feralfocus
A PUBLICATION OF SPAY AND STAY
FALL 2010

# From Bully to Buddy

*How do caretakers handle a cat that doesn't fit with the colony? Here is the story of a cat who started as "Chester the Bully" and became just plain Chester, a very mellow fellow.*

Chester showed up in our colony of 3 cats early one winter. He was a pushy loner, and no other cat in the colony trusted him. And he trusted no one. He first showed up on the coldest days. When we looked at him through the window of our dining area he left. He was very frightened. He would sneak up to our feeding station and then disappear. Some mornings he would be in our garage at breakfast time, wanting to eat with the other cats.

He started to come around more and more, but was never friendly to the other cats or me. The lone male cat totally hated him and we had several cat fights between them. Chester was an odd guy. Often he was seen and heard walking down our street, loudly talking to himself. We could tell he was incredibly smart.

Over time, Chester moved in and was a regular. But he was still a loner and very pushy. The next fall we trapped him and he had a visit to Spay and Stay. He did well and was declared to be a very healthy, big boy. We waited to see what the hormone drop would do to his personality. He was still not friendly and would push the other cats away to get to the food first. Over the following couple of months his personality changed some. He spent more time in the garage and was always there at breakfast time. Then one day he started rubbing on my ankles, demanding attention. So now he owned me too… his friendliness kept the other cats away from me. He also prevented the resident male from eating. I began to feed the other male on a mat up on the car hood. All the while Chester would talk loudly, rubbing my ankles and demanding scratches from me. As long as he was looking away from me, I was safe.

*Chester happily relaxes on the sofa in his new home.*

And it came to pass that he owned what he wanted to own, when he wanted to own it. No other cat snuggled with him on a cold night, cleaned his face after eating or even walked close to him. It was a sad situation.

*Chester's "homing" cage is ready and waiting for his arrival in the barn office.*

Then a friend of mine with a horse farm near Zion said she would check with their farm manager and see if he wanted to take Chester in as a mouser. Yes!

*(continued on page 3)*

## Upcoming Events

***Feline Groovy in Wauconda***
Murphy's Pub 110 Slocum Lake Rd. at Main St., Wauconda
November 20, 5 PM to 8 PM
50/50 raffle, silent auction, live auction, animal-related gifts, bake sale, door prizes, good conversation and cat stories.

***Holiday Boutique***
Highland Park Presbyterian Church
330 Laurel Ave., Highland Park
December 4, 11 AM to 3 PM
Gifts for men and women, cats and dogs, and children.

# President's Mewsings

My Mewsings for this *Feral Focus* are about thank-yous. I want to thank all of our wonderful donors, volunteers and caretakers. Spay and Stay could not do its work without the many monetary gifts and gifts of time and place made on behalf of our community cats in Lake County. The economic issues faced by all of us these days are impacting our outdoor cat community as well. When we are doing our work to end feline homelessness, we are acknowledging that we care for animals that have been abandoned and left to fend for themselves. Thanks to all for your commitment to our community cats!

This has been a year of transition for Spay and Stay. One of our co-founders, Sandy Kooper, left us for new challenges. Sandy was with Spay and Stay as Executive Director since it's founding in 2002. Sandy and Rebecca Adler formulated the vision for Spay and Stay and their work continues today as the foundation of our mission. We thank Sandy for her efforts on behalf of feral and stray cats in Lake County.

Cynthia Deen has been serving as Program Director and doing an amazing job. She has had the task of developing all of the processes that go along with our new working arrangements with our vets. Cynthia has worked out the kinks and is a lifeline for our cats. This summer, some wonderful volunteers have aided Cynthia. Ardith Pucin has been working the phone lines and our intern for the summer, Svetlana Peykoya, was a huge help at both Wonder Lake and in the office. Sharon Johnson from AHA not only helped manage the Spay Days at the clinic in Wonder Lake but also helped trap and transport many cats to the clinic all summer.

In addition, our community of cats sends a huge head butt to Julie Wheeler and her expanding network, who have found barns and homes for cats who needed to move or needed to find a home this summer. Thanks to all offering a place for our cats to hang out when needed.

Spay and Stay has been working with our vets in a new way. We are spaying and neutering cats during the week, with caretakers dropping cats off and picking them up at the vets' offices. This model allows cats to have the surgery done when they are trapped instead of waiting for one day a month. The vets have available slots that we can use to schedule the cats. This has worked wonderfully well this year and as the model evolves, we have been able to work in more and more cats. This is a year-round model. We began in February, a month earlier than usual and will be working throughout the winter months as cats present themselves to our caretakers. The vets working with Spay and Stay are Dr. Dave Luaces and Dr. Euan Morrison at Care Animal Hospital in Libertyville, Dr. Edin Mehanovic at Wonder Lake Veterinary Clinic in Wonder Lake and Dr. Laurie Swanson at Waukegan Pet Clinic on some Saturday afternoons.

