

Readers Write

Ballantrae from page 6

Finally, if there is no daycare in our community, we strongly believe that housing prices would be affected negatively. Many of the families that now use the daycare moved here because of the centre's proximity within the community and to the elementary school.

We understand that (daycare owner) Ms. Pike has looked into every possible option in the community, and nothing fits the needs of the facility due to lack of space, lack of outdoor play space, or proximity to the school. We understand that town council has voted to no longer renew long-term leases in the community centres, but Ballantrae is a unique situation, and sometimes exceptions must be made.

We are the community, and we are asking that our community centre be available for use as a daycare facility, specifically Ballantrae Child Care.

Marina Brock

Co-chair

Ballantrae P.S. School Council

Ballantrae

Historic Photo

Historic building had many guises

This building, located east of the railway tracks on the north side of Main St., enjoyed a rich history in its 134 years. In the last three decades it was home to, among others, Fullerton's Place, the Clever Conductor and Bruce County Pine. (Yes, that's our own Bruce Stapley, desperately searching for a "Pine" hair cut). It was torn down earlier this year and replaced by Crossroads, a new restaurant and pub due to open soon.



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Vintage Whine

A bitter pill to swallow

By Kate Gilderdale



"Cats are to dogs what modern people are to the people we used to have. Cats are slimmer, cleaner, more attractive, disloyal, and lazy. Cats are irresponsible and recognize no authority, yet are completely dependent on others for their material needs." P.J. O'Rourke.

There is a difference, of course. Cats never need to have their self-esteem boosted. Or so I thought until Poc, sole survivor of twin feline terrorists, was sidelined by a mystery illness. For several days he lay around looking woebegone and failing to eat.

After a raft of inconclusive tests and several days under observation, he was given a course of pills to try and cure what ailed him. As any pet owner knows, getting a pill down a cat's gullet is one of life's most vexing challenges. However, I fancied myself quite an expert on technique, since Poc's late, lamented sibling had swallowed more than his share of medication in the course of his short but merrily disruptive life.

Poc, alas, was a different bundle of fur. The first pill, administered before he had time to tune in, disappeared without much ado, but after that it was open warfare. As soon as I picked him up he would squirm frantically to get away, clamping his teeth firmly together and resisting all attempts to prise open his jaws.

Even when the pill seemed to have gone down, he would hold himself completely still for a moment, then start foaming at the mouth while I stroked his throat in a vain attempt to make him swallow. A couple of days into the debacle, little white dried up bits of pill started appearing on the rug and in desperation I took him back to the vet, who kindly said staff at the clinic would do the evil deed for me.

As the battle raged on, even the vet admitted that Poc was extraordinari-

ly difficult to medicate. On our third visit, after another five minute spitting contest behind closed doors, the vet asked if I would like to try the next dose at home.

"How did it go today?" I asked, warily. "See you tomorrow," he said, with a resigned sigh. Eventually, when all the pills were either inside Poc or being worn as a fashion accessory by an unsuspecting caregiver, we returned to Chateau Gilderdale in the hopes of a quick recovery.

Although he was better, he still wasn't eating much, so I took him back. This time, the vet said he thought Poc might be anorexic. An anorexic cat? Where had we gone wrong? Didn't he know we love him just as he is? When I told my daughter, she promised not to mention his love handles when he was within earshot. "Otherwise, the next thing you know he'll putting his paw down his throat."

When I checked out the internet, I discovered that anorexia does indeed occur in cats, but it has nothing to do with wanting to look like the feline equivalent of Kate Moss or being shunned by other, cooler cats. The good news was, it was treatable. The bad news was that the treatment consisted of a plethora of pills.

The vet administered the first one and we went home for a re-enactment of World War Three. This time, all attempts at pill popping ended in ignominious failure for *homo sapiens*. Fortunately, the first pill seemed to do the trick and for the last couple of weeks I have been chipping little bits of pill residue off various surfaces while spending the bulk of my grocery money on truckloads of posh dinners for the discerning cat.

Poc is definitely cured; now it's our bank account that's on life support.

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