

July, 2009

Volume 4, Issue 3

The Scratching Post

In This Issue:

- Volunteer Opportunities
- Meet Jennifer Vail, Staff Member
- *Ask the Vet...* About Inappropriate Elimination
- 2009 Health & Wellness Expo
- Expansion News!
- *Spotlight On...* Tammy Casiere

Contact Info:

8431-137 Garvey Drive
Raleigh, NC 27616

919 872-1128
919 872-7730
919 872-7732 fax

info@safehavenforcats.org

www.safehavenforcats.org

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



All About Volunteers

Volunteer Opportunities

Can You Help?

As anyone who's moved knows, moving always brings with it a variety of expenses, expected and unexpected. SAFE Haven's expansion into the new adoption space on Durant Road was no exception.

Due to the generosity of volunteers and friends, many of the move expenses and needs associated with supplying two spaces were met via monetary and other donations. However, support for two spaces on an on-going basis will bring new challenges.

Can you consider making a special donation to the shelter to assist with these on-going needs? Regular monthly donations, even just \$5.00 a month charged to your credit or debit card, would be a great help.

Staff Support Needed

We are looking for some help over the next couple of weeks to help support the staff as we try to tackle dealing with two buildings. The tasks we need help with will be both office and shelter related.

We would like to have at least one volunteer for each of the following shifts: Monday through Friday from 10am to

1pm and from 1:30pm to 4:30pm.

Volunteer Committee

A new Volunteer Committee is looking for suggestions and comments from you.

Do you have ideas about how your cleaning shift could be improved? Do you have a question about a shelter policy? Do you have a comment about the new adoption space?

Please take a minute to write down your suggestion or comment and put it in the suggestion box – the Volunteer Committee wants to hear from you! Look for the purple suggestion box near the volunteer sign up board on the white shelves.

SECC Campaign Begins

The State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC) kicks off on July 31. We'll need several people to work a table and talk to state employees who might be thinking about designating their contributions to SHFC.

This campaign is of particular significance to SAFE Haven, since the SECC is our largest source of individual contributions. Check the Sunday e-mails for further details about this opportunity.

Tuxedo Cat Ball Wrap-up

The fifth annual Tuxedo Cat Ball raised over \$40,000 for the cats! This year's ball was held at Sisters Garden and Catering Company in Raleigh, and despite the current economic climate was a tremendous success.

Thanks to everyone who participated in SAFE Haven's largest fund-raising event of the year!

Wagons Ho!

Special thanks to the volunteers who provided the muscle and the vehicles that moved the cats and their accoutrements to the new adoption space.

*Tim Hanis
Kathy Burnett
Chris Yefko
Dave Miller
WRay Templeton
Cathy Rindge
Jen Reed
Nancie McClendon
Sue Minns
Kerry Holbrook
Sherry Johnson
Cathy Biondi
Larry Robertson
Shalea Rhodes
Gina Register
Dee Cramsie
Sherri Orner
Jennifer Vail
Dianne Barnett
Jan Midden
Mary Nell Murphy*

Meet the Staff – Jennifer Vail



Those of you who volunteer for any of the daytime weekday shifts are certainly familiar with Jennifer Vail.

Jennifer, or Jen – she says she doesn't have a preference – has an official title of Shelter Program Supervisor, which means that she gets to organize and perform many of the daily activities that keep the shelter running.

Those activities include supervising the work done by the weekday volunteers, making calls and performing other administrative functions for the SAFE Care clinic, feeding and medicating cats, and assisting with adoptions. In addition, she takes those great pictures of the adoptable cats and writes descriptions for them for the SHFC website.

Jennifer's been working at the shelter for over three years. Before joining SAFE Haven she worked with two other animal welfare organizations, the Forsyth County Humane Society and the Wake County SPCA, doing mostly

adoptions at Forsyth County and intake at Wake County. But her education is in a considerably different field – Jennifer is trained as a massage therapist.

Jennifer lives with a few animals of her own. She's got two cats, Max, whom she fostered when she was at the SPCA and who stayed with her, and Lorne, whom she adopted from SAFE Haven. They're both about four years old. She also has Pedro, a Chihuahua mix, who came with her from Wilmington.

Photographing the cats and working with purring kittens are some of Jennifer's favorite responsibilities. She also enjoys working with the volunteers, and appreciates being around people who love animals as much as she does.

