



HUMANE SOCIETY OF SCHUYLER COUNTY

Racehorse Retirement Program

Winter 2003

In the highly speculative sport of horseracing, very few equines become stars. Thousands of horses become unwanted liabilities if they breakdown or fail to perform. What happens to these horses that lack the star quality to make money at the track? The vast majority are unloaded at horse auctions, and many, if not most, end up at a slaughterhouse.

These horses are not “bad apples”, mean or untrainable. They just don’t happen to run fast. Many have suffered serious injuries, such as chip fractures and bowed tendons, and just need time to recover. More often than not, these injuries end their racing career. These are purebred, registered Thoroughbreds with potential to perform in any number of horse sports, or to be yours or your son or daughter’s best buddy.

In November 2002, the Humane Society of Schuyler County started a Racehorse Retirement Program to provide a lifetime haven to some of these equine athletes when they had nowhere else to go. Dr. Margaret Ohlinger, the newly appointed examining veterinarian at Fingerlakes Racetrack in Farmington, recognized the need for such a program and presented the idea of horse rescue to the Board of Directors. She received overwhelming approval. The majority of the horse trainers are equally tormented by the problem of what to do with these horses. Many have raised them from young stock and do not relish the thought of sending them through an auction with an uncertain outcome.

At the end of last year, through our efforts we provided a well-deserved humane retirement for eleven horses. So far this year, nine horses have been adopted and we have ten in foster homes, with fifteen more on a waiting list to move from the track. Some are champions whose distinguished careers could not protect them from a last

trip to a slaughterhouse. Others are just hard knocking racehorses that did their best. So far, thirteen families have opened their doors to give these equines a second chance. Our hopes for the future include continued efforts to rescue horses in need, with possible placement in therapeutic riding programs, adolescent treatment programs and summer camp riding programs. In order to accomplish our goals we need community support with donations of hay and grain, transportation and foster homes.

We would like to thank our current foster homes being provided by Linda Edinger, Dr. Margaret Ohlinger, Dr. Steve and Deb Renier of Trumansburg and Carol and Bernie Cook of Newfield. Transportation has been provided by Linda Edinger, Debbie Evans, Beth Bowen, Debbie Carpenter and Eric Kesson. Without these volunteers, such a program as this could not exist.

If interested in adopting one of these animals, please call Dr. Margaret Ohlinger at 387-5104 or Carol Cook at 564-9375 before 9:00 in the evenings. There is a \$500 adoption fee and potential homes have to pass inspection before a horse will be placed.



Humane Society Partners with Shelter Outreach Services to provide Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Services



Dr. Leslie Appel performing surgery at one of the low-income clinics being held twice a month at Finger-

If interested in Spay/Neuter certificates, please call 546-7710 and leave your name and address. An application will be sent to you.

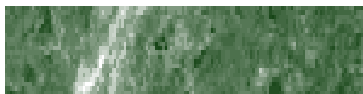
Over the past two and a half years the Humane Societies in Schuyler, Tompkins and Cortland Counties have worked closely with Cornell University to address dog and cat over population by holding monthly spay/neuter clinics. In that time, we spayed and neutered 2332 animals for low income families and for those families with large barn and feral cat populations.

Dr. Leslie Appel and Sue Wilczewski, Licensed Veterinary Technician, were instrumental in making these clinics possible. In June the two women left their respective positions at Cornell to work directly with area shelters and Humane Societies providing in-county services for the companion pets of income-eligible residents.

Since July 1, Shelter Outreach

Services (SOS) has spayed and neutered 260 dogs and cats for Schuyler County residents. Clinics are held the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at Fingerlakes Animal Hospital in Odessa . Dr. Frank Fielder has generously donated the use of his facilities in support of this effort. The clinics are organized and staffed by Humane Society volunteers. For more information about these clinics, or to volunteer, please contact Georgie Taylor at 594-3639.

For those that may not qualify for a low income clinic, the Humane Society also continues to offer financial assistance in the form of spay/neuter certificates redeemable toward these services at most local veterinarians. These certificates are funded by donations and grants.



