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○ SPRING 2008 | ○ SPAY AND STAY | ○ Lake County, Illinois

Feral cat focus

EVERY CAT — OWNED, FERAL, OR STRAY — DESERVES THE BEST MEDICAL CARE POSSIBLE. —SPAY AND STAY

Home Rule and the TNR Movement

BY ANNA MORRISON RICORDATI*



Recent laws enable TNR on state (and some county) levels, but what does that mean for the actual TNR advocate? This article touches upon the complex interplay of state, county and local laws when dealing with a local government's home rule powers to regulate its own affairs as those powers are applied to the management of feral cat colonies.

TNR and State Government

On August 22, 2005, TNR practitioners cheered as Illinois State Law 510 ILCS Act 92/1-999 was approved and became effective as part of the Illinois Public Health and Safety, Animal Population Control Act. Commonly known as “Anna’s Law,” 510 ILCS Act 92 was aimed at controlling the unwanted stray dog and cat populations.

Anna’s Law provides for a low cost spay neuter program for Illinois residents, and specifically includes provisions aimed to assist Illinois residents who assume the various costs associated with managing a feral cat colony and who humanely trap feral cats for spaying/neutering in accordance with the program’s eligibility requirements. Specifically, a feral cat caretaker participating in a TNR program that is recognized by the municipality (if located in an incorporated area) or county (if located in an unincorporated area), makes only a \$15 co-payment for a cat sterilization procedure and vaccination performed by a participating veterinarian – all other costs are covered by State funds.

Coupled with specific provisions found in the Illinois’ Animal Control Act, 510 ILCS Act 5/1 et seq. (the “Animal Control Act”), it is

clear that Illinois State legislators intended to assist feral cat caretakers by not only specifically defining “Feral Cats,” but also by specifically immunizing the activities of feral cat caretaker from criminal and civil liability. Under the Animal Control Act, a “Feral Cat” is: “a cat that (i) is born in the wild or is the offspring of an owned or feral cat and is not socialized, (ii) is a formerly owned cat that has been abandoned and is no longer socialized, or (iii) lives on a farm.” 510 ILCS Act 5/2.11(b).

Furthermore, “[a]ny veterinarian who sterilizes feral cats and any feral cat caretaker who traps cats for a trap, sterilize, and return program shall be immune from criminal liability and shall not, as a result of his or her acts or omissions, except for willful and wanton misconduct, be liable for civil damages.” 510 ILCS Act 5/35(c).

TNR and County Government

Following the lead of the Illinois State Law and at least one other Illinois county government, Cook County adopted its own “Managed Care of Feral Cats” (the “Cook County Feral Ordinance”) on October 16, 2007.¹ See, Chapter 10, Animals, Article IV, Secs.10-95 through 10-99 of the Cook County Ordinances. The Cook County Feral Ordinance similarly distinguishes a “Feral Cat Caretaker” – defined as “any person other than an owner, who provides food, water or shelter to, or otherwise cares for, a feral cat” – from an “Owner” – which means “any person having a right of property in an animal or who keeps or harbors an animal, or who has it in his care, or acts as its custodian, or who knowingly permits an animal to remain on any premises occupied by him or her.”

“... IT IS CLEAR THAT ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATORS INTENDED TO ASSIST FERAL CAT CARETAKERS . . . BY SPECIFICALLY IMMUNIZING THE ACTIVITIES OF FERAL CAT CARETAKERS FROM CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LIABILITY.”

(Continued on page 4)



► SEND US YOUR STORIES

WE WANT TO SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES WITH OUR READERS. TELL US ABOUT YOUR COLONY. HOW HAS STERILIZATION IMPACTED YOUR COLONY? HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO GET ANY OF YOUR CATS ADOPTED AFTER BEING STERILIZED AND RETURNED TO YOUR COLONY? E-MAIL YOUR STORY AND PHOTOS TO: INFO@SPAYANDSTAY.ORG.

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President's “mewsings”

Since becoming President of Spay and Stay, I have become intimately aware of our finances and how important funding is to our organization. In the process of getting familiar with our budget and sources of funding, I learned that no government or municipality had ever supported Spay and Stay, even though the humane work we do is actually community based animal control work. Nor has any municipality paid us for the work we do in the field mitigating neighborhood conflicts regarding cat related nuisance issues. It just didn't seem right, so I decided I would try to change that.

