



# ROAR

December 2010

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The Official Publication of the TOP CATS OF ILLINOIS

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Carlton R. 'Top Cat' Marcyan



### Top Cats of Illinois

It has arrived, the end of another calendar year, riding season and Top Cats administration. All three come to a natural end. This includes my tour of duty as President concluding in a few weeks. It has been challenging but lots of fun. I thank you all for provid-

ing me the opportunity to lead the club for the past two years and hope the club is somewhat better for the experience. It certainly has been for me. There are only so many opportunities in life to take a leadership role; when it arrives the real challenge is to make it a worthwhile for all.

The members of the board during the past two years have given much of themselves and their private time for the good of Top Cats. Please thank them for these efforts. Of course, there are bumps in the road. This is to be expected; however, the goal is to seek ongoing improvement of communication with, services for, rides with and great experiences to our members and guests. Overarching above all is maintaining a high level of safety for our riders.

Already we are planning rides and activities for 2011 as well as GRASS dates and road captain training sessions. If you are not a road captain,

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### Upcoming Events

#### DECEMBER

7 General Meeting  
14 Board Meeting

#### JANUARY

4 General Meeting  
11 Board Meeting



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# **KAUTION KORNER**

## ***Stayin' Safe... Experienced Perspective***

By Tom "Top Cat" Malia

Earlier this year, Dennis Dougherty, Larry Scalzitti and I attended a Stayin' Safe Motorcycle Training session. This program was developed by the late Larry Grodsky to provide on-street rider training using proven street strategies and real-time coaching techniques. This article will attempt to summarize some of the key concepts taught in this training session.

Eric Trow has now taken over the program and is their Senior Instructor. The class extended over two days and began with a brief organizational meeting over breakfast and then moved to a nearby parking lot where the students were instructed to ride a variety of low-speed loops. I think the point of this exercise was simply to give the instructors some initial insight as to the riding capabilities of their students. We then headed out on the road and the real instruction began. The students were all equipped with one-way radios so that the instructors could communicate with us as we rode. This was a very effective teaching technique in that it was real-time. You knew exactly what the instructor was talking about because you were "experiencing" the situation as he was discussing it. We would then stop periodically to conduct "chalk talk" sessions to clarify concepts and to discuss any questions.

As we were riding, the instructor's near constant commentary was focused on our developing a heightened sense of awareness of our surroundings. Their fundamental message was that instead of waiting for a hazard to demand our attention and then devoting our energies to executing emergency maneuvers, we should instead eliminate surprises by sniffing out potential hazards before they become real. Then, by using speed adjustments and lane positioning, we proactively create space between our bike and the potential hazard. (The SIPDE/SEE concepts hammered home real-time on the road). As part of this, we were constantly trying to assess the direction and contour of the road ahead and to predict the movements of surrounding vehicles. They put a huge emphasis on watching our mirrors and encouraged us to always check our mirrors before slowing down, passing, changing lanes or even shifting position within our lane.

In an effort to predict the direction of the approaching road-and thus adjust to your ideal speed and lane position-they introduced the concept of monitoring visual points and verges (converging or diverging). While these concepts are very useful, they are near impossible to describe without visual aids. See me- I would be happy to try to explain.

One of Stayin' Safe's primary concepts is that while motorcyclist suffer many disadvantages in terms of minimal protection and decreased visibility to other drivers, we do have a distinct advantage over larger vehicles in terms of our maneuverability and our ability to use the entire lane to our advantage. Therefore to maximize this advantage, in many instances, they discourage using a staggered riding formation. Particularly when riding on a two-lane road that you are not familiar with, roads that have lots of curves and/or blind hills (i.e., hills that you cannot see over as you ap-

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## TECH TALK

Technology That Can Impact Your Life

### Motorcycle Troubleshooting

Taken from an article by Jerry Lemke owner of [www.freeengineinfo.com](http://www.freeengineinfo.com)

When troubleshooting a motorcycle, first start with the basics. These simple tests can work for any small engine. All engines need three basic things to run fuel, spark and air. These simple things can cause your motorbike to not start up or run poorly. First start off with the fuel remove the hose off the tank and make sure the fuel is flowing properly. Some bikes will have to turn the fuel selector to prime, not on, or fuel will not flow. Take a flashlight and look down into the tank, is the fuel varnished or is there dirt in the tank? Older motorbikes had a problem with tanks rusting inside and would plug the screen up inside the tank. Fuel delivery may still be a problem but we will come back to that later.