Spike's Legacy—May it Continue

Suzie Q, Tuffy, Joey, Tiffany, Nuisance, Sophie, Romeo and Juliet, Skitterbug, Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum, The Bobbsey Twins, Moxie, Radar, Mist, Mrs. Murphy. These are but a few of the shy, frightened feral or stray kittens that Spike took under his wing and provided babysitting services for. Spike, a robust (to put it mildly) black and white “tuxedo” cat was a feral cat himself. When I first moved into my home in Mecklenburg, it was obvious to me (and my cats) that we had moved into Spike’s territory. Rangy and wary, he would run at the first hint of the latch on my door, and took every opportunity to prove his dominance over my resident cats. The day he didn’t run I knew

something was wrong. A bad abscess on his ear required medical attention, and he was installed in my bathroom to ensure close proximity for abscess flushing and daily medication. The rest, as they say, is history. Spike became, over time, a large, mellow couch potato. As if to make up for years out in the cold, he lived next to the woodstove all winter. In fact, he would take up his position at the sound of papers being crumpled and kindling being split, waiting for “the glow”.

Much as some humans have a penchant for nurturing the aged or sick, Spike had a penchant for nurturing timid or frightened kittens or cats. I was

not aware of this until I started “cleaning up” a barn down the road from me, spaying and neutering the resident 20+ cats, some feral, some drop-offs. Many of these cats would find their way to my house and were subsequently adopted by me. It is very likely that Spike was born at this barn. It was obvious that with the barn cat population unchecked, not only was the barn going to be continually overrun with cats, but I would be too. When I realized the barn owner could only offer stale bread to a new litter of kittens, I trapped the kittens and the mama and took them home with me. They were installed in the bathroom much as Spike was years ago. There were

six kittens, all malnourished, plus a very young mother cat, a rack of bones using every ounce of energy trying to nurse her kittens. After two or three weeks of good nutrition and a medical check-up for all, I began letting the kittens out of the bathroom. This is when Spike kicked into high gear. He would meet them at the door and chaperone them into the living room. He would groom them and allow them to play king-of-the-hill on his back. He would wrestle with them and when he had had enough, he would push them between his back legs and gently squash them until they simmered down. When everyone decided it was nap-time, there would be a heap of kittens on and around Spike. At feeding time, back in the bathroom with mama cat, he would sit and watch. Mama cat, feral and wary, rarely came out from under an antique commode, but she warmed up to Spike months before she warmed up to me. They became pals and when she started making forays away from the safety of the bathroom, she was rarely far from Spike.

A couple of litters later, after successfully placing a number of well-socialized youngsters in good homes, I caught the last intact female at the barn. I had been trying to trap her for months because I wanted to have her spayed at the free spay/neuter clinics sponsored by the HSSC at Cornell. She was approximately 8 months old and had lost her first litter. While under anesthesia, it was discovered that her breastbone had been broken and had healed in such a crooked way that there was a hole in it. It was amazing to

realize that at such a young age she had survived this trauma. Without hesitation I brought her home. Instead of sequestering her in the bathroom, I placed her in a crate where she could see me and the other cats, but be safe and secure in her crate. For the most part, my cats ignored her. It was Spike that took up residence outside her crate. Rarely at first, but eventually with more regularity, the new kitty, dubbed "Skitterbug", would come to the front of the crate and rub against the bars. Spike would rub back. Over time, noses were sniffed, and Skitters moved to the front of the crate more often. One day while I was putting Skitterbug's food in the crate, Spike ambled in and sat just inside the door. I left him there and closed the door. It took a long time, but eventually Spike practically lived in the crate with Skitterbug. They groomed each other and ate together and slept together. When Skitters was finally liberated into the house, she was usually close to Spike. When something scared her (and everything did) she would run over to Spike and butt him under the chin. Skitterbug is still uneasy at times, but she has come a long way since being trapped over a year ago. Undoubtedly, without Spike in the picture, her progress would have been much slower.

These are just two examples of litters and feral cats that Spike has taken under his wing in the past years. There were many more. Some are still with me (mama cat, now named Juliet, is still here) but most have been placed in loving, forever homes. Fostering kittens as well as adult cats is an important part in the development of these animals that would otherwise



Spike, in Holiday gear, getting toasty by the fire.

become feral if left in a "wild" setting such as a barn. Kittens are much easier to socialize; adult feral cats can take months or years to gain our trust. Spike spent his first year with me behind my couch! Juliet took over a year to sit on the couch with me, and almost two years to become a bona-fide lap cat, which is now undisputed! Skitterbug is improving daily, but is still not totally trusting. Foster homes are always needed to help socialize these animals, especially kittens, to give them the opportunity to become the special pet they all are capable of being. The younger a feral kitten is, the easier they are to socialize.

