the vet for more fluids. The schedule was now for him to come in only once a week unless he has problems.



Fluffy loved to sit and sleep in my office chair.

On Saturday I bought several cans of Friskies canned cat food for Fluffy. I selected cans that had either gravy or sauce because I knew that even if Fluffy did not eat the food, he would lick gravy. Fluffy liked these but he was a slow eater and Slinky who had already finished his own serving would then try to take Fluffy's. I would have to stand guard for quite a while until Fluffy finished. Then Slinky and Squeaky could have any that was left. Fluffy was now eating well. I thought the worst was over. Maybe he would live after all.

Wednesday, January 9: I took him to the vet for more fluids. The trips to the vet were now reduced to once a week on Wednesdays. Each morning Fluffy would disappear to avoid going to the vet though he did not know that he was not going anyway. He would hide under the living room sofa. Before I left for work, I would check to find him there. He seemed to think that this ploy was working until the next Wednesday came and I captured him from under the sofa. He seemed perplexed as to why this trick was not working anymore. The good news from blood tests was that his blood levels were close to what they had been prior to the December crisis.

Remembering Fluffy

Since the previous week he has been eating more and is playing a lot more. He resumed asserting his top cat status with the other cats. At no time did he seem to feel bad. He continued to eat well and be active until Sunday. On Friday night we had a great playing session and Fluffy played and ran around like a kitten chasing the laser spot. When Slinky or Squeaky were chasing the spot and ran into Fluffy, he would swat them on the head several times. Fluffy had a lot of fun that night and it was the last night that he really felt good. I probably gave him and the other cats some catnip that night as I had done every few nights.

On Saturday I got a turkey to cook. My plan was to cook it in a week or two so that Fluffy and the other cats could enjoy a real treat. Fluffy was perhaps a little slower on Saturday but still was very active. I had no reason to think that he was about to get sick again.



Fluffy loved to sit by the basement door. This was the last picture I took of him a few days before he went to Auburn.

Sunday, January 13: Fluffy ate very little breakfast and then spent most of the day hiding under the sofa. He was clearly not feeling well. About 6:00 in the evening he came out and used the litter box. He then ate some Meow Mix and played a bit. At 9:30, he vomited while trying to use the litter box. He is licking his mouth again as if it is bothering him. His spirit was high - he walked around the house as if nothing was wrong.

Remembering Fluffy

Monday, January 14: I took Fluffy to the vet for more fluids and to see if they could determine what was wrong. His blood levels were now very high again. They determined that his left kidney was enlarged. An appointment was made with another clinic for Wednesday morning for him to have an ultrasound. That evening he was better and ate and played a bit but not like before. The vet gave me some antibiotic pills to give Fluffy. I gave him his first pill that night. He put up a big struggle.

Tuesday, January 15: I took Fluffy to the vet for more fluids. He was feeling fair that evening. I started thawing the turkey so that I could cook it on Saturday. That night I gave him his second pill and again he put up a major struggle.

Wednesday, Jan 16: I took Fluffy for his 9:00 appointment for an ultrasound in hopes of determining what the problem was. I sat with Fluffy during the procedure and petted him. The ultrasound showed significant damage to his right kidney due to some blockage in the ureter. The left kidney was better but also damaged. The doctor found a kidney stone in each ureter. Fluffy stayed very calm during the procedure but towards the end his patience was running out.

I then took Fluffy back to his vet for more fluids. The vet suggested that an appointment be made immediately to take him to the Auburn Small Animal Clinic for surgery to remove the stones. I went back to work while the appointment details were worked out. I picked Fluffy up at 2:00 from the vet and took him home to place him in the large pet carrier which I lined with some old clothes to make a comfortable bed for him. I placed the carrier in the front passenger seat so Fluffy could be close and watch me. Fluffy did very well during the two-hour drive. He never complained. He did a little sleeping but mostly watched me. I was afraid that as I drove him to Auburn that this would be the last time I would see him. About halfway there he dug under the bed of old clothes and buried himself except for his head looking out. It seemed that he was trying to be cute.

