

# Adoptable cat might soon be a famous face

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While voting is still under way to choose the picture for the new Georgia cat license plate, Joan Sammond of the Georgia SPCA is hoping the real winner will be Hope, a little tuxedo cat in her Suwanee shelter.

A painting of Hope is one of six finalists for the tag. Sammond thinks someone will see her big yellow eyes and fall in love.

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Randalyn Bieniek

**This painting of Hope, a nearly 2-year-old cat, is one of six finalists in voting for a new Georgia cat license plate.**

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“She’s very sweet and gets along well with other cats and people,” said Sammond, director of the group. “But she’s been here since May. She’s just ready to have a home of her own.”

The black and white cat, which is younger than 2 years old, was dropped off at a Douglas County shelter by

owners who were moving and didn't want to take her along. She was pulled from that shelter just before she was to be put down and transferred to Sammond's no-kill shelter.

Randalyn "Randy" Bieniek, a Duluth artist, said that when she heard the Georgia Department of Agriculture was holding a contest to choose a cat painting for a new license plate, she headed over to the shelter and took photos of the cats. She painted four of them, including Hope, and submitted them for the contest.

"I was thrilled that out of about 200 paintings submitted, two of mine made it into the final 20, and Hope's painting was chosen for the final six," Bieniek said. She said she chose to paint Hope because she ended up with so many photos of her.

"She ... just kept coming back for more attention," Bieniek said.

Voting on the license plate choices ends Monday at [www.fixgeorgiacats.org](http://www.fixgeorgiacats.org). The tags will be available in December for a one-time \$25 fee in addition to regular tag costs. All but \$3 of that will go to the Dog and Cat Sterilization Program, which subsidizes spay/neuters at vets throughout the state.

For information on Hope, go to [www.georgiaspca.org](http://www.georgiaspca.org) or call 678-765-2726. Information on Bieniek is at [www.petcrazyportraits.com](http://www.petcrazyportraits.com).

### **Local dog lover on 'Oprah'**

Jamye Hickman of East Point loves "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and often checks upcoming show topics to see if there's anything she's interested in. So when she saw last month that they were looking for dog lovers, she sent the show her story about how her Shih Tzu, Zoe-Joe, brought more than joy to her life.

"I told them about how I was an unhappy student, but Zoe brought me love and even changed the direction of my college education," Hickman said.

An engineering psychology student, she started looking for ways to apply engineering principles to pet product design. Eventually she founded a business, PupCentric, selling a doggie "diaper bag." The E.B.D. bag (Everything But the Dog) makes it easy to pack and carry everything needed for a small dog.

A week after contacting the show, Hickman, 29, and two other women were beamed onto the show, while other guests were brought into the studio. They discussed various topics, Hickman said, including an update on puppy mills from an April "Oprah" show.

Hickman said she sent Oprah and several staffers monogrammed E.B.D. bags.

She was told the show may air around the second week of September.

"It was crazy. I'm in the middle of data collection for my dissertation, but it was something I couldn't pass up," Hickman said. "When Oprah calls, you do it."

### **Mutts & Music**

Matilda's Enchanted Cottage in Alpharetta is hosting a blues concert Saturday to benefit the Humane Society of Forsyth County. The event kicks off at 6 p.m. with a best-dressed mutt contest. At 7 p.m. Noonday Blue will play. At 8 p.m. Bill Sheffield will take the stage. People can bring their pets, children, chairs, tables, food and drinks to the outdoor event. The first concert, which benefits the rescue group, is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 6 to 11 and free for children under 6. The Sheffield concert tickets are \$15 for adults, \$5 for children 6 to 11 and free for children under 6. Or both concerts are \$20 for adults, \$5 for children 6 to 11 and free for children under 6. 377 South Main St. More information: [forsythpets.com](http://forsythpets.com) or 770-887-6480.