

# C.A.R.E.'s Critter Chronicles

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Critter Adoption & Rescue Effort, Inc.  
1528 27th Street S.E. • Ruskin, Florida 33570 • 813.645.2273 • www.careshelter.org

## Please Join Or Renew Your C.A.R.E. Membership Now!

If you joined C.A.R.E. last year, or the year before that, you may ask why you have to renew your membership again this year. Please know that income from membership dues is needed annually and pays almost entirely for the medicines and medical supplies we use to treat our animals throughout the year. In 2004, we took in over 200 animals, many of whom required considerable treatment and rehabilitation prior to being ready for adoption. Almost all required spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations and blood tests. Many needed treatment for fleas, de-worming, sores or wounds which required medical attention, and many dogs required Heartworm treatment. These procedures often run over \$100 per animal but must be done to save and rehabilitate them. This is where your membership dues go. So, please join us again or renew your membership for 2005 and help us help the animals. As a member you will also continue to receive our newsletter, will have a voice in how our volunteer shelter is run and will have a vote for board members during our annual meeting in September.

**Please join now!**

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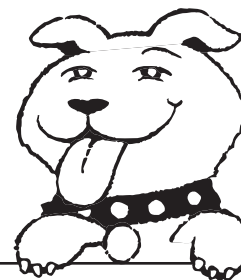
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### C.A.R.E. Hours of Operation

Tuesday-Saturday  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

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**C.A.R.E. is a  
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## Help Make A Difference... Join C.A.R.E. Today!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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May we occasionally send you C.A.R.E. updates via e-mail? YES NO  
*(circle one)*

Membership Level:	_____ Junior Member	\$20 donation
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Please send a check made payable to C.A.R.E. to the following address:

**C.A.R.E. / Attn: Membership**  
**1528 27th Street S.E.**  
**Ruskin, Florida 33570**

- New Member
- Renewal

# From Doc's Desk: Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

By Dr. Hal Ott

FIP is one of the most frustrating diseases for veterinarians and their clients. It is a fatal, highly contagious, difficult to diagnose and to treat disease associated with the feline corona virus. It is primarily a disease of kittens and cats younger than 3 years of age but it can affect cats of all ages. Clinical signs are easily confused with a number of other diseases and there is no blood test that can diagnose FIP. NONE! Positive diagnosis can only be made by biopsy of tissue or by tissue analysis at the time of necropsy (autopsy).

The virus is spread primarily through contact with other cats and kittens that are harboring the virus but may have no outward symptoms. Cats that are housed together sharing common litter boxes are more likely to contract the disease. It is a given that shelters housing cats in a free roaming environment and multi-cat households of five or more cats are going to experience FIP at some point. The disease doesn't affect all cats exposed to it in the same way. Researchers do not yet agree on why exposure to the corona virus will infect one cat with FIP while another in the same household remains free from infection.

## Testing

There is a test to detect the presence of a corona virus in cats but it's not very accurate. A positive test result only means that the cat had prior exposure to a corona virus (not necessarily one that causes FIP) and has developed antibodies against the virus. If the test is negative, it means the cat was never exposed to a corona virus. Therefore a positive number (titer) on the FIP test is very likely to be false positive. We recently tested ALL of our cats at C.A.R.E. and found that only about 15% had titers against the corona virus. Should we destroy these otherwise healthy cats? I think not. Have we isolated them? Yes.

## Symptoms

The corona virus affecting cats is a mild one that may cause diarrhea or gastrointestinal problems in cats with no outward signs of illness. It is when the virus mutates to the very virulent FIP form of the disease that serious trouble begins. The virus loves to inhabit the blood vessels. For that reason symptoms of the disease can vary widely depending upon which blood vessels the virus decides to visit.

*Continued On Page 7...*

## You Can Find It All On The Web!

By Mike Fitz

The best way to keep up to date on what is happening at C.A.R.E. is to check out our website on a regular basis ([www.careshelter.org](http://www.careshelter.org)). From the website you can link directly to Petfinder and see all the animals we currently have available for adoption. You will also find a list of upcoming C.A.R.E. events and links to recent news. All of the past newsletters are available in electronic format for your viewing, along with Dr. Ott's tips for keeping your pet healthy.

One of the best sections on the site is the "Success Stories" page. Here you can see some of the wonderful animals that have been adopted and read how they have enriched their new owner's lives. If you have adopted an animal from C.A.R.E. and would like to have their story posted on the website, please send an e-mail to [info@careshelter.org](mailto:info@careshelter.org).