Spay and Stay offers its services to Lake County, IL residents only. Lake County is divided into 18 townships, so I set out to contact each jurisdiction. My goal was to 1) make the township trustees and its citizens aware of our services and 2) request financial support. Since I live in Shields Township, I started there. After an introductory letter to Charles Fitzgerald, the Township Supervisor, and a formal presentation to the Township Trustees, Spay and Stay was notified that we would be recipients of a Township Social Service grant.

Mr. Fitzgerald and other Trustees have made a real effort to reinvest tax dollars back into the community by developing partnerships with local nonprofit organizations. Evidence of this commitment comes not just in the form of the Social Service grants they have awarded. Shields Township also hosted a partnership breakfast-workshop earlier this month which Sandra Kooper and I attended. It brought several nonprofit organizations working in the community together. We met their leaders and learned about their organizations. It was a wonderful networking opportunity.

I have contacted other township governments and hope they will demonstrate the same kind of government leadership, commitment, and support that Shields Township did, allowing nonprofit organizations like ours to flourish. Thank-you to the leadership of Shields Township.

Julie Haas, President 

Purrs and Headbutts

Spay and Stay gets so much help in so many ways from our dedicated volunteers and supporters. We are especially grateful to the following people whose generous financial support and in-kind donations help us continue to serve these special cats. Please share a headbutt with the kind folks who have donated since our last newsletter.

Special Thanks to our Grantors

The DAS Charitable Fund for the Preservation of Feline Animal Life
The Dr. Scholl Foundation
The PetCo Foundation
Shield's Township



Forever Friends: \$10-99

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Cameron Thomson
Laurie Swanson, DVM



A Place for Purring—Honoring special people and animals

In Memory of Chaps
Anonymous

In Memory of Lucy
Anonymous

In Honor of Tony Skvarce
Gloria Askew

In Memory of Juanita
Margo Buchholz

In Memory of Fluffy Bear
Nadine Burge

In Memory of Princess Kitty
Lee and Jane Dahmer

In Memory of Hank
Jean Delle-Grazie

In Memory of Scardy Cat/Princess
Aileen Drugan

In Honor of Jennifer & Kevin Hurley
Gretchen and R.K. Gabriel

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Deniz Gursoy & Sam Wheeler

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Donald Haugh

In Honor of the Johnson Colony
Lucy and Darin Johnson

In Memory of Marilyn Hendricksen
Marilyn Leibfritz

In Memory of the Rosenberg's dog Mazzie
Marilyn Leibfritz

In Memory of Mariah, Thistle, Virgil, Kit, and Farina
Bruce & Diana Mason

In Memory of Schatzie
Sue Muchowski

In Memory of Marilyn Hendricksen
Carol Mueller

In Memory of Marble
Betty Phelan

In Memory of Brody
Tina Santopalo

In Memory of Isabel Schapals
Stanley Schapals

In Memory of Spencer
Jayne Sheehan

In Memory of Magic
Stacey Spoerl

In Memory of Rusty
Sharon Steiger

In Memory of Bailey
Dorothy Vastag

In Memory of Willie
Renee & Richard Weatherford

In Honor of Sandra Kooper
Maureen Witkiewicz

If you'd like to honor a special person or pet, send us the name of the person or pet you wish to remember, along with your memorial donation. Their name will appear in our next issue of *Feral Cat Focus*.



► "MY NEIGHBORS ALL SEEM TO BE HAPPY I TAKE CARE OF [THE FERAL CATS] AND SOME EVEN HELP FEED AND CARE FOR THEM. EVERYONE ASKS ABOUT THEM." **-CARETAKER, SPRING GROVE**

Feline stowaway finally dry-docked

After a three-month sojourn, Ornerly, a feline stowaway from a managed colony in northwestern Lake County, is back home and relearning the art of trust.

Just before last Thanksgiving, one of Spay and Stay's feral cat caretakers, who happens to be a professional fisherman for Bass Pro Shops, decided it was time to put his boat into storage for the winter.

Between fishing trips, the boat sits covered in his driveway for the entire season.