Next remove the spark plugs, you may need to remove the tank to reach them. Inspect every spark plug as you take them out. All the spark plugs should look the same. If a plug looks white colored, that cylinder may be (lean) and not getting enough fuel. If you have a plug that looks wet and black, that cylinder may be getting too much fuel (rich) or not sparking good. Remove all the spark plugs and snap the plugs back into their wires. Set the spark plugs on the engine so that they can ground themselves. Crank the bike over and watch the plugs for sparks, preferably somewhere dark. Make sure you look at all the plugs to make sure they are all sparking. If one spark looks weak check the wire and plug, if old or worn replace them. If there is no spark the coil may be bad.

If you have any test equipment such as an ohm meter, you can find out what the resistance reading should be for your bikes coils. This way you will know for sure if the coils are o.k. If the ignition system looks fine move on to the carburetors. First, if the bike has not been maintained recently

(a problem in itself) make sure the carbs are synchronized. To do this you need a vacuum gauge made for this. Remove the small rubber plug located between the carbs and the cylinder. Attach the gauge and take the readings from each cylinder. Replace the caps when not measuring or it won't run right. Adjust the throttle screw or linkage for that carb until they all read close to one another.

Refer back to inspecting the spark plugs. If one cylinder looked lean or rich check all hoses for cracks and air leaks. If the motorcycle has not been run in awhile the carbs may be (gummed up). Remove the float bowl off the bottom of the carb. Look in the bowl for dark varnish looking gas. If the fuel looks dark you will probably have to remove the pilot and main jets and carefully run a wire through the center hole to clean them out. Be careful to not bend the float as the height needs to be correct to run well also. Check that the small needle attached to the float between the pivot point, is moving up and down. If it doesn't move smoothly the carb will not fill up with gas or will run low as your driving down the road.

Make sure you check the battery also, if they become weak the ignition system won't have enough power to keep the bike running smoothly. If you still haven't found anything make sure you valve lash has been checked at the correct mileage intervals. If not this can cause many problems with the way it runs. Also you can screw a compression gauge into the spark plug holes and check that they are within 5-10% of each other. If one is way down you have a serious problem either with the pistons, bore or valves. This should be a good start to finding a general problem with your motorbike.



## 2011 ELECTION PROCESS

By Gary Brandt

Once again we have a full slate of candidates willing to step up and serve. The Top Cats have been blessed over the years to always have such members who are willing to give of themselves for the betterment of the organization.

This year we will have an uncontested slate. With the concurrence of the Top Cats Board of Directors the slate is presented as follows:

<b>President</b>	<b>Mike Bradbury</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Wayne Kirkpatrick</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Stewart Johnson</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Muriel Brandt</b>
<b>Director</b>	<b>Mary Walters</b>



A single voice vote, for the entire slate will be conducted at the December general meeting.

Gary Brandt,  
Past President.



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proach the crest) and when you anticipate riding with some pace, they would insist that you ride single file. All riders would typically ride in the left vehicle track and then utilize the full width of the lane to better avoid potential hazards, to better visualize the road ahead and to establish an optimal set-up for the safe execution of an approaching curve. There were a couple of instances where I was amazed as to the visual impact of moving slightly to my right to get a better view of approaching vehicles that were eclipsed by the lead vehicle. This simple maneuver not only gave those drivers a better view of me, but gave me early warning of their possible intent to execute a pass or a left turn in front of me.

