

# PAWS FOR EFFECT



## *The PolyTrak Newsletter February 2009*

**Volume 3 - Number 2**  
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# Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

February 2009 – Volume 3 No. 2

## WELCOME!

**G**reetings to each and everyone one of you. Welcome to this month's issue of "*Paws for Effect*". Also a welcome to this month's new subscribers. You can add, remove or send us your comments or story ideas at any time by just emailing [ptnewsleter@polytrak.net](mailto:ptnewsleter@polytrak.net).

"*Paws for Effect*" is a Newsletter from PolyTrak, a worldwide data base service that tracks information on the Maine Coon polydactyl. We feature information from our database as well as pictures of Maine Coons from the submissions from Breeders and Fanciers that participate in our database tracking system. We also feature articles of interest to the Maine Coon poly owners and breeders. But most important it is a Newsletter designed for you – the reader.



Mainelymag Anwen P of Keiz ar Mor

If you have suggestions on how to make this Newsletter better --- if you have a comment --- if you would like to write a letter to the Editor or compose an Article on The Maine Coon polydactyl, we invite, actually encourage you to write to us. We would be delighted to hear from you and feature your Article or letter in "*Paws for Effect*".

In addition PolyTrak and "*Paws for Effect*" works closely with a great bunch of Breeders and Fanciers who are interested or work with The Maine Coon polydactyl. These people have formed a group called PolyStandard. This Group is actively supporting the acceptance of the MC poly into the Championship Rings of Cat Associations around the World. This is an active Group from many Countries around the World. If you support acceptance would like to join their team in this project, they would welcome you to their fold. If you would like more information you can email [polystandard@polytrak.net](mailto:polystandard@polytrak.net). They would be happy to answers your questions. If you would like to join the group you can click on this link:



[Click to join polystandard](#)

You will asked to fill out a short narrative about the reason you would like to join. Once that is received by the Group a short questionnaire will be sent to you privately asking a little bit about yourself that includes any MC polys that you may have, show or breed, where you are from and similar info. In any event, you will probably enjoy the fun and work of this active group as they work to bring the Maine Coon poly to its rightful place in the Show World.

So take a break and glance over this month's issue of "*Paws for Effect*".

PolyTrak

966 cats listed.  
Is yours?



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## **A LONG BUT SUCCESSFUL ROAD FOR THE MAINE COON POLYDACTYL IN NEW ZEALAND**

**(By Susan Grindell)**

**T**he road to acceptance for the polys in New Zealand was a long and tortuous one, but we got there in the end. I can blame it on Heddie (Coomtn Come Fly With Me) the first polydactyl Maine Coon in the South Pacific (Australia, NZ and Asia), but that's OK as Heddie is secure enough in her opinion of herself to shoulder the blame! I decided to breed polys firstly because I like the look of those great big feet, and secondly because as a scientist and health professional myself I was concerned that this gene could be lost to the breed. The deletion of any harmless gene is of concern to anyone with any genetics knowledge.



**MainelyMagic's "Heddie"**

So, Heddie arrived from the USA (a story in itself!) and the story begins. In her first litter I fell in love with "Dark Poly" as he was known when he was a tiny baby. Heddie got gangrenous mastitis when the babies were only 4 days old and nearly died. The litter was handraised and what a mission that was. I still have a clear picture in my mind of Dark Poly sucking from the bottle, his huge hands on the end of wee stick legs holding for grim death

onto the bottle as he sucked it dry. Dark Poly grew up to become Mainelymagic Digitally Enhanced, our first poly stud boy. Diggie is a beautiful clear silver and the father of cats in Canada, Australia, Hawaii, England, France and Reunion Island.



**MainelyMagic's "Diggie"**

I loved the polys and so did everyone else who saw them. But the injustice of the showing disqualification started to rankle with me. Why should the polys be treated as second class citizens, they were there from the start. Who had the right to decide they were not as good as their straight footed littermates? The quest began. Little did I know what I had got myself into!

First I approached the Executive Council of the New Zealand Cat Fancy to request the MCO standard be altered to allow polys to be shown. The Breed Section was polled and the vote was all in favour of accepting polys except for one abstention. Even so, the EC denied this



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first application. Most people did not seem to be well educated about the polydactyl gene and I realised I needed to do a lot of work so that there was a general understanding of how polydactyly worked in Maine Coons. I researched and then set up a website. I brought the subject up on the NZ Cat Fancy list and patiently (and not so patiently at times) answered everyone's queries. I took Diggie to shows and put him on display and I spoke to as many judges and officials as I could.