One member of the fisherman's feral cat colony, a gray tabby by the name of *Ornerly*, loved crawling under the cover and into the boat, sometimes finding his way under the deck of the boat. Maybe this was a safe place where *Ornerly* could be warm and dry. Or, maybe he just loved being surrounded by everything that reminded him of fish.

Before hauling the boat to a friend's shop about 12 miles away, the seasoned angler, who was also

wise to feral cat antics, removed the cover from the boat and did a thorough check of the vessel, including all of its compartments, to make sure it wasn't carrying any



Ornerly looks out from one of the cozy hiding places he's found inside his caretaker's boat that sits in drive during the fishing season.



four-legged, ear-tipped passengers. If *Ornerly* was in the boat, the fisherman knew he would have jumped out when the cover was removed, as he had done many times before. After getting a cup of coffee from the house, the angler drove off with the boat in tow.

Three days went by and *Ornerly*, who was generally very punctual when it came to his meals, was nowhere to be found. Thinking the cat might actually have been in the boat, the angler called his friend and told him he might be seeing a hungry gray striped cat in his shop. The friend went to the boat for a look, opening all the compartment doors, just in case. No *Ornerly*. The fisherman and his wife were worried, so they contacted both Lake and McHenry County Animal Controls, but no one had reported finding a light gray striped cat that happened to look hungry and lost.

Another two weeks went by and the owner of the storage area moved the boat again to another facility a couple of miles away.

Three months elapsed and the fisherman and his wife sadly accepted the fact that *Ornerly* was gone. Then the call came. It seems that some people at the second storage facility had been seeing a skinny grayish cat crawling along the rafters. Armed with a big Muskie net, the fisherman's friend went to the site and caught the cat. It was probably an easy catch because, by now, the cat was a bit dulled by hunger. After receiving a call about the feline catch, the fisherman drove over, hoping it might be his missing *Ornerly* cat. When the man and cat saw each other, there was a sense of recognition. The fisherman leaned down and picked up the thin gray striped animal and it was obvious they knew each other. It was definitely the weary, wayfaring *Ornerly*.

Back at home, *Ornerly* was brought into the house so he could receive regular meals to help him regain his strength. The fisherman was happy to have his friend safely back, even though *Ornerly* would occasionally cast a mistrusting look in his direction. The fisherman understood the cat and was glad to give *Ornerly* all the time he needed to regain his trust. If there's one trait a fisherman has plenty of, it's *patience*, and this angler had plenty go give *Ornerly*.



Find a great deal at our annual sale



It's all for the cats!

Friday, May 30

8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Saturday, May 31

8:00 am - 1:00 pm

405 Oakwood Avenue

Waukegan, IL 60085

All sales will be **CASH ONLY**

- Infant and young children's clothing
- Adult coats only (*no adult clothes or shoes*)
- Kid's toys and baby items
- Glassware and dishes
- Kitchen items
- Furniture
- Interior decorating items
- Electronics
- Exercise and sports equipment
- Tools for home and garden
- Office supplies
- Books, CD's, DVD's
- Pet supplies (cages, carriers, fish tanks)
- Musical instruments
- Jewelry

Bring your friends

We are still accepting donations of goods for this year's bigger, better sale! If you have clean, gently used items, please contact us at **847-289-4557** for information on drop-off times and location.

Rain or Shine



► REGISTERED CARETAKERS DONATE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO ENSURE THAT THE CATS THAT MUST REMAIN IN THEIR OUT-DOOR HOMES HAVE THE BEST OF CARE BY SUPPLYING FOOD, WATER, AND SHELTER ALL YEAR LONG.

(Continued from page 1)

Interestingly and in line with the thinking of most TNR advocates, the Cook County ordinance explicitly notes that a Feral Cat Colony Caretaker is not an owner of the feral cats in a managed colony.

TNR and Municipal Government – The Importance of Home Rule

Despite the great progress realized by Anna's law and the county ordinances, the TNR battle with other county and municipal ordinances continues. Although TNR advocates attempt to work with county and municipal governments, clear support for TNR is often lacking. In fact, certain municipalities continue to fine feral cat colony caretakers for activities that are specifically protected under Illinois law.

