

Unconditional companions

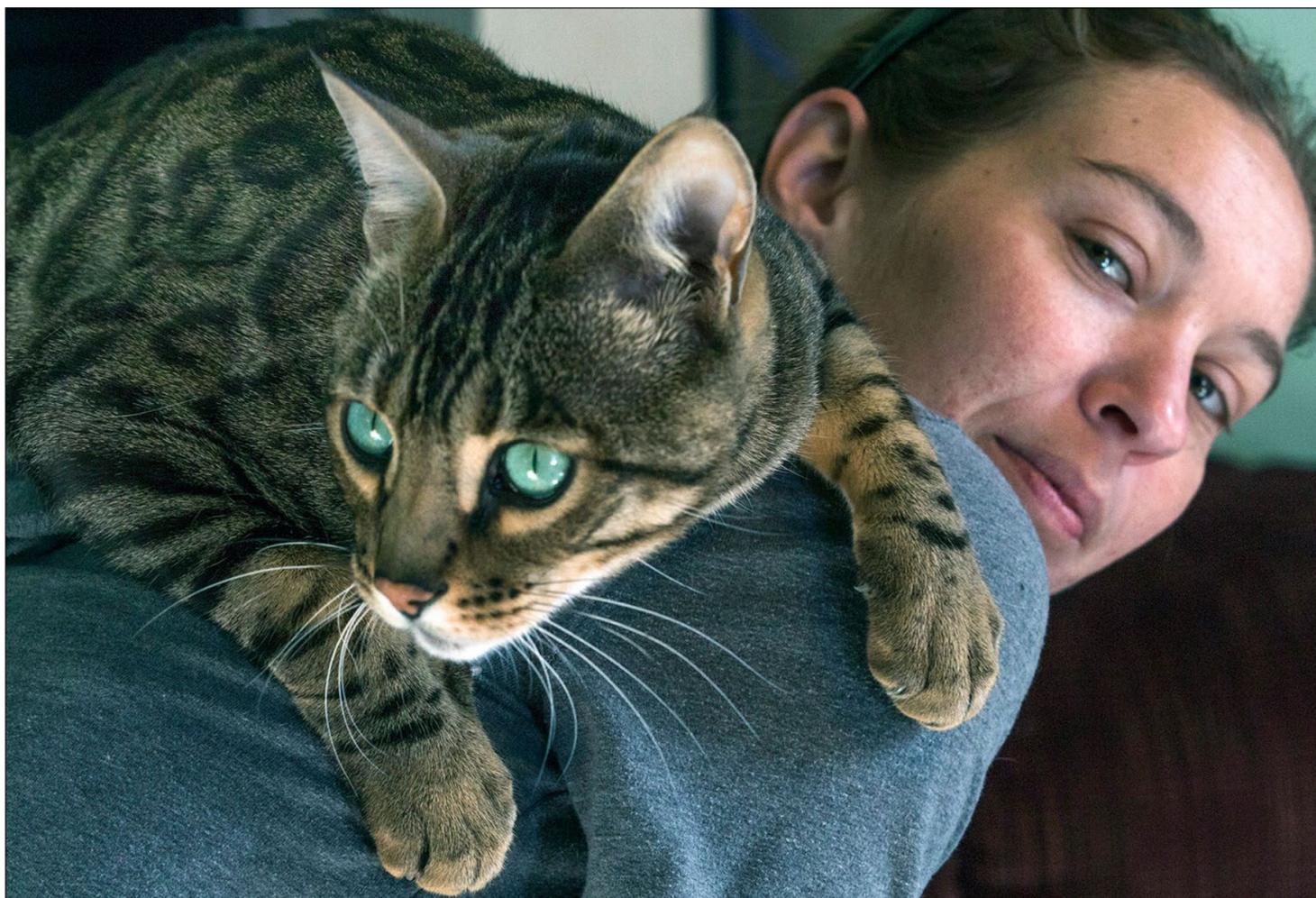


Photo by Elaine Bombay

Quantum, a male Bengal cat, sits on April MacFarland's back. MacFarland says she can't imagine life without animals.

