

Life



INSIDE
LOW NUMBERS AT BIRD FEEDER A SIGN OF CHANGING SEASONS. 2C

BY CORBIE HILL
Correspondent

Four years ago, Pam Miller went to the home of a woman who was dying of cancer. The woman had lived a full life and was in home hospice care. She was no longer aware of her surroundings, which meant it was time for Miller to come for her cats. The cats were nervously hiding under couches, and Miller admits she felt sad taking them from the house before their owner passed. (Two days later, the woman died.) Miller took the cats to SAFE Haven For Cats, a Wake County nonprofit, non-euthanasia cat shelter and adoption agency she founded 23 years ago and has run since. Eight weeks after removing the cats, Miller reports with satisfaction, they were in new homes. Miller doesn't want to think about what would have happened to the animals otherwise. "In a (traditional) animal shelter, the older cats, any cat with a medical issue, a cat that may not be quite perfect ... most of the time they end up dying," she says. One way pet owners can prevent that is to take the steps those cats' first owner did: She included her pets in her estate planning, and Miller was simply fulfilling her wishes. Taking in and finding new homes for the pets of the recently departed is something SAFE Haven does relatively often – granted there's a plan and funds set aside. It takes preparation, and it isn't necessarily cheap, but more and more people are making assurances that their animals will be taken care of after the owners die. It's a sacred trust, says Miller, and she is honored to take it on. "It comes up every week," she says. "There are a lot of people who don't have kids. There are people whose kids are all over the country or are overseas. There are people whose kids are allergic to cats."

HOW TO PREPARE
In the fallout from a loved one's death, too, there are so many things to take care of – the funeral, the house, and all the usual arrangements that come along with the grief – that it's easy to forget something needs to be done with the pets. To that end, Miller says, put a card in your wallet. It should say how many pets you have and where they are, and it should include the numbers of a vet, a pet-sitter and a trusted friend to whom you've spoken about caring for your pets in case the worst happens. Anyone can do this. If you have the means to leave a trust for your pets, talk to a lawyer with experience in pet trusts. Shirley Diefenbach, a member attorney at the Durham law firm Walker Lambe, works with SAFE Haven regularly and holds two information sessions annually on estate planning for pets. "When I talk in a group setting, inevitably people who don't have pets will chuckle a little bit when you introduce the concept," says Diefenbach. But she says she works with a few people monthly who want to leave a trust fund for their pets.



Reclining luxuriously in her own cat condo, Mystique, a 13-year-old calico female, is roused from her relaxation by SAFE Haven for Cats adoption counselor Ginger Rice for some activity in the cat playroom. Mystique's owner died this year. Read more about Mystique on 2C.

A SACRED TRUST

Providing for your pets after you're gone

- To ensure care for your pets after you pass, consult an estate attorney
- Pets can't inherit money, so you'll need to set up a pet trust
- Pet owners say having a trust in place gives them peace of mind



Pam Miller is executive director of SAFE Haven For Cats, located in Wake County.

RESCUE ME

N&O Rescue Pet of the Month

Name: Lucky
Age: 8-10
Breed: Labrador retriever
Location: Neuse River Golden Retriever Rescue
Contact Info: goldenrescuenc.org
Though he's being taken care of by a golden retriever rescue group, Lucky is a very handsome and sweet Labrador retriever. Lucky walks a bit oddly because he had an old injury that was never fixed, but doctors at the N.C. State School of Veterinary Medicine have checked him out and say his leg is OK and won't get any worse with age. He gets around just fine – even runs up and down stairs. Before his current situation, Lucky had never lived in a home and had to learn how to walk through a door, negotiate stairs, play with toys and with other dogs and sleep on a dog bed. But now he's a champ at all those things. He's never even had an accident in his foster home. Lucky gets along with his foster dog friends, who are mature like him, but he's not a big fan of cats. His foster family reports that though he had a rough start, he's a very happy and loyal dog. He just needs a family to love him! And since Lucky is considered a "young senior," he's part of the Senior-to-Senior program, so a senior can adopt him with no adoption + fee.



Lucky is a happy and loyal Labrador retriever taken in from a nearby shelter by Neuse River Golden Retriever Rescue.

PET NOTES



Abigail Narducci with Dill Pickle, a Pawfect Match Rescue dog.

8-year-old organizes Howl-A-Ween Dog Adoption Event

8-year-old Abigail Narducci of Cary spent a couple of months collecting yard sale items from her neighbors this summer and then sold them to raise money for the Holly Springs dog rescue group, Pawfect Match Rescue and Rehabilitation. Abigail raised \$339 with her sale, but she isn't stopping there. She has also organized an upcoming neighborhood adoption event so people can meet some of the puppies and dogs Pawfect

Match has available. "She wants to help as many homeless dogs as possible find loving homes in Wake County," said Abigail's mother, Amy Narducci. Abigail's "Howl-A-Ween Dog Adoption Event" takes place 10 a.m.-noon Oct. 31 at the Park At West Lake neighborhood in Apex (5149 Moneta Lane). Dogs of all breeds and ages will be present. There will be T-shirts and ice cream for sale, and all proceeds go to the rescue group. Pawfect Match will also accept items from its Amazon Wish List at the event (nando.com/2gn), from anyone who'd like to make a donation that way. Abigail's mother said her

SEE PET NOTES, 2C