Why, you ask? The answer lies in "home rule." Certain counties and municipalities qualify for this special status. A county which has a chief executive officer is considered a "home rule unit." Similarly, any municipality which has a population of more than 25,000 is a "home rule unit." Other municipalities may elect by referendum to become home rule units. ILL. CONST. Art. VII, §6.²

So, why is home rule so important? The Illinois constitution grants home rule units the power to regulate its own affairs. The easiest and most basic example of home rule governance lies in the exercise of municipal gun control. This is why you have the right to bear arms under the US Constitution, but cannot do so in Chicago without restrictions.³ In fact, if a home rule county ordinance conflicts with an ordinance of a municipality, the municipal ordinance shall prevail within its jurisdiction. ILL. CONST. Art. VII, §6(c). While the power of municipalities has come under recent scrutiny by the Supreme Court, home rule governments currently rely on the home rule regulation powers in enacting many local ordinances.

According to the Illinois Constitution:

[A] home rule unit [of government] may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs including, but not limited to, the power to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare; to license; to tax; and to incur debt. ILL.CONST. Art. VII, §6(a).

Non-home rule counties and municipalities shall have only the powers granted to them by law and the limited powers proscribed in ILL.CONST. Art. VII, §7.

Conflicts arise when local home rule governments attempt to regulate matters that have not traditionally "pertained" to local government or that have been preempted to some extent by state legislation, as the home rule government may lack enactment authority. Therefore, analysis of the laws enacted

by local home rule jurisdictions involves a complex interplay between state, county and municipal laws.

The Illinois Constitution's grant of home rule powers contemplates that different communities may adopt different measures to address a perceived problem, provided that the state

legislature has not taken affirmative steps to circumscribe those measures. In addition, the measures taken by a community cannot be unreasonable.⁴ Accordingly, a home rule unit may exercise any power and perform any function "pertaining to its government and affairs." ILL.CONST. art VII, §6(a) (emphasis added). The language of Article VII, §6(a) limits home rule power to problems that are local in nature rather than state or national.⁴ Therefore, when a home rule unit's action has an extraterritorial or inter-governmental impact, the action may be challenged.⁵

As it applies to TNR, home rule governments frequently argue that their powers include the regulation of laws affecting animal care and control, including trap-neuter-return programs. And as would be expected, TNR advocates have argued that Anna's law, an Illinois State law, is not local in nature as it aims for



statewide animal population control. Furthermore, TNR advocates have argued that home rule power should not be permitted to restrict TNR as a local home rule government's decision will undoubtedly have an extraterritorial and intergovernmental impact by potentially forcing adjacent governments to "clean up the slack" of a non-participating government that has taken inappropriate or ineffective steps to reduce the stray animal populations.

While TNR has proven benefits clearly identified in Anna's law (510 ILCS Act 92), certain home rule governments continue to oppose it. Some home rule municipalities even attempt to shoe horn TNR activities into pre-existing ordinances that have not been rewritten to include feral cat management. For example, TNR activists have been accused of violating pre-existing ordinances directed against the feeding of outdoor animals, the harboring of cats, and the failure to procure kennel licenses, among others. As many of the ordinances cited against TNR practitioners pre-date Anna's law and never anticipated the actions of a feral cat caretaker, their applicability is questionable in light of the shifting legal landscape.

Practically, when faced with expenses of ongoing fines or engaging legal counsel, feral cat caretakers – who are often procuring spay/neuter, vaccination and other animal care at their own expense – may opt to cease TNR activities altogether, thereby

(Continued on page 5)

“ . . . CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES
CONTINUE TO FINE FERAL CAT
COLONY CARETAKERS FOR
ACTIVITIES THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY
PROTECTED UNDER
ILLINOIS LAW.



► "SOME [NEIGHBORS] DIDN'T LIKE [THE CATS] AROUND. BUT NOW THAT WE HAVE TALKED TO THE NEIGHBORS EXPLAINING THEY ARE CARED FOR AND THEY ARE ALL FIXED, EVERYONE IS FINE WITH THEM BEING HERE."
-CARETAKER, LAKE VILLA

(Continued from page 4)

depriving the community of a much needed benefit and enabling the local home rule government's abuse of powers.

