



South Central Michigan's nonprofit **advocate, sanctuary** and **source** for companion animals since 1887

critter chronicles

Fall 2011

July 16, 2011 was a very hot day in Battle Creek. It was one of those days when it is so hot, it almost feels like time is standing still. No breeze stirred. A passer-by out walking happened to look at a storm drain, and did a double-take. There, lying on the hot pavement, was a tiny fluff of orange striped fur. The small creature wasn't moving at all. The kind-hearted man moved closer to see if any life still breathed in the impossibly small body. A barely audible sigh escaped, and the man knew he had to act quickly.

Andy arrived at the Humane Society of South Central Michigan in rough shape. We don't have a

veterinarian on staff, but our kennel staff members knew what to do right away. "I looked inside the carrier, and there was a tiny kitten, looking up and panting heavily," said Lori Lamkin, HSSCM staff member. Andy was badly dehydrated. He couldn't walk, couldn't move, couldn't eat. Lori administered subcutaneous

fluids until Andy was stabilized. The tiny kitten was crawling with fleas, which were running all over his face. His ears were completely blackened on the inside. He was cleaned up and was finally able to eat a little on his own.

Our Andy was a fighter! It wasn't long before he was running around in his cage. Still too small for neutering, he was all alone. HSSCM Finance Director Melissa Sawyer took him home for socialization.

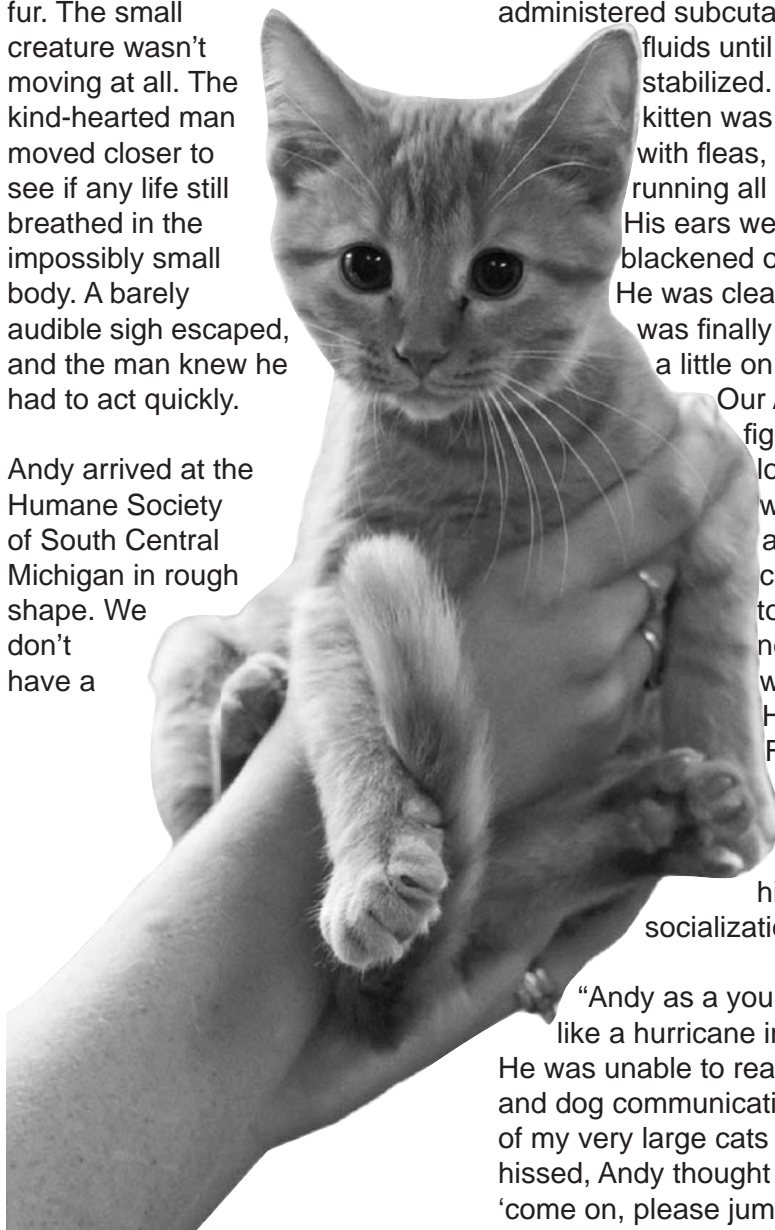
"Andy as a young kitten was like a hurricane in my home. He was unable to read basic cat and dog communication; when one of my very large cats growled or hissed, Andy thought that meant 'come on, please jump on my back

