



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

critter chronicles

Fall 2009

September 1, 2009 started out chilly, unseasonably so, at only 44 degrees that morning. Humane Society kennel technician Lori Lamkin was the first to the shelter that morning, the first to face the horrific sight of human irresponsibility.

As Lori pulled into the parking lot, she saw a cat run across the drive. Then, she noticed that something was on the concrete near the front door of the building. As she got out of her car and walked up to investigate, the reality hit her: three dead kittens. They had not been dead for long; their little bodies were cold, but they were not yet stiff. So small they were nursing, too small to keep themselves warm. Someone had left the mother cat and tiny kittens at the front door on the cold concrete during the night. The mother, frightened and cold, had probably done her best to keep them warm and alive, but in the end was unable to do so. Staff members picked their tiny bodies off the pavement and placed them in a plastic bag where they await mass cremation and burial in an unmarked plot. Kittens that could have grown up to be members of a family, sleeping on the bed and playing, reaching out their paws for human contact and affection.

There are simply too many unwanted cats and kittens in our community. The agency takes up to 20 calls each day from individuals wanting to surrender a cat or multiple cats. There are even more calls from

residents plagued by stray cats. However, there currently is simply 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. Other shelters are feeling the same pinch when it comes to cats and kittens. There are simply not enough homes and too many unwanted animals. There have been times over the past few months where not a single shelter in our immediate area was able to take a single cat at all.

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 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. If someone had just talked to the individual who left the cat and kittens at the front door of the shelter on that cold September

morning,
three
kittens
would
not have
died.
Please
help us
save
lives.



"Too many companion animals competing for too few good homes is the most obvious consequence of uncontrolled breeding. However, there are other equally tragic problems that result from pet overpopulation: the transformation of some animal shelters into "warehouses," the acceptance of cruelty to animals as a way of life in our society, and the stress that caring shelter workers suffer when they are forced to euthanize one animal after another. Living creatures have become throwaway items to be cuddled when cute and abandoned when inconvenient. Such disregard for animal life pervades and erodes our culture."

- Humane Society of the United States

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- All animal photos by
Ray Closson -

How quickly the year has gone! Fall is fast approaching, with the changing leaves and cooler temperatures. We're putting coats on the short-haired dogs (thanks to volunteer Thelma Nay, who sews the wonderful creations), but we're still enjoying the dog park and walking trails - stop out and spend some time with us!

Our facility is under construction, with all projects expected to be completed before winter is here. It's an exciting time at the shelter, and we are so proud of the work that is taking place to make better the lives of animals in our community.

As we are gearing up for our signature fundraising event, Antiques for the Animals at Southern Exposure Herb Farm in October, I am reminded how much of our programming and care for animals occurs because of our fantastic donors and volunteers. We simply couldn't do what we do without the support we receive from the community. You make a difference, every day. Thank you.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to give me a call at  269.963.1796.

Antiques for the Animals

Do you have an old item sitting around, and have wondered what its value could be? Are you a fan of Antiques Roadshow and wish you could participate? Well, now's your chance!

On **Wednesday, October 7, 2009**, the Humane Society will be hosting its signature fundraising event, Antiques for the Animals, at Southern Exposure Herb Farm.

The evening features a silent auction, a live auction and an antiques appraisal.

The appraisal of family heirlooms and collectables will be hosted by personal property appraiser Timothy Bos. Bos

will spend a few minutes discussing each item and will give a professional appraisal.

"We determine the origin, time frame and fair-market value of each item," Bos said, "but the best part is we have a lot of fun doing it."

Please limit your antique to one item per person.

Gourmet hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar are available starting at 5:30pm. A silent auction and live auction will take place before the appraisals.

"This event has been recognized in the community as one that is not just

beneficial for the animals but a lot of fun for all the attendees," said Tina Slayton, board chairperson. "It is not necessary to come with an antique to participate. The silent and live auction will keep you quite busy!"