She's grateful to work for an organization that recognizes our responsibilities to our animals. Max recently had a serious medical problem that required her to take time off for many, many trips to the vet. That was never an issue at SHFC – Jennifer, like all of us, appreciates working for an organization that knows that our animals are part of our families.

2009 Health & Wellness Expo

by Inez Leyden

Raleigh's Health & Wellness Expo was held this year on May 30 and 31, and brought in tens of thousands of people who participated in interactive sports and activities, took advantage of health tests and screenings, and learned about community organizations such as SAFE Haven. Inez is one of the volunteers who manned the SHFC booth.

This was my second year representing SAFE Haven at the Health & Wellness Exposition at the NC State Fairgrounds. I was shocked by the increase in foot traffic, which I expect was due to the event being held in conjunction with the free NC Carnival. Regardless, it only helped SAFE Haven spread their mission.

The number of people who stopped at the booth was easily twice as many as last year. In my two-hour shift there were only a few minutes when the booth had no visitors. Often folks were waiting to speak with us.

We spoke with people who knew nothing about SAFE Haven, and to many who were repeat adopters. (At least five people within my two-hour span were SAFE Haven adopters). We met folks who said they were the second people to adopt from the original SAFE Haven facility – Pam & Doug's garage! If memory serves me right, over the years they've adopted four cats from SAFE Haven, three of which are still alive and providing joy every day.

An elderly couple raved about a kitten they recently rescued. When I asked them whether their kitten was spoiled, the man said, "He's so spoiled the garbage man wouldn't take him!"

(continued on page 3)



House & Pet Service Inc.
HOME & PET SITTING

**Loving Care for Your Home and
Pets in Durham**

*Pet sitting, pet play, house sitting, dog
walking, pet taxi, vet visits, plant care*

IRENA SMITH, owner

Insured, Bonded Certified Pet Sitter
Member of NAPPS and PSI

housepet@verizon.net
housepetservices.com
919 450 7195

ASK THE VET ... *About Inappropriate Elimination*

by Betsy Pethick, D.V.M.

Behavior problems frequently top the list of reasons cited by owners when they relinquish cats to a shelter. One of the most common of these problems is inappropriate elimination, or urinating/defecating outside the litter box. This article is designed to help you to sort through this common yet complex problem

It is important to determine first whether your cat has an elimination problem or marking behavior. With inappropriate elimination, the cat stops using the box and targets areas of "preferred" texture (rugs, laundry baskets, bathroom sinks, etc.). The cat's posture is usually squatting and there is a large amount of urine voided.

With marking, the cat continues to use the litter box, but also urinates in areas with behavioral significance (say, doorways or windows). The posture is usually standing with the tail up and twitching, and the amount of urine is small.

Medical problems can be at the root of inappropriate elimination. Diseases that cause excessive thirst and urination, constipation, or diarrhea can lead to avoidance of the box.

Any condition causing pain or discomfort while urinating or defecating can result in inappropriate elimination, as the cat identifies the box as the source of the pain. It is extremely important to have your veterinarian evaluate your cat for medical issues as soon as elimination behavior problems start.

Once you have determined that your cat has an elimination problem and medical conditions have been ruled out, here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Am I keeping things clean enough?
At a minimum, scoop the box daily, change out the box weekly, and replace the box with a new one every 6 months. Clean with mild soap and water only

(no strong scented cleaners). Use an odor neutralizer (such as Get Serious) to thoroughly clean areas where that cat has voided. Long haired cats may benefit from having the hair around their feet and hindquarters trimmed to avoid the uncomfortable feeling of having litter or feces stuck to the coat.

2. How does my cat feel about his litter box? The cat that perches on the edge of the box, doesn't cover or dig in the litter, shakes his paws when he gets out, and exits at a run most likely has an aversion to the box. It's time to offer your cat 3 or 4 boxes with different types of litter to determine his preference. Although most cats prefer finely textured clay litter, you may need to be creative. Try substrates such as disposable diapers, carpet swatches or towels.

Make sure that there are plenty of boxes -- the number of cats in the household plus one. The box can be open or covered, but be sure that the cat has plenty of room to get in and out easily. Most commercial litter boxes are too small for the average cat. A storage box (32 quart or larger) is a better choice.

Keep the box close to the area where the cat spends most of his day, in an

area that is quiet and well lit but not right near his food and water.