When they brought Fluffy back after some initial tests, I set Fluffy on the floor so he could walk around. He went under the chairs and hid in the corner. When it was time for them to take him, I had to wrestle him out from behind the chair. His blood work showed high levels of BUN and creatinine and he was now a bit anemic and was a little dehydrated. He had not been anemic in earlier tests. This indicated that the kidneys were not producing a substance to stimulate red blood cell creation - another indication of kidney damage.

Without surgery to remove the stones, Fluffy would continue to have crisis after crisis and any crisis could kill him. He might live a few weeks or maybe longer, but his condition was deteriorating fast. Even with surgery there was the possibility that complications would kill him. The surgery would have to be done very soon if he were to have any chance to live at all since

Remembering Fluffy

the longer surgery was delayed the more his kidneys would be damaged. The only hope for Fluffy was to do the surgery.

After I got home that evening, I put the turkey back in the freezer since it would be at least several weeks before Fluffy could have some. I really hoped that Fluffy would live to enjoy it.

Thursday, Jan 17: Fluffy had surgery to remove two stones in his right ureter. One stone was 4 mm, and the other stone was 2 mm. These stones had practically completely blocked his right ureter leading to serious damage to his right kidney. The good news was that his blood levels were slowly coming down. The doctor commented that Fluffy was a model patient.

Fluffy's next surgery to remove the stone on the left side was initially scheduled for the following Tuesday. Over the next several days, his blood levels continued to come down, and he felt well and ate well. The surgery ended up being put off until Wednesday. On Wednesday morning his blood tests showed the lowest blood levels since his first diagnosis a year earlier. He was anemic though. They gave him a blood transfusion prior to the scheduled surgery, but he had a mild reaction. He began to vomit and his temperature and heart rate increased. They gave him some medicine to reduce the reaction and slowed the pace of the transfusion. Fluffy did not have any more problems although the surgery would be put off another day.

Thursday, Jan 24: Fluffy had surgery to remove the stone in his left ureter. This stone was about 1 mm and was located very near the left kidney. Significant kidney damage was observed. Neither kidney looked good. A short stint was placed in the ureter where the stone was to hopefully keep a path open. A temporary tube was inserted into the left kidney to ensure that drainage could take place. The surgery took longer than expected. Fluffy was in guarded condition.

For the next several days, Fluffy continued to improve. The tube inserted in the left kidney came out around Saturday, but the ureter path was open so there was no concern. The situation was potentially that Fluffy could come home in three or four days. He needed to remain at the hospital for observation in case anything happened. The only concern was the possibility that the ureter might close up.

Tuesday, Jan 29: I was moving offices at work, so my phone was not connected. Any call would go to my voice mail. Something prompted me to check the voice mail at about 8:20. That is when I received the message that Fluffy had taken a sudden turn for the worse. That call had just come through a few minutes before. I called back and the surgeon told me that at 4:00 that morning a routine check indicated that Fluffy was normal. At the 6:00 check Fluffy was in trouble and was having difficulty breathing. His lungs were filling with fluid. His body temperature was dropping. His prognosis was very poor. Fluffy was in grave condition and if he was to have any chance to live at all surgery would have to be done that morning to place a

Remembering Fluffy

drainage tube into his left kidney. It seemed that the left ureter was completely closed. I agreed to the surgery.

About 4:30 that afternoon the surgeon called to let me know that Fluffy had survived the surgery and that the left tube was working and that the right tube was not. Fluffy was still in grave condition but was now stable. He was on nasal oxygen now to assist his breathing. They gave him medication to reduce the fluid in his lungs. His breathing was improved and his body temperature was back to normal. He was on pain medication.