and bite my ears!' When Andy was kenneled at the shelter before he went into foster he was very sweet and just wanted to melt in your arms. In foster it was a Jekyll and Hyde transformation, he no longer wanted to be held. He just wanted to 'play' really hard with my other cats. I was concerned that soon my much-larger cats would eventually lose patience and so we moved Andy into another foster family that had two other kittens closer to his age and an adult cat that refused to accept any disrespect. That was just what Andy needed," said Melissa.

We knew as an only kitten, Andy needed to learn how to be a cat by being with other felines. Andy went to stay with veteran foster Mom Diane Sly and her daughter Meghan. Diane and Meghan have raised countless numbers of kittens for the Humane Society throughout the years, and had two foster kittens already in their home. Andy would get the companionship he needed.

"Andy was initially very overpowering to the other kittens but he soon learned his place and some manners when it came to playing. He is very social, liked to hang out with the other kittens, did very well with the dogs (they didn't faze him at all) and quickly learned our daily routine. Once he had his play time and wanted to nap he would seek out a warm person to lay with. Quite pitiful actually, would sit next to me and meow

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All photos by 11000 Lakes Photography. For your privacy, the Humane Society does not sell, rent, lend or exchange its mailing or contributor list.

As a society, we are dependent on technology. At the Humane Society, we track all kinds of data points to improve our ability to serve the community of South Central Michigan. A failure of a system can therefore be catastrophic. The Humane Society recently suffered a loss of one of our software systems. While we are working to fix our problem, it is possible that you may receive duplicate mailings, or perhaps a misspelling of name or address. Maybe you've even asked to be removed from our mailing list, and are now once again receiving our newsletter. Please give me a call at 269.963.1796, ext. 13 for any

corrections that need to be made regarding your regular mailing as we work to correct our data problem.

We would like to thank Chuck McCann and the Second Saturday group from First Wes for all their hard work this summer beautifying our walking trails. Special thanks also goes out to Deb Hastings, the master gardener responsible for our beautiful flowers. If you haven't been to the shelter lately, it's time to stop out for a visit! As always, thank you for your continued support!

Jessica Gilbert

In Honor/In Memory Donations

We are so thankful for those individuals and families who, in time of great sadness, remember the cats and dogs at the Humane Society and ask that donations be given in lieu of flowers, or those who give a memorial or honorary donation. Such thoughtfulness touches many lives. Recent donations have been given in the honor or memory of the following:

Arnold Miller
Augie
Barbara Nilson
Belinda Freds
Benji
Betsy
Brenda Newberry
Daisy Roebuck
Deborah Quinn
Doris Hagerman Cole
Eleanor Pastor
Everett Miller
James Warner
Janet "Pat" Clapper
Jean Newkirk
Jim Nelson
Joseph Ferrari
Lois V. Shamp
Lorraine Sheppard
Penny Colburn

Philip Ptacin, Sr.
Rita LaLonde
Scott G. Calhoun
Tuffy

Planned and major gifts are very important to the Humane Society of South Central Michigan. The agency receives 87 percent of its annual operating funds through generous donations from people like you. The remaining 13 percent is received through service fees.

The agency does not receive any government or tax dollar support. Planned gifts supplement,

but do not replace, annual giving through the community. Planned gifts enhance the agency's ability to provide new programming focused at stopping pet overpopulation throughout south central Michigan.

A planned gift is a commitment that will benefit homeless companion animals in south central Michigan in the future through such means as wills, IRA or traditional retirement or 401K plans, living trusts, life insurance policies or charitable annuities and trusts.