3. How can I discourage my cat from eliminating in areas outside the box? As mentioned previously, thoroughly clean the areas with an odor neutralizing product. If possible, remove the "target areas" such as throw rugs or laundry baskets from the cats reach. Or, make the area aversive by using upside-down carpet runners (with the "nubby" side up) aluminum foil, motion detectors, or citrus air freshener.

Treatment of inappropriate elimination is very individualized and consists primarily of environmental modification. The particulars vary in each case, but the basic approach is to clean the soiled areas and make them aversive, and make the "toilet area" more desirable. It may be helpful to keep a log of which box the cat prefers to use and what, if any, inappropriate locations are still being targeted.

Most cases are treated and resolved with environmental modification alone, without the need for medication. Your veterinarian can be a great source of support. In tough cases, he or she may recommend referral to a veterinary behavior consultant.

2009 Health & Wellness Expo

(continued from page 2)

It was quite refreshing to see people dedicated to helping felines. One Long Island native talked about her daughter and son-in-law, who help feral cats in their neighborhood even though the son-in-law is allergic to cats. They've even built a shed in their yard to help with cat rescue operations!

These events are so important for funding and education. While the number of compassionate people we witnessed was amazing, even more amazing were those who are unaware of the impact of not sterilizing cats. Many of our discussions focused on SAFE Care, our low-cost spay/neuter clinic.

We hope the people we reached that day remember SAFE Haven when they want to adopt a cat and SAFE Care if they have a need for low cost spaying or neutering, and those that knew of SAFE Haven continue to be supporters. As a volunteer, meeting the public and spreading our mission is one of the most rewarding things I do.

Spotlight On...

Tammy Casiere
Bookkeeper and Cat Cuddler



Tammy, all dressed up for this year's Tuxedo Cat Ball

Tammy Casiere has a one-of-a-kind job as a SAFE Haven volunteer – she does our bookkeeping, making sure all income and expenses are accounted for and documented properly.

Tammy found out about SHFC because of Food Lion, as she was picking the organization she wanted to support when she shopped there. She was so impressed with the web site and the SHFC mission that she decided to volunteer.

Like many of us, she started with a cleaning shift. She became part of the Thursday night crew, the crew that always reminded themselves that 'Thursday night rocks'. After she'd done this for a while, Pam put out a call for someone with bookkeeping experience who'd be willing to donate some time to SAFE Haven. Since Tammy was in business for herself as a bookkeeper at the time, she answered the call.

Tammy started coming in every Sunday morning to work on the books. The amount of time it takes her each week to get everything up to date varies

between two and five hours.

Tammy was instrumental in making sure our audit went smoothly. She was on-call for Pam when the auditors were present, but since she'd been through audits before she made sure we were prepared even before the auditors got here. Tammy says that she and Pam try to run every day as if there was an audit going on.

In addition to the bookkeeping, Tammy has done Christmas wrapping shifts, represented the shelter at the Triangle Town Center, and worked during the Cats production. She also does some

chores around the shelter on Sundays if she needs a break from the bookkeeping or if she finishes early.

Tammy does whatever's needed on Sunday afternoons – she cleans out cages after adoptions, does laundry, helps with the evening feeding. Feeding is probably her favorite job – the cats get so excited when it's time to eat! She may take a cat to the playroom, or brush and cuddle a cat who needs it.

Although she gets caught up in the bookkeeping, it's the cats that keep her volunteering. She considers them a 'perk' of the job, and enjoys doing what she can to make their lives better.

Expansion Complete!

Have you ever heard the expression 'herding cats'? That's how Pam describes the move to new adoption space that occurred the weekend of June 27.

The move took place in several waves, one of which was focused on getting 50 cats from the old space to the new one. Each cat was put in an individual carrier (labeled with its occupant's name), and put in a cool and relatively quiet area while the cages were disassembled.

The cages were then trucked 'up the hill' to the new space and reassembled. When their new homes were ready for

them, the cats got their ride up, in volunteers' air conditioned cars.

Most of the cats settled in quickly, enjoying the sunshine and light in the new adoption space.

The additional space and location of the new area will bring increased visibility to the adoption program, allowing us to increase the number of cats and kittens that find permanent homes.

Much of the space that was freed up in the Garvey Drive location will be used to expand the SAFE Care clinic, increasing the spays and neuters that can be done each year.



Look at all the natural light in the new adoption space!

Adoption hours in the new space will be from 11 am to 4 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays, and 10 am to 4 pm on Saturdays. Tell all your friends to stop by!