Wednesday, Jan 30: I talked to the student working with Fluffy about 9:00 that morning and he suggested that a trip be made to visit Fluffy and discuss what options there were with the surgeon. The appointment was for about 12:45. The student brought Fluffy out on a cart at about 12:57. Fluffy could only be visited for about 15 minutes as Fluffy should not be off of oxygen much longer. Fluffy was awake but pain medication made him only semi aware of his surroundings. He looked very pitiful. There were tubes in his nose for oxygen. He was breathing with his mouth open and making very short grunting sounds every few seconds. I am not sure he recognized us at first although his spirit improved towards the end of the visit. I brought his lion puppet toy, his favorite feather toy (what was left of it - he had mostly mauled it into pieces), and the laser pointer. I think he slowly started recognizing these toys and us and wanted to play or do something but just couldn't. I scanned the laser pointer around and watched his eyes but most of the time they did not follow the spot. He seemed to really like it when I petted him and rubbed his forehead and behind his ears. He also liked it when I rubbed under his chin. His grunts seemed to be trying to communicate his pleasure at the attention. I called his name many times. We ended up visiting him for about 24 minutes. The surgeon thought it was best to get him back on oxygen since he was panting more through his mouth. I rubbed Fluffy's head for what would be the last time as the student rolled the cart out of the room at about 1:21. Fluffy was looking up and around as the cart went into the hallway. That is the last time I saw him alive.

The surgeon then said that there was one possible surgery that might save Fluffy, but success was not likely. But if the surgery was not done, Fluffy would be dead within a few days. We decided to try for the best and go through with the surgery. The surgery would replace the short stint in the left ureter that was closed with a longer stint made of smaller tubing that would run most of the entire length (about 2 inches) of the left ureter. If this tube re-established drainage from the left kidney, then it was possible for Fluffy to live. But it might not be possible to install the tube. There also might be other factors that would be found when Fluffy was opened that would indicate that survival would not be possible. If this was the case, then we decided that Fluffy's life would be ended since all hope would then be gone.

Remembering Fluffy

Thursday, Jan 31: They first gave Fluffy a blood transfusion carefully in the morning since he was very anemic probably because he was losing a lot of blood through the tube in his left kidney. The operation was scheduled for some time that afternoon. The surgeon called me at about 3:40 to tell me that the situation was hopeless. It was not possible to insert the new tube and the ureter around the previous stint had swelled up to about four times the normal size which is what closed the stint. Apparently, there was a reaction to the material in the stint. It was not possible to even close the ureter as material was tearing away. At this point, Fluffy could live no more than a few days with the tube in his left kidney. Also, the levels of BUN and creatinine in Fluffy's blood were rising indicating that the left kidney was shutting down. There was no hope, so we decided to end Fluffy's suffering. Fluffy probably died shortly after 4:00 that afternoon.

From the beginning of all of this sometime in 2000, Fluffy was doomed. Even if the kidney stone diagnosis had been made earlier he would probably have died from the complications of the surgery. That is, the ureters would have closed. What made Fluffy's situation so bad was that there were stones in both ureters. If Fluffy lost the function of only one kidney he could have lived mostly a normal life. At this point the only thing that can be said is that everything possible was done for Fluffy. There is nothing else that could have saved him. One way or another, Fluffy was going to die. Even if Fluffy's left ureter had not closed he would still have a weakened kidney whose function may have come back some over the next few weeks. Had Fluffy lived he would have needed a lot of support.

If it could have been known that Fluffy had kidney stones in his right ureter early on, then it is conceivable that he would have lived through that surgery since the problem in the left kidney was not yet acute. Then, assuming that the right kidney function was restored, surgery on his left kidney would not be so critical. In each case, fluffy would have had a working kidney to keep him alive. Unfortunately, it is generally not possible to know these things until it is too late since that is when the symptoms suddenly appear. In Fluffy's case, his left kidney was apparently working fine while the right kidney was being destroyed by kidney stones plugging the ureter. The crisis hit in early December when a stone plugged his left ureter. The stone had probably been causing restriction for some time which would explain his elevated BUN and creatinine levels. After the December event, the restriction in urine flow would vary from mild to severe. Eventually, it would be permanently severe as was the case for the right kidney. The alternative to surgery was continued fluids but near-term death was almost certain given the probability that the left ureter would plug up as it had done before. At some point the plug would be permanent. Also, Fluffy's kidneys were being repeatedly damaged. They would eventually give out.

