



SAFE HAVEN
No-Kill Shelter For Cats

The Scratching Post

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Comments on the Scratching Post? Send ideas and suggestions to cbiondi@nc.rr.com.

All About Volunteers

Can You Help?

Matchmakers Wanted – Have you ever thought about what makes the perfect match between feline and human? SHFC needs adoption counselors, and you might be a perfect fit for this role! Counselors report that sending cats to their forever homes is incredibly rewarding. Training is provided, so if you're interested, e-mail Sherri at sherri@safehavenforcats.org.

Help! – The shelter is full, and we need extra help for all the weekly cleaning shifts. Can you spare a couple of hours to help out? Also, getting folks out into the community to spread the word about the shelter brings more potential adopters in the door, so please consider helping out with our on-going events!

Fill a Truck, October 29 – Our next Fill a Truck event will be at the Wake Forest Wal-Mart on Oct. 29. We need about 12 volunteers to make this event a success. It promises to be a very busy day, as this is Halloween weekend and people will be buying costumes and candy. Feel free to come in costume!

Mistletoe Marketplace, November 19 – Mistletoe Marketplace is great craft fair held in Wakefield High School. If you have any ideas for crafts that volunteers can make for this event, or if you'd like to

staff our table, contact Nancie.

Black Friday Open House, November 25 to 27 – We'll need the usual volunteers, tour guides, and bakers to help support this post-Thanksgiving open house, so keep it in mind as you plan your Black Friday shopping!

Carolina Christmas Show, December 2 to 4 – What a great place to see crafts and talk to people about Safe Haven! Let Nancie know if

you're interested in participating in the Carolina Christmas Show, held at the (still) new Raleigh Convention Center.

Holiday Gift Wrapping – Every year a battalion of SHFC supporters wrap books and gifts at Barnes & Nobles bookstores. It's a great way to make money for the shelter, as well as getting yourself in the holiday spirit! If you'd like to help out at this great event, contact WRay Templeton at safehavenvol@aol.com

SHFC PetFest a Huge Hit!

by Cait Hawley

On September 10, SAFE Haven held their first annual PetFest and it was an unexpected hit! The Fest hosted a low-cost rabies and microchip clinic for cats and dogs, as well as a number of excellent vendors, including pet sitters, a mobile veterinary service and Alana Stevenson, a local dog/cat behaviorist and trainer.

Starting in the early morning, SAFE Haven volunteers and staff prepped for a crowd, but no one was prepared for the line that formed. Dogs and cats of all shapes, sizes and colors appeared, and over the course of the afternoon, over **420** pets were vaccinated, microchipped or both!

In this economic climate, many pet owners have trouble affording even critical rabies vaccinations at "for-profit" veterinary hospitals and clinics, so unfortunately, many dogs and cats go without. At SAFE Haven's PetFest, customer after customer showed his or her appreciation through warm smiles and words of gratitude.

Thanks to our own vet, Dr. King, another vet who volunteered her time, Dr. Janice Sagris, and a host of SHFC volunteers and staff, PetFest went off without a hitch. Due to the sensational turnout of this first annual event, SAFE Haven has decided to hold two low-cost rabies and microchip clinics a year, one in March and one in October. We hope to see you at one of them!

Animal Law in North Carolina

Attorney Calley Gerber is one of a handful of attorneys in the country who practice animal law exclusively. I talked to her recently about what she does and about the state of animal law in North Carolina.

Although animals have some protections in North Carolina, they don't have any unlimited or universal rights. There are laws to protect animals from cruelty, but the laws put limitations on those rights – for example, acceptable methods of farming and hunting are explicitly excluded from being regulated under the animal cruelty law.

Since companion animals are considered property, the rights to be exercised are generally those of their owners, not of the animals themselves. If someone injures or steals your cat, you may have a remedy under both civil and criminal law (lawsuit and charges, respectively). You can also sue a veterinarian for malpractice if the care your animal received was below the standard and harmed the animal.

Although North Carolina allows you to sue someone in civil court for cruelty to animals, such suits may grant possession of the animal but not monetary damages. If, for example, a neighbor notices that horses in a pasture are being starved, it is possible to sue and obtain possession of the horses.

This private suit for cruelty isn't used much because of the costs involved. Most individuals concerned with

SHFC 5000th Adoption!

SHFC adopted its 5000th cat during the recent *High Five* weekend. Handsome Eddison, below, was the lucky cat!



animals don't have room to take in more of them, so the civil remedy for cruelty is most often utilized by agencies, if it's used at all.

Criminal law can be used in cases where animals are tortured or abused, and the abuser may be sentenced to jail time in some cases. These cases are generally brought by local law enforcement agencies.

Calley handles a variety of cases in her practice, some concerned with the rights of animal owners, and others with the rights of animals themselves.