Live auction items include weekend condo vacations, pet photography sessions, landscape design packages, signature dinners and much more. The variety of baskets and items for the silent auction ensure there is something for every taste and desire. It's a great time to stock up for your holiday gift giving while supporting the animals.

The event is held at beautiful Southern Exposure Herb Farm, a long time supporter of the agency and its programming. The breathtaking surroundings contribute to a perfect evening which has grown over the past several years. You won't want to miss this fun-filled evening.

Tickets for the event are \$50 per person. Proceeds go to benefit the programs of the Humane Society. To purchase tickets, please call 269.963.1796, ext. 19.

Justin Wetzel

The Humane Society of South Central Michigan has one of their own moving on to Michigan State University this fall. Justin Wetzel has been a kennel technician at the shelter since August of 2006. If his level of responsibility and care at MSU is equal to his dedication to the animals at the Humane Society, he will surely be very successful and well received in all his future endeavors. Thank you Justin, and best of luck. **We will miss you!**



Employee Spotlight

Construction Project Update

Constuction is now underway for the renovation of the facility including the creation of a new education and training center, the expansion of the agency's surgery suite and a new addition for animal quarantine.

Lonny Lumbard, Schweitzer employee and HSSCM project manager, said "Schweitzer, Inc. is excited and pleased to be a part of the Humane Society's expansion project. All of our employees and sub-contractors involved with the project so far have expressed their enjoyment with working around the staff and the animals at the Humane Society and have shown great concern in protecting the safety and well being for all. It's been fun watching these toughened construction workers melt whenever they see the animals and their real curiosity of the function of the Humane Society. Most are under the impression that it is the "dog pound" and really don't understand the love and kindness that the animals receive once they are here and the hard work of the staff in turning around these pets and getting them back into loving homes. A new

appreciation for the function of the Humane Society and their good work is being felt with all involved here at Schweitzer, Inc. and the construction team."

Carrie Bammer, Animal Care Manager, noted "the new education and training center will be very beneficial to the quality of service that we will be able to provide to the community and to our employees. With the extra space, we will be able to conduct quiet and thorough adoption counselings and show new owners ways to train and handle their new family members."

The renovation and expansion of the surgical suite is scheduled to begin October 1st, after the completion of the Low Income Spay and Neuter (LISN) Program year.

The entire reconstruction and building addition projects will be completed this fall, with the first Puppy Kindergarten class scheduled soon after (details to follow!). The agency will host an open house in December to celebrate the new changes to the facility.

Did You Know?

The Humane Society offers a FREE dog park and walking trail, open from dawn to dusk. The dog park features a large fenced-in area where dogs can run and play off-leash and a bone-shaped pool where they can cool off. Dogs can walk the trails (on leashes) with their owners and get some exercise while meeting new friends. Please stop by the front desk during normal business hours to fill out an application to become a member!



In Memorium

Margaret May Spencer was born December 18, 1922 in Battle Creek, the daughter of Leonard and Mary (Ashley) Lehmoine. She was a 1941 graduate of St. Philip High School. She enjoyed playing bingo and cards, traveling and the winters she spent in Lakeland, Florida. Prior to her retirement in 1979, she had worked at Kellogg's for 34 years and was a member of the Kellogg 25 Year Club. An animal lover, she helped to ensure that the Humane Society can continue to provide compassion and care for homeless pets in our community, a lasting legacy.

Ask the Behaviorist

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SOCIAL

There are many reasons why a dog or cat is brought to the shelter. Genetics and a brutal start in life play a part. But the two overwhelming reasons are isolation, with minimal exercise, and poor socialization to this crazy world in which we all live, resulting in behavior problems to which the family can't or won't attend.

In this issue's column, I'm going to talk a little about the importance of socialization, especially as a puppy or kitten, but really all through our pet's life.

