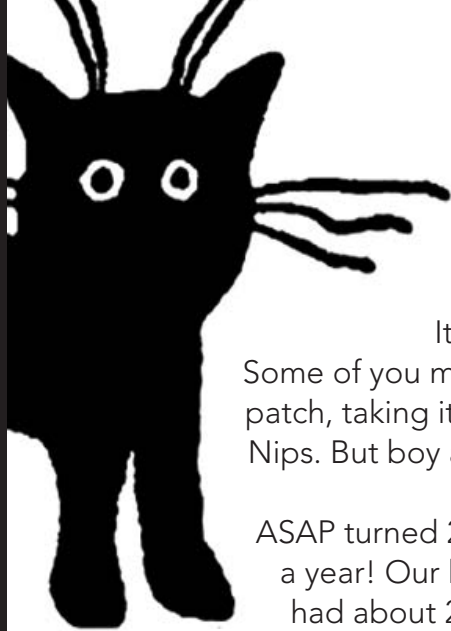


CAT NIPS

Edited by Lisa Lane



Dear Friends, 

It doesn't seem possible that it's already March 2010! Some of you may be thinking that I've been curled up in a sunny patch, taking it easy, and that's why you haven't been receiving Cat Nips. But boy are you wrong...I've been one BUSY kitty!!

ASAP turned 20 years old in 2009 and it proved to be a doozy of a year! Our kitty population reached an all-time high and we had about 25% more cats in our shelter than in previous years. Many of my kitty friends lost their homes when their human caretakers hit hard economic times, had to move to smaller places or had to look somewhere else for new jobs. These kitties have a particularly difficult time adjusting to life at ASAP because they are very sad and miss their humans.

Another thing that has kept me extremely busy over most of last year was KITTENS!! Usually, there is a defined "kitten season"—typically starting in the late spring and ending in the early fall. But not last year! I had to take care of little fur balls constantly and there were sooooo many of them! ASAP cared for almost 450 kittens last year—a *new record!* Boy, I sure didn't get the long winter nap I needed; it's hard work teaching all those little kitcats the ropes around here, not to mention all of the messes that I had to clean up... and then there's all the grooming...my tongue is exhausted.

And then, as the last of the kittens had been adopted, days after Christmas, on a quiet Sunday morning—when, what to my wondering eyes should appear? Fourteen bewildered cats, abandoned in the overnight cage, left with a simple note that stated their owner could no longer provide them with the care they deserve. And goodness—these weren't little ones, either! These were some hefty, older fellows, but here at ASAP we're not going to turn away a feline in need; we made room at the inn, and gave them all spice names! So



from Cinnamon to Sage, everyone has settled in nicely. Some of the "Spice Cats" have gone on to loving homes, but a few are still with us. I urge you to

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Winter/Spring 2010

ASAP'S newsletter for its friends and supporters

Continued from cover

come in and meet them; they could use a little extra petting!

With the increased numbers of cats and kittens, my human friends have been busy too. When the population increases at our shelter, unfortunately so does disease transmission. We had a tough year with really bad upper respiratory infections. But the dedication of our vet staff and volunteers have nursed us all through it. I sure am tired of all the sneezing!

In addition to taking care of all the shelter cats and kittens, we also housed approximately 220 evacuated cats during the Jesusita Fire. It was my special job to go around and make sure all of these scared, displaced kitties knew that they were safe. It was a stressful time for both cats and humans and we sure were lucky to have the support of our community. ASAP put out calls for help: food, carriers and other supplies; even people whose homes had burned down made donations. It was truly heartwarming confirmation of how our community comes together in times of crisis.

