

## Consult the Cat

by Shannon Roy, Continuing Education Coordinator

*The following question was asked by a service repairman who came to the cottage the Cat shares with four other cats and 5000 books. Why do you spend so much time reading? The Cat, like all cats, is introspective and thoughtful. She pondered the question.*



The Cat reads all the time. But she doesn't read everything. Her reading is mostly in several well-defined areas, each of which has something to say about her life.

The Cat craves happy stories about likable people living warm, ordinary lives. She will read such stories over and over again. They may be hung on a mystery or a romance but the Cat doesn't care who murdered whom or who gets married. She wants those descriptions of life, as life should be. She doesn't care if they are set in Kansas, Scotland, Australia, Father Rabbit's Burrow or Rat's Riverside Home. She will re-tell such stories from her own life and discuss such living with her closest friends.

The Cat reads social history. She is fascinated by tales of what life was like for people (and cats) who lived in different times and places. She still prefers the happy descriptions but she plays fair. Life in the past wasn't easier than life in the present. It was just different. The Cat would never consider living only in the present. The past is the biggest toy box there is.

The Cat reads popular science. She calls them the Gee Whiz Books. They are full of fascinating facts that it is fun to know. Science study is learning as pure play, with absolutely no motive except enjoyment. When someone studies science, they can see how mankind has learned and grown and changed and developed wonderful tools. Other studies sometimes make it sound like there hasn't been much change.

The Cat reads self-help books. She likes advice on using thought, compassion and courage to get through the times when life is very difficult. The Cat considers a lot of human advice to be totally absurd and wildly off the mark, if the target is happiness. But when humans really use their brains, their hearts and their extraordinary courage to develop happiness, they can be an admirable species. Fortunately, those are also the times when they are most likely to take care of cats. That is a sensible and happy pastime, if ever there was one.

The Cat loves books and audiobooks and videos and the Internet. But they are all the same thing. They are all stories. Life is an endless network of stories, a never-ending story and we are the storytellers. We are the child who tells the story and the child who listens, all down the ages. What was once a ring around a fire that passed an evening is now a timeless net covering the world.

What do you read? Why do you read it? Have you ever wondered what makes certain stories speak to you? The Cat has never been given an e-mail address of her own but she will get messages sent to [shanroy@kslib.info](mailto:shanroy@kslib.info).