Just as in TICA, we had those who were vehemently opposed, those who supported and the vast majority of fence sitters who had no opinion either way. The difference in NZ was that the discussion was between all the breeders, not just Maine Coon breeders. I was lucky to have the support of the entire Breed Section, so the discussion was Maine Coon breeders versus the rest!. But again I was fortunate to have breeders in other breeds (eg Persians, Birman, Siamese etc) who were well thought of and scientifically minded enough to grasp the concepts, help by supporting me in discussions on our NZCF list. At least I wasn't a lone voice, and I think it helped that people who had no axe to grind were in the polys corner. One of the biggest hurdles I overcame in people's minds was the nature of the gene. Once people understood it was a dominant gene they were more relaxed about it. It took a while for this to sink in and I had to repeat this time and time again. But it was a big point. People said "well no one has to breed with them if they don't like them".

With the feeling that more people understood about polys, I was brave or foolish enough to apply again. I took 2 cats (TC and James Blonde) along with me to the Breeds Standard Council (the equivalent of the TICA genetics Council) and the first hurdle to overcome. They voted favourably for the polys. On to the EC meeting which I also attended with a cat. I only took TC as it was an early morning 2 hour drive to the airport, followed by

a 1 hour plane trip and a taxi ride to the hotel where the meeting was held and then back again the same day. This time the EC after a lot of deliberation, they decided to look favourably at the polys. They asked the Breed Section to vote again (vote number 2) and if the vote was positive, to then come up with the wording for the change in the standard. The feeling at that meeting was that if they were accepted they should be part of the MCO breed and not a separate but intermateable breed. I arrived home exhausted but cautiously optimistic.

There was much discussion on our Breed List and the wording was finally tweaked and twiddled so that it read how we all wanted it to.



Shiningwater's "Winner"

Back to the EC December meeting, which I couldn't attend. I was rather taken aback to be told by phone from the meeting that they were going to be a separate breed and not part of the MCO breed. This was incredibly disappointing. I asked that the meeting be made aware of the resultant problems with certified pedigrees having different breeds recorded when both were Maine Coons, but the die was cast. It was a step forward, but not the giant leap I had my heart set on. I put in an official



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request to have this revisited and in the meantime forged ahead with the process for the Polydactyl Maine Coon breed (PMC).

At this stage Zena Pigden entered the ranks of the poly breeders, as I had I sold a poly boy, Mainelymagic The Winning Hand, to her. Together we started the process of getting the new breed approved. We had to fulfill certain requirements which included having judges examine the polys, be present at judges seminars and other official events. Each event gained us points and we had to get 100 points to become an approved breed. Zena and I attended another meeting to further discuss the polys. It was a rather arduous trip for us both flying from different ends of the country to meet in the middle for this. That meeting was at a small provincial town. The little bumpy plane that I arrived in did nothing to cure me of my fear of flying!

During this time poly kittens were born and the registration process started to be implemented for them. Problems arose as I had predicted and I spent hours trying to get them sorted out and writing to the Executive Committee about it. A new Executive Committee was voted in during the year and we hoped that they may be more open minded about the way polys were going to be dealt with in New Zealand. Another vote (the 3rd one) was requested and again the Breed Section wanted polys as part of the breed, not as a separate breed. Finally, late last year, Zena & I attended another meeting. In July John & I moved to the South Island and so this time Zena and I could travel together (moral support is always welcome to the chicken hearted flyer). Another small plane and a bumpy ride (by the way, anything smaller than a 737 is small to me) brought us to Palmerston North a small city in the North Island.

At long last, success. This EC reviewed all the previous discussion on polys and their

acceptance as well as the ensuing problems with the registrations. The Chairman in his ultimate wisdom put forward a motion to revoke the previous decision for a separate but intermateable breed and to change the MCO standard to allow for polydactyly.

The first show is coming up and hopefully I will be able to report that there is for the first time in the world, a legitimate Champion Polydactyl Maine Coon."



Mainelymagic's Jazzman P

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*No amount of time can erase the  
memory of a good cat, and no amount  
of masking tape can ever totally remove  
his fur from your couch.*

*- Leo Dworken -*

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*"People that hate cats will come back as  
mice in their next life."*

*- Faith Resnick -*

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## POLYTRAK FACT

Near the end of February there are 701 kittens listed in PolyTrak born as part of a polydactyl litter. 382 of these kittens listed are polydactyl.

