

And the winner is . . .

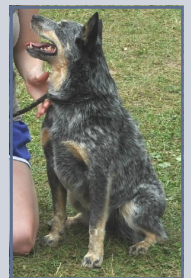
**S**afe Haven's Eighth Annual Ugly Dog Contest at the Ionia Free Fair in July was fun, colorful, and, as always, tremendously entertaining. Prize packages were awarded for Best Dressed, Best Kisser, Most Talented, Looks Most Like Owner, and, of course, Ugliest Dog. Because all the contestants were so great and deserved prizes, the judges couldn't have had a tougher time choosing winners. All contestants did receive tennis balls and treats, if interested.

The winners of the contests were: 1) Nora, an Australian cattle dog owned by Erin Therrian of Lyons, won "most talented";

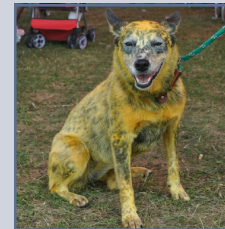
2) Therrian's other dog, Sammie, won "best dressed" with a Chester Cheetah dye job; 3) Chiquita, a Chinese crested dog, won "best kisser"; 4) Caillou, another Chinese crested, won "looks most like owner" by resembling owner Cindy Geiger's outfit and hair style; and 5) last, but certainly not least, Fugly, a Chinese crested, Boston terrier and Shih Tzu mix won the "ugliest dog" title.



# Caillou



## Nora



**Sammie**



## Fugly



## Chiquita

## And then there were none

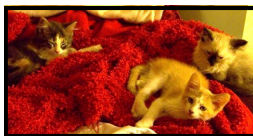
Four Safe Haven kitty siblings were waiting for their forever homes at our PetSmart adoption event. One was adopted, and that left three. Two more were adopted together, and that left one litter mate all alone.

Jake and Andrea had driven over 100 miles from Pinckney to Grand Rapids to adopt two kittens that day. After choosing two of the remaining siblings and returning home with the babies,

they kept thinking about the one they left behind. They called to see if the lone kitty was still there. Learning that she was, they made arrangements to drive back to Grand Rapids to adopt the remaining sibling.

Andrea sent an email to us, which said: "Hi, we adopted Gracie, Allie and Zoie (formerly Reva, Rikki, and Bekka)! We

have enjoyed them so much! Our kids love them so much, and our littlest gives them kisses and picks them up – she just adores them all!



Gracie, Allie and Zoie



### Andrea relaxes with Gracie, Allie, and Zoie

They make a great addition to our family! We look forward to watching them grow up and making great ever-lasting memories for our family and yours!"



## Before that stray gets pregnant . . .

(A plea from your local animal shelter and humane society)

It's July at the animal shelter and the phone rings for what seems like the 52<sup>nd</sup> time – and it's only mid afternoon. The caller has a stray cat who showed up several months ago, and the caller fed her. Now the cat has babies – more kittens who don't have a home and probably never will.

Why didn't this caller call the shelter when the cat first showed up, or within a few days? Why didn't the caller bring the cat to the shelter *before* she got pregnant, *before* there were more little lives to fill another cage, more little lives whose odds of ever finding a home are against them? These thoughts (and more) run through the shelter manager's head.

She sets aside her frustration and tells the caller to bring them in. When they arrive, the kittens and mama get de-wormed, vaccinated, photographed, named, and then they join the already overflowing cat room of 60 or more cats and kittens – all vying for a loving home. Every last one is sweet, friendly, social, litter trained – just wonderful babies and sweet mamas.

For ten weeks this summer, in an effort to increase adoptions and reduce pet over population, Safe Haven Humane Society paid to fix all cats adopted from the Ionia County Animal Shelter. Adoptions of cats and kittens tripled during that period, but that's still not enough to find all of them homes, and there just isn't enough money to continue this subsidy indefinitely.

Many sweet little lives are still snuffed out before they ever get a chance of a home, a chance to be a family pet. As they are humanely euthanized, shelter staff just wish that caller, and the hundreds of others, had called as soon as they found the cat, brought her in before she got pregnant, and/or had her spayed. For every kitten born, a cat or kitten in the shelter dies, because there simply aren't enough homes for all of them. It's not a judgment call – it's just math.



When a stray cat comes visiting, she is looking for food and a safe place to sleep (or have her babies). Your first impulse is to feed

her and that's great...she's hungry. But then you need to make a decision. Is this cat really nice and you'd like to keep it? If so, call the animal shelter and ask about spay and neuter options. Get the cat fixed immediately. If you can't keep it, take it to the shelter. She has a chance there of adoption or going to a rescue. Don't just keep feeding her because soon there will be babies and even while she's nursing, she'll be pregnant again, with more babies in about eight weeks. Then you will be totally frustrated, and you'll be the one making that phone call to the shelter.

When funds are available, Safe Haven subsidizes the cost of spaying/neutering for those who have too many

cats or kittens. We take dozens of cats and kittens from the shelter into our adoption program and only adopt them out after they have been fixed. Safe Haven is on the front lines in the battle to reduce pet over-population.