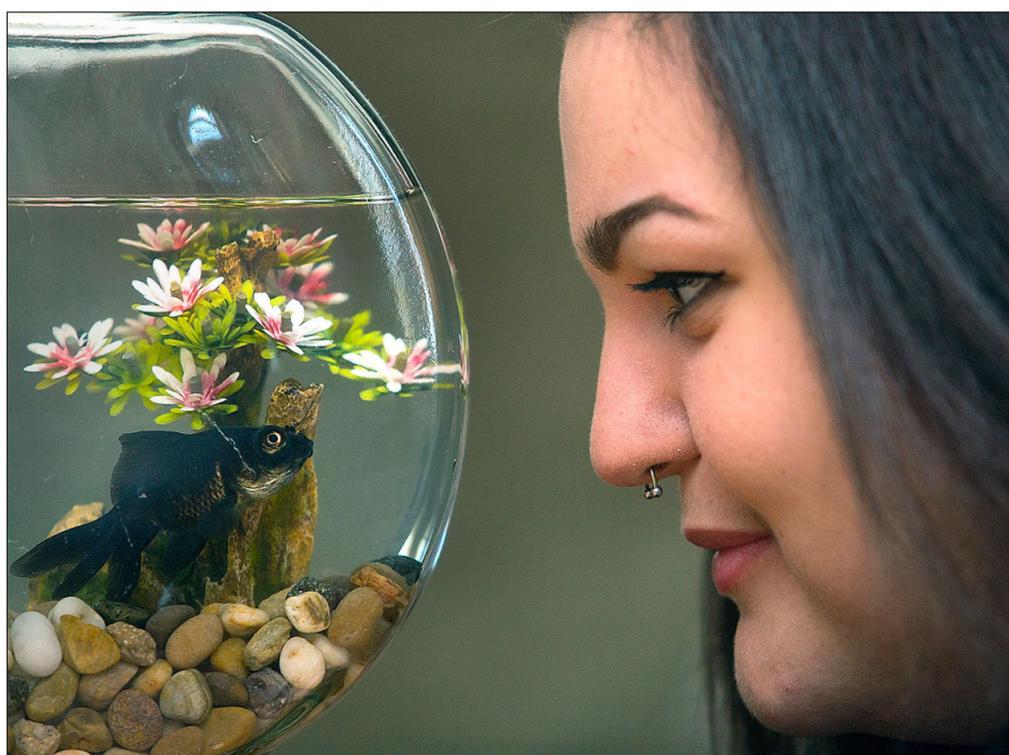


Photo by Andrew Meade

"Having animals around me just seems to calm me down and make me feel more comfortable. He is the first pet I've had since my cat died so right now he's just floating around making me happy," says art and design foundations student Lydia Lambert, describing her black moor goldfish Captain Jack.

