An Inside Look at Animal Rescue

By Christine Callaghan

A couple of weeks ago, on a late afternoon ferry crossing, a fellow Islander came over to my car to chat. Spotting the pet carrier in the back seat, he asked what I had been up to that day. I replied:

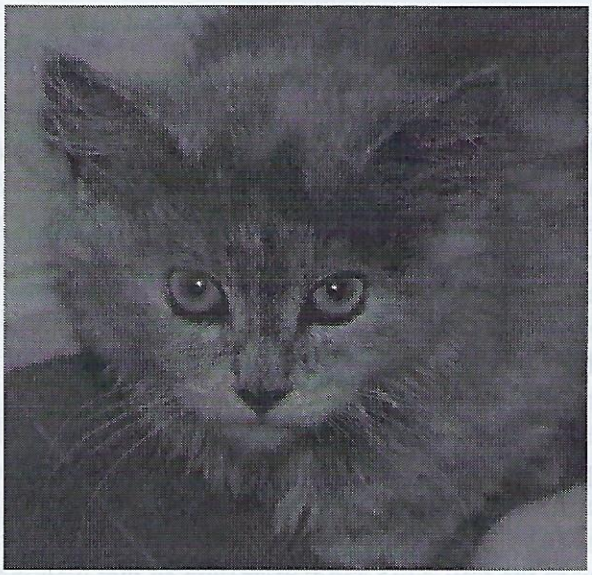
> "Well, I picked up four kittens from Central Grove, took them to the vet, and then drove them to a foster home further up the Valley. So today was kind of shot, other than that".
>
> " Ah, but you love it though", he replied.
>
> I think he was shocked when I instantly replied, "No, I don't"!

Of course, I love the animals, and it is gratifying to see them go on to better lives. But I don't think anyone - other than those involved in animal rescue - realizes how much time it consumes, and the emotional toll it can take. Let me tell you about last week. Just before I left for *a Friends of Ferals* meeting in Digby on Monday, I got a call that a couple of kids in the Marshalltown Trailer Park had found a newborn kitten. I urged the caller to look for the mother and more kittens. I mixed up a bottle of KMR (kitten milk replacer), grabbed a rabbit fur hat to put the kitten in, and

Sweet, tiny, preemie "Eclipse" was found all by himself in Marshalltown Trailer Park.

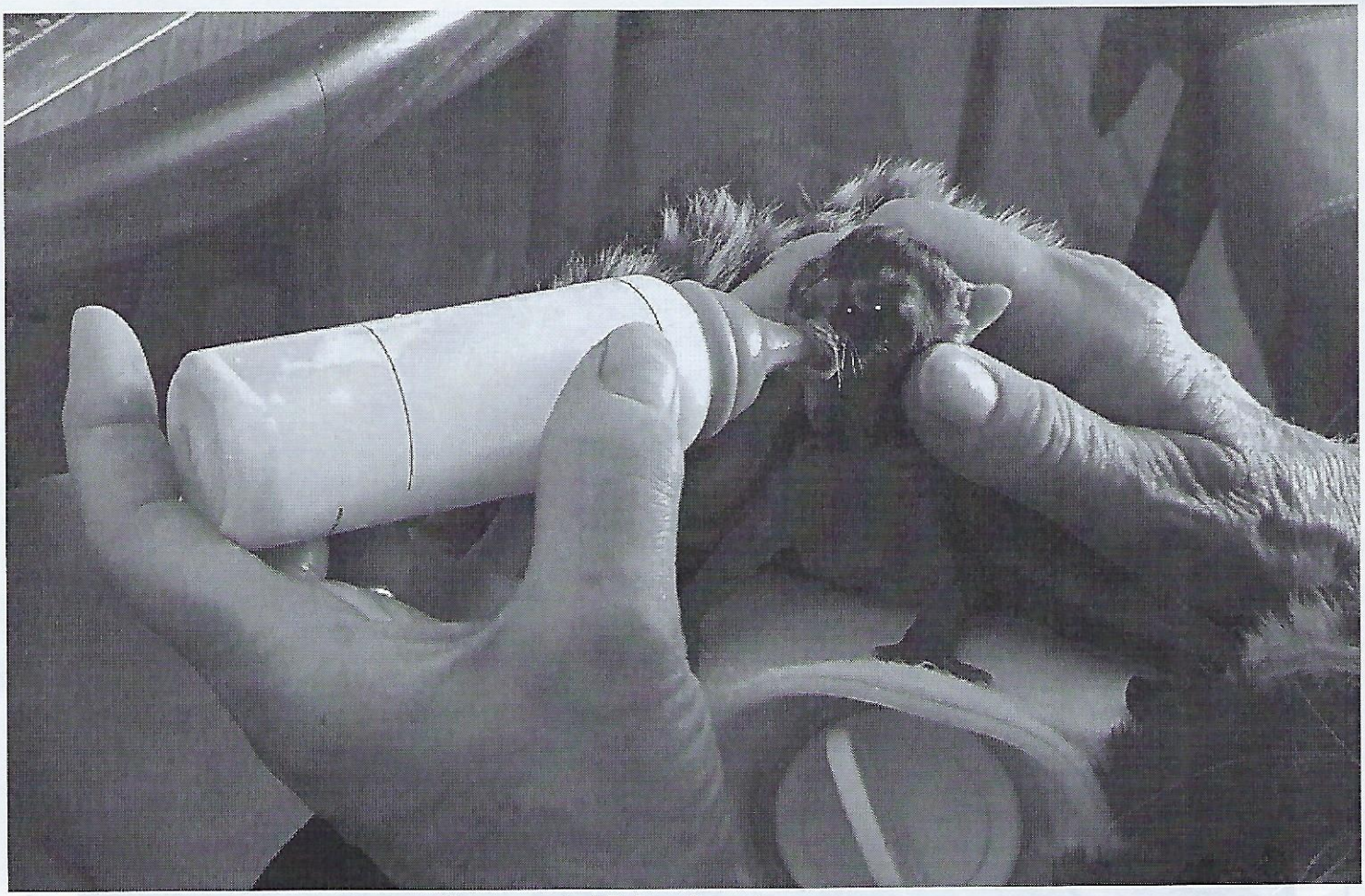
rushed for the ferry. I have never seen such a tiny excuse for a cat! Obviously, he was a preemie. (When I weighed him at home, he was 88 grams, barely 3 ounces.) I took him to the meeting, and he did nurse from the bottle. The other ladies named him "Eclipse". He had big (everything being relative) double paws. We all fell in love with him. One of the other members had brought a semi-feral kitten from Bear River that I agreed to keep overnight and to transport to the city the next day. Also to go to the city on Tuesday were three kittens from Lighthouse Road in Digby, that had been offered "Free to Good Home" on Facebook. (We hate that. It's dangerous for the kittens to be handed over to someone you don't know, and it's unlikely they will be spayed or neutered). Oh, and I also had to pick up a dog in Tiverton that was destined for a rescue group, to be re-homed.