After we got the shelter back into shape, my humans got to thinking that we should be better prepared for future disasters. I have some really smart humans (but of course I've trained them well!). With a private donation, ASAP was able to build a storage shed to house disaster preparedness supplies and other things we might need in the future. Also, as part of planning for

Donations we can use:

- Cash or gift cards
- Thin latex gloves
- Heavy rubber gloves for cleaning
- Lint rollers
- Postage stamps
- Paper towels
- Canned Wellness (all flavors) or Fancy Feast (fish-flavored for sick cats)
- Plastic bags (zipper-closing, small and large)

future disasters, ASAP used part of these grant funds to begin a microchipping program. Every cat and kitten that gets adopted from ASAP is now microchipped so that they will always be able to find their way home (That was my bright idea!).

Gosh, I'm exhausted just thinking about the last year...but I'm hopeful for 2010. **Through all the hardships of 2009, thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and the contributions of our community, ASAP remained strong.** More than 1,000 cats and kittens found loving forever homes and 100 lost cats were reunited with their grateful owners.

We certainly couldn't have survived last year with such success without your support. So in honor of our 20th anniversary, I'm giving all of you a 20 meow salute...**MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW!** Oh goodness, that's a lot of meows...I think I need a quick cat nap before I finish meowing and continue to tackle 2010! This year, I hope I can continue to count on your support to help further our mission of saving the lives of our community's lost and stray cats today and for the next 20 years!

Purrs, 
Basil



The funds for the shed and emergency supplies were generously donated by an anonymous donor who gave in memory of Marco, her furry friend.

Microchipping – Your Pet’s Ticket Home!

By Lisa Acho Remorenko
Animal Adoption Solutions, Executive Director

According to the National Council on Pet Population Study, about **1 million stray dogs and half a million stray cats are turned into shelters across the nation each year. Unfortunately, only 15 percent of those dogs and a measly 2 percent of those cats are ever reunited with their owners.** Why is this number so low? One of the reasons could be that owners neglect to properly identify their pets.

There are several ways to identify your pet. You can use a collar, identification tag, tattoo or microchip. A collar is fine, but without any identification on the collar, it’s pretty much a fashion statement with no purpose. Identification tags are great, IF the collar stays put and IF the identification tag has accurate information. Tattoos aren’t a bad idea, especially if you live in an area where pets are stolen and sold for research (*most laboratories won’t test on animals that have tattoos showing they belong to someone*). But unless the tattoo has information linking your pet to you, they aren’t worth much either. Microchipping is the only permanent identification that is truly your pet’s ticket home.

Microchipping involves the injection of a tiny chip (*about the size of a grain of rice*) with a needle and special syringe just under your pet’s skin between the shoulder blades. The chip is housed in a type of glass made to be compatible with living tissue. The process is similar to receiving a shot and no anesthesia is necessary for implantation. Once in place, the microchip can be detected immediately with a handheld device that uses radio waves to read the chip. This device scans the microchip, and then displays a unique alphanumeric code which will be entered into a database with your information.

Most animal shelters check every stray pet that comes through their doors to see if they have a microchip. If a microchip is found, the shelter contacts the database to find your information. Although there are at least four different microchip frequencies marketed in the United States, most animal shelters and veterinary clinics have universal microchip scanners, which can read multiple microchip frequencies sold by the different microchip manufacturers.

Microchips are said to last 20 years, so there is no need to remove or replace it in the duration of a pet’s lifetime.

Although microchipping seems to be catching on, according to the Coalition for Reuniting Pets and Families, less than 5 percent of all pets are microchipped.

The good news is that The Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association found that the return-to-owner rate for cats was 20 times higher for microchipped pets than were the rates of return for all stray cats that had entered shelters.



Although microchips are a lifesaver, don’t rely on it as your pet’s only means of identification. While your local shelter may have a microchip scanner, your neighbor probably doesn’t, so a collar with an identification tag may get your pet home faster. Identification tags should include your pet’s name, your name and your current contact information. Since pets, especially cats, often become separated from their collar and tags, by providing your pet with both tags and a microchip can help ensure a happy reunion in the event that your beloved pet becomes lost.

In 2009, ASAP begun microchipping all the cats at their shelter at no cost to the adopter. This registration is valid for the life of the cat. It is the responsibility of the adopter to keep their contact information updated. The first year subscription comes with insurance from Home Again in the instance that the cat is injured and needs veterinary care while lost.