Look for help immediately when that stray shows up in your yard. Depending on the county you live in, and the availability of funds, there generally is help with trapping, as well as reduced-cost or no-cost programs to get the cat fixed. Please don't let her get pregnant and produce another litter born to die.

## Time for a pet portrait?



**"That's Splash"**

Portraiture artist Arlene Tannheimer, who painted this wonderful portrait, "That's Splash," to raise funds for Safe Haven last year, has expressed her willingness to take bids on another portrait in the future. Details will be forthcoming, but start thinking of someone in your family who would like a portrait of a beloved pet, past or present. It's a warm, wonderful gift.



**What did you like best about this issue? What topic would you like to see covered in an upcoming issue? Put your comments below.**

**Here are some ways you can help Safe Haven animals:**

☐ Donate: My check made payable to Safe Haven Humane Society is enclosed for

☐ \$20   ☐ \$30   ☐ \$50   ☐ \$100   ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

(you can also donate online at [www.shhs pets.com](http://www.shhs pets.com))

☐ Foster. Please send me information about fostering cats or dogs

☐ Become a member of Safe Haven: \$10 individual or \$18 family

☐ Other:

☐ Help transport animals

☐ Hold or help with fundraiser

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for helping us!



cut out and mail  
this form to:  
Safe Haven Humane Society  
P.O. Box 55  
Ionia, MI 48846



Your comments. Thank you. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Declawing: We asked an expert

This article is not about whether you should declaw your cat. It's for those who have already made the decision to declaw and need good information. People ask us questions all the time about declawing, and we answer based on our experiences, but we're not vets. So we asked an expert to answer those questions for us.

Dr. Jennifer Petrovich, DVM, is a veterinarian with Clyde Park Veterinary Clinic in Grand Rapids. She also owns and operates Crash's Landing Cat Rescue in Grand Rapids and Big Sid's Sanctuary (for FeLV and FIV positive cats). Dr. Petrovich knows that many people will have their adopted cat declawed, so she declaws most of the rescued cats herself making sure that it's done following the best possible protocol she has found.

Over the past 15 years, Dr. Petrovich has declawed thousands of cats, so she's

who we went to for answers to the most commonly asked questions.

**Question:** How much does age matter when declawing a cat?

**Answer:** Weight is the primary concern. I don't like to declaw them when they're too heavy.

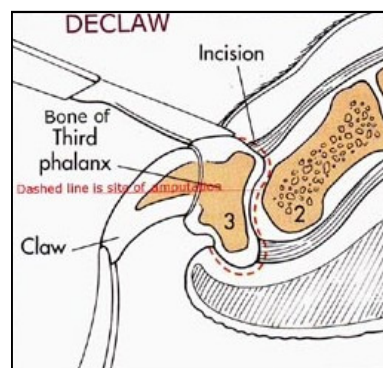
**Question:** Why not declaw the back paws?

**Answer:** Why? They aren't destructive with the backs intentionally.

**Question:** If you have multiple cats, does it matter if some are declawed and some are not?

**Answer:** Not really unless the ones with nails are aggressive and beat the daylight out of the others.

**Question:** Have you seen any connection between declawing and house soiling?



**Answer:** Not at all.

**Question:** What's the biggest consideration in declawing a cat?

**Answer:** Weight, then age (pre-anesthetic lab work needs to be run on all cats over the age of 8). I personally do not like to declaw cats over

5-6 years of age. A post-op pain control protocol is a MUST; mine is awesome, which is why I have no problem declawing, because I do it right.

If you're planning to have your cat declawed, please consider the factors outlined by Dr. Petrovich. Remember, cats can't just go home after surgery, put their feet up, and have the family wait on them. They have to use their paws constantly, for everything. That makes pain management essential after the declaw surgery.





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**"Where Happy Endings Begin!"**

If you would prefer not to receive future copies of our newsletter, please call or email us and let us know.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### "Pet" Peeves — what are yours?

Working in rescue, we see a lot of things involving animals that annoy the heck out of us. We probably see more than most people, but we're sure you see people with their pets, and you think "why are they doing that" or "don't they know any better." We're asking that you share those "Pet" peeves with us for upcoming newsletters, and we hope everyone will learn a little something from the exchange. On page 3 you'll find a space for your thoughts on the clip-out form, or just email them to us. We'll get the ball rolling with this one.

**Stray** I hate the word stray. County animal shelters normally label dogs coming in as owner surrendered or stray. Stray makes us think of this lone dog who just wanders the world looking for food and shelter. In reality, this dog was born

*somewhere, at someone's home: it **had** a home and just wandered away (or was run off or dropped off), **but it had a home**. It wasn't just beamed magically to a life on the streets. It **had** a home.*

But it wasn't wanted at its home. When the dog is "found" by a kind stranger or when animal control comes to pick it up, no one claims it. Why? Because it's not wanted.

I vote for changing the word stray to unwanted. So the two classifications of dogs brought into the shelter are owner surrenders (these are the honest people) and the unwanted, which come from the people who don't have the guts to find a proper home for the dog or to at least bring it to the shelter.

Mary Ellen



If you would like to become a member of Safe Haven, or would like to foster a pet or volunteer in some other way, please call us at 616-522-1611 or email us at shhspets@hotmail.com.