They also taught us to drive a line through a curve different from the one I have typically used. I have historically driven the “racing line”. Using this line, you enter a turn by moving as far to the outside as the road or your lane permits and then clip the inside edge of the curve at the apex (the geometric center) of the turn and then accelerate out again using the full width of the road or lane. This serves to “straighten” out the turn as much as possible allowing you to carry more speed (and less lean in the case of a motorcycle) through the turn. This is probably a fine technique if your objective is to go as fast as possible and if you are familiar with the shape of the turn and the quality of the road’s surface through the turn. Stayin’ Safe teaches that these conditions or objectives are seldom prevalent when riding a motorcycle and safety is, or ought to be, of paramount importance. Thus when riding a motorcycle the racing line is not ideal and apexing at some point in the second half of the turn or “late apexing” is recommended. Stayin’ Safe would say it differently. Their point is that because riders are frequently unfamiliar with the road and thus do not have good information as to where a turn apexes. Therefore a motorcyclist should initiate a line that gives them the best line of sight. Once you can clearly visualize your exit out of the turn, execute your turn-in and begin your acceleration out. The actual apex, late or otherwise, is coincidental. Furthermore, your line must remain flexible and continuously updated based on new information as it becomes available on your travel through the turn. This technique gives you a much larger margin for error if you have misjudged the shape of the curve or if oncoming traffic is intruding on your lane or if there is some problem (dead animal, gravel, oil slick, wet leaves, pavement deterioration) with the road condition’s through your line that you need to compensate for.

To stabilize the bike’s suspension, it is important to introduce and maintain some level of throttle throughout the exit of the curve. But that throttle position can be anything from “off idle” in the midst of tighter or downhill bends to spirited acceleration upon exit of a visually clear sweeper. Throttle use is dependent on what is happening with your visual point and the distance we can see ahead.

Some of their other more useful tips:

Proficient riding begins with the **correct posture**. Heighten your awareness of your riding position. The expert rider is always loose, rests his/her hands on the bars-no death grip- and adopts an “athletic” position by placing the balls of his/her feet on the foot pegs. **Eyes are looking well ahead.**

Observe but do not fixate on the rider or the vehicle in front of you. Instead, **look “through” or beyond the preceding bike** and pick your own line. Never let the pace of the rider in front of you influence you to ride faster than you feel comfortable with.

Attaining the appropriate entry speed is key to achieving smooth cornering. Frequently excessive

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entry speed is followed by mid-turn stabs at the brakes, choppy lines and frazzled nerves. Instead think **“slow in, out with a grin”**.

If riders find they are carrying too much speed into a corner, the natural reaction is to reach for the brakes. Instead you should focus on where you want to go and **introduce more lean angle**. Crashes typically happen in a corner because a rider has lost faith/confidence, not because the motorcycle could not execute the turn.

On twisty roads, it is important to **think of curves as a series of turns**, even if you are unable to see the next run right away. Always set up for the turn that comes **after** the turn you are in to avoid being in the wrong place or at the wrong speed for upcoming turns. Thus looking well down the road is critical.

When operating a motorcycle, you go where you are looking. It is essential to set your sights on where you want to go next—not where you are at the moment and **certainly not on where you are afraid you will wind up**.

Any time you stop or significantly slow your motorcycle, whether at an intersection or a pedestrian crosswalk or wherever, focus on identifying a **specific escape route** and then scrupulously monitor your mirrors in case you have to execute an escape.

In conclusion, I found the class to be very instructional. The next time you are out riding with others, get the group discussing safety issues and get in single file formation and try some of these techniques. Stay safe!





## the World According to Andy

### HER DIARY:

Tonight, I thought my husband was acting weird. We had made plans to meet at a bar to have a drink. I was shopping with my friends all day long, so I thought he was upset at the fact that I was a bit late, but he made no comment on it. Conversation wasn't flowing, so I suggested that we go somewhere quiet so we could talk. He agreed, but he didn't say much. I asked him what was wrong; he said, 'Nothing.' I asked him if it was my fault that he was upset. He said he wasn't upset, that it had nothing to do with me, and not to worry about it. On the way home, I told him that I loved him. He smiled slightly, and kept driving. I can't explain his behavior. I don't know why he didn't say, 'I love you, too.' When we got home, I felt as if I had lost him completely, as if he wanted nothing to do with me anymore. He just sat there quietly, and watched TV. He continued to seem distant and absent. Finally, with silence all around us, I decided to go to bed. About 15 minutes later, he came to bed. To my surprise, he responded to my caress, and we made love. But I still felt that he was distracted and his thoughts were somewhere else. He fell asleep - I cried. I don't know what to do. I'm almost sure that his thoughts are with someone else. My life is a disaster.

