



## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ROSETTE.....NOT!

At the beginning of their show career, a majority of new exhibitors may think that the objective of showing cats is to make as many finals, get as many rosettes as possible. Nothing could be further from the truth. The final and rosette is merely a mile marker or guidepost....it is not a destination unto itself.

Certainly no one enters a show to lose, but each exhibitor may have a different goal that weekend than the exhibitor benched beside him. Think of a show as not one single race, but an obstacle course on which many races and events are held simultaneously. In fact, just as the cat fancy has different competitive divisions, this subliminal cat show has divisions of its own.

### The Breeder Division

Competitors 'entered' in races here are interested in knowing how their breeding program is coming along. The placements that their cats achieve at a show give them feedback as to how the physical result of putting together those pedigrees has worked....or not. Seeing their cat in direct competition with a cat of the same breed shows the good and bad points of each cat as compared to its breed standard. They will also have the benefit of an objective opinion of several judges. Objectivity is often difficult for a breeder who sees their cats day in and day out.

### The Training Camp

Dominated primarily by kittens with older cats often competing as well. The objective of showing in the "Training Camp Division" is to see which cats/kittens have the temperament to be a future show cat – or not. Sometimes only one show is all that it takes. After an entry or two in this "Proving Ground" race, they may move on to the "Confidence Building Wall." Here, young entrants learn that the showhall is not such a scary place, there can be toys involved, and that showing can be fun! Finally, some entrants may take a side course in "Charm School" where they develop poise, grace, and show sparkle (and sometimes how to schmooze the judge!). None of these things can be taught at home; it takes the environs of the showhall for cats to develop these skills.

### Show Cats for Dummies

No the title of this contest is not meant as an insult. It refers to the popular "...For Dummies" series regarded by most as a good, basic level introduction into the named field. In this showhall event, the new exhibitor learns the art of showing a cat – how to groom, how shows are conducted, and the other basics of showing. It also has a companion event "(XXX Breed) For Dummies" in which the new exhibitor learns about a given breed. This contest can be run in conjunction with or just prior to....

### The Cat Calling Card Contest

In this event, the novice exhibitor gains introduction to the cat show world and more specifically, introduction to breeders within his breed. In society long ago gentle people would arrive with letters of introduction and precede visits with a calling card. Here the cat acts as the calling card and vouches (or not) for the sincerity of the new exhibitor's intent to work with the breed. When the new exhibitor later approaches an experienced breeder for a cat, stud service, or a cat to show, he will be a known quantity. New exhibitors are encouraged to play these latter two events on the Premiership field as there will be fewer obstacles (such as hormones) than on the Championship field.

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## *IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ROSETTE.....NOT! (CONT.)*

### **The 200 Point Pick-Up (and it's parallel event, the 75 Point Pick-Up)**

Sadly, this is the most popular and most conspicuous event. Cats come out, collect the points necessary for a Grand (Champion or Premier) title, and are whisked off, never to be seen again. Sometimes it is because this cat is better suited for running events on the Mommy (or Daddy) Track which is always held in the confines of the cattery. Other times it is because the owner is trying to pick up Grand titles on a cat he is trying to achieve a DM title on. But unfortunately, some owners simply retire the cat simply because they feel that once the cat has earned its Grand title (and they have no intentions of running for a higher win) that they cannot show it. And even more sadly, other exhibitors have been known to 'bully' the exhibitor into not showing the cat the second that he has earned his grand title. IF the cat is a good example of its breed and IF he enjoys showing there simply is no good reason not to show him...if that is what the owner chooses to do. That cat would be a great contender in the....

### **100 Meter Social Butterfly**

In this event, the object is not to win or lose. It's playing the game for the joy of it. The cat has a good time, shows the cat fancy and the public a good example of the breed. The owner gets to enjoy hanging out with friends for the weekend, maybe have a nice dinner Saturday night. The cat may earn a rosette...or not. But a good time is had by all!!

So one sees that (with the exception of the goal to obtain a Grand Final) not one of the aforementioned events has the goal of making a final. Yet all are certainly worthwhile and necessary goals. In fact, in most cases they may actually be more worthwhile and important than making a single final!