Please contact us today to learn more about our Legacy Guild and how your planned gift can make a lifetime of difference to thousands of animals



in our community.

Together, we will ensure that every pet is a wanted pet.



Veterinary Viewpoint

--Dr. Jennifer Aschenbrener,
Irwin Avenue Animal Hospital

As a veterinarian, I see cats and dogs of all different shapes and sizes every day. Unfortunately, like most vets around the country, I am seeing an increase in the number of pets that are “a few sizes too big” and “a bit more round.” The American Veterinary Medical Association recently estimated that one out of every three house pets is overweight. It seems as though the “obesity epidemic” that Americans are facing has extended to our pets.

There are several causes of obesity in pets. Some breeds of dogs show a predisposition to obesity. Certain diseases such as hypothyroidism can cause heaviness in dogs. Medications like anticonvulsants and steroids can cause increased food consumption and lead to weight gain. Neutering slows metabolism, as does aging (however, the benefits of neutering your pet by far outweigh the risks!). Of course, the most common cause of weight gain is increased caloric intake and reduced exercise.

Consequently, as in humans, obese pets are predisposed to many health problems. For instance, tubby pets are more likely to have orthopedic issues, such as arthritis, due to more stress on their joints. Obesity can result in diabetes, heart and respiratory

disease, and has been linked to certain cancers. Overweight pets are more likely to have difficulty undergoing anesthesia, and they are also less tolerant of the heat. We often equate food with love, but in doing so, we are compromising the health and longevity of our four-legged companions.

Are you able to feel your pet’s ribs? If not, your pet may fall in the “chubby” category. Are you free feeding your pet? Some animals can pick at their food all day, while others will scarf down their meal as soon as it is placed in front of them (think of any Labrador in a dog-food commercial) and still want more. Not all pets can or should be free fed! Measure your pet’s food – are you using a REAL measuring cup? Or perhaps an old margarine tub? Or a coffee can? How many “cups” is your pet getting a day? There are many commercial diets available for weight loss or “less active” pets. If needed, prescription diets formulated for weight loss and weight maintenance are available through most veterinarians. Acceptable low-calorie treats for dogs include carrots, celery, apples, green beans (low sodium variety), and rice cakes.

Remember that a “treat” for your pet doesn’t have to be food. Often, your attention is reward enough – a game of fetch, a belly rub, a scratch under the chin or behind the ears, a long walk. Exercise can be a reward for both you and your dog - take your dog to the beach for playing and swimming, play a game of Frisbee or ball, go to the Humane Society and walk along

the beautiful trail! Exercising your cat isn’t always as easy, but can be entertaining! Have you ever watched your cat chase a remote controlled toy or laser pointer? Even a toy on a bungee or string can provide lots of exercise & fun. “Buster cubes” are toys that your pet has to roll around in order to get treats or kibble – these make activity necessary for a food reward. Consider adding another pet to the family to help your dog or cat become more active (the staff at the Humane Society can help you find a pet that fits well with your whole family!).

If you are trying unsuccessfully to get your pet to lose weight, consult your veterinarian. He or she may rule out medical causes of obesity by reviewing medications that your pet may be taking or running some blood work to test general organ function and for specific diseases. Together, you can form a comprehensive weight loss plan that keeps your pet healthy and happy.

facebook

By ‘liking’ us on facebook, you’ll get up to date announcements on adoptions, new animals arriving on the adoptable animal floor, volunteer opportunities and upcoming events. We also post photos! Our fans on facebook can post their own photos of HSSCM alumni animals.

To find us online, visit our website at www.hs-scm.org and click on the links. Help us get the word out to your friends and family about our social networking circle!

From Intake to New Home - the Adoption Process

At the Humane Society, we seek loving forever homes for companion animals. The majority of the dogs in our facility are transferred from so called "high-kill" municipal shelters in surrounding counties. Special volunteers go into participating animal control facilities, identify animals who would be a good fit for our facility, and negotiate their transfer. Some of these dogs arrived at the animal control facility as strays. Others were surrendered by their owners. Most of our cats are either found as strays or are owner-surrendered. Because we are a limited-admission facility, with space for only 39 dogs and 60 cats, we turn away many people every day. We can only bring in new animals when our adoptions allow for space!

