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This is part of an occasional series by the Sanpete Country Travel and Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance on the people and places along U.S. Highway 89.

## **‘Fat Cat’ Makes a Comeback**

Drawings by Ephraim Artist Featured in New Book on Felines

In the 1970s, Ephraim artist Larry Nielson was inspired to draw a picture of a fluffy, “sort-of-arrogant-looking” feline that he dubbed “Fat Cat.”

“It was sort of a whimsical drawing, and I ended up turning it into a poster. It took off big time,” he says.

For years, Fat Cat was a popular image on walls, lockers and anywhere else posters could be found. Following the success of Fat Cat, Nielson was inspired to draw other images of cats, followed by a whole series of other critters: elephants, pigs, horses. “Some of them got wide exposure, but a lot of them weren’t seen by too many people.”

Now, some 30 years later, Fat Cat and his pack are making a come back. The smirky orange cat graces the cover of a new book, *Cat Miscellany*, that was recently published by a press in London, England.

The book was written by Max Cryer, a New Zealand-based author and talk show host who just happens to be a friend of mine. “He called me one day and asked me if he could send an image of Fat Cat to his publisher to look at. I told him ‘fine, go ahead.’” The publisher loved it and enquired whether Nielson had any other cat drawings.

Nielson sent in a bunch of drawings and sketches of felines that he had done over the years. “They called and said ‘Can we use all of them?’” he says with a laugh.

Fat Cat ended up on the book’s cover, and some 30 other of Nielson’s drawings illustrate the rest of the text, which includes funny tidbits, factoids, quotes and other information about cats.

“It just flew off the shelves, it’s already on its second printing,” Nielson says, adding the book will start to be promoted in the United States this month.

While he isn’t making any money off the sales, Nielson says the book’s popularity is igniting new interest in his “cats-and-critters” illustrations.

“I do love to do whimsical drawings, along with my other art work,” he says.



Nielson is best known for his paintings on old and weathered wood, especially images of Native Americans, wildlife, and Western themes. Recently, a painting he did of the likeness of a famous battle scene, the image of the marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima in 1945, was turned into a print that is being circulated around the United States and is very popular with veterans groups.

Images of Fat Cat and the other felines that appear in the book are available on Nielson's web site, <http://windandwings.com/bookcats1.html> . There are also links to his other "critter" drawings, as well as information about his other art work.

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