It remains unclear why a local home rule government would choose to prohibit or fine its citizens participating in a TNR program when there are obvious benefits to the community. Specifically, the municipality may participate in a number of state sponsored financial relief packages, in addition to the obvious benefits of humanely and effectively reducing the feral cat population through TNR. To the extent a municipality or other local governing body would fear liability for allowing citizen participation in such programs; this was also addressed by the Illinois state laws, which specifically grants government bodies immunity for participating in TNR programs:

Any municipality or political subdivision allowing feral cat colonies and trap, sterilize, and return programs to help control cat overpopulation shall be immune from criminal liability and shall not be civilly liable, except for willful and wanton misconduct, for damages that may result from a feral cat. Any municipality or political subdivision allowing dog parks shall be immune from criminal liability and shall not be civilly liable, except for willful

and wanton misconduct, for damages that may result from occurrences in the dog park. 510 ILCS Act 5/35(a).

Given the relative newness of the TNR laws and the unexpected, though staunch, opposition by some local governments to TNR programs, it is likely the courts will be called upon to end the debate. Here, the courts would consider: (1) the applicability of numerous and potentially inapplicable ordinances cited against feral cat colony caretakers; (2) the constitutionality of criminalizing TNR where no specific local laws have been enacted by the home rule government to expressly prohibit TNR⁶; and (3) the specific provisions exempting feral cat caretakers from criminal and civil liability under the Illinois Animal Control Act. Additionally, the courts may be called upon to decide whether any municipal prohibitions on TNR should fall within the home rule powers given that Anna's Law endorses – and, indeed, provides financial incentives for – those citizens whose municipalities and/or counties have recognized TNR programs.

Many questions remain unclear: What does

it mean for a local government to recognize a TNR program? Does this include pilot programs? Do disinterested or indecisive governments that fail to specifically prohibit TNR recognize TNR by default? What does remain clear, however, is that a local government's recognition of targeted TNR programs benefits not only the cats, but the entire community as well. By endorsing TNR, a community enables access to financial assistance by its feral cat caretaking citizens and veterinarians while also finally getting its feral cat population under control.

"ANY MUNICIPALITY OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION ALLOWING FERAL CAT COLONIES AND TRAP, STERILIZE, AND RETURN PROGRAMS TO HELP CONTROL CAT OVERPOPULATION SHALL BE IMMUNE FROM CRIMINAL LIABILITY. . ."

¹ McHenry County Animal Control also allows for the management of approved feral cat colonies. See, Article XVII, Secs. 6.17—6.18 of the McHenry County Ordinances, Amended February 1, 2007

² Cook County is currently the only home rule county in Illinois. Will County voters elected to go to a county executive form of government without home rule in 1988.

³ Municipal Code of Chicago, Sec. 8-20-050 Unregisterable Firearms.


⁴ *City of Chicago v. Roman*, 184 Ill.2d 504, 705 N.E.2d 81, 235 Ill.Dec. 468 (1998).

⁵ *Commonwealth Edison Co. v. City of Warrenville*, 288 Ill.App.3d 373, 680 N.E.2d 465, 223 Ill.Dec. 732 (2d Dist. 1997).

⁶ See Op. Att'y Gen. (Ill.) No. 96-033.

⁷ Regarding constitutionality, the determining factor is whether any ordinance cited against a TNR practitioner is sufficient to put a person of ordinary intelligence on notice that TNR activities are not allowed. See *Papachristou v. City of Jacksonville*, 405 U.S. 156, 92 S.Ct. 839 (1972).

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The views expressed in this article reflect those of the author and should not be construed as legal advice. This article was written for informational purposes and is not intended as a substitute for legal counsel. 

Kooper brings TNR message to Cable TV

Sherry Graditor, host of the long-running cable program, *All About Animals*, recently interviewed Spay and Stay's Executive Director, Sandra Kooper, about TNR. To listen to the interview visit their website at:

http://www.funadventure.tv/all_about_animals.htm

When you see the *All About Animals* website, scroll down to the Spay and Stay segment. It will be in two sections.





► Support Spay and Stay

There are many ways to give.

Looking for space

For just under three years, Spay and Stay has had the good fortune of renting very affordable office space in a building owned by one of our volunteers. Regretably, the building is being sold and Spay and Stay needs to find a new home.



In addition to office and storage space, we may need our new location to house an operating area. We are investigating the feasibility of offering spay/neuter surgery more often than once a month. If that happens, more cats can have access to this much needed service.