Spike passed away this past August from complications due to a heart condition. His absence is felt everyday, and his fostering talents are dearly missed, but you don't need a cat like Spike to be a good foster parent. You need patience and understanding, and a desire to raise the healthiest best-adjusted kitties you can. Please help carry on the Spike legacy and consider fostering. It does make a difference.



Happy Endings do Happen at the County Dog Shelter

Kate Mizzoni currently takes care of feeding and caring for the dogs at the County run shelter on Van Zandt road. She has made an enormous difference in the quality of life for these shelter dogs. Fewer and fewer dogs are having to be euthanized because she and another foster parent, Jodi Smith, work quickly to get those dogs out into foster homes or into adoptive homes. She has had as many as five at a time in her own home until permanent adoptive homes can be found. She shares a couple of Happy Endings stories from the shelter:

Annie is a pure bred Coonhound who came into the shelter with a growth on her leg. She had just had puppies not too long before coming into the shelter, and always sat in the corner of her kennel looking very sad. I spent days sitting with her and taking her in the office with me. She and I became great friends quickly. I took her home with me after her 5 days of remaining 'unclaimed' at the shelter were up. She fit in like she had always lived with us. A few weeks prior to this, a man had come in looking for a small calm dog. I called him after I had spent enough time with Annie to know she was the "one" he had been looking for. He came to meet her and adopted her. She is now a therapy dog at the Victorian House in Painted Post. She brings so much love to the people who live there and they enjoy her everyday. I was able to visit with her a little over a week ago and she greeted me with a kiss and a paw shake!

Another special Coonhound was Hank. He came to us back in February of 2003. He was so afraid that it took days of me sitting inside his kennel for him to finally come outside to sit with me. I fell in love with him the day I met him! He was going to be put to sleep one day due to the shelter being so full. I wasn't going to let that happen! Not to Hank! I took him home. He loved everybody and he and I had a very strong bond. I fostered him for 4 months thinking I would always have him. I was going through emails one night and saw that I had one for an adoption. My heart sank when I saw Hank's name. I met with the people, trying to find something wrong with them so I could tell them NO! There was nothing wrong. They were so good for him. He now lives with his new parents and a cat. His family sends me pictures and updates all the time. He is a happy boy. Looking back, he could have been put to sleep. Now he has a great home with all the love in the world!

**Saving just one dog won't change the world,
but it surely will change the world for that one dog...
Please help by becoming a foster parent!**

Good News for Dogs in New York State

The State of New York recently signed into law an amendment to the Ag and Markets Law that requires appropriate shelter for dogs left outside in inclement weather and provides standards for compliance. Any dog left outdoors must have ready access to some form of shelter that will offer protection from inclement weather conditions that could adversely affect the health of the dog, including, but not limited to, ice, sleet, snow, rain, wind or extreme heat and cold. Appropriate shelter means a waterproof, adequately insulated shelter of sufficient size that the dog can turn around and lay down comfortably. Owners that do not comply can be fined no less than \$50 and no more than \$100 for the first offense. For a second offense, the fine is no less than \$100 and no more than \$250. Each day that an owner fails to correct the deficiency can count as a separate offense. **Please provide adequate shelter for any animal in your care.**



Annual Rabies Clinic Fundraiser a Success

The Humane Society held its annual fall rabies clinic on October 11, at the P&C in Watkins Glen. Once again, we'd like to thank the manager of the P&C, Bill Reese, for allowing us to set up our clinic in front of his store. Our many volunteers pulled together to vaccinate a total of 257 companion animals against rabies - all in four hours! 128 cats and 129 dogs were vaccinated for Schuyler County residents. This annual fundraiser netted \$450 for the Humane Society. These monies will be used to help the Kit Cat Connection, the Humane Society's cat adoption program, purchase cat food, kitty litter, and pay for medical costs and spaying and neutering of the cats in the program.

Please remember, rabies vaccinations are mandatory for a reason. If you are bitten by an unvaccinated animal there are post-exposure vaccinations you can receive to prevent the disease, but it may be too late to help your pet. If you do not have proof of a rabies vaccination, your pet can be ordered destroyed in order to test for rabies. Don't let this happen to your pet for want of a simple, FREE vaccination. Recently, a 16-year old pet cat had to be destroyed for this very reason. The cat had never been out of the house, and the children decided to take it out on the back porch. A dog came through the yard, the cat got scared and tried to run, the kids tried to hold on to it, and the cat bit one of the kids. The cat was destroyed for rabies testing for lack of a rabies vaccination. The cat tested negative. Don't let this kind of trauma happen to your kids and family. Take rabies vaccinations SERIOUSLY.