Finally, if you are interested in volunteering, the website has information about the various volunteer opportunities and how to get started helping the animals. You can find all the latest content right on the home page in the "What's New" section, so come check us out.



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## Community Outreach *By Kara Rutherford*

**Pictures With Santa** Our first annual Pictures with Santa weekend was a big success and lots of fun. We raised almost \$700 during the picture taking weekend. We've already booked a date for this coming December and look forward to giving even more C.A.R.E. supporters an opportunity to bring their pets to Petsmart for Pictures with Santa 2005.

**Holiday Donations** Thanks to members and friends of C.A.R.E. who donated to have their beloved pets remembered and honored during the holiday season with lights and ornaments at our shelter. The sentiment and love represented by each of these donations made them a very beautiful addition to the holiday décor at C.A.R.E. The animals currently at the shelter benefit from the generosity of those who remembered and/or honored their pets, and we are grateful to all who made these donations. Over \$1,200 was raised to benefit the animals at the shelter.

**On The Road...** C.A.R.E. had a booth at the Manatee Arts Festival on March 12-13 and at the Florida Home Show on March 12. On March 24, we participated in the Sun City Center Dog Show—always a fun event. Look for us and some of our dogs at the No More Homeless Pets Spring Adoption Expo at the Florida Fairgrounds on April 16.

**Spring Yard Sale** Mark your calendars for our Spring Yard Sale here at the shelter on April 2. There is a lot of good stuff arriving daily. Hope to see you there!

Keep looking for us at upcoming events. Your help and support is what keeps us going!



## Annie's Cat House *By Gloria Blue*

Working at an animal shelter requires a commitment of the heart as well as the mental and physical aspects of the job. Whether volunteering or being employed you can't help but become emotionally attached to our animals.

### **We are currently seeking a person to oversee the duties of the cattery.**

This is a paid position and requires the type of person who not only loves animals but relates to people as well. This position works with the public and a great group of volunteers. It takes a lot of people working together to make a shelter a success. The hours can be long and the pay doesn't always reflect the effort put into the job. The person selected for this position will be responsible for keeping the records current and the cattery operating smoothly. Being familiar with the handling of cats and the illnesses they can acquire is a must. If this sounds like a job which interests you, please call the shelter at (813)-645-2273.

## C.A.R.E. Visits Career Day

Last November C.A.R.E. was invited to participate in the annual Career Day at Ruskin Elementary School. We were represented by Dr. Hal Ott and Tim Otte, our resident hound dog Hunter and one of our puppies. Dr. Ott explained to the students the importance of taking care of cats and dogs and told them about Hunter and how he came to be at the shelter. We know the adults enjoyed the visit with the students. Think the kids enjoyed it? Here's a sample of letters the third graders sent to Dr. Ott:

"I liked your dog Hunter. He is nice and he kept coming to me. I'm sad that he got left in the tomato patch."  
—Rebecca

"I had a great time answering your wonderful questions. Another thing why I want to thank you is because you talked all about your big nice and brownish dog. I have a question. My question is what is that stuff inside your big dogs eye?" —Vanessa

"Thank you for caring for the dog that all he ate was just tomatoes and for that little dog." —Jared

"Thank you for bringing your animals. I also loved petting your dogs. I hope the big dog gets new teeth back." —Diana

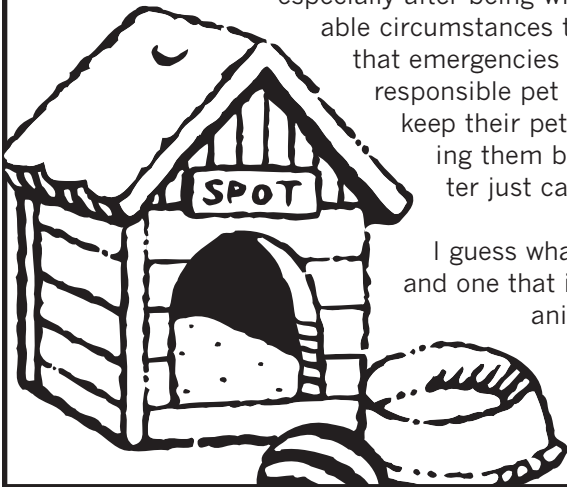
"I liked your show. Thanks for coming." —Amber

## 1 Bark Avenue *By Gloria Blue*

At C.A.R.E. we try to screen our adopters and make people/animal matches that give the animals the best chance of having a new home forever; forever being defined by the dictionary as “for a limitless time/always.” Unfortunately, some people seem to think that animal adoptions are “for as long as it’s convenient.” Recently, our shelter has received several pets back without the new owners seeming to take the time to think through the consequences of their actions on the animal. In one case, the owner had their pet for over a year and claimed they were “moving to a state that didn’t take animals.” We try to be compassionate, but sometimes we’re really tested!

