

# Summer Catnip: A Feline Affair

By **Edwin Okong'o**  
*Staff Writer*

The only thing cats and fashion models have in common is that they do not smile in beauty pageants.

Cats contesting for beauty crowns don't care if they are groomed, do not walk runways, and eat whatever they want throughout the contest. They don't even need talent; all they have to do is be there and their owners will do the rest to ensure they win.

That's what happened last weekend at Centennial Hall in Hayward, where 164 felines showed up to either compete or be sold at the show, dubbed the Summer Catnip.

"It is a great way for cat lovers to meet and talk about their pets without the fear of being labeled weird," said Karen Talbert.

The whole Catnip was like a children's talent contest. All cats, regardless of ranking, received equal praise from the judges and applause from the audience, as though nobody wanted the cats' feelings hurt.

Yet, it was easy to see why some would consider people obsessed with cats weird, as Talbert claimed. David Coffey's Oriental Shorthair, for example, has a public name and a private name.

Coffey's cat is officially known as Black Gold Texas Te, named after the Beverly Hillbillies theme song. But he won't say what else he calls him.

"You don't want to know what I call him at home," Coffey said.

Even weirder: Coffey said he

started liking cats because his stepfather liked dogs. However, he swore he had nothing against his stepfather.

Not far from Coffey, Gwen Watson was getting her 6-month-old European Burmese cat Apaulo ready for his debut in cat showbiz. Watson loves Apaulo so much that anyone eavesdropping on her conversing about the cat could think she was describing her latest boyfriend.

"He's got the looks: great eye shape and color, beautiful hands and he is a really sweet guy," Watson described the short-haired light brown feline, who was draped over her shoulder.

Apparently, European Burmese cats are a rare breed and Apaulo was the only one of them at the show on Saturday. Watson got him from Champagne, Ill., after receiving several photos of him by e-mail.

"I was not ready for a new family member but he is just so cute," said Watson, who already owns several cats.

Cats also have attitudes, according to Napa resident and cat owner Carol Cummins. She brought her 8-month-old Silver Persian cat, Imari, to the beauty contest.

"It depends on what side of the bed she woke up on," said Cummins when asked if she thought Imari was going to win in her category.

Indeed, Imari not only looked like she had woken up on the wrong side of the bed, but also too early. The furry little creature

looked like an owl with four legs and a tail. She had big round eyes and a tiny nose that almost looked like a beak.

Cummins said Imari was a champion cat and was there to gain points toward the grand championship. She needed to defeat 200 other cats for 200 points to claim the title. So far she only had 95 points and clearly had a long way to go.

"I told her this morning but I don't think she understands," Cummins said.

Feral cats can breed themselves but to breed a sphynx takes a dedicated woman like Kathy Smith of San Juan Bautista. Sphynx do not have fur anywhere on their bodies, and sunburn easily. In fact, every little scratch on their bodies is hard to ignore.

"I have to pay attention to them even when they play to make sure they don't take it too far," said Smith.

Smith seemed to get the most out of the Centennial Hall cat show. She brought seven sphynx kittens to compete but less than two hours into the show, she had sold three of them at \$1,200 each.

It gets better. When it was time to compete, she was the only one who had cats of that breed. Three of her kittens got to compete against each other and took home the top three titles in their class.

The winner of the sphynx title was a male cat named Dipstick. His grey tail was white at the end, which made it look like a

dipstick, hence his name.

Another odd aspect of cat beauty pageants is that males and females can compete against each other. Dipstick prevailed over his sisters Bare Lady and Razzle Dazzle. Back at the cage, Dipstick stood on his hind legs, seemingly happy to have been voted more beautiful than his sisters.

Not all cat lovers were happy on cat day at Centennial Hall. For the first time in five years, Kevin Quosig could not enter his Scottish Fold cat in the contest because the cat had an eye problem that might have been contagious. He stopped by to say hello to his fellow cat lovers like Smith and talk about his cat.

"He might have herpes," Smith said after carefully listening to Quosig's description of his cat's condition.

Quosig said he had refused a veterinarian's recommendation for surgery because he did not want to put his cat through unnecessary pain.

"My cat is old and petroleum jelly seems to be working just fine," said Quosig. "I will just wait for him to go naturally," he added.

Not everyone at Centennial Hall was there for the cat show. Scott Panzer, the founder of Silicon Valley Friends of Ferals, is a guy cats would rather not see: he traps stray and feral cats and sprays them before releasing them to the streets.

Although his booth was outside the hall, away from the "good"



**Purr-fect Feline:** Imari, a silver Persian cat, gets a final once-over by owner Carol Cummins.

**Photo/** Marie Reyes

cats, he had some information cat fanciers could use. They can call him to get rid of feral cats from their neighborhoods. Panzer's organization treats the cats humanely in the process of neutering them, he said. They are offered "standard veterinary care" and the process is done by qualified veterinarians, said Panzer.