Newborn kittens need to be fed every three hours, so I was up at 1:00 and 4:00, and then at 6:00 to get going. As soon as we started down the driveway, with Eclipse in his little carrier on the seat beside me, the Bear River kitten in the back began to tell me how much she hated car travel. And she kept it up for the next three and a half hours! I stopped in Tiverton for the dog. I had visited her every day for the preceding week, with treats, so she kind of knew me and liked me, so much so that she wanted to jump in the front seat. So with her leash wrapped around the headrest to keep her safely in the back seat, we carried on. At Lighthouse Road I picked up those three kittens, and took the opportunity to feed Eclipse again. Halfway out of town, Coco the dog needed to poo, so we found a place to walk and take care of that. By the time we hit the 101, Bear River Girl had convinced the



Shy Little Miss Bear River complained all the way to Halifax! (Good thing she's beautiful.)

Lighthouse Road triplets that road travel is agony, so I "enjoyed" a
mournful four-part harmony all the way to Halifax. And Tuesday was a hot day – 30 degrees in the Valley – so I juggled trying to keep the gang in the back cool enough with the AC, while keeping little Eclipse warm in his fur hat. (I kept the KMR warm by tucking the bottle in my



Tiny preemie "Eclipse" nursing.

bra, if you must know!).

When we got to the city, the dog went to one vet, and the four larger kittens to another. (Both vets work with rescue groups – Animal Rescue Coalitions for dogs, and SpayDay Nova Scotia for cats). Little Eclipse went to Pick of the Litter, where they specialize in trying to save wee orphans. By the time I caught the 6:30 ferry home, I was exhausted.

The three Lighthouse Road kittens were adopted two days later. They were vaccinated, treated for any possible parasites and the cost of spaying and neutering was included in the $250 their new owners were happy to pay for a pet they will love for many years. Coco the dog was treated for a serious skin condition and for parasites, and is now in a loving foster home until she is well enough to be spayed and go on to her "furever" home. Shy, little Miss Bear River is being fostered and socialized. She is so beautiful she will be adopted in no time, once she's ready. And dear little Eclipse passed away, despite all the loving thoughts that accompanied him during his brief time in the world.

Friends of Ferals will be having our annual Fall Fund Raiser on October 15th, at the Curling Club in Digby. (See ad on Page 19). Donations for the Penny Auction and the Silent Auction will be gratefully accepted. Call me at 839-2337. Please Spay and Neuter your pets.