I believe that an animal can become attached to a new owner quickly, and this attachment is unconditional.

It is very damaging to an animal who must adjust to new surroundings on a revolving door basis, especially after being with an owner for an extended period of time. There are understandable circumstances that require an owner to bring back an animal, and we understand that emergencies happen. After a period of time, however, one would think that a responsible pet owner would expend every effort possible to enable themselves to keep their pet or, at least, to find the pet a new home without resorting to “donating them back to the shelter.” We give our animals the best we can but a shelter just can’t be compared to a home environment.



I guess what I’d wish for is a society that is less driven by a disposable mentality and one that is more compassionate. I’d like to see more of a commitment to animals, where all pet owners think through their actions before relinquishing their animals. I’d like them to feel what an animal must feel when being left behind, before they make this decision. At C.A.R.E., we seek forever homes for our animals. One that will last “for a limitless time/always.”

## Proposed Volunteer Foster Care Program *By Betsy Hinderliter*

We are considering establishing a pet foster care program whereby some C.A.R.E. dogs and cats would be temporarily placed with designated volunteers. These volunteers will care for the animals in their own homes until space opens up at the shelter or the animal can be adopted into a permanent home.

Each week C.A.R.E. receives many more calls to rescue helpless animals than we have the capacity to provide for. It’s rare when any of our 11 dog kennels are not occupied. Many of our incoming dogs are heartworm positive or come in with urinary tract infections, skin conditions, or other medical problems best treated in a quiet home. Small breed dogs also do better in a home away from the noisy shelter environment. We also occasionally receive litters of puppies and kittens without nursing mothers, necessitating round the clock feeding. Our cattery, where adoptable cats roam freely rather than being confined to individual cages, is also usually at capacity. This free-roaming concept is less stressful for the cats and promotes socialization. The downside is that to maintain the highest level of

sanitation and health under these conditions, we must limit the number of cats we accept.

If you can meet the following requirements, and are interested in learning more about the proposed foster program, please contact me by e-mail ([BetsyHinderliter@aol.com](mailto:BetsyHinderliter@aol.com)) or leave a message for me at the shelter (813-645-2273).

- Interest in providing a temporary home (with fenced yard if fostering dog).
- Some knowledge or experience with dogs or cats.
- Time available during the day to properly feed, exercise and care for the animal.
- Designated space for foster animal separate from your own pet(s).
- Be willing and able to complete special training for fostering animals.
- Willingness to abide by the rules established by the Kennel Manager.
- Must be able to provide proof of current vaccinations on owned pets.

## Comings & Goings

### Comings...

C.A.R.E. is pleased to introduce some of our new guests. May their wait here for a new home be short and fruitful. There are many more pets-in-waiting at the shelter. Come see them in person or check them out at our website (Careshelter.org) or Petfinder.com.

**Lilly** is a black lab mix “new Mom” who was found wandering on the side of a local street when our kennel manager drove past. Lilly came right up to the car and rolled on her back for a pet. She got her pet. Then we realized she had 7 new pups nearby. They are all now residing with us until old enough for adoption. Mom’s doing fine but certainly enjoys her outside morning rest while our volunteers occupy her puppies with play time while the kennel is being cleaned.

**Sarah** is also a new Mom. She’s a white and tan mix with 6 new pups. The pups just recently opened their eyes and, now that they can see, are getting around and displaying their energy. Sarah has heartworm and is a little tired from birthing and nursing but we’ll be treating her soon and giving her lots of love, food and exercise until she is adopted. The five white and one tan pups are all doing well, healthy and are waiting for that special home.

**Charlie and Elwood** are both cats relinquished together from a homeowner who couldn’t take them with her when she had to move to a smaller home. Charlie is a tan and white domestic long hair and weighs 14 pounds. Elwood is gray and white, weighs 15 pounds and wants to be a lap cat. Both are declawed, very affectionate and looking for that special home to spend the rest of their lives.