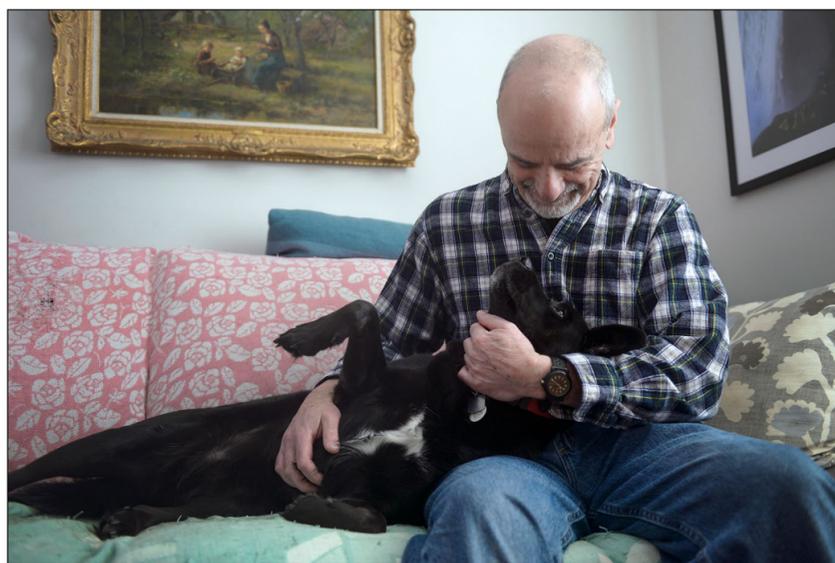
By Mary Barber

The bond between humans and their pets is primitive and deep rooted. Our furry friends have evolved with us for thousands of years. Our innate connectedness to these creatures has compelled us to understand and care about all nature's inhabitants.

We attribute to our pets their inherent personalities and in turn they define ours. This complex evolution allows us to share personality traits, compassion and hugs. Whatever makes your heart swell at the sight of your critter, it's undeniable. We want them in our homes, in our beds. They are family.

When photojournalism students at Loyalist College were asked to capture the relationship between owners and their pets, they asked, "Describe the special bond you share with your pet, how have they impacted your life?" Here are some of their responses.

For a look at some of the owners describing their relationships, go to <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=48208>



(Above) Gerry Fraiberg sits with his eight-year-old black lab/ brittany spaniel Roxy in his home in Belleville. Roxy is Fraiberg's first dog, and came to him by chance after reading a story in the newspaper about a podiatrist that was fostering a litter of puppies looking for homes.

Photo by Franki Ikeman

(Left) Tracey Brooks and her dog Penny pose in the Belleville dog's park. Although the temperature felt roughly like -30, Tracey did not skip her morning walk with Penny.

Photo by Giovanni Capriotti

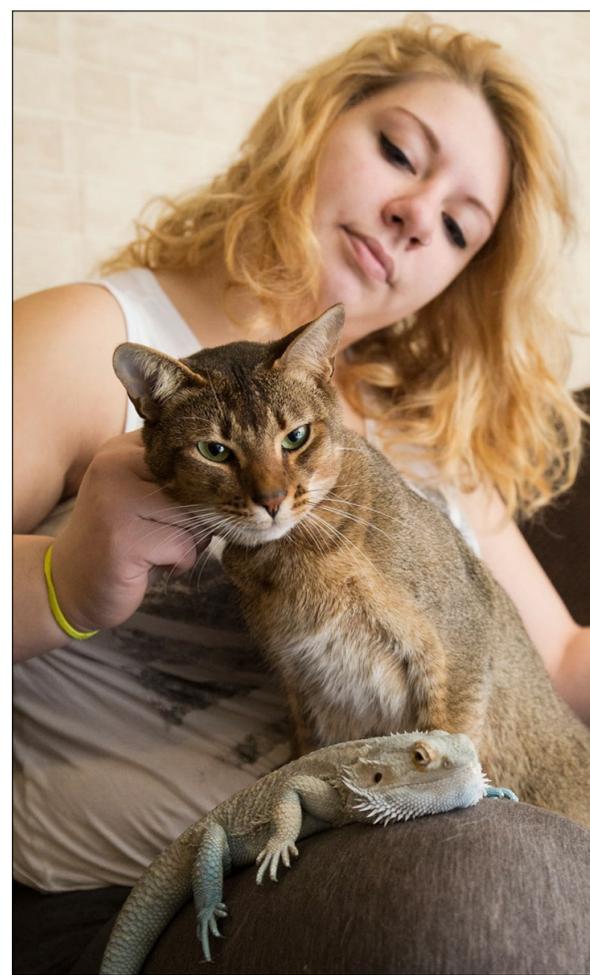


Photo by Amanda Paulhus

Sam Caissie sits with Bug the cat, an Abyssinian Bengal, and Rio the bearded dragon. She said her pets are important to her because they make her feel better when she is upset.