Her cases may include representing someone whose dog died while it was being boarded at a local kennel, or where an individual poisoned cats or shot dogs who came onto his property. She takes 'dangerous dog' cases, where someone accuses a neighbor's dog of something as part of an on-going squabble. She also offers assistance in estate planning for companion animals through pet trusts.

In addition to her individual clients, Calley works with animal-focused groups and organizations. She helps non-profit rescue groups with contracts and other legal advice, consults with shelters about feral colonies, and helps rescue groups and shelters that are trying to enforce contracts.

One interesting application of the animal cruelty law is in hoarding cases. Hoarding cases can be prosecuted under either the criminal cruelty law or the civil cruelty law. In either case, when hoarded animals are seized, the owner can be required to pay for their care under North Carolina's bonding statute.

If the owner cannot or will not pay, the animals may be forfeited. This allows the animals to be adopted out to new homes, rather than keeping them in shelters while the court case slowly works its way through the system. I asked Calley what you should do if

you know about an animal who is being mistreated. She stressed the importance of documenting the mistreatment, both in a written log with dates and times, and in pictures, if you can get them. Logs and pictures are tremendously useful when animal cruelty cases are prosecuted.

You should also report the mistreatment to local authorities, usually animal control or the sheriff's office. If the cruelty is severe and involves many animals – say, a hoarder or a puppy mill – you can contact the Humane Society of the United States to see if they can help.

Calley teaches a course in animal law at Campbell Law School and at UNC Law School. The course covers a broad range of topics in criminal, civil, constitutional and other legal theories, including the evolution of rights in various groups throughout our history in comparison to the animal movement.

She also discusses how thinking outside the box to apply laws not specifically written for animals can help them in certain cases, and how doing that can improve animals' lives over time.

Animal law is evolving rapidly, in North Carolina and around the world. For example, North Carolina's animal cruelty law was recently changed to make the penalty for malicious deprivation of food resulting in the death of an animal a class H felony rather than a misdemeanor, allowing judges to sentence abusers to significant jail time.

This bill, also known as Susie's Law, was named in honor of a puppy who was beaten and badly burned by a person who received essentially a slap on the wrist for his actions. Susie was left for dead, but she pulled through and was able to add her paw print to the bill when Gov. Bev Purdue signed it last year!

Ask the Vet ... About Rabies

In light of the recent case of rabies in a kitten adopted from the Wake County shelter, we'd like to share with you some information on this very serious disease. The article below is from the Veterinary Information Network (VIN) client education section:

Descriptions of rabies go back thousands of years, as rabies has classically been one of the most feared infections of all time. It is caused by a rhabdovirus that is relatively unstable in the environment, requiring fresh contact to establish infection.

In most cases, disease is transmitted via a bite wound. Only mammals are susceptible to infection, and wildlife is the primary animal group where

Adoptee Update – Brendel!

Brendel is a very sweet girl who was often overlooked because of her shyness. Turns out she was just waiting for Christine and Scott Hilton!

"We have changed Brendel's name to Abby Layne. She is such a joy to be with. She is becoming more comfortable in her new forever home each day. Her big sister, our precious Shelby, is very nurturing towards Abby. That doesn't mean they don't play "fisty-cuffs" every now and then! Abby is exploring her wide open spaces especially when it comes to batting her little mouse around. One big milestone is that Abby is now coming to us to be petted instead of shying away. This truly is a match made in heaven."



infection occurs.

Despite vaccination being readily available, every year the U.S. reports several human deaths from rabies, not to mention hundreds of dog and cat deaths. Rabies is nearly untreatable once symptoms begin despite all the resources of modern medicine and it is important to take its threat seriously.

The most common wildlife species to spread rabies to domestic animals and humans in the Northern Hemisphere are the skunk, bat, raccoon, fox, and coyote.

Course of the Disease

Virus in the infected animal's saliva enters the victim's tissues during the bite. The virus attaches to the local muscle cells for a couple of days before penetrating to local nerves and beginning its slow ascent to the brain.

Although the average time between bite and detectable virus in the brain is 20 to 30 days, it may take up to one year for the virus to journey from the nervous tissue to the brain.

Virus ultimately reaches the brain and in two to three more days is evident in all body secretions including saliva. At this point, the disease becomes transmissible and symptoms begin.

PRODRONTAL STAGE (First 1-5 days after symptoms have started)

A change in personality is noted. Friendly animals become shy, etc. The larynx begins to spasm and a voice change may be noted. Most infected animals will actively lick or scratch the site of the original bite.

EXCITATIVE STAGE (Next 2-3 days)

Classically, the "mad dog" stage. The animal has no fear and suffers from hallucinations. If confined, the animal often attacks the bars of the cage.