No matter how they arrived at the shelter, most are traumatized by the experience of losing their home. A shelter can be a scary place for an animal! The smells and noise from the other dogs and cats can be overwhelming.

Many of the dogs have not received any kind of training whatsoever. We can't guarantee these animals are house-trained, as they are inside the kennel from 6:00pm until 8:00am each day. It's important to consider that all shelter animals will require a little bit of effort to help them

a minimum of four days at our shelter to settle in. After the first four days (or, depending on law, up to seven business days in the case of stray animals), all dogs and cats are temperament tested to ensure they are safe, family animals. After the animal has passed temperament testing, it is examined by a veterinarian and spayed or neutered, microchipped, vaccinated and dewormed. Only after all of those tasks have been completed will the animal arrive on the adoptable animal floor.

We believe that the animals in our facility are receiving what we consider to be the minimum level of humane care required. A shelter environment, no matter how good, is never a home. As such, we want our animals to have *even better care* in their forever home and so potential adopters must go through a thorough adoption counseling process to ensure a proper fit for family and pet.

Potential adopters must fill out an application prior to meeting with the animal one-on-one. All members of the household must meet with the animal; if you are considering adopting a dog and have a dog currently in your home, we also schedule a match-up between dogs.

During the adoption counseling, a trained staff member will go over the needs of the animal in question, along with the needs of the family. We will also call personal and veterinary references, and may even schedule for a home visit! While it may seem like a lot of effort, there is nothing more tragic than to have a dog or cat returned to the shelter, abandoned once again. Every time an animal returns to a shelter, they have a harder time trusting

humans and their potential to find a forever home becomes that much more difficult.

Adoption counselors have been specially trained in animal behavior topics, and they know the animals in our facility. Sometimes, the fit between a family and the animal they select isn't a good match. It's possible that a family may be qualified to adopt an animal, but will be denied for the pet they chose. We want to make sure that the pet you adopt is perfect for you, and we want to make sure that the new home environment is perfect for our animals. We'll ask you lots of questions during the adoption counseling to ensure a perfect fit.

Unfortunately, now might not be the right time for you to adopt from our facility. If you are currently unemployed or qualify for our low income programs, if according to local ordinance you have too many pets in your home, if you are allergic, if you have pets in your home that are unaltered, if your apartment has restrictions, or if we receive bad references you may be denied adoption from our facility. That doesn't mean that you are a bad person! It just means you don't qualify to adopt from us. It is also possible that you will be qualified to adopt from us in the future.

At the Humane Society of South Central Michigan, our first responsibility is to the animals in our care. Our second responsibility is to our community. We want every pet in south central Michigan to be a wanted pet.

Are you ready to open your heart and home to a shelter pet? Visit www.hs-scm.org to see animals currently available or to download an adoption application!



acclimate to their new home.

All dogs and cats are given

At the Corps of Things

“I wish I could take them all home.” It’s hard to imagine a phrase more commonly spoken throughout this facility, especially when considering the soaring levels of compassion and generosity which flow through virtually every member of our volunteer corps. I’m confident almost everyone willing to volunteer their time with this organization wishes that somehow they could do more - more for the facility, more for the community, more for the animals, but fortunately ‘more’ doesn’t necessarily have to mean squeezing one more companion animal into your home. Although our ability to find suitable forever homes for each of our available animals is the determining factor in which we will judge our success as an organization, volunteers have the ability to play a critical role in contributing to our success by making just a few changes to their routine.