You will read about two new Board members in this issue of *Feral Focus* as well as other exciting news. Our Volunteer Corner is new and we hope to tell you more about our wonderful volunteers in the future. We also have new members on our Project Management Team.

One last change is that Julie Haas, who served as Board President for four and a half years, has finished her term with Spay and Stay's Board of Directors. Julie saw the Organization through many of these transitions and remained on the Board longer that she desired to keep Spay and Stay moving forward. Her leadership was tireless and continues today as a volunteer, caretaker and Mom to Jackie and Vorticity. Julie's ongoing work on behalf of feral and stray cats is incredible and we thank Julie for her commitment.

Elizabeth Fischer, President

*Mama Kylie enjoys her meal as Rascal and Kevin look on. Mama Kylie's last litter all found homes thanks to her caretaker's efforts. Then she was spayed through Spay and Stay, stopping the continuous breeding cycle of homeless kittens.*

*Chester enjoys some loving from Nancy, his original caretaker, in the barn office.*

*(continued from page 1)*

So under the guidance of Spay and Stay, we trapped him again and transported him to the barn office. He spent some time in a large cage getting used to new smells, sounds and farm life. The farm manager took him on as a challenge and managed to tame him enough to rub him down and scratch his tummy and could talk him back into the cage from the confines of the office. Chester always wanted to be the only cat to get all the attention, and he now has it. And he has flourished.

Today Chester is a very happy cat, living with a family of five at the horse farm. He is living with a dog and another little kitten. He has no interest in going outside or even mousing in the barn (a surprise to all). He found a happy, animal friendly home, and they love him. His quick reaction to get mean is long gone, he has mellowed out. I think it's because he no longer has to worry about where his next meal is coming from or if he will have a warm place to sleep or if someone loves him specially. It's an amazing story.

## Collaboration Is the Word

This past year has been a time of meeting, greeting and getting things done. Spay and Stay and its board of directors have worked together with Save-A-Pet, Animal Education and Rescue (AEAR), Alliance for Humane Action (AHA!), Waukegan Animal Control, All For the Love of Cats, Lake County Animal Protection Association, PAWS Chicago, and Lake County Animal Control to return cats to their homes, find homes for misplaced cats, raise funds and save lives. Each group has unique talents and missions, so working together to solve problems has allowed for more effective use of resources.

Through this network it has become apparent that Lake County and the surrounding area are filled with compassionate people who care for animals. Margaret Mead got it right when she said "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

*Chester brings joy to a member of his new family.*

## Pre-vet Student Helps Out

This summer, Spay and Stay was very fortunate to have an exceptional college student, Svetlana Peykova, volunteering at the Wonder Lake Veterinary Clinic spay days and in the Grayslake office working with Cynthia Deen. Svetlana, a resident of Antioch, is starting her sophomore year at the University of Illinois this fall. She is a pre-veterinary student who observed and assisted Dr. Mehanovic and Dr. Donna with surgeries, cleaned ears, chased fleas, and administered Revolution to many cats. She was also a whiz with data entry, filing, and tracking documents at the Spay and Stay office. Svetlana was a valuable asset this summer with her "can do" attitude toward all projects put before her. We wish her well in the coming school year and hope to see her again next summer.

# Headbutts and Purrs

***Thank you to all our very generous donors. Your support keeps Spay and Stay running!***

*The following list contains donations received from June 1, 2009 through August 15, 2010. We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions that may have occurred.*

**A Place for Purring**

**Honoring special people and animals**

In Memory of Cornelia from April Nemrava
In Memory of Boots from Muriel Provenzano
In Memory of Lynn Schapals from Jean Studebaker
In Memory of Charney from Ingrid and Don Haugh
In Memory of Sylvester Harris from Lynne Faulhaber
In Memory of Girly from Paul Oksnee and Lana Keroson
In Memory of Winifred from Richard Balz
In Memory of Willie from Dick Weatherford
In Memory of Little Lucy from Tina Santopoalo
In Memory of Brave Boy and Gray Babes from DiJon Moerke
In Memory of All Our Furry Friends Who Have Crossed the Rainbow Bridge from Faith Dicke
In Memory of Luna and in Honor of Cynthia Deen from Elizabeth Fischer

In Honor of Jennifer and Kevin Hurley from Gretchen Gabriel
In Honor of Lisa Fischbach from DeSha and John Kalmar
In Honor of Jill Hancock from Ruth Olfe
In Honor of Ruth Olfe from Barb Petersen
In Honor of Cindy Menke from Dick and Laura Menke
In Honor of Baby Brite from Diane Haubrich
In Honor of Anthony Vastag from Dorothy Vastag
In Honor of Alex, Dana, Jamie, Charquie, and Orangy from Anne Edwards
In Honor of Julie Haas for her years of service to Spay and Stay from the Board of Directors
In Honor of Elizabeth Fischer from David Sandford and Lydia Tien
In Honor of Donna Fedeli from Kelly Lacey

**Our Special Grantors**

DAS Fund for the Preservation of Feline Animal Life
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# Thank you!