The Humane Society would like to thank all the Schuyler County residents who brought their pets to our rabies clinic this year! The next rabies clinics will be offered by the county health department in May 2004.

The Second Annual HSSC Rummage Sale

Memorial Day weekend brought lots of rain to the Southern Tier...and lots of shoppers for the second annual Humane Society Rummage sale. This year's sale was bigger and better than the last. Hard working volunteers filled the Watkins Glen Community Center with treasures for everyone thanks to the generous donations of gently used merchandise from our members and friends. Carol Bower Catering provided coffee service for the shoppers and staff and Carl's Rent-All helped us promote the event.

We realized almost \$3200 in profit designated for the building fund.

The 4th Annual HSSC Golf Tournament

This year's Humane Society Golf tournament was a huge success with a record number of teams and a host of winners in a variety of categories. Many local businesses offered both generous sponsorships and great prizes. Thanks to all the businesses that gave prizes and sponsored holes. John and Ginny Yeager organized the event and once again served a fabulous dinner to participants. Record proceeds of \$1984 helped to fund the Kit Cat Connection Adoption Program.

Looking for that Perfect Pal to Adopt?

Visit www.petfinder.com, look for our colored adoption poster around town, visit the County dog shelter or Lakes's End Pet store.



A Few Facts About Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

Blackie has finally found a home. For anyone who has been in Lake's End Pet Store in the last year and made his acquaintance, this will be welcome news.

Blackie is a huge, black FIV positive cat that had endeared himself to many of the customers coming into the store. Try as we might, for almost a year we were unable to find a forever home for this very special boy in Schuyler County. So, in September, Ginny and John Yeager transported Blackie to CatTail Farms in Perry, Michigan, a sanctuary for FIV and feline leukemia positive cats. We're still hopeful that he'll be adopted from there, but if he isn't, we

know he'll be happy and well cared for in his new home.

Perhaps, by informing more people about the prognosis and care of an FIV positive cat we can find more homes for friends like Blackie. So, a few words about the latest thinking about FIV.

To diagnose FIV, most veterinary hospitals run an in-house test called an ELISA, which can, on occasion, give a false positive reading. In the event of a positive result, it is recommended to have the cat's test result confirmed by a Western Blot test.

And, unfortunately, there is still some misconception about FIV, even among people who consider themselves animal lovers. Some veterinarians are still not well educated about FIV since the virus was only discovered 15 years ago.

FIV is not easily spread. It is

transmitted almost exclusively through serious, penetrating bite wounds. When introduced properly into a household with cat-friendly cats, FIV-positive cats can live safely with FIV-negative felines.

It has been estimated that the majority of FIV positive cats never become ill and generally don't die from the virus. Experience indicates that FIV positive cats are more likely to lose their lives because they have tested positive and have been relinquished to a shelter, from which no one is willing to adopt them.

For more about testing for FIV/FeLV, the American Association of Feline Practitioners Academy of Feline Medicine offers "Recommendations for Feline Retrovirus Testing" available at: <http://www.aafponline.org>.

Kit Cat Connection Update

Since its beginning in August 2002, only a year ago, the Kit Cat Connection has placed over 75 cats and kittens into new homes. Not bad!! Because we have yet to locate a permanent building, the Kit Cat Connection houses our feline friends at Lake's End Pet Shop, at Neils Miller's sanctuary and in foster homes throughout the county.

The foster program enables our feline friends to live in a family setting while they await their forever homes. It also helps us to determine the best fit for adoption.

But, there's still more work to be done. With over twenty cats and kittens currently in the program and a long waiting list, we are still in need of both foster and permanent homes. We've also experienced some large, unexpected medical bills, so any donations specific to this effort would be greatly appreciated.

We held three off-site adoption days at Wal-Mart. These events have given both the Humane Society and the program greater exposure and helped to find 12 of our "Kit Cats" new homes.

If you are interested in adopting a cat or kitten or becoming a foster family visit Lake's End Pet Shop or contact Virginia Yeager at 546-7710.

Feral Cats, Stray Cats, Abandoned Cats!

What Can We Do?