Santa Barbara County Animal Services offers microchipping for dogs and cats for only \$20! This includes registration fee. No appointment is necessary. Call 681-5285 for more information.

ASAP's "Ranch Cats" Need Special Homes

ASAP has always worked diligently to rehabilitate cats whose personalities would make them un-adoptable in other shelters. "Ranch cat" is an umbrella term that ASAP uses to describe cats that volunteers and staff find difficult to handle on a regular basis, or cats that are miserable and distressed to be in the shelter. Unfortunately, many of these cats remain at the shelter for months and sometimes more than a year. But these cats cannot and should not be labeled un-adoptable.

ASAP volunteer Beth Rushing and Catalyst for Cats volunteer Belinda Burns have devoted much of their time and energies to help stray and homeless cats in Santa Barbara find loving homes. Belinda has volunteered with Catalyst for Cats since 2000 to oversee feral cat colonies in the area. Beth is a long-time volunteer since 1993, lead volunteer and former board member of ASAP, who has worked diligently to find homes for adoptable cats.

After the Jesusita Fire, County Animal Services solicited help from experienced volunteers to find adopters for hard-to-place cats from both ASAP and the Santa Maria shelters. Following a Public Service Announcement, Animal Services compiled a list of potential adopters in Santa Barbara County who were willing to give these "non-traditional" kitties good homes on their properties. Belinda and Beth combined their efforts to start the ranch cat program, which matches ranch cats from ASAP and some feral cats with homes tailored specifically to their needs.

Each situation is different: "We have placed cats in large warehouses, home workshops, at the home of a person who grows commercial flowers in Carpinteria, in barns so large every cat was offered his own stall," explains Beth, "and in ordinary neighborhoods where a backyard cat was needed to cut down on the rodent population."

ASAP's vet staff and board of directors work in tandem to identify ranch cats and approve them for adoption into a "non-traditional" situation in the Santa Barbara area. Beth receives a list of ranch cat candidates and devotes a lot of time getting to know each cat. She and Belinda then determine what environment would best suit each cat, and approach potential adopters. Coupled with her full-time job at the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara and volunteer work with Catalyst for Cats, Belinda spends her "spare" time driving all over the Central Coast to find the perfect home for each ranch cat.

Owners of ranch cats typically benefit from this program through a reduced rodent population. For the cats, the benefits are even more considerable: they are no longer miserable, they are not labeled "un-adoptable," and they



have the freedom to roam. According to Beth, "nearly all" of the people who adopt ranch cats intend them to be mousers. Esmeralda and Simon were recently adopted to a "very caring home" where they will spend their days catching mice. Cali was recently adopted to a backyard home with a cozy shed and a kind gentleman who is very happy to have her around.

Two orange tabbies, MacDuff and MacTuff, who were terrified and anxious at ASAP, have the run of a huge tool shed. They do not go outside because of their pink noses and light skin. Belinda and Beth strive to place younger cats and lighter-colored cats like MacDuff and MacTuff in protected situations to keep them away from predators as well as the sun.

"No place is ever completely safe from coyotes," says Belinda, "but we always do our best to place cats in safe locations."

A local Santa Barbaran saw an ad in the paper about ranch cats and thought she could help. Larry, Mo, and Shep were relocated to her house in the hills, where she has lots of acreage. Her black poodle was "shaking with happiness" to see the cats. The trio are "happy as clams" and spend most of their time on the back porch. Another family took in two cats, Lucas and Scarlett, who have decided they'd rather snuggle in bed with the family's adult son than go outside.

There is definitely a spectrum to the phrase "ranch cat." Some cats stay away from their new human owners. Others become affectionate and blossom when they reach their new home. Of course, some of these cats would simply prefer to spend their daylight hours avoiding humans and catching mice, but they all still need a bed and a home to come back to at night.

