

MEWSINGS

The newsletter of Thundering Paws Animal Sanctuary

Volume 4, Number 1, March 2007

Welcome

Welcome to this edition of the Thundering Paws newsletter. Inside you'll find updates on some of the animals rescued by Thundering Paws, happy adoption stories, and more.

Do You Shop at Randall's? If So, You Can Help Thundering Paws!

We've tried to spread the word on this way of supporting Thundering Paws, yet our most ardent supporters are amazed when we tell them this.

You can link your Randall's card to Thundering Paws and we get 1% of all your purchases, with no cost to you. Our account number is 10927. You fill out an application at the Courtesy Booth, they give you a card which you scan each time you check out, and your grocery purchases will be recorded automatically to our account.

Each quarter, Randall's will send us a check for 1% of the total purchased by all our supporters. So far, with only two people doing this, we are able to afford a week's worth of cat food per quarter!

If 26 more people do this, it will buy food for all the cats! So please, sign up and let Randall's buy all the kitties' food! Then we'll be free to take care of more animals instead of raising money.

And thank you!



July Remembers

by Anne Zabolio

Our last newsletter featured an article on July, a cat who came to Thundering Paws feral, emaciated, and obviously quite ill. She had a wonderful sponsor, Jennifer Pospisil, who paid all her expenses until we could find out what was wrong with her: a glob of plastic in her stomach which interfered with her digestion to the point that she was literally starving to death while eating tons of food. Once it was removed, she gained 11 ounces in three days, and became the gorgeous, healthy—and still feral—creature that we all knew she could be. She lives here because we don't want her to do any more dumpster diving and ingesting plastic wrap!

Jennifer alerted Thundering Paws to July, and we went and trapped her to start this process. But the woman who used to feed her, and who told Jennifer about this pathetic cat, is Gloria Colvin, who came over here to volunteer on a recent Sunday. We pointed out July to Gloria who, after the initial denial— "That can't be July!

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That cat looks great!”—talked to July while she was working outside the screened porch where July often suns herself.

July was completely focused on Gloria, watching her work. Gloria began talking the baby talk that she used when she was the caretaker for July’s feral colony. And July, who never talks to us, began meowing in response to Gloria’s baby talk. July remembered. We trapped her on the first of July, 2004, hence her name, and July still remembers Gloria. Hardened cat trappers burst into tears when told this sweet story.

Tale of Two Sisters

by Anne Zabolio

Sean and Daniela came over to adopt a kitty. This in itself is unusual as we don’t advertise our whereabouts, but we felt that these people wouldn’t dump 40 animals on us, so we gave them the secret address. When I opened the door, Sean said, “Please see that my wife gets a cat!” Since I had already checked their references and there were tons of kitties from which to choose, I thought that would be pretty easy. It was. They chose beautiful Patricia, one of Amber’s calico kittens, took her home, named her Tatyana, and fell madly in love with her!



That left only one of Amber’s family at Thundering Paws (Amber herself having been adopted): the gorgeous and unusual looking Anna Star. Daniela was perusing the website a week or so later and noticed that only one of that family was still here. She called and said that she and Sean would like to include Anna Star in their family, too. Sean came and took

her home—where absolute war broke out!

Tatyana was NOT amused! She did not remember her sister or, if she did, remembered her as the one she always had to beg Amber, their mom, to make Anna Star stop looking at her, stop touching her, leave her alone! Tatyana had to share her first family with this horrid creature and now she was having to share her humans with her? NO WAY!

Sean and Daniela did everything I suggested. They did a few things I had not thought of but were good ideas. They spent plenty of time with both girls. Anna Star was petrified of Tatyana and hid behind the humans whenever she was faced with her sister. I asked advice of my other cat rescue friends.

