ROSIE - ARTICLE 2

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| **PRAIRIE STATE CAT CLUB'S NINTH FALL HARVEST CAT SHOW** **Franklin Park, Illinois**by Rosie Alger-Street

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| 0n 2nd October 2004, Barrie and I went over to Chicago to attend the Prairie State Cat Club’s Ninth Fall Harvest Cat Show in Franklin Park, IL. A long way to go for a Cat Show, I must admit, but this wasn’t just any ordinary cat show. The show extended over three days and on the first day it was the Eighth On Safari Bengal Congress, a Show especially for Bengals where the cream of North America’s cats were competing against each other in three rings. This is actually open to Bengals worldwide, though they don’t often have entries from outside N.A. |

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 | It had been ten years since we went to the first ever Bengal Congress in West Springfield, New England, (taking over two of our own cats and amazingly winning it!), so we felt it was time we went back to see how the breed has moved on, and also to catch up on old friendships. The Congress was brilliant and there were some amazing Bengals there and well worth the journey. |

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| However that was only a third of the treat. On the following two days there were two separate all breed shows in the same venue with five TICA judges in five rings catering for a large number of different breeds. This is effectively having five open classes all on the same day, so with their points system it is possible that good cats can be made up to Quadruple Grand Champions over a weekend. This is particularly advantageous in the USA where exhibitors have flown their cats from all over the country and even Canada, and it is very expensive to attend a cat show. |

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 | Here I must take a breath, because apart from our Supreme Cat Show at the NEC where they have ring judging, there was no similarly with the GCCF system and after years of strict training, the lack of formality was hard to grasp! People arrived with their cats and were handed a catalogue labelled with their name at the door. No one checked the cats or even looked to see if they had the right cats. No vaccination cards were checked and there was no vetting in. As far as I am aware there wasn’t even an official vet present. |

This was a point I checked with the Show Manager and apparently while TICA does not have a vet on hand, the show rules allow for the show committee to have removed from the hall any cats showing signs of illness. At this show she was asked by an exhibitor to look at a nearby Persian that had been sneezing – she talked to the owner and it was agreed that the cat had been sneezing from the dusty cat litter. However, she did have removed from the show hall an underage kitten and when one cat swallowed a feather from a toy, she arranged with the hall manager to send her to a local vet to be treated.

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 | The hall had rows of benches and basic wire pens provided by the club which the exhibitors liberally decorated, and some pens that people had brought themselves. And what a lovely array and variety of pens were there. Mesh fronted collapsible ones, Perspex fronted ones, large igloos covered in, all decorated with multi-coloured drapes, ornaments on top and frills and bows and fancy material everywhere. It was a delightful hotchpotch of informal colour. |

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| Cats seemed to spend more time out of their pens than in them and lots of people had a bench for the cats to sit on outside the pen. What I did find confusing was that the pens were not numbered at this particular show and until the cats actually went up for ring judging and then had a number on top of their pen, you didn’t know which cat was which. No cat is in a basket after they have arrived at the Show Hall. The ring steward calls the various numbers and it is up to the owners to carry them up to the ring, sometimes even handing them directly to the Judge. When the Judge has finished with them, the ring steward removes the number and the owner then takes the cat back again. |

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 | I was pleased to see that the Judges were very strict about disinfecting and all the ring pens were thoroughly cleaned between cats. However I would have loved to have seen the \_expression on a Show Manager’s face in England if they had seen a Savannah (A cross between a Serval and a domestic Shorthair) being walked around the hall on a lead, or a very large Main Coon casually strolling around on its own, or four young Persian brothers all doing “kissy kissy” together as they hadn’t seen each other for months!What was interesting was that in the whole three days I did not see a single bad-tempered cat or one that could not be handled. Nor did I see any signs of illness. The owners were all so friendly and laid-back and the show was so delightfully informal, I think this must rub off on the cats. There were so many aspects I could write on about this marvellous experience, but probably the main memory I am left with was the lovely warm informal atmosphere of a lot of like minded people really enjoying their cats. |

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