What do the following have in common? Loud rap music, cell phone ring tones, toilets flushing, umbrellas, horns honking, tires squealing, elderly Uncle Fred zipping around with his walker, toddlers screaming, meter readers, people wearing sunglasses or with shaved heads, baby carriages looking like the lunar module...this list could go on and on.

All of the above were created by humans and are now part of 21st century life...no matter where we live. As humans with large prefrontal cortexes, we understand these things; we may not like them, but we live with them and adapt. But what do our pets think? How do our pets react to novel things they don't understand?

All mammals, including our pets (and us) are equipped with a survival technique called "fight or flight." This is why Fido or Fluffy hides under the

bed or in the tub, refuses to move, hisses or growls, scratches or bites when confronted with a sound, thing or other cause, which 1) they have never encountered before and 2) don't have the self-confidence needed to tell them "I survived that...so I can survive this."

Socialization is the process through which we, with positive rewards, introduce our pet to the "two-legged world" in which they are going to live for the rest

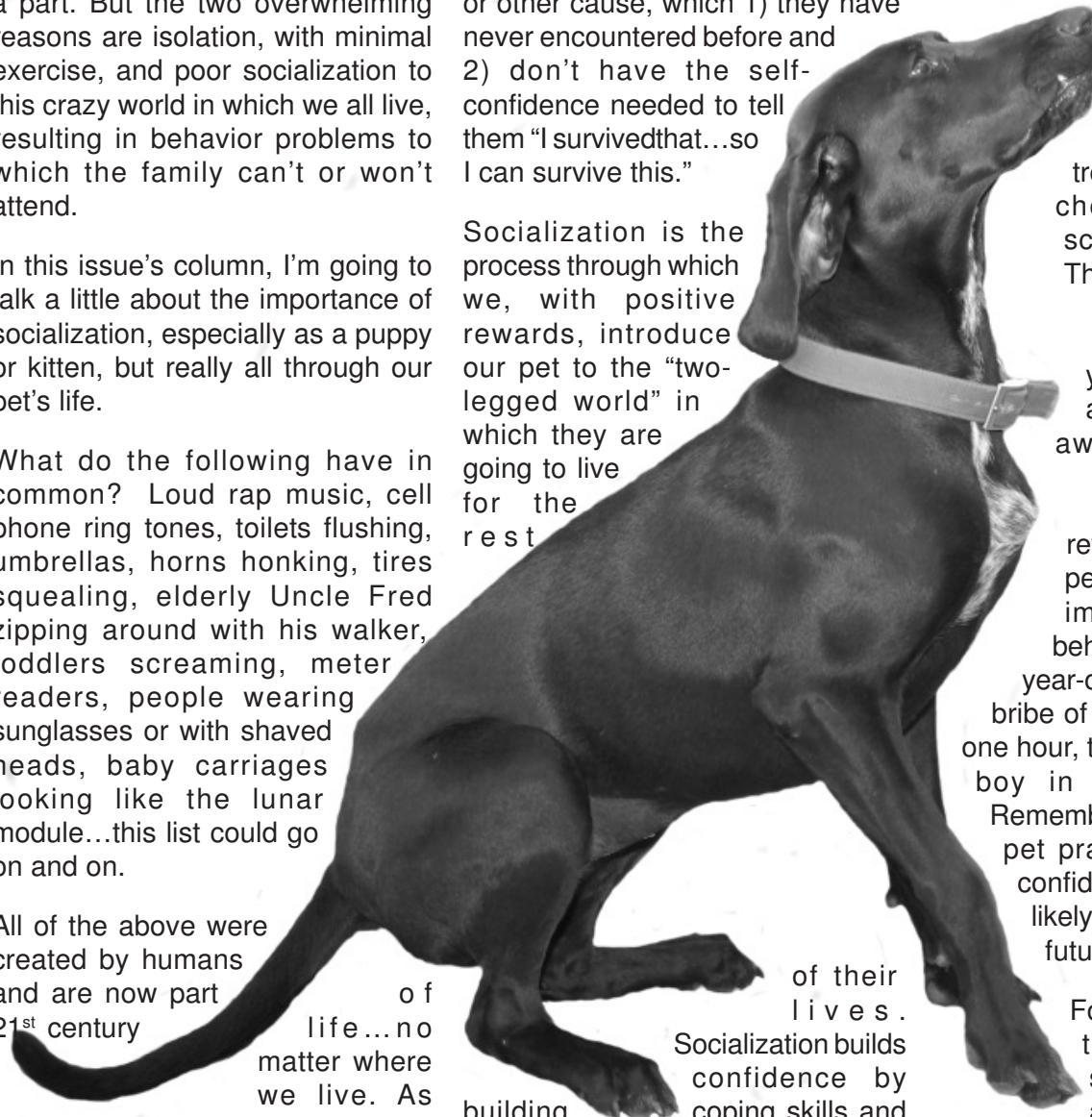
of their lives. Socialization builds confidence by building coping skills and creating both brain and muscle memories, for future encounters with like, or similar, "things".