Volunteers make their biggest contribution to this organization by taking a goal-oriented approach to their time with our residents. As touched upon during volunteer orientation, it is only the personality and confidence of individual residents which will lead to successful adoptions. When spending time with dogs and cats here at the facility, it is important to remember that many times behavioral issues are what lead most of our residents here in the first place, and in order to find their forever home these issues need to be addressed in a way conducive to our companion animal philosophy. When spending time with our feline residents for example, our volunteers need not spend too much time with the same playful and warm cats

each week, but instead take some time to better socialize the more fragile residents among the group. Volunteers in our cat room spend their time best by socializing residents tucked away in a cupboard or hideaway, by speaking to them calmly and extending a non-intrusive hand, and most importantly by thoughtfully taking their time each week to raise the confidence of a resident, inch by inch. Similarly when working with our canine residents, volunteers must be willing to go outside their comfort-zone by taking a more focused approach to the issues that may be plaguing a particular resident. For example, spend some time with an unfamiliar face and never hesitate to request from HSSCM staff members more information regarding behavioral issues of a particular resident, for many of the issues impeding a dog’s adoption may be steadily resolved with commitment of a dedicated volunteer.

At the end of the day, our goals can only be achieved with the commitment of knowledgeable volunteers working to increase the personality and confidence of our residents. For each of our residents every second spent in a shelter environment is an opportunity, an opportunity for good habits to deteriorate as the pack-mentality consumes them or an opportunity to foster the growth of social skills necessary for them to find their forever home. To our volunteers, the choice is clear.

Our volunteer application is available on our website for download at www.hs-scm.org. We are in need of pet therapy volunteers and individuals willing to wear our Watkins mascot costume

Volunteer of the Month

July



Doug Wolfgang

August



Linda Green

at events. For more information on volunteering at the Humane Society, please call 269.963.1796, ext. 10.

--Jake Smith, Program Coordinator

Ask the Behaviorist

Games We Play

Why did you get your pet? There are probably myriad answers to that question, but one which really intrigues me says a lot about our 21st century culture. According to this theory, we have become a very serious species. We take making money seriously; we take our relationships seriously, raising our children seriously...we even take what we call play seriously...so seriously that our toys now cost thousands of dollars. We have forgotten that delicious sense of fun and wonder and imagination which filled our childhood lives. Playing with our pets lets us return to that childhood world of explosive laughter and silliness. And, this theory continues, it is good for both us and our pets.

Psychologically, it lets us connect with that little boy or girl still living inside us; neurobiologically, it fosters new connections in our brains and releases hormones throughout our bodies which help all our biological systems work better. For our pets, these games encourage problem solving, thinking, and physical exercise, things that all

mammals need to do throughout their lives.

