

frantic foibles of a fickle feline

all points bulletin: heidi come home

LOST CAT—Margaret Wally as told to Anna Novikov

Heidi was orphaned at a very early age, her mother being presumably a promiscuous female and her father unknown.

In September of '67 she was rescued from the horrors of animal orphanage life at the S.P.C.A. The adoption was witnessed by Bob Copps and the S.P.C.A. proprietor. (Adoption papers are still available for inspection.) Entire cost of the transaction amounted to \$1.00 plus bus fare.

Upon arrival at 11017-89 Ave. she immediately clashed with the previously installed feline populus. Heidi would refuse to share kitty-litter with above-mentioned felines, consequently we invariably found old and new turds tucked away in various nooks of a very nooky house. And I would invariably say, "Heidi didn't do it."

This cat appreciated good music; she showed great interest in Rick Lang's piano playing, spending hours beneath his bench absolutely entranced. The days she would listen to Rick's playing she would walk the keep in the dead of night.

By late winter Heidi had developed very nicely, eloped with god-knows-what, and was found the

following day. Alas in early spring, disaster struck! Heidi contracted distemper and was immediately pushed to an EXPENSIVE vet, who gave her one chance in ten to survive. I pleaded—he treated. She lived, and I had to get a job to pay the bill.

Shortly after her recovery Heidi eloped again and was again found two days later. After this event, she became extremely fussy about what she ate and finally narrowed it down to hamburger, liver and Kentucky fried chicken. I'm still at the job. Also, she would drink only milk, and just enough that half would have to be flushed away and replaced with a fresh lot.

As you can see, Heidi is extremely photogenic, and preferred to be shot in color—it's more expensive. She is very arrogant, and in most instances scorned the alley peasantry so predominant in the Garneau area. It was due to her unreasonable and somewhat surly temperament that forced her to make fierce enemies with a vicious female known as Hetsabah who is notorious for her ugly disposition. Heidi unfortunately would get the worst of it and I would often arrive home to find grey fluff floating about the house and Heidi look-

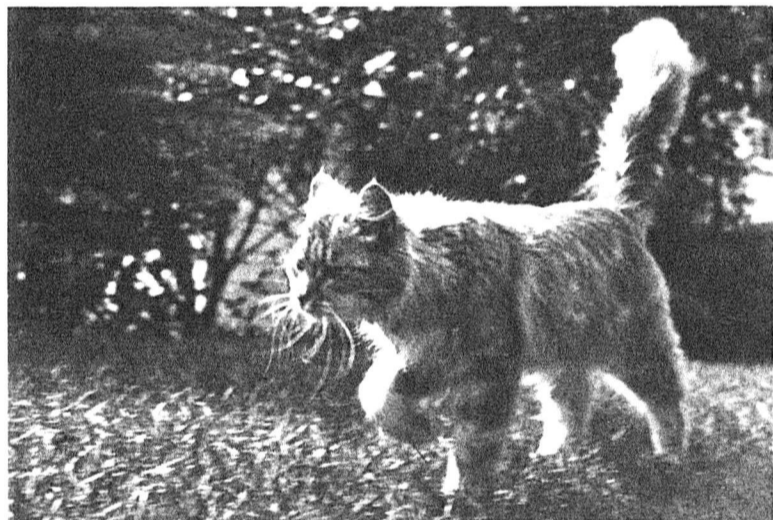
ing utterly disgusted with the whole world. I would soothe her with chopped liver which she would fight me for, and later take her for a joint in the ravine. She was such a good friend to me.

Shortly before her disappearance an September 29, she had been courted by a persistent Don Juan of a Siamese, whom she absolutely detested, and which he soon realized after finding her paw-print on his cheek. She was also called on by a large gray n'ere-do-well who prowled the alleys in search of unwary femmes. However Heidi knew the type—puts notches in his garbage can, no doubt—and simply paid him no heed.

After her mysterious disappearance I thought perhaps she had had a change of heart and gone off to live a life of sin with Don Juan, the Siamese 'Catanova'. However I soon discarded that presumption when I found he lived only two doors from us and shows up every other day still waiting for her return. Likewise with the other potential fiancée.

Without Heidi I just can't go on—for without her my days are not gray, they are black; without her it never rains, it pours; without her, I am saving money. Ah, but what is money? Love of it is, as every good man knows, naught but the root of all evil, and that little cat was all good. Since she has gone, I often sit and contemplate on her goodness and in these long and dreary days I sometimes lament of that day when "I was gone and not at home, (Sept. 29, 1968) and she went away . . . And Heidi I miss you (call 439-6701), and I'm being good (down-right silly), and I'm saving my money (\$15.00 reward), to buy you some food."

So now I plead, I beg of you—if you have seen Heidi or know anything about what has happened to her, please, please, contact me—Margie Wally—at 439-6701 after 4:30 p.m. on weekdays; I shall be waiting patiently and hopefully for that gorgeous and darling fluffy gray cat with the lemon-colored eyes.



