



# Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association (VOKRA)

We are a registered non-profit, no-kill organization dedicated to rescuing kittens and cats, and finding them safe, loving homes.



Spring 2011

## Upcoming Events

- 9 April Tisol Burnaby Mini-Adoption Event.** Times & details on VOKRA website & Facebook
- 17 April Tisol Grandview BBQ**  
Come out and celebrate Spring!
- 23/24 April PetSmart Adoption Event**  
Grandview and North Vancouver locations
- 30 April & 1 May The Petnership Project**  
Tradeshaw and Lectures  
[www.petnerships.com](http://www.petnerships.com)  
Come and visit VOKRA!
- 25 June Tisol Burnaby BBQ**  
Summer sizzling! Stay tuned for details.



Jake ... A Happy VOKRA Kitten

## From Karen

I would like all of our volunteers to know how much they are appreciated. We used to help an average of 200 cats per year. During the last two years we have gone to over 1400 per year. We couldn't keep going without you!

We have teams that do driving, trapping, website updates and management, fundraising projects, care in our adoption centers at two PetSmarts and of our long-term ferals at our Barn location. The office/homebase could not run without the daily care teams, and there would not be room to walk without organizers who try desperately to keep things in order here. People interview potential adopters and fosters, and those who wish to surrender cats. Constant work is needed to find foster homes and deliver supplies. Other folks send in pictures and bios to newspapers, manage the outgoing media info, and answer letters and phone calls. Our wonderful calendar and this newsletter would not be possible without hours and hours of volunteer time. Banking, budgeting, and tax receipts take a team. A group is planning our second annual walk and festival taking place this autumn. Grants and contest opportunities, legacy planning, outreach to schools—all these take so many people to keep moving along. And then we all have lives, families, jobs and our own pets to think of.

I am always so grateful for the time and energy you all put in. With you and people who donate, VOKRA carries on, even through really hard times. Bless you and know that we are here because of you and all those who have been here over the years past!

Karen 🐾

## SPRING is here. Foster Homes Needed!

The 2010/11 winter was much milder than predicted, and we had kittens coming in throughout. Soon we'll have many, many more, plus their mothers and other adults cats, all needing loving, safe foster homes. If you'd like to become a foster parent, go online and fill out an application to be contacted for an interview. **Please note:** INDOOR homes only, no exceptions.

<http://www.orphankittenrescue.com/fostering>

## From the E-mailbag...

We continue to receive many e-mail letters from folks who have volunteered or fostered for VOKRA, as well as from adopters. Here are more of their stories ...

### The Barn Cats

I needed to take a moment to tell you how blessed I have been and how enriched my life became because of working with VOKRA ferals.

When I got the opportunity to help socialize many of the cats at The Barn I had no idea of how satisfying and rewarding those interactions would become. I knew I had a gift to reach out to cats, but I only hoped I could make a difference . . . But I was honoured to see and be part of the changes that got them appropriate housing.

I work in second-stage transition housing for the homeless so appropriate housing means something different for each individual. As The Barn volunteers know, the ferals there are also unique. Not all of them will find a home to go to and some may find themselves merrily chasing mice and rats at a farm or comfortably living with goats on Bowen Island.

So, briefly, I'd like to share some of my special memories.

First there was *Magic*. I had a soft spot for this fearful and feisty tabby. I remember the day I knew I could pick him up, hold him for a few minutes and let him know I was not going to hurt him. Then followed petting and, eventually, a small purr. It seemed like a very short time until Magic was always out and always waiting for some attention. Then it happened. Magic started bunting and purring and

making sure he got noticed. But it got better. Magic found a new trick and became the amazing upside down pineapple cat who came running to almost everyone to get petted and demonstrate his adorable trick: he started to pose by turning his head upside down with his ears to the ground while he still remained standing or sitting . . . as if to say, "Look at me!" So it wasn't a surprise that this cat, who had previously been considered for permanent residence in The Barn, caught the heart of a very nice woman and left for his very own home.

Then there was *Naomi*, and I have vivid memories of a tiny cat curled up in a tight ball on one of the beds as if she wanted to disappear, shaking if anyone came near. I couldn't help it. I had to pick her up and hold her close and speak softly to her right from the start. She was a passive cat so she reluctantly let me hold her and then eventually pet her until the shaking went away. Sometimes, when it was cold, I put her under my sweater or jacket. I paid attention to her every visit, seeking her out when she was not seen. She had lots of friends and protectors, like Faro. One day she came to be picked up and that felt great. She was getting bigger and healthier. Then, one cold day, with the heater on in the ceiling, I was talking to one cat when Naomi appeared from a straw house and started to rub my legs and bunt against me. Actually, I did not know it was Naomi at first because



she'd had a growth spurt and was now a lovely big friendly cat. I saw the orange spot above her eye and knew. It was like graduation day. So I was not surprised she left the barn with someone who could see she now needed a home away from there.