Socialization is easiest when our pets are young (younger than five months), but environmental conditioning, habituation and desensitizing can occur anytime during life.

How do we make Fluffy and Fido more comfortable, living in our world? By positively introducing them to new experiences and rewarding their calm reactions. Rewards include high value treats (pieces of chicken, cheese, tuna) or ear scratching and petting. The key is remembering to reward **ONLY THE CALM BEHAVIOR**. If your pet starts acting agitated, move her away until she calms, reward that behavior, then move her closer, rewarding calmness. Our pets link the reward to the immediately preceding behavior; unlike your eight year-old son, who can link the bribe of a hot fudge sundae in one hour, to behaving like a choir boy in the grocery NOW. Remember, the more often your pet practices her calm and confident behavior, the more likely she is to exhibit it in the future.

For more information on the importance of socialization and additional socialization techniques, please contact the Humane Society of South Central Michigan. Also, we have many wonderful, professional and positive trainers in our area who can help you create the pet you want.

Lois Phelps is the behaviorist at HSSCM. She will be teaching a puppy kindergarten class at the agency's new educational center in the fall.



Focus On: *Volunteering!*

21 YEARS IN THE MAKING

“ The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their environment .

-Rachel Carlson, from *Silent Spring*, 1962

The construction of the Humane Society on Watkins Road was completed in 1988, 21 years ago. The original property was set on 65 acres of wide open corn field and there was little else; it was a huge change from the old facility on Edison Street.

With each passing year, the natural plant life and vegetation grew up around the building. Various trees, wild roses, evergreens, and tall grasses set their foundation here and created a beautiful natural environment for the local wildlife, as well as providing enrichment for our own animals to enjoy and explore.

In effort to add a friendly, welcoming feeling for Humane Society guests, trees were planted lining the driveway, a memorial brick path was conceived and created, then lined with beautiful lilies and shrubs. The entrance of the Humane Society was thoughtfully landscaped through the gift of a generous donor, with a variety of common and unique perennials, shrubs, grasses, and

trees that hug the front of the building. If you explore the grounds a little more you discover many lesser-known treasures. On the south side of the property behind one of our pens is a memorial paw garden on a hillside.

and the landscaping. Additions are being made to the building to bring it up to date with all the community's 21st century needs. This includes an entirely new addition to the south side of the building and appropriate landscaping to provide adequate shade over the new outdoor kennels.

The present Humane Society facility and its surrounding property is both a product of the constant efforts of volunteers and staff members. This year's United Way Day of Caring volunteers worked diligently to help improve the landscaping around the facility.

We are so

thankful for the support of the community!



On the northwest side of the property is the entrance to our walking trail, a more recent addition to the landscape. The trail chisels its way through the natural landscape. Additions were made this year to the trail to add some resting and reflection areas as well as some unique plants and trees to add character. This was done with the help of many thoughtful, hardworking volunteers during the HandsOn Battle Creek's Community Barnraising project in June of 2009.