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Films

Easily the most offensive presentation involving film that it's recently been my misfortune to see was put on in Corbett Hall last Friday by a troupe of itinerant librarians from the University of Buffalo.

The stated purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate, through the use of mixed media, the complexities of the information explosion in which we're all currently caught.

As the evening boringly unfolded, I thought maybe it was another case of Let's Bring Culture to the Hicks, more than usually misconceived. Certainly the use of mixed media was crude in the extreme, the sort of thing that might just blow the mind of a go-ahead Goldwater small town in Colorado.

To be more specific: there's no point in using four screens instead of one if the juxtapositions achieved do not add to the total effect. Here one's attention was distracted without compensating gains in irony or density. The result was not information but obfuscation.

Perhaps another principle should be laid down: no screen should be used if nothing has been created beautiful or enlightening enough to be worth screening. Adherence to this principle would have shortened Friday's fiasco to about ten minutes.

All in all, in Corbett Hall, scene of the premiere of Wilfred Watson's never-to-be-forgotten . . . Dip . . . , the amateurishness of the whole expensive and cumbersome show stood out grimly.

Nor were the group dynamics experiments ("Now let's split into groups of ten and have each group boil down its reaction to what we've seen into one sentence") exactly impressive.

No, it was only once we were all seated again after this last horror that the real rationale for the evening was coyly revealed.

The film-work tightened up slightly, and suddenly the ingratiating emcee launched into the praises of the Esalen Institute, while we saw emcee and crew basking in the nude by the Pacific.

What, you may ask, is the Esalen Institute?

Well, on current evidence it's the liberal (hence sillier and deadlier) equivalent of Moral Rearmament. Its headquarters are in California (where else?), and it goes in for Sensitivity Training in a big way.

Its local guru is Professor Richard Weaver, an impressively weary-looking man with a magnificent greying beard who teaches Early 20th Century Literature. He introduced the Buffalo Gang without mentioning any Esalen tie-in.

Now the tactic of waiting until your audience is all softened up before you tell it what it's paying for is as old a huckster's trick as I know. I'm not fond of it, I can't see why a reputable group should use it, and when what's being dealt in is a wishy-washy sort of thought-control anyway, it scares me.

But the point of the evening that really appalled me didn't come until the very end, when people came up to the mike and said how much they'd been impressed.

I mean, I don't mind people being impressed by the Nuremberg rallies, which were at least well stage-managed. But the emotional impoverishment and aesthetic nullness of those who were bowled over by what we saw and heard last Friday is frightening indeed.

To be taught sensitivity by this particular bunch of dead-heads! Wow! America does it again!

The Bride Wore Black (at the Roxy) would be, from any director other than Francois Truffaut, something to be grateful for. The same could be said for the immediately preceding Truffaut film, *Fahrenheit 451*. Neither have been greeted with ecstatic enthusiasm by us hard-line Truffaut fans.

Whence this perverse unwillingness to appreciate the more recent work of the man who, next to Godard and Resnais, is unquestionably the most exciting director to emerge from the French New Wave of the late '50s?

Alas, M. Truffaut made the tactical error of beginning his career by making a pair of masterpieces.

First there was *The Four Hundred Blows*, probably the best film ever made about certain sorts of childhood hopelessness, lifting it out of the ruck of decorative movies into that select company of films capable of adding to our knowledge of what we are.

What was exciting about Truffaut's earlier work was that it showed him to have one of the few pairs of eyes in the current cinema capable of looking at the actual urban landscape to reveal its logic—sinister or beautiful—on the screen.

Fahrenheit 451 was the first film in which Truffaut turned his back on this gift and gave us instead a landscape of the future.

Unfortunately, although *The Bride Wore Black* is a much less problematic film than *Fahrenheit*, it doesn't mark a return to Truffaut's roots.

Instead, it is a neat, mathematical homage to that most heartless of old pros, Alfred Hitchcock.

Truffaut's admiration of Hitchcock is well-known. And Truffaut has said that he needs writers to think up violence for his plots, that his mind doesn't work naturally in that direction.

Precisely. Truffaut is blessed with the sensibility of a realist. Hence, since we're all most impressed by those achievements least natural to our own talents, he has fallen in love with the grand guignol which Hitchcock has perfected.

Not quite deeply enough in love to have learned how to bring it off, however. In neither of his most recent films has he contrived to satisfy the prime requirement of the designs he's chosen—that the audience be kept in suspense.

That is why the formal elegance of *The Bride Wore Black*—which, let me repeat, is by run-of-the-mill standards a splendid film—fails completely to involve us with Jeanne Moreau's step-by-step revenge, or even feel chilled at our exclusion from involvement (a valid Hitchcock trick).

All we can hope is that in his next film Truffaut will let his urge to be a decorative film-maker fizzle out, and take a look at the real world again.

—John Thompson