I was tasked with some behaviour modification for a frisky little cat. *Oliver*, who at that time might better have been called Fagan, had a bad habit of biting and scratching at the same time as looking for attention. Needless to say, many of us bore war wounds from Oliver's attention. So I took an unorthodox approach to his behaviour. I intentionally paid attention to him and picked him up despite his well known reactions. I knew he really wanted attention but was just protecting himself from the possibility of being scooped up and taken or hurt. He had learned his mother's lessons well, and did not know how to do anything differently. So, when he hissed, I hissed back. When he scratched, I gave his paw a quick pat. When he tried to bite I put my finger in his mouth so he could not bite down. The results were quick. Oliver looked for attention, let people pick him up, did not scratch or bite and had a very loud purr. He returned to the North Shore to seek a home.



Then there was **Rheanna**, the tiny grey scruffy cat who seems to have decided to abandon the colony in favour of solitary independence. It was very cold when I started seeking her out from under her straw square with the plywood ceiling. No matter how many blankets I threw in for her to curl up in, I would always find her lying on plain straw and alone. I worried when it got even colder and Rheanna would not move. She seemed to be all right, but I kept putting her in a basket in the shed where she stayed under the heat lamp for long periods of time. I repeated this every time I visited The Barn. In the Spring I brought one of my tenants, under a people and pets program I started at Lookout North Shore, to see if one of the socialized cats and this man might click. I showed him several cats and let him hold them and then brought out Rheanna. Still scruffy and leery of strangers, she let him hold her and looked up and it was love at first sight. My tenant said she was his soul mate and there would be no more discussion. She went home with him and the two loners became inseparable. Rheanna learned to play and run his apartment at the same time. He learned to follow her orders and the two of them moved into independent housing where they are both very happy.

I remember the first time I picked up **Momma Cat**, the incredible calico who took in every new cat that came to The Barn and rarely saw her own two kittens. Fearful

and very feral, she indulged my attention, but I noticed she was spending less time hidden and more up on the bales, waiting for some treats, which she would avoid until she thought no one was looking. I knew she probably would never socialize enough to go to a home of her own, but she was happy in a protected space, sure of having food and an endless supply of cats to care for.

I got to name **Liam**, who hailed from Lynn Valley. A loner tom who froze when picked up and was so fearful he needed to protect his territory from other males, Liam very quickly became obsessively demanding of attention. His purr got bigger as he sought more attention and jumped up on my lap to get scratched. I remember seeing Liam take over the bassinet, and him following me out when I went to the door. So it wasn't a surprise that someone else fell in love with him and took him home.

There are so many I remember with fondness: Harry, Snickers, Buddy, Indigo, Faro, Silky, Spice, Pandora . . . the list is longer than my memory at any one time.

A simple "thank you" to VOKRA and Kristina. These cats have given me memories for a lifetime. And my two ferals (Wolfie, 10, and Kabuki, 6) would probably thank you as well for the interesting smells on my clothes every time I came home. . .

**Mac Gordon** 🐾



## Leo

Sweet Leo came into my life sixteen months ago. A friend who volunteers at VOKRA said, "I have the cat for you." She was so right!

Leo has enriched my life so much that I can't imagine what I ever did without him. He has brought love and laughter to a retired lady who was looking for a companion.

I have watched him change from a somewhat nervous kitty to a very loving, trusting one. He will sit and stare at me, purring away. I'm sure he can hardly believe he has finally landed in a forever home.

I feel a sense of pride in myself knowing that I took in a creature that needed love and kindness, and upon receiving that from me he blossomed into this fantastic companion who asks for nothing other than love, food and a warm place to sleep . . . which is usually my bed! I only wish more kitties could be rescued and given a home where they feel secure and loved.

**Pauline** 🐾



# Dressed for Success: The Mystique of Tuxedo Cats

Susan May, VOKRA volunteer

When I adopted my tuxedo cat, Sophie, last year I decided to look around the internet to see if there was anything I could learn about them. Some sites said tuxedoes were much smarter than most cats—up to 200% smarter. I was thrilled: not only had I adopted a gorgeous, gentle, fun, sweet cat but she would be able to balance my bank statements and pay my bills—yahoo!

Sophie has not made any indication to-date that she is able to do those tasks, nor does she appear any smarter than my tabby cat, Marcus, but if your cat is a tuxedo, you might be interested in these facts.

