

Waco Tribune-Herald

# LOCAL & TEXAS

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## From shelter cage to big stage

Abandoned felines take spotlight in household division of cat show

**By Jessica Chia**  
Tribune-Herald staff writer

**A**n energetic tabby named Fruitcake came from an animal shelter cage to competing in the same arena as some of the top pedigree cats in Central Texas. The 4-month-old brown patch tabby was chosen best cat in three of the six rings in which she competed in the household division of The Cat Fanciers' Association Allbreed Cat Show on Saturday.

The event, held by the Gulf Shore Consortium Regional Club, is one of the biggest cat shows in the state, said Jan Rogers, show coordinator. More than 120 Waco-area spectators came out to see the preened and pedigreed contestants at the Extraco Events Center. But it was those born without documents and special treatment that touched some of the spectators' hearts.

Toni Huff, a 64-year-old who has been showing cats in the household pet class for seven years, found Player abandoned in a parking lot.

"The 'very outgoing' 1-year-old lynx point tabby competed in her first show as soon as she was 4 months old.

Before that, Huff prepared her by getting her used to riding in the car and playing with the types of toys typically used by judges at shows.

"You usually know within the first three shows what your cat's going to be like. After that, they let their owner know they don't want to do it by some kind of bad behavior," Huff said.

She thinks her cats enjoy competing in shows. "They love being shown because when they go to a show, they get my undivided attention," Huff said.



Spring resident Sheryl Zink shows off her winning cat, Fruitcake, who took home a Best Household Pet ribbon at The Cat Fanciers' Association Allbreed Cat Show Saturday at the Extraco Events Center General Exhibits Building.

Player was judged one of the top 10 cats in each of the rings.

Sheryl Zink, treasurer for the Gulf Shore Region of The Cat Fanciers' Association, adopted Fruitcake from the Humane Society of North Texas.

She thought Fruitcake's showing

Saturday was unusually good because there's no written standard

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Staff photo — Duane A. Laverty



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Judge Jeff Janzen plays with a cat during the household division of the Cat Fanciers' Association Allbreed Cat Show on Saturday.

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for judging household pets.

The non-pedigreed cats compete against one another in the areas of health, overall beauty and friendliness.

"I judge them based on cleanliness, temperament, how they play, their coat is clean, nails are clipped," said veteran Cat Fanciers' Association Allbreed judge Darrell Newkirk, who noted the absence of written standards makes household pet judging highly subjective.

"It needs to be a cat that interacts well with strangers," Zink said. "They will be handled by six to eight judges per show. Not all household pets are cut out for shows."

Cats must be at least 4 months old and spayed or neutered to compete in the household division.

The Cat Fanciers' Association prohibits wild or declawed cats from competing.

More than half of the 12 cats competing in the household division were rescued from Texas animal shelters or the streets.

The Humane Society of Central Texas brought sev-

eral cats and kittens up for adoption to the show, and two were adopted Saturday.

DFW Purebred Rescue also brought cats looking for homes, and entered those with the best temperaments in the household pet competition.

Beth Edwards, one of two DFW Purebred Rescue volunteers that shows cats from the shelter, said, "Some weekends we'll adopt six or seven out at one show."

Part of the proceeds from the show benefited DFW Purebred Rescue.

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