Presently the physical structure of the Humane Society is undergoing many changes, both to the facility

HSSCM Calendars

The Humane Society of South Central Michigan will be selling 2010 calendars, featuring the work of photographer Ray Closson, highlighting the animals of the shelter. All proceeds will go to providing daily care for the animals housed at the shelter.

Calendars will be sold at the fundraising event Antiques for the Animals and in the agency's gift shop at the shelter. Calendars retail for \$14.99 each.

No Such Thing as a Free Kitten

You see the signs everywhere, handwritten on cardboard, stuck on telephone poles or at the end of driveways: FREE KITTENS. It sounds like such a great deal! The love of an animal, bringing home a family pet, at no cost at all.

We get many people who stop out at the Humane Society, and



wonder why our kittens aren't free. In fact, our kitten adoption fee is \$100. Why, they ask, would anyone pay that much for a kitten when they can get a FREE KITTEN today? The truth is, there is really no such thing as a free kitten.

Cats and kittens at the Humane Society are FIV/Felv tested, dewormed, treated for fleas/ear mites, fully vaccinated, spayed or neutered and microchipped before they are available for adoption.

Veterinarian costs vary, but we wanted to get an idea of the cost of a free kitten. A local veterinarian did some research, and provided us an average of costs in our community:

FIV/Feline Leukemia testing: \$35-\$40

Office visit with 1st feline distemper booster: \$25-\$35

Deworming: \$10-\$15

Ear mite medication: \$15-\$25

Flea medication \$15

Castration/Spay: \$75-\$125

Office visit with 2nd feline distemper booster: \$25-\$35

Rabies vaccine: \$25-\$30

Microchipping: \$36

The total cost of a free kitten, on average, is actually \$261 - \$356!

There are so many reasons to adopt a kitten from the Humane Society. In addition to coming already set with all their basic health care needs, all animals receive a free health exam with a local participating veterinarian, an adopter kit which includes a bag of cat food, coupons for cat supplies to set up your new friend in your home, and informational DVDs on training. Plus, you get the good feeling that comes with providing a home to an animal in need, in turn creating more space at the shelter to bring in more homeless animals. Each animal adopted out creates an opportunity for another to come in off the street, to be warm, to receive regular meals and to receive affection. Adopt a shelter pet today!

Upcoming Events

October

7 - Antiques for the Animals, Southern Exposure. Tickets are \$50 each, and include an antique appraisal, a drink ticket and gourmet hors d'oeuvres. To purchase tickets or for more information, call 963.1796 ext. 19.

17 - Macy's Shop for a Cause. The purchase of a \$5 shopping pass for the event provides 10-20 percent off most purchases and 25 percent off a single purchase, and all proceeds go to the Humane Society. Passes can be purchased at the Humane

Society at 2500 Watkins Road.

17 - Microchip clinic, Family Farm and Home, Urbandale

31 - Log Cabin Animal Hospital microchip clinic.

November

Battle Creek Holiday Parade

December

18 - Holiday Open House event, 5:00 to 7:00pm.

Did You Know?

The Humane Society can microchip your dog or cat for only \$25, no appointment necessary. You may think that your pet is protected from getting lost. But accidents happen, and some things – like natural disasters – are out of your control. In fact, one in three pets will become lost during their lifetime. According to the American Humane Association, only about 17 percent of lost dogs and 2 percent of lost cats ever find their way back to their original owners. Chip your pet today!