Editor's Note: This article is humorous and engaging. However it also reflects the tremendous effort that the author puts into animal (cat) protection. It also reflects the frustration she is faced with on a daily basis because there are any number of people who treat their pets as an afterthought. Inviting a pet into one's home is serious business; pets look to us for friendship and protection. There should be no feral cats and abandoned dogs. Please assume the responsibility and have your pet spayed /neutered. I encourage everyone to attend the Fall Fund Raiser on October 15th (see above and ad in this issue), to show your support for the author and maybe even volunteer some time.

PASSAGES

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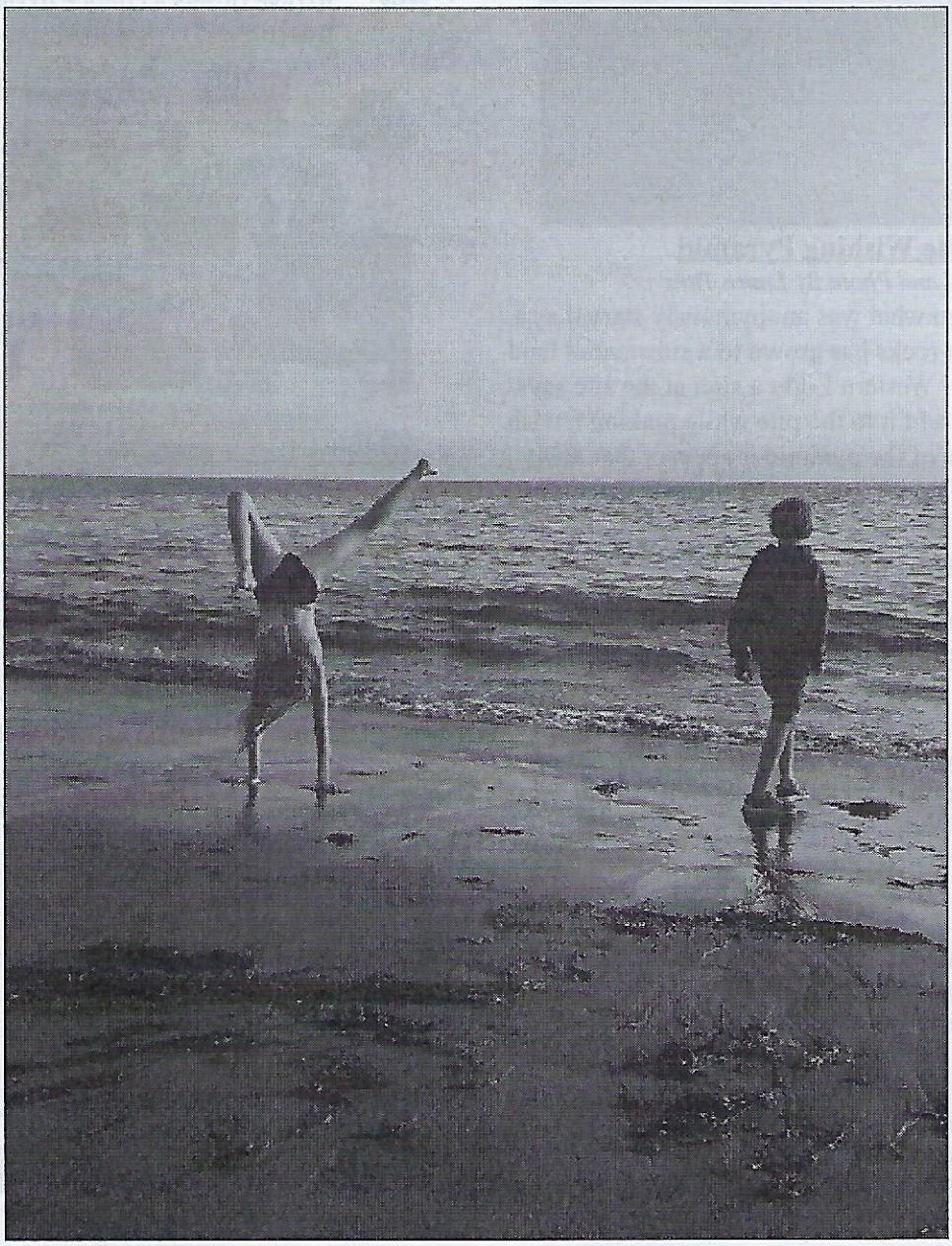
Summer Freedom ...



Ella and Landon Patterson of Alberta had a fun six weeks in Nova Scotia this summer. Pond Cove beach is one of their favourite places and this August evening they had the beach to themselves. Text and Photo by Laura Titus

"There's a New Kid In Town" See Page 24

New Museum Exhibit See Page 20

A Ferry Tale See Page 8