Tuxedo cats are not a specific breed of cat; they belong to many breeds and it is the special coat pattern that earned them the name “tuxedo”. In general, tuxedoes are found to be very friendly and affectionate.

The popularity of tuxedo cats can be traced back to the time of the ancient Egyptians, as the cat pictures depicted in the royal tombs of Egypt are of tuxedo cats.



Famous personalities such as William Shakespeare, Beethoven and Sir Isaac Newton owned tuxedo cats. Another interesting fact about these cats is that it was a tuxedo cat (named Sparky) who inherited over 6.3 million dollars in 1998. This was the largest inheritance ever left for a cat.

You will be surprised to know that the only cat who climbed Mount

Everest was a tuxedo named Roderick.

Here are some more famous tuxedo cats:

**Socks** – Chelsea Clinton’s world famous cat. Socks was born in March, 1991 and sadly passed away in February, 2009. After the Clintons left the White House, Socks moved in with Betty Currie, former President Clinton’s secretary.

**Sylvester the Cat** – This cartoon cat, of Looney Tunes fame, became famous for his lisp—remember “Suffering Succotash”?



**Felix the Cat** – A star of the silent era. Felix is one of the most famous cartoons worldwide.



## BUDDIES: Sometimes it just takes two



*Zorro & Lucy ... best buddies*

**Cleo and Tony** (formerly Henrietta and Wiffle) were found in a filthy, noisy granary with their parents, and rats, and raccoons. When I took them in as fosters they were terrified of everything and they didn't want me anywhere near them. With a lot of love and patience, over time, they became very affectionate little kitties. I fell in love with them and just had to adopt them.



Cleo used to hiss and spit at me every time I got close to her; now she climbs into my lap every time I sit down. Tony used to sleep wedged in behind the toilet; now he spoons with me at night. They are still very shy with strangers, but we are working on that. I am so happy they got to stay together as they are the best of friends and I don't think they would have done so well on their own.

Cleo and Tony have provided a few examples of why it is better to adopt 2 kittens:

They always have someone to help clean those hard to reach places.

They always have a cuddle buddy on chilly nights.

They make great bookends.

Thank you, VOKRA, for all the kitties who now have full bellies and a warm bed to sleep in every night.

*Cynthia* 🐾

When I started volunteering with VOKRA, I lived in a building that did not allow pets. As I loved the feral and stray cats in VOKRA's "barn" foster home, a beautiful black panther stole my heart. **Zorro** was a feral cat who had been trapped as a kitten, adopted but returned to the barn, where he had been hiding for months. I like to think that he chose me. I asked Zorro which of the other cats he would like me to take home with us. I loved many of the cats but wanted to be sure that Zorro and the other cat would be compatible. After a few weeks, he started sleeping with **Lucy**, a beautiful fluffy orange cat who had been rescued from a cat hoarding situation where over 40 orange cats were not getting adequate care. Although she was not socialized to people, over time, she would cautiously come out for treats and play time. She would arch her back, display her beautiful tail, and allow some gentle patting. Lucy showed her love of other cats by rubbing up to them. Unfortunately, some of the other cats in the barn were not kind to her and she was drawn to the protection of gentle Zorro. To make a long story short, I have moved and am very fortunate to have Zorro and Lucy in my home. They chase each other around the house, curl up together, and groom each other. It is my delight to watch, love, and play with them. The love they have for each other seems to grow daily, as does my love for them. Thank you to VOKRA for giving these lovely creatures the opportunity to enrich my life.

*Sherry Dahlke* 🐾



# Holding a Cupcake Fundraiser!

By Morgan & Michele Brayton, VOKRA Adopters & Supporters

In February we held our 2nd Annual Cupcakes for Kitties fundraising sale. Over four days, we went through countless pounds of icing sugar, burned out a hand blender, made 444 cupcakes and raised \$1,000! (Last year's total was over \$750.) There are only so many cupcakes we can bake without losing our minds entirely but you could help raise money by holding your own sale. This is how we do it. You don't have to do any of these things but maybe these ideas will be helpful to you. Okay, let's raise some money!

**Pick a limited timeframe for your sale.** Last year we did it for Christmas. This year we chose Valentine's Day, specifically February 11th at 5 pm through February 14th at 7 pm. It's a crazy, bake-a-licious few days but it's all contained and you get it done in one blitz. You could also pick just one day if you're not crazy people like we are.

**Create a Facebook event.** You could also do an e-vite or post on your own website or even just email all your friends but a Facebook event makes it easy to post info, message all invitees, and get a conversation going on the event wall. Some people may be confused, thinking it's a fundraising event you're asking them to attend, but most get it. You can choose to make the event public (anyone on Facebook can see it and place an order) or invite only.