### HIS DIARY:

My Harley wouldn't start today. At least I got lucky.



## ATTENTION ALL TOP CATS

### 2011 Sturgis on the River Rally –Davenport

Gary Brandt



Mark your calendars for next years Sturgis on the River Rally, in Davenport Iowa. We will leave on Friday June 17<sup>th</sup> and return on Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup>. The Top Cats have 12 rooms already set aside at the Radisson in downtown Davenport. This year we will return to J&P Cycles and visit the **all new** Motorcycle Museum in Anamosa. Don't miss a fun filled weekend. You can call and reserve your rooms now at 563-322-2200. Make sure you mention the Top Cats. Treat yourself on this Fathers Day Weekend!!





Happy Birthday to

Robert Mann on  
December 25<sup>th</sup>

And

Dennis Dougherty on  
December 30<sup>th</sup>

**Also, a Belated Birthday Wish  
to**

**Mike Bradbury** on  
November 5<sup>th</sup>  
(Sorry, Mike!)

Send your special dates to us at  
[Roar@topcats.org](mailto:Roar@topcats.org) so that we can celebrate your  
special days with you!



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## PRESIDENTS CORNER

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step up and tell us you want to be. Yes, there is responsibility, but the satisfaction you will experience and education you will receive will, as a result, make you a better rider. These benefits are far greater than the costs of your energy and time. Challenge yourself by getting involved; no better way to get through the coming cold months than by keeping yourself busy.

My best to the next Top Cats-Illinois administration. It has been my pleasure and honor to have been your leader.

Ride on,

Carl

**WANTED**



**Top Cats Historian**

The Top Cats Board is looking for a member to become official historian for the club.

Over the next year we want to create a written and oral history of our club that we can share with existing, new, and potential members.

The club turns 15 in 2010. Many of our legacy members have or will be moving on. We want to capture their and others' stories of our humble beginnings as well as favorite tales of the road.

If you have an interest in becoming Top Cats Historian or being a part of this activity please contact Dennis P. (Wombat) Dougherty at [wombat@dpdougherty.com](mailto:wombat@dpdougherty.com)

## HELP WANTED WEBSITE EDITOR

The Top Cats Board of Directors is looking for an enterprising and creative individual to assume responsibility for coordinating the content on our soon-to-be upgraded website. No 'technical' website experience is required.

The primary responsibility will be to work with the webmaster and various individuals who 'own' certain areas of the website to ensure our content is fresh and inviting as well as come up with ideas for additional content and enhancements to the site to bring more value to our members.

For more information contact any board member or Dennis P (Wombat) Dougherty at [wombat@dpdougherty.com](mailto:wombat@dpdougherty.com)



## **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**

### **NOVEMBER 2ND, 2010**

**Eskape Entertainment 350 McHenry Rd. Buffalo Grove**  
**Submitted by Muriel Brandt**

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by Mike Bradbury, Top Cats Vice-President

#### **Opening**

The membership was asked to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice President Mike Bradbury asked members for feedback on this month's meeting place.

#### **Guests**

Bill and Jill Roesner (Jill's brother Tim Richardson was one of the founders of Top Cats.)

#### **Special Guest Speaker**

Tonight's guest speaker was Bill Gade from Tour on Two Motorcycle Tours. He passed out literature and spoke in depth about how he conducts his rides. He went into detail on how the longer rides were set up and conducted. He proposed a special Top Cats ride along the Pacific Coast Highway. The ride would start in Seattle and end in LA. Our bikes would be shipped ahead of us. If there is enough interest he will provide a cost estimate.

#### **Past President-Gary Brandt**

Gary spoke about the upcoming election at December's general meeting. The approved slate is as follows: President-Mike Bradbury, Vice President-Wayne Kirkpatrick, Secretary-Muriel Brandt, Treasurer-Stewart Johnson, Director-Mary Walters.