**Nena** is a 1 1/2 year old black and white kitty that’s great with children. She was with a family whose children developed bad allergies and had to give her up.

### ...And Goings

The following canine and feline guests at the shelter found new homes during the first three months of 2005. We miss them but wish them and their new owners many happy years together!

#### Dogs

Noel	Max	J.D.	Black Pups
Cocoa	Bendi	Princess	(#1-3)
Pogo	Kari	Bosco	Black/Tan
Sadie	Fluffy	Phoebe	Puppy
Buddy	Jake	Pointer Mix Pups	Brindle Puppy
Angel	Baxter	Brown Pups	
Auggie	Bella	(#1-4)	

#### Cats

Buzz	Zack	Morgan	Starlight
Bailey	Kinder	Mona	Barbie
Gillie	Salem	Jasper	
Cashew	Lila	Sadie	
Teri	Della	Mickey	

## An I.D. Tag Is A Lost Pet’s Ticket Home

Without identification (like an ID tag) very few dogs and even less cats who wind up at C.A.R.E. and other shelters across the country will be reunited with their families. Any time a stray animal enters a shelter without an ID tag or other form of identification, the chances are very slim that the pet will ever see its family again. Making sure that your pet can be identified—with a tag, microchip or tattoo—is something all pet owners can do to help their own pets, as well as the homeless animals in our community.

April 2, 2005, kicks off the American Humane Association’s **Make Every Day Tag Day** campaign to help pet lovers understand the importance of providing identification for their pets. As a pet owner, here are some of the ways you can help:

- Make sure your pet wears a collar with a current ID tag, rabies, and city license. Include a contact name, address, daytime, and evening phone. Consider providing a phone number for an alternate contact—like a neighbor or family member.
- Keep your pet’s licenses and ID tag current.
- If a reward is offered for returning the animal, put that information on the tag.
- When moving or traveling, place a temporary tag on your pet with the phone number of someone who knows how to reach you. Better yet, use a lost pet tag system such as AVID that employs communications technology to allow you to update your contact information in a database as often as you need without ever changing your pet’s tag.
- Remember that even indoor pets need tags. Many strays in shelters are indoor pets that escaped and got lost.

## Hey! Pick Me! Pick Me!

These wonderful pets are looking for a good home! Stop by and meet them today!  
To see more pets that are available for adoption visit [www.careshelter.org](http://www.careshelter.org) or [www.petfinder.org](http://www.petfinder.org)



### Tucker

Tucker is a very sweet gentle soul. He knows basic commands, is house broken and is good with children.

Tucker is a full grown hound-beagle mix and weighs approximately 60 lbs.



### Bella

Bella is a Labrador Retriever mix and is approximately five years old. Bella loves to be loved, petted and talked to. In return, she freely shares her love and kisses.



### Riley

Riley is a 1 1/2 year old German Shepherd mix. He is very active and very friendly. He loves to play and (unfortunately) dig. He is ready for a new family that will love him and provide him with a large fenced in space that he cannot dig out of.



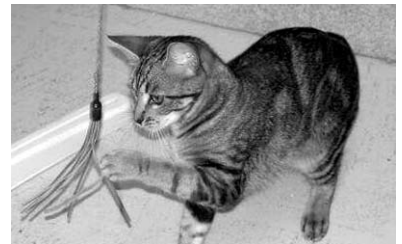
### Flame

Flame is approximately two years old. He is very shy but loves other cats. He is always sleeping next to and in between other cats in the cat house.



### Megyn

Megyn and her 3 siblings were rescued by the librarians at the Homossas Library. Megyn is now roaming freely in our cat house and biding her time until she has a family to love her.



### Tawny

Tawny is a friendly black and brown tabby who was turned in as a stray. We think she is about 6 months old. She has been recently spayed and has received her first shots. Come in and meet this charming kitty.

## Valentine's Day Luncheon

We held our annual volunteer appreciation luncheon on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2005 at the Cypress Creek Golf club in Sun City Center. Volunteers at C.A.R.E. worked over 5,000 hours in 2004 and helped care for the 220 animals that were adopted from the shelter last year. The luncheon was held in their honor.



## C.A.R.E. Volunteer Spotlight

By Betsy Hinderliter

Over the past two years as Volunteer Coordinator I have been privileged to meet and work with a tremendous group of committed, talented and caring volunteers who serve in a variety of positions. This year I will introduce you to some of our most dedicated and tireless volunteers.