**Write out all the details people need to know to place an order.** It's unavoidable, you will spend lots of time emailing back and forth with people sorting out details. We provide very clear instructions but, inevitably, people don't follow them completely because humans are rebellious in nature, so be prepared for the administrative work of a bake sale. (You've been warned.) Here is the text from our event description; feel free to copy or use as a template:

Just in time for Valentine's Day, Michele has decided to repeat last year's successful "Cupcakes for Kitties" fundraiser, with all proceeds going to VOKRA (Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association). What better way to show someone you love them than a dozen delicious, vegan cupcakes that will help VOKRA save the lives of cats and kittens? (Seriously, if you haven't had Michele's cupcakes, you have no idea how freaking delicious they are.)

**PICK UP ONLY—FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11th (5 pm) TO MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14th (7 pm) ONLY!** If you have mobility issues and don't have someone to pick up your order for you, let us know and we will make an exception for you.

\$25 for a dozen cupcakes—additional donations happily accepted!



*Louisa, doing quality control*

Here's how it works. Message Morgan through Facebook or at morgan [at] morganbrayton.com with:

- \*How many dozen cupcakes you'd like
- \*Your flavour—chocolate, vanilla or lemon
- \*Your frosting—chocolate, vanilla, lemon or mint
- \*\*\*Sorry, no mixing because we make each batch fresh, just for you. If you need more than one flavour, buy two dozen! Or find someone who wants to trade?\*\*\*
- \*Your preferred pick up date/time or if you're flexible
- \*Your email address and phone number
- \*Your mailing address if you require a tax receipt and plan to pay by cash.

Morgan will be in touch to confirm.

We will accept:

- \*Cash (exact change please—or feel free to donate extra!)
  - \*Cheques made out to VOKRA
  - \*Proof of a donation of \$25 or more made through VOKRA's website
- <https://www.orphankittenrescue.com/donate/> between now and Valentine's Day.

We've made this an invite only thing for now to make sure we don't end up with more orders than we can handle—we baked ourselves into a stupor last year and plan to do the same again!—but you can "invite guests" if you know people that would like to place an order. But please don't repost or tweet this widely at this point.

Place your orders today! And thanks for supporting VOKRA!

(continued...)

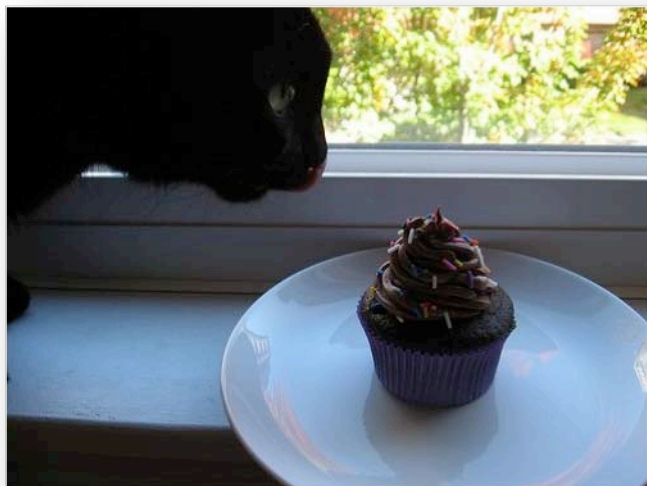
## Let the baking begin...

**Create a spreadsheet to keep track of orders.** Maybe you're able to keep track of all your orders on Post-it notes or in a notebook but an electronic spreadsheet is the only way I've found to be sure I don't lose track of everything . . . including my mind. An Excel sheet works just fine but I created a spreadsheet using Google Documents so that my wife (she's the baker in the family, I'm the organizer) can also access it to see how our orders are shaping up and plan her baking accordingly. If you have a G-mail account, you can create a Google Document and share it with whomever you'd like. Handy if you have more than one person taking orders.

A spreadsheet will allow you to:

- keep a running tally of how much you have raised
- have all your information at a glance
- sort your orders. For instance, I can sort the orders by the "Pick Up Date" column so we can see how many orders we have for each day, what times they need to be ready for, and how many batches of which flavour cupcakes we need to bake. Nerdastic!

