

SWIFTWATER DIARY

Thanksgiving Notes

BY MERLIN AND S. A. MORSE

My leader "D" says I should do this column because cats have something to say. There was quite a lot going on at Goose Lane. The snow was eight inches deep and the weather cold. People began to arrive and I suddenly found myself upside down and stretched out in the hands of Jacob. Jacob is very tall and very strong and very sure about cats, so there I was, all white soft fur from chin to tail, with people taking turns patting and stroking. Finally, I got back my dignity and my right-side-up-color, which is tiger except for fronts on toes.

They had a 19 pound turkey cooked for three hours and then taken down to Hanover for 13 at table. Or so I heard. Fortunately, they all came back in time for my late supper.

One day I was sacked out as usual on D's computer chair in the study when he came and carried me into the kitchen and put me down on the dinner table where we could all see out the big picture window and there was a flock of turkeys feeding on something. They stayed around quite a while, then went away, and then came back again.

That reminded me of the summer down on the island when we had a gang of poults feeding in the lawn. They looked just the right size for me, and I carefully crept along so that our trips would converge, but every time it got feasible to make a move, a big hen would calmly be in my way. No luck.

In fact I don't eat much game. A squirrel now and then, maybe. And *Microtus pennsylvanicus* - the Meadow Vole. And especially white-footed mice, *Pero-*

myscus leucopus. Chipmunks are fun to play with and sometimes get hurt, but mostly D rescues them and hides them in the brush pile. D recalls that once I chased a chipmunk about eight feet up a cedar tree, knocked it off, dropped off on top of it, and carried it away.

S o m e t i m e s something happens that I can't explain. Like, one afternoon M came back home and found me soaking wet and muddy. It took lots of work to wash me off and get me dry. Of course, I'd had an encounter with the pond, or something in the pond, and it must have got away. Maybe a frog or a crawdad. It's hard to explain some things, when you mostly get eyes to talk with.

When D wants to sit in his kitchen chair, and I'm napping, D says, May I sit down? And I get up and hop down. Because he loves me and he says so. And I blink.

The other night, or early in the morning, I wanted fresh water from the bathroom sink, and it wasn't quite deep enough, so D said "Oh, move a little aside so I can run more water," and I moved aside, and he drew some more water, till there was just enough, and I moved back where I could drink again. And purr, of course.

In winter, I like to wait till D is in bed and then jump up and lie down beside him like the Sphinx with paws out front. Then after we both fall asleep I get up and find the groove in the middle of the bed.

In our Gray House bedroom, there is a four-drawer chest with a mass of toys and strange objects on top and I can jump onto the window sill and from

there onto the top of the chest and lie down among all the toys, but once in a while I poke something over the edge and D has to find it in the morning. I can also jump up onto M's chest of drawers via her window sill, but she fears for the mirror and there is hell to pay. Or else, she lovingly lifts me off.

There are special places for two of us, like the "marble" bench (it's concrete) out on the lawn down country, and if I trot out there D has to come along too so I can

purr and rub and if necessary attack him so he knows his limits, after which I can be nice to him.

Maybe he has told before about the attack strategy against D at bedtime down country. But here's here how it goes anyway. At certain times, going upstairs gets very dangerous. I run up and fling myself on my side and growl and tear at the thick carpet and cry ominously in threatening voice, and he comes up the stairs anyway, where

upon I angrily growl and cry and grab him by the pants and cling, getting dragged by the strong fellow he is, until we get near the second floor, when I suddenly concede and let go and prepare for the second flight. He then sings out "run away, run away" and starts up the last flight and I flee up along the innermost stair well till we both reach the top and I jump up onto the bathroom counter and await water.

Mostly these days I avoid drawing

blood. D calls it drama. Which I guess it is. But it's original, eh? And fun to show how to be fierce and dangerous when you're really just a kitty with ideas. About theatrics.

And I really do understand what love is. And some of us cats are lucky.

Merlin the wise Cat.

S. A. Morse and Merlin write their Swiftwater Diary as from Goose Lane Farm in Swiftwater

SUMMIT BY MORRISON AND THE MORRISON ASSISTED LIVING AND SKILLED NURSING CARE

Aging in place together



BY SHANNON LYNCH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For many of us, the ties we have with family and friends are critical to our wellbeing. They create our favorite memories and provide a support system that cannot be easily replaced.

In a study of the world's longest living groups of people conducted by National Geographic and Blue Zones (an organization dedicated to helping people live better and longer), two of the nine healthy lifestyle habits they share are a commitment to family and a commitment to friends.

As we age into retirement and consider moving into a senior community, some of us fear this important network may be weakened and meaningful relationships could be lost. AARP studies show that one in three U.S. adults ages 50 and older experience frequent loneliness, while around 17 percent live in chronic isolation.

One of the barriers we face is that we all age differently. For instance, you might

regularly enjoy golfing with your friends, but your spouse has a chronic illness that demands constant medical care that you cannot provide. Or, perhaps, you are widowed and the friends who are the heart of your social support system have decided to move into senior living. What do you do?

The good news is that senior living options are evolving to help alleviate those feelings of isolation and allow people to preserve their networks.

By offering different living options on one campus, whether it is

independent living cottages, assisted living apartments or memory care support, people can be part of the same community while still receiving the individualized care they need. This new model allows all of us to transition from our homes to a community where more support is available.

Access to wellness programs, meals and assistance with life's daily activities are the immediate benefits of a senior community, but shared amenities such as libraries and activity rooms allows you to build your network and enhance

your social life.

The level of stress decreases when a spouse no longer has to shoulder the responsibility of caring for their partner by themselves, or caring for a home. Anxiety drops when there is no worry of developing new friendships, something that can be overwhelming for some people and lead to self-imposed isolation.

The new stress-free model of senior living communities is not only allowing people to age in place, but are preserving the relationships that keep them vibrant.

MEMORIES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE A4)

contained dresses, coats, sweaters, and blouses. There was a separate section for "little ones." At the time, it was the only baby/children's shop in town, and there were no consignment shops.

Occasionally, fashion shows were held in the two large front windows with local girls as models.

At Christmastime, Mrs. MacLeod always made her delicious fruitcakes for every employee, and in the summer, Mr. and Mrs.

Hosted a gala party at their large camp at Patridge Lake. We were one big family (around 25 of us).

In closing, most remembered the overhead electric system. All transactions — money or charges — were put in a little cylinder and sent overhead to the office, where change and a receipt were made and returned. Many entered the store just to observe this!

It was a great era. For all the employees, only one remains today — Virginia Miller.

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