Saturday, Feb. 2: I left the house for Auburn at about 7:30 in the morning and arrived shortly before 9:30. I paid the bill for Fluffy and the student who had spent over a week with Fluffy

Remembering Fluffy

brought Fluffy to me in a box lined with towels. I put the box in the front seat. I then left for home and arrived at about 11:20. I chose to bury Fluffy on the left side of Itsy's grave. I dug the grave and gathered some small rocks to outline the grave and found a large rock for the headstone. I opened Fluffy's box and placed a white milk carton ring on his right paw. I also took a feather from his favorite feather toy and placed it between his paws. I then took about a one-foot piece of the colored rope (he loved to play with that) that Squeaky had chewed off and placed it around his paws and over his head. I rubbed his head and under his chin. Then I petted and tugged a bit on his little fluff tail. He had always hated that, but he knew I was just teasing. I rubbed his head one last time and then closed the box and placed the box inside a white garbage bag. I then placed the box in the grave. It was about 12:30. I gently covered his box with dirt one handful at a time until it was mostly covered. Then I used the shovel and rake to complete the job. I set the headstone in place and leveled the dirt around the rocks. After washing dirt off of the headstone I used a black marker to write "Fluffy ~Oct 1, 1996, Jan 31, 2002" on the stone. When the weather turns warm, I will plant flowers and border grass.

Remembering Fluffy



Fluffy is buried in the back yard next to Itsy. Flowers will be planted when the weather is warmer.

Life without Fluffy

Teensy is assuming the role of top cat. Fluffy's pad is still on my desk waiting for one of the other cats to take over that position. Orbit and Squeaky would take the position over in the past. Fluffy's food dish on the kitchen counter has now been moved to my office with the other food dishes. I mixed his special diet food with the other cat food. The weekend tradition of canned food will continue. Bitsy now eats in Fluffy's spot on the kitchen counter. Squeaky seems to be taking Fluffy's place on my desk but sometimes Orbit is there. Squeaky is also taking an interest in the shower like Fluffy had. I am saving Fluffy's lion puppet to play with some future kitten that may enter my life. The turkey will be cooked in a few weeks in Fluffy's honor for myself and as a treat for the other cats.

Remembering Fluffy

Since Fluffy went to the hospital in mid-January, Bitsy has often slept in his spot on the bed. She also would walk around on the bed in the mornings before I got up and meow and try to get my attention. On the Tuesday morning after Fluffy died, she was sleeping in Fluffy's spot when I got up. Bitsy got up and meowed at me. I said to her, "We no longer have Fluffy." The moment I said Fluffy, she suddenly looked at me very intently as if to ask, "where is he?" Bitsy and Fluffy were good friends and I think she misses Fluffy. Bitsy has become good friends with Slinky now. They chase, spar, and groom each other.

Fluffy was a cat so full of life. It was a shame that his life ended after a little more than five years. Manx cats are supposed to be long lived, and I had hoped to be enjoying the company of Fluffy for many more years. Fluffy always liked to be very near me. He would always act very cute for me usually by rolling onto his back and stretching his paws out while looking at me with a happy expression on his face. If he were real close, he would touch me with his paw as he stretched out. I think of Fluffy every time I get out the laser pointer to play with the other cats. When I get into the shower, I instinctively look down to see him checking out the water. I miss him sitting and sleeping on my desk while I work. Every time I make coffee, I expect to see him get up on the kitchen counter wanting some ice cream. Every time I get some chili cheese Fritos or some cheese goldfish I think of him trying to swat one out of my hand. I miss his race to the kitchen on weekend mornings for canned food. I miss his vibrating tail. I look at places he would typically be and expect to see him. It is amazing how one small cat can have such an effect on an entire house. Even with seven other cats there is now a great emptiness in the house. Fluffy always made a great presence in a room and was a master of bringing the focus of attention upon himself.

Twice in the two weeks since he died, Fluffy visited me in a dream. In both cases, Fluffy was a kitten of about 12 weeks and would act cute by running from me but letting me catch him and then purring as I petted him. In the dreams, I was aware that he was really dead and was amazed to be seeing him. But it felt good to be holding and petting him.

Just as I have remembered the cats that died before I will always remember Fluffy. Every cat is a unique individual often with cute and comical antics. They act that way because they know it makes their owners happy. Their antics and expressions of delight when their owner returns and desire to be near their owners are the ways they thank their owners for providing them a nice home to live in. It is a high honor to be adored by a cat and Fluffy honored me every day. I will forever miss my little Put-Tat.