A wonderful volunteer at another shelter suggested that we loan Sean and Daniela a cage to incarcerate first one sister and then the other until they got re-associated with one another. It worked like a charm. At last report, both girls were cuddled up on the bed, cleaning each other and purring. It doesn’t get any better than that



Emancipet in Dripping Springs

The Emancipet mobile spay/neuter clinic makes regular visits to Dripping Springs. Starting in April they will come to Dripping on the third Thursday of each month. Appointments are required. Find out more at the Emancipet web site at: www.emancipet.org

Goodsearch for Thundering Paws

by Kay Rolfes

Goodsearch lets you support charitable causes with no cost to you, for doing something that you do anyway—search the internet for information. We can earn a penny for each search done through Goodsearch and you get reliable search results because Goodsearch is powered by Yahoo!

Start by visiting www.goodsearch.com. Type “Thundering Paws” in the “Who do you Goodsearch for” box on the Goodsearch web site. Then click “Verify” and start searching.

How does it work? Search engines make most of their money from companies that pay an advertising fee when users click on links during a search. GoodSearch is different in that they developed a way to keep track and direct some of the advertiser money to charities. They are a fantastic organization doing a lot of good for many charities, now including Thundering Paws. For more information about Goodsearch, visit the list of frequently asked questions at: www.goodsearch.com/About.aspx

We hope that you will use GoodSearch as your main search engine from here on out, and will also pass this message on to your friends and family. The more people who use this, the more money is earned for Thundering Paws.

Volunteer Opportunities

by Kay Rolfes

We have lots of things that we can use your help with—cleaning and doing chores at the shelter, taking cats to adoption events, providing temporary foster homes, yard work and maintenance projects, tabling and fundraising. All activities include plenty of cat-petting opportunities. Come and join us, it’s fun! To volunteer, give Anne a call or contact us through our web site at: www.thunderingpaws.org



China Diaries

by Dave Harper

At Thundering Paws animal sanctuary, the opportunity to help improve the lives of our animals in big ways presents itself each and every day. You don't have to look for the opportunities; they almost come flying at you. Many sanctuary animals have been lost, abandoned, or given up for various reasons (sometimes not very good reasons). These animals often come to us hurt, or sick. This is where China the feral kitty comes in.

China lived in a feral cat colony for the first six months or so of her life, and was trapped as part of the trap-neuter (or spay)-return program that has been so effective in helping to limit the explosion of newborn cats in the region. Anne Zabolio, Director of Thundering Paws, realized from previous observation that China seemed sickly and extremely thin, and the vet who spayed China confirmed that she was indeed unhealthy. She was diagnosed with lymphocytic plasmacytic stomatitis, a terrible disease that causes extremely painful inflammation in the mouths of affected cats. It is so painful for these kitties to eat that they can starve to death if not treated. Anne could not bear to place this ill kitty back in the wild, where she would not survive long, and where her last days would be full of suffering. So China took up residence at Thundering Paws, where she seemed to improve over time with medication but not to the extent we had hoped.

Early January. Recently, Anne and the Thundering Paws volunteers noticed that China was eating less than she should, and was looking poorer in spite of the medication she had been on for quite some time. We concluded that drastic measures were needed to keep China going. We have all loved this kitty from the first day she came to Thundering Paws, even though she has never been able to show affection toward us, due to her feral nature. I've always had a particular affection for feral kitties, and China won my heart the first day she arrived back in the spring.

Rocky

by Anne Zabolio

Rocky was a stray cat, fed and cared for by a nice lady who couldn't bring him inside because her cat and Rocky did not get along. One day she noticed some neighborhood children tormenting Rocky. (I didn't ask what they were doing because I didn't want to know.) Rocky bit one of these children and was picked up by Round Rock Animal Control, (RRAC) taken to a kill shelter and observed for rabies. Angie, his former caretaker, began trying to find a shelter that would take him.

We responded to her plea and then began the stressful problem of getting him out in time! Thundering Paws is not licensed by the state to quarantine a cat for rabies because we have no veterinarian at the facility. RRAC would not release the cat to anyone but a licensed group, which is totally correct on their part. I was going out of town the next day, a Friday, for the weekend, and so was Angie. Rocky's time was running out on Monday. Everything that can go wrong always does so on a weekend.