The election will be a voice vote as it is an uncontested slate.

#### **Vice President-Mike Bradbury**

Mike reminded everyone if they wanted any Top Cat merchandise to let him know.

#### **Activities-Larry Scalzitti/Greg Smith**

Greg told members to watch for emails or check website for any last minute rides. Larry is going to try and lead a ride a month through the winter months.

Wayne Kirkpatrick invited everyone to attend the Rolling Thunder Veterans Day remembrance table ceremony on November 6<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at Woodstock Harley Davidson at 11am.

Mike Bradbury and Gary Brandt will be co-chairing the Top Cat banquet in 2011.

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## **Secretary's Report-Muriel Brandt**

Nothing to report

## **Treasurer's Report-Tom Nichols**

Stewart Johnson reported that Tom is sending out the renewals for the 2011 membership dues.

## **Membership-Stewart Johnson and Eileen Perry**

There were no new members this month.

## **ROAR -Website- Dennis Dougherty, Andy Konsewicz and Mary Walters**

Mike announced November's Roar was on the website and encouraged members to take time to read the Roar each month.

## **Safety/GRASS/Road Captains-Wayne Kirkpatrick/Don Schaffer/Ric Case/Gary Brandt.**

Don asked all the Road Captains to come forward while he presented three new Road Captains who were, Stewart Johnson, Jeff Tietz and Tony Loden.

Dates for the 2011 G.R.A.S.S. classes have been chosen and will be on the calendar soon.

Wayne mentioned that there were Top Cat coins available for purchase.

Wayne gave a bonus safety tip as he described a dangerous situation that he found himself in. While traveling on Algonquin Rd. his bike acted strange and as it turned out there was a fuel spill on the road. This caused him and others to skid into oncoming traffic. His point was that you need to pay attention to odd behaviors of your bike and be aware of what could be the cause.

Tonight safety tip was given by senior road captain, Greg Smith. Greg advised riders to be aware of hypothermia in the upcoming fall season. He recommended paying attention to the entire day's forecast because the temperature could drop dramatically in a short period of time.

Signs of hypothermia would be uncontrollable shaking, confusion and slow breathing.

Refer to his article in the November Roar for more information.

## **50/50 Raffle**

This month's winner was guest Bill Gade

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

### NOVEMBER 9TH , 2010

**D&J BISTRO - LAKE ZURICH**

**Submitted by Muriel Brandt**

**Present:** Carl Marcyan, Mike Bradbury, Wayne Kirkpatrick, Gary Brandt, Muriel Brandt and Stewart Johnson

**Absent:** Dennis Dougherty, Larry Scalzitti and Tom Nichols

**President-Carl Marcyan** called meeting to order at 7:30pm.

The board discussed the locations we have tried the past few months and decided the Eskape Entertainment facility for future general meetings. Feedback from members was very positive. Mike Bradbury will contact Eskape to set up the 2011 schedule.

Wayne reported that he was in contact with the people from the Epic Memorial Ride and is working with them regarding what the Top Cats can do. This will be turned over to Activities. Wayne mentioned that it would be a great opportunity to promote the Top Cat Charity event by passing out our flyers to the riders on the Epic ride.

**Roar/Website-Dennis Dougherty (absent)**

**Vice President-Mike Bradbury**

Mike and Gary will be co-chairing this year's banquet and will be contacting Millrose restaurant to set the date.

**Treasurer- Tom Nichols (absent)**

Carl gave a brief summary of the financial status of the club and reported no issues.

**Membership-Stewart Johnson**

Stewart presented two applications for regular membership. A motion to approve Dan Ohara, as a regular member was made by Carl Marcyan and seconded by Gary Brandt. A second motion to approve Ned Meisner, as a regular member was made by Gary Brandt and seconded by Mike Bradbury.

*(Continued on page 15)*



The board talked about finding a permanent place for membership applications and ride waivers.

## **Safety and Awards-Wayne Kirkpatrick**

Wayne reported that dates for the G.R.A.S.S. classes for 2011 have been selected and are on the calendar.