If you know of someone who has reasonably priced space for rent, please give us a call at 847/289-4557 and let us know.



PURR it forward!

If Spay and Stay has helped you or someone you know, why not consider helping us reach more people and cats. Become a **VOLUNTEER!** Call for more details at 847-289-4557.

Shop and Share

June 30

July 1

July 2



Shop at **Jewel/Osco** on these dates and Spay and Stay will receive a portion of the sales. See our website for more details and to download the coupons so you can shop for the cats.
www.spayandstay.org

PETCO helps our cats

Because Spay and Stay is a Charitable Partner of the PETCO store in Vernon Hills, we received a generous donation from PETCO Foundation's 2007 Tree of Hope campaign. The program raised over \$2.5 million from donations given by PETCO customers, vendors and store associates. **Thank you PETCO!**

Make a better tomorrow

We would be honored to work with you and your financial advisor to explore ways to include Spay and Stay's feral cats in your charitable giving plans.

Outright Gifts

Use the form below to make a direct donation to Spay and Stay.

Bequests

Ask your attorney to include a charitable bequest to Spay and Stay in your will.

Retirement Plan Beneficiary

You can ensure the continued success of TNR by naming Spay and Stay as a beneficiary of your retirement plan(s).

Please contact Spay and Stay at 847-289-4557 if you have any questions regarding planned giving.



Your discards help cats AND the environment!

Spay and Stay is conducting a **recycling fundraiser**. There's nothing to buy. We are asking you to protect the environment by donating your used *cell phones, ink jet cartridges, DVD movies, video games, portable DVD players, laptop computers, MP3 players, digital cameras, digital picture frames and GPS devices.*

Your used items may be tax deductible and will be recycled in accordance with EPA regulations or refurbished and sold. 100% of the proceeds will help fund Spay and Stay's programs. Call 847-289-4557 for more details.



ENDING FELINE HOMELESSNESS

With your support, Spay and Stay can reduce the overpopulation of homeless community cats in Lake County through sterilization and humane management. Your donation will make a difference in the lives of these special cats.



PLEASE ACCEPT MY GIFT OF:

- ☐ \$35 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500
☐ \$50 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$_____

REMEMBER HOMELESS COMMUNITY CATS IN YOUR WILL:

- ☐ I am interested in receiving information about including Spay and Stay in my estate planning.

Spay and Stay is a 501c3 organization and your contributions are fully tax deductible. For more information contact us at 847-289-4557.

Here's my information:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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E-Mail address _____

Please make your check out to **Spay and Stay** and send to:
P.O. Box 484, Gurnee, Illinois 60031.



► A LOT OF THESE CATS ARE ABANDONED. THEY'RE NOT JUST FERAL. IT'S A SOCIETY PROBLEM. IT SHOULDN'T BE A POLICE DEPARTMENT PROBLEM. IT SHOULD BE DEALT WITH BY SOCIETY."
-ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER, DAYTONA BEACH, FL

Chicagoland community sets TNR precedent

Citizen concern over the number of feral cats in parts of LaGrange, a village in southern Cook County, prompted the village to look into alternatives for controlling this population of homeless animals.

In the past, LaGrange had used a commercial trapping service to trap the cats, but the village's director of community development stated in a recent newspaper article that that method did not work well.

After sending out a call for assistance, the city is now partnering with a local humane organization, Triple R Pets, to implement a trap-

the cost to the resident is \$40 for each cat. At the second level, a resident will attend one of Triple R Pets' training workshops and participate in the trapping and/or transport of the cats; these residents will pay \$20 for the vet cost of each cat and the remaining \$20 is paid by the village or Triple R Pets, depending on the resident's financial situation. Finally, the village will reimburse the \$40 veterinary fee per cat for residents who are not financially able to cover this expense.

The agreement with Triple R Pets is a win-win situation for both the village as well as the residents. Village officials are pleased to be working cooperatively with residents to solve the feral cat issue, and the residents are happy to see their feral cats safe and healthy, to lend a hand and to save money in the process. TNR in La-

Grange is a total community cooperative effort.

All cats that go through the program are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped, and microchipped for identification and registration purposes. Feral cats are seldom suitable for adoption, so almost all the cats are returned to their original colony to live out their lives under the watchful eye of a caretaker who will provide shelter and food for the cats.