The ideal owner of a ranch cats has a good structure where cats can stay warm and dry, especially during the winter.

ASAP's Greatest Gift

ASAP's President learns the meaning of unconditional love.

Louis came into my life when he was 9 years old. He was adopted from ASAP when he was a year old. His first parents adopted him for their daughter. After nearly nine years of not being treated as royally as he felt he should be, Louis started "shopping" around for a new person...one he could train and who would answer his every wish and command.



I had lost my cat Vili, which I shared with a dear neighbor nearly a year previously and was thinking of going to the shelter to adopt a new best friend. Less than a week after putting this idea "out there", Louis showed up at my doorstep. I found out he belonged to some neighbors across a creek. No matter how many times I took Louis back to his home, he always came back to me, sometimes beating me back home after I dropped him off with his "owners".

After a while, it was decided that Louis had chosen me as his new servant and that I had better get used to the idea!! For 9 years Louis had me under his thumb. Whatever he wanted, he got!! Loved one kind of food one week and the next week looked at me as if I were trying to poison him if I served him the same food!! We went for walks every day...but I had to be leading the walk. If I followed Louis he would turn around and attack my ankles. With Louis it was always "my way or the highway"... When I started volunteering at ASAP and bringing home foster kittens, it was the ultimate insult and betrayal, but Louis got used to the idea: as long as the kittens were only there temporarily and he remained the King, it was fine.

A little over a year ago, Louis was diagnosed with cancer, with only a few months to live; but Louis, always living life on his own terms, defied any and all prognostics and lived over a year and a half after his original diagnostic. Louis passed away on New Year's Eve doing what he liked best, taking a walk in the sun. I am grateful for all the time we had together and especially to ASAP: if ASAP had not been in existence by the time Louis showed up at Animal Services, he would have been euthanized, more than likely, and I would never have known the meaning of unconditional love.

~Eliane Martin

They must want to feed and keep the cats safe, be willing and able to take them to the vet, and keep food and water available. Belinda helps the new owners set up large kennels -- equipped with food, water, bedding, litter, and toys -- where the cats will live for the first three weeks to get used to the sounds and smells of their new environment. Belinda usually asks new owners to feed the cats both wet and dry food so "the cats figure out this is a really nice place to live!"

All of the adopters with whom Belinda has placed cats are "extremely loving and caring of cats, and want to do the very best for them."

The program, Beth says, tries to place "as many cats in one location as the adopters are willing to take, because there are only so many locations and a never-ending supply of cats!" But even placing one frisky feline in a new home is a triumph for the ranch cat program. The program, facilitated by Beth and Belinda's hard work, has opened up opportunities for "less desirable" cats to find homes that best suit their needs. Beth and Belinda have relocated over 50 cats since June.

If you can provide a loving home for one or more of these deserving kitties, please contact County Animal Services. BY CALLING 805-681-5285

Support us with Sponsor-A-Cat

A great gift for your cat-loving friends!

For just \$30 per cat (or you can become a Super Sponsor for \$360 – one cat each month for a year).

Your Sponsorship Provides

- Food • Shelter
- FIV/FelV testing
- All needed veterinary care

Sponsors Receive

- A certificate with a picture of your sponsored cat.
- ASAP's Cat Nips newsletter to keep you updated on our shelter's activities.
- A postcard notification when your kitty is adopted.



To sponsor a cat, complete the enclosed envelope and mail to ASAP.

Ensuring Our Work Will Continue For the Next 20 Years

Before you write another support check....

You may wish to discuss the following strategies with your financial professionals:

Donate appreciated stock for potential double tax savings. If you have owned a stock for more than one year and it has gained in value, you can avoid paying capital gains taxes by donating it to ASAP. You may also take a charitable deduction on the full value of the stock, subject to your deduction limits.

Planned Giving... leaving a legacy of caring for ASAP.

