

♥ If you love your pets, have them spayed or neutered. ♥

- Cattery
- Low Cost Spay/Neuter
- Adoption Services
- Foster Homes
- TNR Assistance



- Feral Sanctuary
- Lost and Found Service
- Animal Placement Service
- Pet Owner Education
- Cat Boarding

wishing for a home . . .



Baby--room 2



Rambo--room 2



Tinkerbelle--room 1



Toby--room 1

Adoption Center
Street Address:
133 North D Street
Lompoc, CA 93436

Hours:
Saturdays from
10 to 4 or
by appointment

Phone:
(805)735-6741

Mailing Address:
VIVA
PO Box 896
Lompoc, CA 93438

Website:
<http://vivaonline.org>

Email:
info@vivaonline.org

V
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*"Helping
the Helpless"*

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
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LOMPOC, CALIFORNIA
Permit No. 132

SEPTEMBER 2007

- * 9/16-22: National Farm Animal Awareness Week
- * 9/22: Elephant Appreciation Day
- * 9/23-29: National Dog Wk
- * 9/24-30: Sea Otter Awareness Week
- * Adoptions: Saturdays 10AM thru 4PM or by appointment

HELP! WE NEED SOMEBODYS

At the moment, we have two slots needing to be filled immediately. The first one is Tuesday mornings to clean Room One and its patio. The second is to be the dishes and litter boxes washer on Thursdays. We have people that will train you; it's not difficult at all, but it IS crucial that we get two dedicated people who love cats enough to give them two or three hours a week. If that person may be you, please call the cattery (735-6741) right away. Leave a message and we will get right back to you. Thanks!

COOKIE FUND RAISER

The residents of the Garden Court on De La Vina (1116 De La Vina in Santa Barbara) hold a cookie sale each month and donate the proceeds to a charity. Last month they selected VIVA as their non-profit group. This is a wonderful thing that they do to help the community. Shirley can vouch for the fact that the cookies are delicious. If you are in Santa Barbara on the day they have their cookie sale, stop by and buy some.

KITTENS, KITTENS, AND MORE KITTENS

We have lots of sweet kittens that are looking for forever homes. When you add these kittens that are ready to go now, the kittens from last fall who are now almost a year old, and the last litters of this year that will be arriving soon at our shelter, you can see why this article is called "Kittens, Kittens, and More Kittens". In spite of the fact that we have so many kittens that need homes, we are not seeing quite as many kittens in midsummer and early fall. This is probably because we have been so aggressive in our spay/neuter program. Trap, Neuter, & Return (TNR) really does work.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

Can you believe we are talking about Christmas already? Our Open House is going to be held on December 9, 2007, from 1 - 5 PM. As usual we need your help with donations for our silent auction and our raffle. We will also have our country store with great gift items. This is a good time to do some Christmas shopping and help the animals.

CAT THYROID DISEASE LINKED TO CHEMICALS ... Maria Cone

An epidemic of thyroid disease among pet cats could be caused by toxic flame retardants that are widely found in household dust and some pet food. The often-lethal disease was rare in cats until the 1980's when it began appearing widely, particularly in California cats. That was the same time industry started using large volumes of brominated flame retardants in consumer products, including furniture cushions, electronics, mattresses, and carpet padding.

Scientists from the Environmental Protection Agency noted a possible connection between hyperthyroidism and flame retardants. The chemicals - known as polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs - mimic thyroid hormones, so experts have theorized that high exposure in cats could cause overactive thyroids.

A major unanswered question is whether cats are the proverbial canaries in the coal mine, signaling health dangers for their owners. Cats and human beings are the only mammals with a high rate of hyperthyroidism. So far, no link has been established between human endocrine disorders and exposure to flame retardants. However, "there is growing concern," scientists wrote. People in the US have the highest PBDE levels in humans worldwide, but US cats are even more exposed... some with levels 100 times greater.

Cats, while sleeping, often come in direct and prolonged contact with upholstery, carpeting, and mattress materials that contain flame retardants. In addition, they often sit on electronic equipment.

California has the nation's strictest fire-retardant standards for furnishings, so PBDE exposure is generally higher than elsewhere.

Volunteers urgently needed. Please call us at 735-6741.

LIBBY, THE SEEING-EYE CAT

Terry Burns from Middleburg, PA, has a 14-year-old blind and deaf yellow lab named Cashew. Her best friend is Libby, 7, her seeing-eye cat. Libby steers Cashew away from obstacles and leads her to her food. Every night she sleeps next to her. The only time they're apart is when Terry takes Cashew out for a walk. Without this cat, she knows that Cashew would be lost and very, very lonely indeed. It's amazing but true. This is one animal who knows what needs to be done and does it day in and day out for her friend.

FOXTAILS

From late spring through fall, foxtails and other weeds that shed their burrs can work their way through your pet's coat and into his or her skin. The area between the toes is particularly susceptible. They can also enter through the nose, eyes, ears, and genitals. During grooming sessions, check your pet's coat thoroughly for foxtails. Once a foxtail has penetrated the tissue, it can migrate to cause infection and may have to be removed surgically.

Vigorous head shaking and ear scratching may indicate foxtails in the ears. Sneezing fits and occasional bloody discharge from nostrils may be symptoms of foxtails in the nose. In cats, the eyes are most commonly affected by foxtails.

REMEMINDERS:

* VI VA does cat boarding for \$8 per cat per day. Reservations!

* Recycle at Drive-In Recycling; ask them to credit VI VA.

OSCAR THE CAT PREDICTS PATIENTS' DEATHS

In Providence, RI, Oscar the cat seems to have an uncanny knack for predicting when nursing home patients are going to die, by curling up next to them during their final hours. His accuracy, observed in 25 cases, has led the staff to call family members once he has chosen someone. It usually means they have less than four hours to live,

"He doesn't make too many mistakes. He seems to understand when patients are about to die," said Dr. David Dosa. He describes the phenomenon in a poignant essay in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. "Many family members take some solace from it. They appreciate the companionship that the cat provides for their dying loved ones."

The 2-year-old feline was adopted as a kitten and grew up in a third-floor dementia unit at the Steere House Nursing and Rehab Center. The facility treats people with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other illnesses.

After about six months, the staff noticed Oscar would make his own rounds, just like the doctors and nurses. He'd sniff and observe patients, then sit beside people who would wind up dying in a few hours. Dose said Oscar seems to take his work seriously and is generally aloof. "This is not a cat that's friendly to people."

Oscar is better at predicting death than the people who work there, according to Dr. Joan Teno of Brown University, who treats patients at the nursing home and is an expert on care for the terminally ill. She was convinced of Oscar's talent when he made his 13th correct call. While observing one patient, Teno said she noticed the woman wasn't eating, was breathing with difficulty, and that her legs had a bluish tinge, signs that often mean death is near. Oscar wouldn't stay inside the room though, so Teno thought his streak was broken. Instead, it turned out the doctor's prediction was 10 hours too early. Sure enough, during the patient's final two hours, nurses told Teno that Oscar joined the woman at her bedside.

Doctors say most of the people who get a visit from the sweet-faced, grey and white cat are so ill they probably don't know he's there, so patients aren't aware he's a harbinger of death. Most families are grateful for the advanced warning, although one wanted Oscar out of the room while a family member died. When Oscar is put outside, he paces and meows his displeasure.

No one's certain if Oscar's behavior is scientifically significant or points to a cause. Teno wonders if the cat notices telltale scents or reads something into the behavior of the nurses who raised him. Nursing home staffers aren't concerned with explaining Oscar, so long as he gives families a better chance at saying goodbye to the dying.