For more information on the program, contact Triple R Pets' Executive Director, Judy Clark, at 708-738-1438.

Spay and Stay hopes this informed and cooperative agreement between the Village of LaGrange and Triple R Pets encourages communities here in Lake County to embrace similar community plans to humanely control the feral cat population.



A volunteer for Triple R Pets in LaGrange returns a cat to its home territory after recovery from sterilization surgery.

neuter-return program which will manage the feral cat population in a humane and safe way.

LaGrange's Department of Environmental Health didn't take much convincing to embrace TNR. The administration was well informed and familiar with studies that prove trap-neuter-return really does work.

The written agreement between Triple R Pets and the Village of LaGrange defines a three tier reimbursement program. All trapping is initiated by a resident of La Grange. If a resident wants Triple R Pets to handle the entire TNR process,

The time is right for a spay/neuter clinic

BY JULIE WHEELR

The need for a local low-cost spay/neuter clinic was again brought home to me when I visited a local vet recently and bumped into a friend who does foster care for a humane rescue organization in the area. He was lamenting that a male cat he had been working with for a couple of months may have to be euthanized for behavior problems. The cat would bite without warning and my friend had several puncture wounds still visible on his hand to prove it.

When I asked what brought them to the vet that day, my friend said it was to pick up the male cat after his neutering. Even though the cat had been in foster care for two months, the humane group had not wanted to invest money into sterilizing the cat until they felt he had adoption potential. The cat finally did get sterilized because another concerned party stepped in to cover the vet's fees.

It is generally accepted that a cat's propensity for behavioral problems can be reduced through sterilization. It is too bad this group had to wait to sterilize a cat with a behavioral issue because of financial restrictions.

My friend has updated me that, since being neutered, this cat's behavior has improved to the point where the humane organization caring for him has determined that he has some sensitive areas on his back and near his tail. He will receive treatments in the hope that he will be able to be adopted soon.

Low-cost, high-volume clinic is possible

I believe that a high-volume, high-quality spay/neuter clinic is needed here in Lake County. It could offer low-cost sterilization to ferals, shelter cats, and pet cats of low-income residents who may not be able to afford private veterinary care. Spay and Stay is investigating the possibility of opening such a clinic.



Now that he's sterilized, Austin can be found imagining what his new home will be like.



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BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION

Spay and neuter your pets.
Keep your cats safe at home.
Do not abandon your pets.

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○ SPRING 2008 | ○ SPAY AND STAY

Generous donors get cats fleeced

Spay and Stay has learned that one of the most important factors for speedy and safe recovery of cats after spay/neuter surgery is warmth. As the anesthetized cats move from station to station on their way through a spay day, it's essential that their body temperature be kept as normal and warm as possible. We had been wrapping the cats in towels, which did a good job. However, we learned through experience that fleece was far better at holding warmth around the cats.

Last January, Spay and Stay sent a call out to volunteers and supporters asking for donations of fleece, which we could then cut into towel-sized wraps for the cats. The response was immediate and overwhelming. We received bags of fleece, as well as small finished fleece throws. We also received large bolts of cozy and extra-warm Polar Fleece from the owner of *Boogie Baby*, a company in Highland Park that specializes in handmade blankets for babies and young children.

A big warm thank-you to everyone who donated fleece. Now every cat that comes to Spay and Stay for spay/neuter surgery will be sure to stay warm and safe while in our care. 



LEFT: A cat at the eartipping station rests comfortably on a pile of soft fleece blankets.

ABOVE: Volunteer Cynthia Deen brings a sleepy cat, still wrapped in his warm fleece blanket, from the post-operative recovery station back to his clean newspaper-lined trap. He will be watched carefully for the remainder of the spay day, until his caretaker comes to take him back to his colony for more recovery time.

THE HUMANE SOLUTION: Living better without litters



Spay and Stay is a non-profit organization dedicated to working with compassionate individuals and local governments to humanely control the growth of the feral cat population in Lake County, IL through a sterilization program called Trap-Neuter-Return.

Through humane education and outreach programs, Spay and Stay also works to ensure long-term solutions to the source of feral cats: unaltered, free-roaming and/or abandoned domestic cats.