### Meet Phyllis Lamoreux

Phyllis expressed an interest in volunteering with C.A.R.E. many months before she was finally in a position to make the commitment. Soon her initial commitment of one 5-hour shift a week to greet visitors and handle inquiries expanded to a minimum of two such shifts twice a week, plus the added responsibility of training all new office volunteers. In addition to these 10 hours at the shelter, Phyllis spends approximately 10-15 more hours each week offsite performing her Pet Web Coordinator duties.



C.A.R.E. Volunteer, Phyllis Lamoreux

With an interest in digital photography, strong writing skills, and an equally strong desire to find forever homes for homeless pets, Phyllis is the ideal Pet Web Coordinator. Careshelter.org (our website) and Petfinder.com (a national pet search website) are starting points for many people looking for a pet. Phyllis maintains the list of animals available for adoption by taking and uploading digital pictures of each and writing creative and descriptive blurbs to represent each animal's personality for posting on the web and other places. Also, during the week Phyllis reviews and responds to public inquiries about the shelter animals we receive on Careshelter.org. As a result of her tireless efforts C.A.R.E. has increased the number of our homeless animals adopted into new and loving homes.

Phyllis also has a busy life outside of C.A.R.E. She is a licensed Real Estate agent in Sun City Center, a member of the Sun City Dog Club, faithfully attends her Wednesday afternoon card game, and provides all kinds of assistance to many local families who are in need.

## Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) ...Continued From Page 2

If it takes up residence in the blood vessels of the kidney, then clinical signs reflecting kidney disease will be present. If it attacks blood vessels in the brain, then neurological signs will appear.

### Diagnosis

The disease has sometimes been divided into two forms—a wet form and a dry form. The wet form produces excessive body fluid in the abdomen or chest. The dry form does not produce this characteristic fluid. Examination of the fluid can only be an aid in trying to differentiate FIP from other diseases, but it is not diagnostic in itself.

FIP is perhaps the most overly misdiagnosed disease in feline vet medicine today. In a recent study in which veterinarians had all diagnosed FIP in their patients, only 18% of the patients were subsequently found to have the disease at necropsy (autopsy)! In other words, 82% of these cats/kittens were probably needlessly euthanized. Only a small percentage of cats testing positive for corona virus (approximately 5%) will develop FIP.

### Treatment

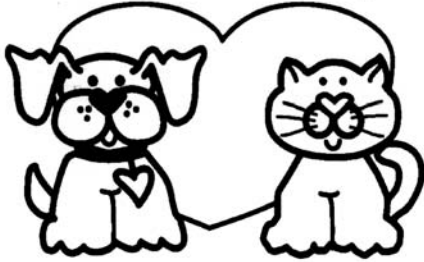
There is no successful treatment for FIP. There have been a few reported cases of spontaneous remission but they are extremely rare and I wonder if these cats actually had the disease. Once signs develop, the course of the disease is a few weeks to several months at best. There has been some success using medications which suppress the symptoms.

### Prevention

Several years ago a vaccine was produced to protect healthy cats against this terrible disease. Independent studies have not found the vaccine to be very effective. The mainstay of prevention remains limiting the exposure of lots of cats to each other—particularly isolating kittens from adult cats and from other litters of kittens. Good disinfecting of the premises is a must.

Research veterinarians are actively studying this serious disease. There is much we know about FIP but there is still much to be learned. There is certainly widespread confusion about the disease among lay people and even among some veterinarians. Stay tuned for the latest developments. Stay well.

# C.A.R.E.



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## Noel's Story

Pregnant with six puppies, Noel came to C.A.R.E. in November of 2003. After health checks and treatment her puppies were adopted but Noel remained here for another 11 months undergoing heartworm treatment and receiving a lot of love from her handlers before she, too, was finally adopted in October 2004. Unfortunately, her new owner fell on hard times, lost her house and had to give Noel up. Shortly after returning to C.A.R.E. for the second time, Noel spotted her new owner and it was love at first sight. Now Noel receives regular hugs and kisses while lounging around her new home. It's reported that Noel loves laying on the rug and receiving lots of attention while checking out household activities. Looks like the wait finally paid off, both for Noel and her new parents!



**For more great success stories, visit our website at [www.careshelter.org](http://www.careshelter.org).**