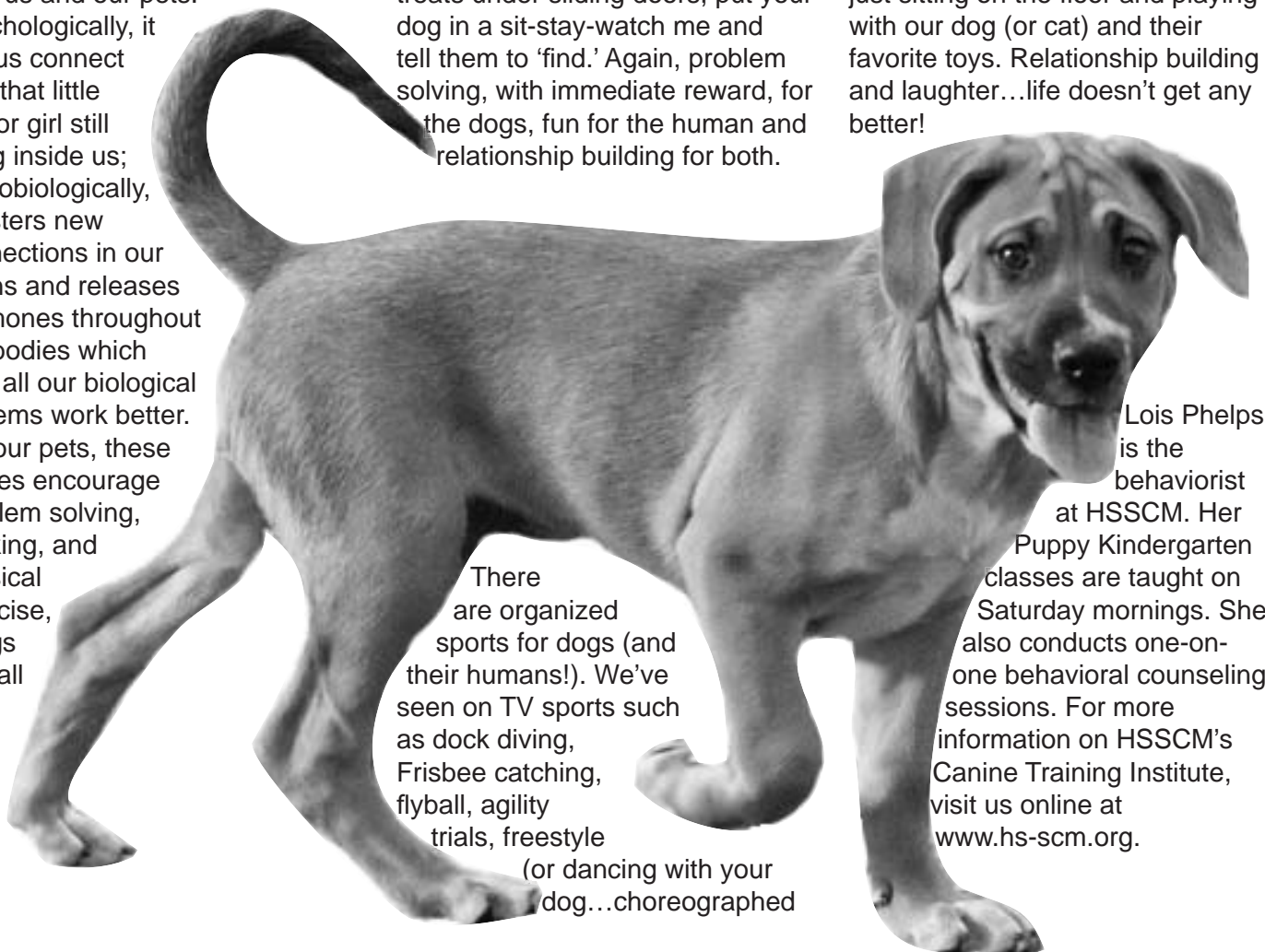
I have a couple of fun games I play with my dogs. In one, I take part of their dry kibble daily ration and hide it, in little piles, under cushions or the sofa or other creative places. Then I put the dogs in a sit-stay-watch me... give them the command 'find'...and sit back and laugh as they tear up the room, using their phenomenal sense of smell, as they search for part of their dinner. Yes, I have to put the room back together but that's a small price to pay. Another game is "Brick," a dog board game (available on the internet and at dog shows) in which you hide treats under sliding doors, put your dog in a sit-stay-watch me and tell them to 'find.' Again, problem solving, with immediate reward, for the dogs, fun for the human and relationship building for both.

There are organized sports for dogs (and their humans!). We've seen on TV sports such as dock diving, Frisbee catching, flyball, agility trials, freestyle (or dancing with your dog...choreographed

to music!). New activities include Rally (a dog and handler course combining obedience commands and agility obstacles and taught by several canine training centers in our county) and weight-pulling (a great activity for your bully breed or any other draft dog such as Husky, Malamute, Bernese or Swiss Mountain Dog. Contact the United Kennel Club in Kalamazoo for training clubs and competition). And the very newest is Treibballing, a type of canine soccer, using those large (human) exercise balls, in which a dog has to push several balls from mid-field into soccer nets...high score wins!

And let us not forget the fun of just sitting on the floor and playing with our dog (or cat) and their favorite toys. Relationship building and laughter...life doesn't get any better!

Lois Phelps is the behaviorist at HSSCM. Her Puppy Kindergarten classes are taught on Saturday mornings. She also conducts one-on-one behavioral counseling sessions. For more information on HSSCM's Canine Training Institute, visit us online at www.hs-scm.org.