At this point, you may have realized that I like to organize things. Well, hold on to your hat because we haven't even got to my order confirmation email template! Once I've taken someone's order and entered everything into my handy-dandy spreadsheet, I want to provide them with details via email so they have everything in one place and know how to get their cupcakes. This also saves you from having to post your home address online, which is rarely a safe idea. I created a template email which I just copy and paste for each order, then plug in the order info [in place of the Xs]. If details are missing, you can modify the template as need. E.g. **"Please let me know how you'd like to pay for your delicious cupcakes. Here are the options..."** Here is my template:



*Frick with (forbidden) cupcake*



SUBJECT: Your Cupcakes for Kitties Order [X-NAME]

Hi X!

Thanks for ordering cupcakes for kitties!

I have you down for:

X dozen cupcakes

X cake

X frosting

To be picked up at X on X, February Xth.

If you have a container (large tupperware, big plate, box, whatever) you can bring to transport the cupcakes in, that would be great and will help us keep our costs down. But if you don't we will have disposable plates / containers of some kind.

Method of payment is X.

Our address for pick up is 123 Cupcake Street. We are near the corner of Cupcake Street and Cat Avenue. Google map here: [http://\[map of your address\]](http://[map of your address])

My cell # if you need to contact me is: (555) 555-CAKE.

Thanks! Yay kitties!

Morgan

**Shop for ingredients.** We are vegan and make THE BEST cupcakes from the awesome cookbook *Vegan Cupcakes Take Over the World* by Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero <http://amzn.com/1569242739> but you may have your own favourite recipes or choose to use a mix. Either way, you're going to need lots of ingredients. Stores like Costco and Superstore are your friend here—running out of what you need in the middle of a cupcake baking blitz sucks, so stock up!

(continued...)

Cupcakes, continued

This part will, obviously, cost you money so make sure you're in a position to pay for ingredients before you dive into this whole endeavour. I'm sure there are stores that would donate supplies, it's just not something we've had the time to investigate but you might. And let us know if you do!

**Get those cupcakes out of your house.** Your house will smell like a bakery for days and you will want to eat all of the cupcakes you make. Don't do it. Think of the kitties. Remind people to bring containers or platters to take their cupcakes away in but have some paper/aluminum plates or boxes for those that forget. Be sure to include a VOKRA pamphlet or info with each order and thank everyone, once again, for supporting VOKRA. Hopefully those paying cash will have exact change but have some on hand just in case. The cupcake pick-up is my favourite part. Cupcakes make people happy. Getting cupcakes AND helping kitties makes people really happy. Soak up all that happiness you helped create and enjoy it. Yay!

**Hand over the loot.** Once all the cupcakes are gone (except maybe just one batch for you), contact VOKRA and arrange to bring them the cheques/cash you raised. Provide VOKRA with names and addresses of anyone who donated cash and wants a tax receipt so they can mail those out.

**Celebrate your success!** Be sure to post on your Facebook event wall and/or send an email to everyone who bought cupcakes, letting them know how much money they helped you raise for VOKRA. It's not just tooting your own horn, it's helping to raise awareness of the great work VOKRA does and encouraging people to support this wonderful cause, so don't be afraid to make some noise!

I'm sure I'm forgetting something but I do tend to go on and on (Really? We hadn't noticed.) so I'll stop now. We can't wait to hear about your Cupcakes for Kitties sale or other fundraising ideas so please be sure to post about them. Good luck and happy cupcaking!

*Morgan & Michele Brayton*

(and our cats Lucy, Frick, Kismet & Billy P.—none of whom helped make any cupcakes because they are incredibly lazy but we love them anyhow)



## Cover Girl

Since Phoenix has become the sweet little face of the calendar this year her foster mum thought it might be cool to show people how she looks all grown up too.

She's about 7 months old in this photo, and still has the beguiling direct way of looking at the camera. Phoenix definitely knows how pretty she is! Her guardian also wrote a few words about how wonderful she is . . .

*Right at this moment Phoenix (now named Lele) is rubbing up against me and head-butting my face. She follows me around the house and is quite talkative, especially when she wants to play (she almost never asks for food though)! Among her favourite games are fetch, hide and seek, and sticking her head in plastic bags. She especially loves looking out the window and making noises at all the birds (or leaves blowing in the wind). At night she crawls under my blanket, and she curls up next to me until morning. She is the sweetest companion, and has captured the hearts of every visitor to my house, even people who don't like cats!* 🐾

**VOLUNTEER 🐾 DONATE 🐾 PARTICIPATE**

**Go online to [www.vokra.ca](http://www.vokra.ca). Donate by mail to:**

**PO Box 74571, 2768 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6K 4P4**

The VOKRA Mewsletter is edited and produced by Dania Sheldon.

We welcome your input!

Please send letters, content suggestions, and other feedback to [danias@vokra.ca](mailto:danias@vokra.ca).