Special Thanks...

to Kazumi Suzuki, for her patience and love that she spends with the animals at the Humane Society. Kazumi visits the shelter every week to socialize the dogs and cats. The animals have a better chance at remaining in their forever home because of her help!

to Charlie Caldwell for all his hard work and love spent on Buddy, our long-term tenant, which absolutely contributed to Buddy finding his forever home.

to John Bammer, and to Ron Smith from US Lumber, for their knowledge

and support during our bidding and new construction process. Your hard work will benefit the animals for years to come.

to all the individuals who volunteered during our annual Pencil Sale: Mary Anne Watson, Kristi Debban, Kelsey Darling, Elaine Kovach, Wendy Dolezal, Amanda Caldwell, Sandy Kehoe, Austin Sawyer and Betsey Briere. This year's Pencil Sale proceeds go to the Bryan Thomas Memorial Fund for Sick and Injured Animals.

to the vets who continue to donate

their time and energy to our Low Income Spay and Neuter Program, including Dr. Jim Barron, Dr. Christy Homik, Dr. Gary Ryder and Dr. Ron VanRyswyk. You make a difference in stopping the pet overpopulation problem in our community!

to all of our volunteers and Shelter Pals, who donate their time and resources to making the Humane Society a better place for the animals. The time you give, in everything from doing the dishes and folding laundry, to cleaning up kennels, pulling weeds and socializing the pets, really helps.

So Hard to Say Goodbye

It is a tragedy that the time we share with our companion animals is so short. Cats and dogs can play such a vital role in our families and our lives, but their life expectancy is far shorter than ours. When adopting an animal, we often know that we will eventually be faced with the heart wrenching fact of letting them go as we go on.

The Humane Society of South Central Michigan offers humane euthanasia and cremation services to the public.

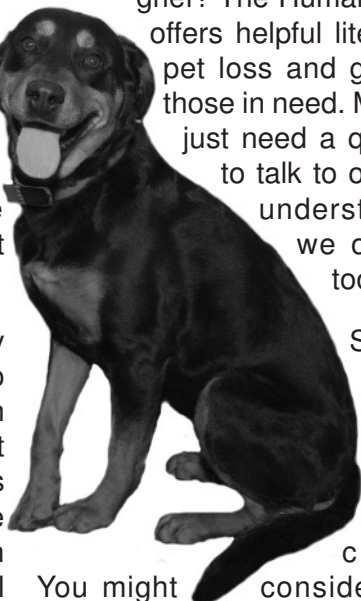
Euthanasia is by appointment only, and the cost is based on the weight of the animal. Pet parents cannot accompany their animal during the process. The remains can be returned for burial at home, or sent out for cremation.

Cremation services are provided by Paws and Remember. There are two options: a mass cremation, or an individual cremation option if the pet parent wishes to receive the ashes back. Ashes are returned in a pine box, but urns are available for an additional fee. Additionally, memorial

items, including memorial jewelry, are also available.

The loss of a companion animal can weigh heavily. Friends and family members may not understand your grief. You may feel alone, but you are not alone. The staff members and volunteers at the Humane Society know too well the loss of beloved pets and may be able to offer you support.

Having difficulty getting through your grief? The Humane Society offers helpful literature on pet loss and grieving to those in need. Maybe you just need a quiet place to talk to others who understand, and we offer that, too.



Sometimes, having a tangible memorial of your pet brings comfort. You might consider putting

together a collage of photos, or write a short story about the special connection you had with your companion animal. The Humane Society offers a selection of urns and other pet memorials, or you can have a brick engraved in your pet's honor. These bricks are then placed in the Humane Society Memorial Path.

Giving another homeless animal a place in your life and home is the ultimate tribute to the memory of your animal friend. While another pet will never replace your lost pet, providing a home for an abandoned animal saves a life.

Not sure if you're ready for another cat or dog? You might consider volunteering at the shelter or fostering an animal in your home. By providing attention and care to another animal, and feeling their appreciation in return, you may wind up healing your broken heart.

For more information on programs and services, contact the Humane Society at 269-963-1796 or visit us online at www.hs-scm.org.

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Adrian Williams - Kennel Technician

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

The Humane Society is always in need of dog, puppy, cat and kitten food without red dye, kitty litter, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, bleach, paper towel, collars, leashes and bedding for the animals.



Humane Society
of South Central Michigan
2500 Watkins Road
Battle Creek, MI 49015