Page 7

Ask different animal organizations about how many feral cats roam the streets of the United States, and you'll get different answers. Although no one is entirely sure how many feral cats there are, the consensus is "lots." Here in Schuyler County, numbers of feral cats are surely high. By definition, a feral cat is an animal that is too poorly socialized to be handled and who cannot be placed into a typical home as a pet. An abandoned cat is a free-roaming cat that may be tame but does not currently have an owner. A stray cat is a currently or recently owned cat that may be lost; usually well socialized but may become wary over time. Kittens born to abandoned and stray cats may become feral. Research indicates that about 20% of cats in feral populations are previously owned cats that went astray, and another 15-20% are cats that were abandoned as kittens by their owners. The cost of spay surgery and lack of knowledge about cat reproduction are cited as major factors in these unwanted, abandoned litters.

Without an animal shelter set up to house, care for, and adopt out healthy cats, Schuyler County sees a large number of cats and kittens abandoned by residents who feel they have little recourse. Thus, the large number of free-roaming cats in the county become a people problem, a

problem created in large part by the people themselves due to lack of knowledge and limited resources to improve the situation.

Amid the swell of emotional issues surrounding these cat populations, there are some innovative ideas and a number of people that are working to stem the tide of feral cats. To stabilize and ultimately reduce the feral cat population, many animal and governmental organizations are turning to trap, neuter and return (TNR), a method of managing cat colonies that involves trapping the animals, spaying or neutering them, vaccinating them (ideally) and returning them to where they were found. The emphasis is on the "R" for "return." The cats are not simply released anywhere in the wild; they are returned to the colony they came from. Fundamental to the success of TNR is continued care of the feral cats by colony caretakers, who feed them and monitor their health. TNR offers a morally acceptable alternative to killing healthy animals and helps ease or erase entirely the problems for neighbors who object to the spraying, howling and fighting of sexually intact cats. The benefits of TNR to the cats are many. Neutering males decreases fighting, thus male cats are healthier with fewer bite wounds and abscesses. Spaying females elimi-

nates breeding, so females aren't constantly stressed by being pregnant or nursing a litter. Overall there is less stress in the colony with overall improvement in health. The cats gain weight and improve in body condition and coat quality. Perhaps most important, the colony experiences zero population growth!

The Humane Society of Schuyler County welcomes feral cats at our spay/neuter clinics. We have already sterilized and vaccinated a number of barn cat colonies in the county and are actively working on others. The results have been positive for all involved, with the barn owners happy and amazed with the results. Some report that we have "built a better mousetrap" since healthy cats are more likely to be successful at catching prey than unhealthy, stressed cats. We are looking for people to become "feral cat sponsors". Even though our clinic spay/neuter costs are reasonable, they are not free. A farmer faced with a colony of 20+ barn cats, some of which are dropped off in the dark of night, still may not be able to put spay/neuter on the top of his financial priority list. Please consider sponsoring a feral cat spay or neuter surgery! Or sponsor a feral for a friend – it would make a great Christmas gift.

If you would be interested in sponsoring the neuter or spay of a feral cat, please make a donation to:
Humane Society of Schuyler County
PO Box 427, Montour Falls NY 14865
Neuter surgery \$25.00 Spay Surgery \$45.00



**HUMANE SOCIETY OF
SCHUYLER COUNTY**

Humane Society of Schuyler County
PO Box 427
Montour Falls, NY 14865-0427

Phone: 607-546-7710

**Please become a
member of the
Humane Society of
Schuyler County.**



**Property Donations Made to
Humane Society**

We are extremely grateful to have received two donations of land during this last year, which could help us on our way to more effectively managing the population of unwanted dogs and cats in this county.

Mr. Neils Miller, a long time Humane Society member, has donated his home and seven acre property for the location of an eventual 'no kill' shelter for cats. There is currently no facility for stray and unwanted cats in this county. The only

adoption outlet is our Kit Cat Connection program. We have managed to arrange 75 adoptions, but the program is still in it's infancy . Mr. Millers' donation was made because he had the forethought to plan for what would happen to his cat companions in the event of his death. He wanted to make sure there was provision for the care of his pets.

The second donation of land has come from the late Donald Kline in the form of a vacant lot on Third St. in Watkins Glen.

**Memorial Donations have been made to
the Humane Society of Schuyler County
over the past year in memory of the
following people and pets:**

Joan Letson
Alice Blatchley

Forest Lambfry	Cat Companion of Diana Kreutzer Cat Companion of Ruth and Charles Young
Patsy Cat Paolo	Companion of Roberta Schaffer Cat Companion of Jim LaRocca
Redken Comet	Dog Companion of Judy Zeigler Cat Companion of Barbara Anderson
Spike Shamrock	Cat Companion of Pixie Senesac Dog Companion of Pat Gallaway