

# Here & Now

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Curiosity didn't kill one cat on a wild ride on the New Jersey Turnpike. The feline, now known as Miracle, hitchhiked a ride on the underbelly of a sport utility vehicle just before Christmas. The gray and white cat traveled some 70 miles on the turnpike Dec. 23.



Miracle

"I'm just amazed that the cat didn't fall off or get blown off," said Karen Dixon-

Aquino, director of the Animal Welfare Association in Voorhees, N.J. The association is caring for Miracle and plans to put him up for adoption.

The SUV's driver didn't know about the stowaway until another motorist saw the cat through a wheel well and flagged down the driver.

Dixon-Aquino said Miracle probably climbed under the SUV and was asleep when the journey began. Somehow, the cat avoided being mangled by fan blades and other moving parts as he clung to the car.

"He was pretty freaked out," Dixon-Aquino said. "His paws were burnt, one

claw was missing and his fur was singed."

Stress-relieving methods number many. But saying "Fred"? Author David L. Mocknick says the name Fred — derived from Frederick, a German moniker that means "peace ruler" — has curative powers. And he's developed a whole system to prove it that he explains in his recent book, "Who's Fred, Ha!: Silly, but Fun Stress Relief" (Clear Brook, \$17.95).

Fredding (which can be done in solitaire but works best in a group setting) begins when someone "baits" another person by getting him or her to say a word that

rhymes with Fred. When the target — a waitress in a diner who suggests bread when asked for an alternative to rolls, for example — falls into the trap, the Fredder calls out, "Bread! Fred! Who's Fred, ha!"

It's not science, admits Mocknick. "I'm no psychologist and I don't have a medical background," says the 47-year-old Philadelphia-based literary agent. "But I've seen it work firsthand."

Going overboard is not difficult with the Fred variations Mocknick details in his book and its accompanying CD. These include double Freds (when someone says two words that rhyme with Fred), musi-

cal/cinematic Freds (Fredding in Britney Spears' or Humphrey Bogart's voice, for example) and Fred clues ("What's thermometer liquid called?" "Mercury." "Freddie Mercury! Who's Fred, ha!").

The last example refers, of course, to the late lead singer of Queen.

But beware: Fredding comes with side effects.

Fredders are subject to strange looks, allegations of insanity, and even, as Mocknick knows firsthand, restaurant eviction.

"One time the owner of a diner threw me out," he says. "But I was stress-free when he did it."