

# The cat came back...

Every barn should have at least one cat.

Mind you, it's rare that there only be one cat, if you let Mother Nature have her way.

Barn cats are a different breed than house cats. They're adaptable, resourceful, and, best of all, they don't require a litter box.

While revitalizing my barn, a friend offered me a 'really nice barn cat' to fill that void in the stable. He told how this cat had been abandoned, tossed into a recycling bin, rescued by some locals and later placed in a barn. Someone named her 'Paper,' being found in the newspaper recycling bin.

I found that quite a coincidence, with me working in the newspaper business, and I could only imagine she'd slept on back issues of *The Independent & Free Press* while detained there.

We decided to change her name to 'Paige'. (The Sidekick thinks it's a play on the Front Page thing, but in reality it's all about Paige Davis, the host of *Trading Spaces* on TV.)

So Paige, our gray and white striped puss, landed at the Brown farm on a snowy December afternoon, during the heaviest snowfall of the month.

It was perfect timing. With so much snow on the ground, there was little chance she'd leave the warm barn to try and find her way back home, wherever 'home' might be. Actually, moving to my barn was an upgrade for her— there were cattle in my barn, and none where she came from.

So Paige immediately captured the heart of The Sidekick and me, and anyone else she met. She was one of those 'talkative' cats, who meows away as she rubs against your leg, arm, body— you name it, she's just downright friendly.

But more than two weeks ago, we went to the barn one morning to find the stable was bare, no Paige in sight.

I searched the upstairs in the barn, just to be sure, and even checked the granary, on the off chance she'd accidentally been locked in there.

Notta Paige in sight.

It being early April, with the snow just nicely melted, I assumed the obvious had happened.

I figured Paige had become coyote fodder.

Ted Brown



She had spent many warm sunny afternoons, curled up on the concrete foundation of the old silo, soaking up the sun. I figured that had been her demise, as a coyote sneaked up on her.

I searched all the way around the barn, making sure that if there were some Paige-like remains, I'd have them buried before The Sidekick or anyone else found them.

Time went on and everyone eventually accepted the same conclusion— the coyotes had got her.

Everyone, except The Sidekick.

"I'm an eternal optimist," she said, over and over, "She'll be back."

Tuesday morning The Sidekick went to the barn to gather the eggs and made a discovery.

The cat came back.

Perhaps a little thinner, and sporting a voracious appetite, but she was back, meowing and rubbing against her as before, and none the worse for wear.

Just before she left, Paige had been experiencing some 'passionate' spells. With no male cats around, I now wonder if she decided to go out and enlist one to fill her 'needs.' Miraculously, she'd crossed the expanse of fields without becoming a coyote's lunch, all in the name of love I suspect.

I e-mailed the concerned parties Tuesday morning to announce the good news.

My eldest daughter promptly replied, "Hooray for our little Paigey-Poo!!! And you had given her up for coyote meat... never underestimate a female!"

Funny, that was the same thing The Sidekick had said, many, many times in the past two weeks.

(Ted Brown can be reached at [tbrown@independentfreepress.com](mailto:tbrown@independentfreepress.com))

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