"We don't neuter them with razors and a bottle of gin," said Panzer.

# Library Needs Tutors for Literacy Program

By **Mark Nicola**  
*Staff Writer*

Literacy Plus, an adult reading program offered by the Hayward Public Library, will be conducting free training for new tutors beginning next Tuesday.

The Literacy Plus program is set up for adults out of high school who seek to improve their reading and writing skills. Tutors are matched up with learners and instructed on a one-on-one basis. Currently in its 19th year, the program has a remarkable 125 students and tutors.

According to Mary McCrea of the Literacy Plus program, all of the learners are different and unique in their needs. Tutors fill out an application, attend an orientation, and then attend 16 hours of training that includes a review of basic grammar and phonics.

Based on characteristics in their applications, tutors are matched up with adult learners in order to establish a comfortable learning atmosphere for both, she said.

Literacy among adults in California and throughout America is surprisingly low, according to statistics gathered by California Literacy.

According to the U.S. Census, 5 million adults in California (approximately 22%) speak a language other than English in their home.

Another 2 million native English speakers in California are functionally illiterate, according to the National Adult Literacy Survey. A functionally illiterate adult is unable to read, write and communicate in English, as well as solve problems at levels necessary

to function in society or at work.

According to the American Medical Association, 46% of American adults cannot understand the labels on their prescription medicine.

Other shocking statistics include that 24% of adults in California are at the lowest literacy level, according to the National Adult Literacy Survey, and 33% of children in California will not finish high school, according to the California Department of Education.

To combat this, Literacy Plus has another program in place.

The Homework Helpers program is for children between the 1st and 5th grades who need help with their homework. Students meet with tutors four days a week between September and May, and there is currently a waiting list for students to join because of a shortage of tutors, McCrea said.

McCrea encourages anyone -- especially students seeking their teaching credentials -- in volunteering for either program to contact Literacy Plus.

"There is nothing like the reward you feel when helping people learn for the first time," McCrea says. "People read their first book to a child, or write their first letter or send their first email."

New tutor orientation will be held on August 3, and the next free training for volunteer tutors begins on August 14.

For those interested in this opportunity or for more information, contact Literacy Plus at 510-881-7910 or check [www.myreality.com/literacy](http://www.myreality.com/literacy).

By **Jodee Schwan**  
*Staff Writer*

From the gesture before the show to the emperor in his "new" clothes, the "Emperor's New Clothes" was funny with a hidden message, proving once again that Cal State Hayward's summer cast are worthy performers.

The run for the play was short but sweet -- a 45-minute performance over two days -- but it was long enough to convey the hidden message of confidence and truth.

The play was to be Edgardo dela Cruz's final directorial for the summer and in yet another display of affection for the longtime theatre arts professor, who died earlier this month, the play was dedicated and performed for him.

As they walked into the small theatre, audience members were taken back to the days of knights and royal courts. A single "royal" chair was in the center of the theatre with flowing linens. It was like looking up at the balcony where the emperor in days of old would speak to the awaiting crowd below.

Before the play began, Cricket, the court jester played by Andres Enriquez, ran though the audience talking to the children and laying across any open seats. He gave the play a sense of lightheartedness and humor.

When the play began, the audience was introduced to Lady Caroline and Lady Deirdre, who were both interested in one day becoming queen. The only difference in the two was that Lady Caroline would do anything to become queen, while Lady Deirdre was a truthful woman and had real feelings of the heart.

The emperor of Sylvania, played by Sean P. Roberts, was the vain ruler who cared more for himself and his clothes than his country.

As the play unfolded, the audience learned of Cricket's plan to make the emperor look like a fool in front of the whole country by making him believe that he had the most valuable clothes in all the world.

Then it happened; wearing his "new clothes," the emperor came onto stage to show off his outfit. Wearing only tights and boxer-shorts, Roberts played it off with as though he was proud. He then remembers Lady Deirdre and her warning. She came back and they lived happily ever after.

Not every story has a happy ending like this, but we all learned that you should listen to those who truly care, and not to your selfishness.