- 4 Kittens (1.1%) are 1WD
- 149 Kittens (40.2%) are 2FWD
- 7 Kittens (1.9%) are 2RWD
- 24 Kittens (6.5%) are 3WD
- 187 (50.4%) are 4WD
- 11 Kittens have unknown paws
- 362 litter kittens are from poly Sire
- 308 litter kittens are from poly Dam
- 24 litter kittens – both parents are poly
- 7 litter kittens have homozygous Sire  
No litter kittens with homozygous Dam

## FIRST MAINE COON POLYDACTYL SHOWN IN RUSSIA

(Contributed by Polina Shevtsova)

**Editors Note:** Polina Shevtsova of the Russian Federation presented her kitten at the BabySalon Cat Show in Moscow in September of last year. PolyTrak is featuring some of the great shows of 2008, where Maine Coon polys were shown. The BabySalon Show was certainly one of those great shows, as this was a first for the poly in Advanced New Traits in Moscow. The attention and kudos received by Polina at the show were numerous and Mamba was well received by the audience, Judges and Officials at the Show. Below you will see many of Polina's comments and observations during the event. Her direct quotes are in blue italic font.



Stonetowns's Jarnac Binty P Queen



Moscow Showhall for BabySalon 2008

*I am here to report to you about showing my polycoon Mamba at BabySalon-2008 in Moscow in September, 2008. I placed PolyStandard logo on my cage and distributed colourful printed materials about polycoons. It was Mamba's first show, but she behaved perfectly - posed before cameras, kissed the judges, let everybody to see her paws. She has a really great temper!*



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*We had 8 rings and 4 judges, and won New Traits collecting all the possible laces :))). All the judges liked her and even expressed their sorrows she was poly - otherwise she would have more prizes :))).*



*Russian breeders turned out generally to be very curious and friendly about polycoons. There was a large crowd during judging and interviews around us. Mamba likes people and likes to be a star :))) And now she really is the one!*



*All the judges liked her and even expressed their sorrows she was poly - otherwise she would have more prizes. I managed to arrange interview with one Russian judge and two foreign judges - Francine Hicks and Kurt Vlach - for TV News broadcast. They*

*all had different opinions, but the main purpose - informative event - was achieved. I was especially happy to get introduced to Francine Hicks - what a wonderful lady!*



**Francine Hicks and Kurt Vlach interviewed on Russian Television**

*Actually, Mamba is a show-lady - she knows how to conquer hearts :))) People just CAN NOT treat her badly. There is love and intelligence in her eyes. They just look into them, touch her and that is all - they are immediately poly-lovers :))) First, I was very anxious about how we would be met by Russian coon-breeders and international judges. But we were greeted very friendly by judges and breeders caught in the line. They started smiling, asking and finally some said they also would like to have a poly.*



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Francine Hicks judging Mamba in New Traits



Kurt Vlach also judges Mamba in New Traits

*The crowd of breeders collected when Kurt Vlach presented a rather detailed story of his own experience in polycoon breeding - it was very interesting. He judged Mamba as just maine-coon, regardless her polydactylie, and his opinion was very valuable to me as a breeder. The lady with palm over her mouth (2<sup>nd</sup> picture on the preceding page) was really saying "Oh, my God!" at that very moment :))) Very funny! After the rings I could hardly struggle to my cage through the crowd, since people were very curious and, thank God, rather friendly. They were surprised to see that a poly can be an excellent cat highly appreciated by respected foreign judges and strongly recommended for breeding. "Why shouldn't we then use them in breeding*

*programme?" was their question. I'm going to show Mamba as an adult also to be sure of my breeding plans. There is already a lot of people asking me when they can see her the next time. The interest is growing :)))*



That's a "wrap" for another month. **"Paws for Effect"** would like to thank you, Polina, for this inspiring report and for your hard work in promoting the Maine Coon polydactyl throughout the World. It is through yours and many others throughout the World that the Maine Coon polydactyl is returning to its rightful place in the Show Ring.

Also many Thanks to Susan for the fascinating story of acceptance of the poly in NZCF. It was through your hard work and dedication that MC polys are now being shown for Championship status.

These are testaments to what can be accomplished. We should all dedicate ourselves to this mission for the betterment of the Maine Coon. We hope that you will join us again in for more of the latest news from PolyTrak. Visit PolyTrak at <http://www.polytrak.net> to see archived issues of **"Paws For Effect"** dating back to January of 2007.

## Bye for Now!