PARALYTIC OR DUMB STAGE (Next 2 days)

Weakness/paralysis sets in. The larynx is paralyzed resulting in an inability to swallow, thus drooling and "foaming at the mouth" result. The animal dies when the intercostal muscles (which control breathing) are paralyzed. It is from animals in this stage where most human exposure occurs.

Once the virus has been released to body secretions, it is again accessible to the immune system; however, the patient dies before his immune system can mount an adequate response.

When human exposure to an infected animal is involved, what happens depends on an assortment of criteria. If the animal is dead, its brain can be tested for rabies. There is no test for rabies in a living animal but since we know that death follows quickly after the virus becomes contagious, a living animal can be confined for 10 days. If the animal is still alive 10 days after biting a person, then the bite could not have transmitted rabies.

Prevention

Happily, rabies can be prevented with vaccination and limiting exposure to wildlife. The standard killed-virus vaccines are available for both dogs and cats, and, after the initial dose, which is good for one year, subsequent doses are generally good for three years.

Rabies vaccination protocols are typically controlled by municipal regulations. The American Association of Feline Practitioners recommends rabies vaccination for all cats.

As many of you know, we hosted our first rabies clinic at the shelter on Sept 10th. We vaccinated over 400 cats and dogs in about 3 hours. (Thank you Dr. Janine Sagris for your help!!) There are several more clinics scheduled in Wake County this fall (see the Wake County Animal Center's website). Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to keep your dog or cat protected from this fatal disease.

Spotlight On...

Ray Dragon Adoption Counselor and More



Ray with his new family member Roman (formerly Clawd)!

When Ray Dragon's cat Sigmund died last September after an illness that was never identified, his vet suggested that it might help the healing process if Ray volunteered at a shelter. Some of the vet's staff suggested SHFC, and Ray joined us in October.

When Ray first came to SHFC, he liked the fact that there was an emphasis both on providing necessary care to the cats and on socializing them. Ray worries about all the cats that don't have a network of friends to care for them, and he enjoys loving the animals at Safe Haven until they find permanent homes.

He says that it's fun to walk in when all

the cats are asleep, and then watch them notice you and want to interact with you. He knows the cats are safe at the shelter, and he can see them get better and happier because of the attention they receive.

Ray started his volunteering with Thursday night cleaning, but after attending several adoption events he decided adoption counseling might be a fun thing to do. After shadowing a counselor three times as part of his training, he happened to be the only volunteer available on one Saturday afternoon, and ended up adopting two cats his first time solo. Since then he's got a perfect record – he's sent home a cat during every adoption shift he's had!

Even though Ray didn't intend to adopt another cat right away, Sigmund's brother Freud was very unhappy when his brother died, and the vet suggested that they get another cat as a companion for him. Ray and his partner Brad spent four hours looking at the cats, and eventually settled on Clawd, who was very shy and who had been at the shelter for a long time.

Clawd, now Roman (because he looks like a gladiator) spent the first several days at home behind the toilet, but

within a couple of weeks he started following Freud around, grooming him and wanting to interact. Roman also follows Ray around the house – Ray says he wants to be a lap cat, but he hasn't quite figured out how to get into a lap.

When Ray and Brad adopted Roman there were two other cats who were in the running, and Ray just couldn't get them out of his head. So shortly afterward, Begris and Hogan joined the family! Hogan is the largest of all the boys, weighing about 17 pounds and stretching out to almost 30 inches long. (He's also the one that Freud tries to intimidate.)

In addition to cleaning and doing adoption counseling, Ray is again expanding what he does for Safe Haven. He's begun training to join Happy Cats, where he'll learn techniques to work with some of the shyer or less socialized cats to make them more adoptable.

Ray finds it amazing that SHFC has so many people who care for animals that can't care for themselves. He says, "The people there don't just like cats, they love them."

Adoptee Update – Rory!

Rory, a beautiful mature torti, languished in the shelter for quite a while before someone gave her a chance. Read what her adopter, Tiffany Kershner, says about her!

"I now call her 'Rory Belle'. Rory Belle is doing great and is adjusting well to her new home, gradually warming up and trying new things. She is definitely not an introvert! She follows me around; well, now she leads me to play areas around my apartment! She plays fetch with paper balls and crinkly balls. She loves the mousies I purchased at SHFC and wrestles with them. She likes to nap on her perch. She just started about two nights ago jumping into bed with me at night. She doesn't stay long, but overall she is warming up to me, starting to trust again.

She is extremely affectionate and loves to be petted. She also really enjoys scratching on the several scratching gizmos I placed around the apartment. Overall, I can say that she is a beautiful girl and I love her very much. We are a perfect match!

"Rory Belle is a very, very special cat and my parents (her grandparents) can't wait to meet her. She will be totally spoiled this Christmas!"



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