# Welcome to Our New Board Members

*Spay and Stay would like to welcome its two newest board members, Susie Duttge and Gloria Seger. These two talented women have years of animal rescue experience between them and have already contributed much to our organization.*

**Susie Duttge** is a Medial Exercise Specialist as well as the founder and owner of Fit For Life Rehab and Fitness Clinic, a physical therapy and wellness clinic located in Lake Bluff for 15 years. She is passionate about the plight of homeless animals and has been an active cat trapper, colony caretaker and has fostered needy cats in her Lake Bluff home for many years. When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005, Susie was asked by Best Friends Animal Society to help rescue the abandoned animals in New Orleans and to work triage at the emergency camp. She continued to make six rescue trips to New Orleans over two years. In October 2005, she started the Hurricane Katrina Home Reconstruction Fund to rebuild homes for people whose animals had been rescued but who had no home to take the animals to. In addition to Spay and Stay, Susie sits on the Board of the Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association, which operates athletic programs for physically and visually disabled youth and young adults, including those with permanent injuries from service in the military. She served for six years on the Board of Directors for the Lake Forest Chamber of Commerce and was the Chamber's Treasurer for two years. Susie is a marathon runner, a triathlete, and NAUI-certified scuba diver. Her daughter, Willow, is a successful writer in New York City.

**Gloria Seger** has been a resident of Lake County since 1961. She is retired from Exelon Corp. and brings with her over 25 years of Customer Service Management experience. She has been involved in rescuing and fostering of cats for more than 18 years. Also affiliated with Safe Harbor Humane Society, she volunteers her time on cat adoption days through the PetsMart Gurnee program and has done work for Save-A-Pet in Grayslake and the Collier County Humane Society in Naples, Florida.

*Kevin lounges in the grass in his caretaker's yard.*

# Hurray for Volunteers!

Kudos go to several volunteers who have stepped up to distribute yellow door hangers in and around their communities. Linda Calhoun, Joe Rotman, Diane DiVagno, Nancy DeSecki, Ardith Pucin, Lisa Fischbach, Jeanne Norkus, Christa Dam, Renee Twombly, Dorothy Vastag, Amy Pickering, and Joan Sayre have spread our door hangers far and wide in the county. This has been a great way to inform people and prevent more kittens from being born. The areas of Barrington, Lake Zurich, North Chicago, Grayslake and Libertyville still need a reliable person to spread the word. Call Julie at 847-624-8432 for information so your town can step up to sterilize more cats.

Speaking of volunteers, Lenny Szulc has been the trap and transport king in his work with a large colony in Antioch. He and Sharon Johnson of AHA! have been instrumental in getting over 50 cats to Wonder Lake Veterinary Clinic for surgery. Lenny is also an experienced fisherman who can talk at length about muskies and other game fish. Thank you, Lenny and Sharon, for your unfailing efforts to stop the littering.

# AHA! Resale Shop Opens

If you love animals and want to help, stop in to the Alliance for Humane Action (AHA!) Resale Shop. It is located in Linden Plaza in Lindenhurst at 2106 E. Grand Ave. The shop is currently accepting gently used items daily during business hours.

The store is Open Mon-Fri (10 am-7 pm), Sat (9 am-5 pm), and Sun (12-5 pm). Proceeds benefit their low-cost spay neuter program for cats, dogs, and bunnies. People need the help now more than ever to stop unwanted litters. If you need additional information, please call Sharon at 312-246-0965 or visit ahaworks.org.

*Julie Wheeler, Dr. Dave Luaces, Elizabeth Fischer and Cynthia Deen show off the new Spay and Stay banner at a recent caretaker meeting.*

## High Visibility

Spay and Stay volunteers and our new banner have been sighted around the county this year. They were in Prairie View fundraising at a rummage sale, in Lindenhurst for the Classic Car Show, at PETCO Highland Park, Vernon Hills and Lake Zurich for the National Spay/Neuter Drive, at the Save-A-Pet reunion in Grayslake, in Round Lake Heights at the 50th anniversary celebration, at Park City's city council meeting and in Mundelein for the June caretaker meeting.

## PetSmart Grant Provides Free Spay and Neuter Program in Round Lake Heights

A July 2010 grant from PetSmart Charities will allow every stray/free-roaming cat in Round Lake Heights to be sterilized at no cost to the residents. This targeted grant was received after close collaboration between Spay and Stay and Round Lake Heights' administration, police and public works department.

Over 20 cats and caretakers to date have benefitted from these free services. Bryan Kortis, PetSmart grant consultant, said that Spay and Stay's success in Lake County is due to its ongoing ability to use its resources to aid more cats and communities. The Free Spay/Neuter program can help to make Round Lake Heights a feral free zone and stand as a model to other communities to use Trap-Neuter-Return instead of eradication of colonies.

*Buttercup takes a sunbath.*

# I want to end feline homelessness!

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