Andy's Tale

at me in his little baby voice. He's very much a 'go with the flow' type of guy," said Diane.

Andy came back to the shelter when he was big enough to be neutered, and is now available for adoption. Right now, the Humane Society has a large number of adoptable kittens. While Andy's story is special, there is no guarantee that he will find a home. There are simply too many unwanted cats and kittens in our community. The Humane Society takes up to 20 calls each day from individuals wanting to surrender a cat or multiple cats or kittens. However, there currently is no space at the shelter for cats. As a limited-admission shelter where no adoptable pet is euthanized due to lack of space, the number of cats accepted is based on the number of cats adopted. And the summer has been particularly heavy with kittens and particularly slow with adoptions of cats and kittens.

Andy is cute, and he has an amazing story. He survived against the odds. Our hope is that he finds a loving forever home before he grows up in the shelter. There is

Coming Events

September 22 - silent auction and beer tasting, sponsored by Southern Exposure and Arcadia Brewing Company at Whisker Mixer at Southern Exposure Herb Farm. Call 269.963.1796, ext. 19 to reserve your tickets.

September 24 - Animals Gone Wild at Binder Park Zoo, adoption event sponsored by the Calhoun County Animal Coalition.

November 19 - Microchip clinic at the shelter, 11am - 3pm.

continued from front cover

nothing more heartbreaking than watching two of last year's kittens, Wanda and Cindy, grow up in the shelter. Wanda and Cindy were just as small and as cute as Andy when they arrived at the Humane Society. Now they have been with us over a year, and the shelter is really the only home they have ever known. We still hold out hope that someone will meet them and fall in love, but it is always more difficult finding homes for cats than it is for kittens.

We need your help. First, make sure you spay or neuter your own cat. Even one litter is too many. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find homes for these cute kittens, and many of them are now growing up in shelters.

Next, consider fostering if you have room in your heart and home. HSSCM can only provide care for up to 60 cats in the facility. Foster homes can help by taking in cats for which there is no room, and keeping them until room opens up through adoptions. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, stop out to the shelter and speak with a staff member. It's an incredibly rewarding experience, to help a homeless pet find their forever home.

Finally, help us to educate others. Encourage others to properly care for their animals, and ensure that they know the importance of spaying and neutering. Our Low Income Spay and Neuter (LISN) Program can help offset the cost of surgeries for individuals and families at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. We also offer a feral/barn cat program not dependent on income qualification. To learn more, visit www.hs-scm.org.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to all the local business who support the Humane Society by hosting our canisters:

Apple Valley
Compulink
Nature's Design
Hot Dog Factory
Hungry Howie's
Lakeview Veterinary Clinic
Continental Bakery
Pizza Factory
Springfield Do It Center
Twin Valley
Spanky's
Barista Blues Café
Brownstone
Pastrami Joe's Battle Creek
Pastrami Joe's Marshall
Schlotzky's Marshall
Cornwell's Turkey Farm
Mancino's Marshall
Wacky's Marshall
Chemical Bank

Davis Oil C Stores
#1 Columbia, 1265 E Columbia
#3 Dickman, 1790 W Dickman
#4 Morgan, 1051 North Ave
#7 Capital, 1608 CapitalNE
#8 Emmett, 321 E Emmett
#9 W. Mich, 1520 W Mich Ave
#17 Raymond, 890 Emmett
#18 20th St, 962 W Columbia
#21 Riverside, 240 E Columbia
#22 Goodale, 629 North Ave

HSSCM has a new vehicle! Due to the extraordinary support of a very special donor and the generosity of Boshears Ford in Marshall, the Humane Society can now transport animals and equipment safely and in style in our Ford Explorer. Vehicle artwork was created courtesy of Jerry Ure from Signs N Designs. We are so thankful for our special friends!

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2011-2012**

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Hours of Operation

Tuesday - Friday noon to 6:00pm

Saturday - 11:00am to 4:00pm

Closed Sunday and Monday

Phone: 269.963.1796

Fax: 269.963.3365

www.hs-scm.org



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of South Central Michigan**
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