

Christmas with kittens is something we have not experienced in many years. Muzzy was well over ten years old when he died last May. We brought Jick and Tony into the house in July. They were probably a couple of months old at the time. So, although they are now big, they are still kittens—teenagers, I would estimate.

They are two very different cats. Tony is very stylish. He is a mottled black and tan with distinctly striped tail, spots on the stomach like a wild cat, and is very sure of himself. He has long legs, is slim, and, if he ever fills out, will be a very large cat. It may be, though, that he will continue to watch his figure and remain a narrow, shiny, feral-looking creature. He is friendly, but not needy.

Jick is another creature in many ways. It is impossible to catch him if he is outside, although he will readily come in hurriedly if I shake the Temptations container a couple of times. His orange coat is perfectly shiny and healthy looking, but somehow, he still seems to embody the persona of a “junkyard cat.” He will, though, with very little persuasion, sit on a lap and purr contentedly. He doesn’t look as big as Tony, but he probably is—just a little less long-legged. He is obsessed with food, particularly yogurt, and has been known to reach up and nearly snag a paw full from Runo’s dish. He is also a terror here as I type on the laptop at the desk. He interferes by “typing” himself, by chewing on the corner of the computer, and by turning things off and on at will. I have to lock him in the cat carrier if he comes this way while I am working at the desk.

Both of them love the cat carrier, and we have never put it away, as they tend to take naps there. And, it is handy if we need to get them out of our way sometimes.

So, we didn’t know what would happen when we put up the Christmas tree. We protected ourselves a bit by adorning the balsam fir only with lights and the paper mache angel. The few other Christmas decorations we hung on the walls were of no interest to the cats.

It was not until a week later that I noticed that about six of the tiny LED lights were not lit. When I looked at them, I saw that the bulbs were definitely chewed up. Jick and/or Tony apparently got no shock from chewing on them. And, I also have discovered that the tree stand, which contains water, must be regularly and often refilled, and the kittens have decided that it has a distinctly more acceptable flavor than the liquid in their water dish or in that of Blue and Kate, the border collies.

All in all, though, these kittens have not been nearly as destructive as they could have been. When the Christmas tree comes down, that string of lights will go to the recycling bin, and we will expect—correctly or not—that as grownup cats next Christmas, Jick and Tony will have no interest in the holiday.