Every year, so many cats and kittens are saved from illness, homelessness and suffering, thanks to the care and support of friends like you. **The Planned Giving program of ASAP helps ensure that this work will continue indefinitely while also benefitting you and your family.** Planned giving can generate income for you now and in the future, reduce taxes, and help preserve wealth for your family. Here are a few possibilities to consider:

Will or Trust. You can remember ASAP in your will or trust by giving a specific dollar amount, a percentage, or a specific asset like stock or real estate. You can name a specific program or leave it to us to use where we most need it.

Life Insurance. Whether you own a term or whole life policy, or have employer-provided insurance, it's simple to include ASAP. You can name ASAP as primary or contingent beneficiary for all or a percentage of your policy. If you also name ASAP as owner of the policy, there may be additional tax advantages. Or you could consider funding a new policy for the benefit of ASAP.

Retirement Plans. As with insurance, you can also name ASAP as a beneficiary of a 401k, 403b or IRA. You retain full use of your funds in your lifetime with the remainder flowing to ASAP.

Annuity. A one time gift to ASAP can fund a charitable annuity that will pay you back with fixed, guaranteed income for as long as you live. The older you are, the larger return you will receive on your annuity gift.

Charitable Trusts. These allow you to set aside assets that will benefit both your family and ASAP. A Lead trust generates income for the use of ASAP, and at the end of the Trust term, your family gets the principal plus any appreciation, which will usually be excluded from estate taxes. A Remainder trust pays income to you or your family for a set period of years, and then ASAP receives the balance, again with long term tax advantages.

As with any planning, you should consult with your financial and estate advisors before committing to any gift. If you have questions or you'd like to know more about how to leave a legacy of caring for ASAP, please call our Financial Advisor, Susan Romaine, CFP, at 818-382-5750.



An Angel for Angel

Volunteer Susan Eselgroth finds just the right wonderful cat at ASAP. Susan is one of the more than 120 “angels” who volunteer their time to provide love and care to the cats at the ASAP shelter.

I am a volunteer at ASAP. I try to visit the New Arrivals at ASAP once a week to visit the new cats who have found themselves taken from their usual surroundings and put into little cages, albeit nice clean cages.

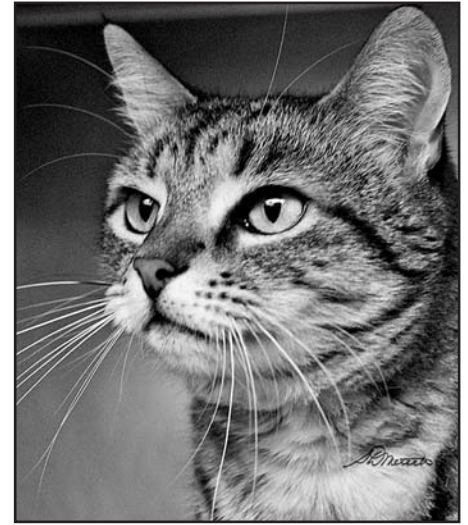
One day, I was visiting the cats in New Arrivals and there was Angel, her name given her by her prior owner. She had only been there a day or so and was hiding back in a corner of her cage. I talked to her for a while and reached out to pet her head. Soon she came to the front of the cage. She had a beautiful face and obviously missed the affection she was used to.

Soon Angel was moved into the Medical Hold section of the main room at ASAP to be treated for dental issues. When I was on volunteer duty and any other time I visited ASAP, I enjoyed spending time with Angel. Every time I came to see her she would give a little welcoming meow. While ASAP's Vet tech, Debbie, treated Angel after she had several teeth removed, I waited. Finally, Angel's treatment was over and she was ready to be adopted.

At ASAP we carefully put Angel into one of the cardboard cat carriers for the ride home. Before picking Angel up, I had created a little covered area in my home where she could go rather than being surprised by all the open space she was not used to. I lifted her out of the cat carrier and as soon as Angel's paws touched the carpet in my living room, she absolutely knew she was home! She stretched out her whole body, dug her claws into the carpet with her tail wagging back and forth, jumped around, rolled over, stretched again clawing the carpet, and ran around the room repeating her excited actions. There was no hesitancy, no need to hide in some small space. She was ecstatic! This went on for the rest of the day.