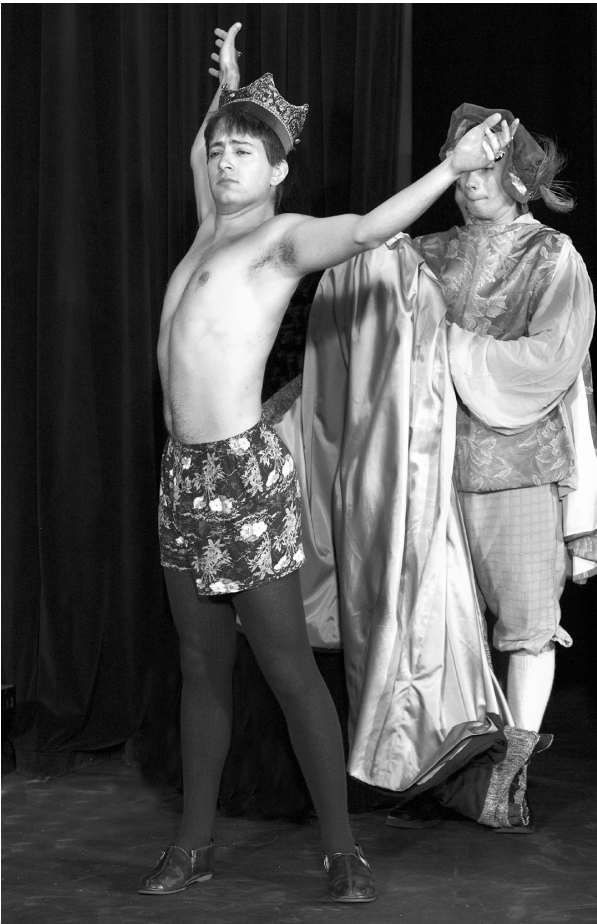
The costumes were reflective of the era of the play -- women wore period gowns, and the men wore tights covered by bloomer shorts.

There were small pillows in front of the seats and on the floors. Children in attendance ran around the room and gathered more and more pillows to cushion their seats.

Students wishing to see a performance at the theatre, but who are on a tight budget, can contact the theatre to be an usher at the shows.

For more information, contact the box office at 885-3261. The box office will be closed until August 9, but you can leave a voice mail. The box office hours after August 9 will be from noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The next performance this summer will be "Guys and Dolls" on Friday, Aug. 13 and Saturday, Aug. 14 and Friday, Aug. 20, Saturday, Aug. 21 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 22 at 2 p.m. Tickets



**Naked Truth:** The Emperor, played by Sean Roberts in all his glory, proudly displays his new outfit.

**Photo/** Howard Gerstein

are \$14 for general admission, \$10 for seniors and children 12 and under. Students with a CSUH ID can purchase tickets for \$8.

# Summers Aren't Just for Vacation Anymore

By **Eva Mangoka**  
*Staff Writer*

Twice a week, Susan Paulson commutes for over an hour each way from Bethel Island to Cal State Hayward for her 10 a.m. class, but she doesn't mind.

Paulson is a full-time liberal studies major registered at CSUH's Concord campus, but the classes needed for her major are not being offered this summer there. But they are here.

And ironically enough, she says she can't think of anything else she would rather be doing.

Not so for Johnas DeLeon, a Communication major.

"I would rather be making money or vacationing," said DeLeon.

While other students are working at summer jobs raking in the dough, or even better, on vacation from school, Paulson and DeLeon are among the 6,120 students toughing it out this summer at CSUH for a variety of reasons.

In Paulson's case, it's to graduate early. DeLeon says it will be his last summer at Hayward because he is graduating this winter.

DeLeon said he has had to take substitute classes to fulfill some requirements. Paulson says she just couldn't get the classes

she needed at the Concord campus.

The division about whether a student wants to be spending their summer taking classes seems to be divided equally, although some issues are universal. Many are using the summer quarter, like Paulson, to graduate early, and many feel the budget cuts have changed the courses they have to take.

For Jean Wright, a returning psychology major, the cuts meant that some classes were not offered this summer, forcing her to re-evaluate her course selection and schedule for future quarters.

Though she would rather be spending time with her children and husband, she says she does not mind being a full time student this summer, as long as she "can get through school as soon as possible."

Tuition also seems to be a factor in some decisions to attend college for the summer quarter.

It is widely believed by students that they will have to shell out more in student fees this fall.

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The decrease in the number of classes offered and high tuition has not only affected the individual student, but the campus as a whole.

The number of students registered by the end of the first week of classes showed an overall drop of 14.2 percent compared to last year, according to data from the CSUH enrollment services office.

There are 500 fewer undergraduate students, a 12 percent drop from last summer's figures, and an 18.6 percent drop among graduate students.

This drop in numbers might be due to the rebounding economy, thus the availability of jobs, as well as strict Visa requirements for international students, according to Bob Strobel, the assistant vice president for enrollment management.

Despite all these woes, Gloria Rodriguez says she can breathe a sigh of relief, because this summer is her last quarter at CSUH.

She graduated this last spring with a BA in liberal studies with an option in human development, but was still a few units short.

"I would rather be working full time, but can't due to school classes," said Rodriguez. One of her main reasons for completing her requirements in summer instead of next fall is because of the expected tuition hike.

For those who still have to trudge on in search of an education, they have no choice but to pay the tuition fees and keep taking summer classes in the hope of one day being CSUH alumni.

While some will spend the summer grumbling and cursing the fate that has kept them in enclosed spaces while the sun is shining in the clear blue sky, others like Rosa Navarro, a mother of two, is enjoying her summer here.

"I wish I had a week off to travel somewhere," she said. "But I am glad to be in school."



**Summer Blues:** Business administration student Staci Hai studies outdoors as she looks forward to finishing her last quarter.

**Photo/** Marie Reyes