There will be a special G.R.A.S.S. class/road captain meeting on Jan. 23 that is intended for current senior and regular road captains only.

Wayne said 11 Top Cat coins are still available.

## **Past President-Gary Brandt**

Gary suggested that new board members voted in for 2011, attend the December board meeting in order to be familiar with the process.

## **Activities-Larry Scalzitti (absent)**

No activities report.

Gary asked for the board's approval on signing a contract for booking the Radisson hotel in Davenport, IA, for the Little Sturgis ride. Approval was given.

## **Secretary- Muriel Brandt**

Muriel asked board members to approve minutes from the general meeting.

**With no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 8:50pm**

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## RIDES & EVENTS

Date	Ride/Event	Location	Destination	Time	Leader
Tuesday, December 07	General Meeting	eScape	Buffalo Grove	7:30pm	Carl Marcyan
Tuesday, December 14	Board Meeting	D & J Bistro	Lake Zurich	7:30pm	Carl Marcyan
Tuesday January 04	General Meeting	eScape	Buffalo Grove	7:30pm	TBD
Tuesday January 11	Board Meeting	D & J Bistro	Lake Zurich	7:30pm	TBD

### **FREE ADVERTISING in ROAR for TOP CATS Business Owners**

#### ***Attention all Top Cats business owners!***

As part of our ongoing philosophy to support our members and goal to provide a more value-rich publication, we are now offering free advertising space in ROAR for Top Cats business owners.

Each business owner can submit advertising content and graphics up to 2 X 3.5 inches (Business Card size) for their company.

We will run the ad for 3 months after which you will need to resubmit it.

This offer is for Top Cats business owners only. We are not accepting advertising for other businesses at this time.



**TOP CATS OF ILLINOIS** is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts with similar interests. Members consist of responsible Leaders, Presidents, Chairmen, Owners, Proprietors, Partners, principals, CEO's, and other 'Top Cats' of large, medium and small organizations, institutions, and companies.

For more information about the Top Cats visit our website at **[www.TOPCATS.org](http://www.TOPCATS.org)**

Elected Officers & Directors	
President	Carlton R. Marcyan cmarcyan@sdflaw.com
Vice President	Michael Bradbury bradbundy@comcast.net
Treasurer	Tom Nichols thomas.nichols@comcast.net
Secretary	Muriel Brandt meo1957@comcast.net
Past President	Gary Brandt cgb002@comcast.net
Director	Dennis P. Dougherty wombat@dpdougherty.com
Director	Wayne Kirkpatrick wkirkpa177@aol.com
Director	Larry Scalzitti scalzitti@mindspring.com
Director	Stewart Johnson studawn@sbcglobal.net
Founder	Carl 'Virgo' Bender 1941-2001

Committee Leaders	
Activities	Muriel Brandt meo1957@comcast.net
Charity	Joan DeRango jmderango@comcast.net
Membership	Eileen Perry ephria@comcast.net
Email	Muriel Brandt meo1957@comcast.net
Safety	Don Schaffer numbersman@cjbs.com
Website	Dennis P. Dougherty wombat@dpdougherty.com
Hotline	Muriel Brandt meo1957@comcast.net

ROAR	
Executive Editor & Board Liaison	Dennis P. Dougherty wombat@dpdougherty.com
Editor-in-Chief	Mary Walters mwalters@WTHS.NET
Publisher	Andy Konsewicz andy@konsewicz.com
Associate Editors	
Executive & Board	Carlton R. Marcyan cmarcyan@sdflaw.com
Safety & Road Captains	Gary Brandt cgb002@comcast.net
Membership	Eileen Perry ephria@comcast.net
Charity	Joan DeRango jmderango@comcast.net
Events & Calendar	Greg Smith vethog@comcast.net
Humor & Human Interest	Andy Konsewicz andy@konsewicz.com
Motorcycle Community	Michael Bradbury bradbundy@comcast.net

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For questions or to submit comments or articles for publication, contact the editors at

**ROAR@TOPCATS.org**