Angel knew me from all our visits, so she just needed to explore my home. This she did and still does with great interest. I think the fact that she

knew me made the transition much easier for her. She still often follows me when I am in various rooms and when I am in one spot for any amount of time, she settles in nearby.



I do not know whether her prior owner taught her the game of hide-and-seek, but she is a pro at it. I know she wants to play when she gets up on her tip toes, arches her back (the hair on her back rising up), stares at me, and then charges off to one of her many hiding places. When I find her I play with her tail or hind legs and then she is off again. Often it takes awhile before I find her. Sometimes I look and look and then I look up on the top of a piece of furniture and she is watching me look for her. This can go on for five minutes or more.

It amazes me that this wonderful cat was just waiting for me at the shelter. She is terrific and I am so glad I can give her a loving home. I am blessed.

-Susan Eselgroth





Burt's Beat

Basil's backyard buddy

Wheeew, I've seen more than 1,200 cats pass through these doors just in the last year. I can hardly keep their names straight anymore.

Let me start with two stories that might surprise you. Surely you'll remember **Dorothy** and **Xuxa**--both these girls stayed at ASAP for over a year. It wasn't hard to see why! In the shelter, these girls demonstrated some major cattitude. I knew they were just tired of shelter life and looking for a lap to call their own, but it was hard to convince potential adopters of their sweet side. Boy was I right: once they found a home to call their own, their softer side came through. See Xuxa below, in her new home with Mara St. James.

Mara reports: "Xuxa (now called Jane) uses her litter box, does not scratch (us or the furniture), and is quiet and well-behaved. She's affectionate but not pushy, and graceful to the point where she can walk over the computer keyboard without pushing the keys down. It's hard to imagine why no one adopted her in 1 1/2 years.



Anyway, she acts like she has gone to heaven. She's very happy - and so are we. Thanks for all you do for the cats."

The next surprise sweetie was

Dorothy.

Dorothy waited over a year for her forever family, and she couldn't have been luckier; when the Sheldon family came looking for another feline friend to add to their black-and-white-cat family, they found Dorothy to be the purrfect fit.



Mrs. Sheldon writes: "Dorothy has been welcomed into the house unconditionally. Our other cats, Cupcake, Yolanda, and Molly are all graduates of ASAP and have been gently reminding her that she is safe and home." Most shocking to me is that Dorothy seems to enjoy her fellow feline housemates. Congrats to the Sheldon's and Dorothy.

Although their wild antics drive me a little bonkers, I do like to hear the updates on our "little ones" after they head off into the big world. Another proud adopter wrote to let me know that her kitten **Cinder 2** (now named Bella) is, "just the most precious loving kitten I have ever had, so sweet and affectionate beyond words." And **Kyle**, adopted from ASAP in September, is just as beautiful as



ever. He posed for his photo, taken by friend/pet photographer, Joyce Reinertsen.

Dewey, one of our furry friends that left the shelter during the very

successful *Home for the Holidays*

adoption fair, has a new name thanks to his musical talents.

Dewey's person has declared him *Amadeus!*-the greatest composer of all time, due to his musical purring that can go for 30 minutes at a time. I say, that's one happy cat!



Wish I could tell you about all 1,007 happy tales but it looks like I'm about out of space for this edition. Let's have a big round of purrrs for all the dedicated volunteers who care for me and my feline friends 365 days a year. I hope to hear from more of our ASAP graduates soon! If you have a story to tell send it over to my human assistant at asapcats@yahoo.com.

Animal Shelter Assistance Program

partners with the Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter
5473 Overpass Road, Santa Barbara (just beyond the Humane Society) • Mon. - Fri., 9:00 AM to 4:45 PM • Sat., 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
P.O. Box 357 Goleta, CA 93116-0357 • www.asapcats.org • (805) 683-3368
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