Fortunately both Animal Trustees of Austin and Shadow Cats stepped up to the plate, willing and ready to spring Rocky. Our wonderful vet offered to keep him for the remainder of his quarantine. Angie and I both went out of town, completely confident that we could leave this kitty's fate in such competent hands. Rocky was sprung, taken to our vet, showed no signs of rabies, was vaccinated, examined, and brought to Thundering Paws.

He is a very large cat, who obviously has not been treated with the respect he deserves. He is still suspicious of our motives but is getting calmer and more loving the longer he stays with us. He does not like change, so we put him in a room that sees little chaos. Lately we have had to house four feral cats in cages temporarily in that room and Rocky voiced his objections to this situation at first, but has become willing to put up with it. He is a beautiful cat who certainly deserves a better life than he had before he came to Thundering Paws, and we are glad to give it to him.

China



I volunteered to take China to my vet (who seems to work miracles sometimes) to see if she could help. I also committed to letting China stay at my house for as long as she needs to during her recovery. The treatment for this condition often means having teeth removed, with a lot of followup medication.

On January 1st, 2007, China spent her first full day at my house. She settled into a comfy cage in a private room with her own cat bed, water, food, a toy mousie, and a litter box. She looked so thin and her fur was thin as well, but she still had the energy to give her usual hisses if she thought I was going to touch her. China has never been ferocious, but neither has she ever been what you might call friendly. I attempted to pet her the night she arrived at my house and she did tolerate it (sort of), although with a look on her face indicating “I’ll let you do this just once!”

In spite of the painful condition in her mouth, she ate some canned food as well as some dry food. This was quite an improvement, to which I attributed the quietness of her private room away from a lot of people and other animals. Although most Thundering Paws kitties love having the other kitties and people around them, China never really did.

The next day, China was eating even better, and seemed more tolerant of being petted. I found a very soft brush (the kind you can’t seem to find in the stores any more), and while she was being brushed, I thought I heard a little bit of soft purr-

ing. I know I did. Yet shortly thereafter, China was hissing up a storm and cringing at the idea of being touched. I’ve seen the same thing with other feral kitties who really don’t want to be feral. They can’t seem to make up their minds sometimes.

Over the next few days, China’s personality began changing dramatically. Each day, she allowed more petting and brushing, although she didn’t purr again for a while. But several times, she rolled on her side and got a tummy rub! Each time I thought “this can’t be happening.” But it was. China also continued eating better and better, and she seemed to be looking not quite as thin. Her energy level increased so that she was not sleeping as much, and she began making eye contact with me. To top it off, she started giving me “love eyes.” Every cat lover on the planet knows what that look is—when a kitty looks you in the eye, then slowly closes her eyes and, just as slowly, opens them again.

On Tuesday, January 2, China went to my vet, who concluded that she would need to be anesthetized so that they could do a thorough exam. My vet also indicated that China might need to have her teeth extracted; otherwise, she would probably not recover from the stomatitis. An appointment was scheduled for later in the week.

January 5th was China’s big surgery. They did remove her teeth, except for her front four teeth. My vet told me that her mouth was in terrible condition—very inflamed and infected. She couldn’t

understand how China could have been eating anything at all.

The next day, China was doing fine. One would never know that one day earlier she had major surgery. She was eating even better, not only canned food, but also dry kibbles. She just swallowed her food without chewing. Another big milestone for China was that I opened the door to her cage, left it open for good, and started feeding her on the floor of her private room. Without hesitation, she began jumping down out of the cage to enjoy her “savory salmon.” It didn’t bother her for me to be in the room when she was out of the cage, either! Previously, she would only let me pet her if she was in the cage, but that changed quickly.

Later that same day it was clear that China had her best day ever. She was eating anything I put in front of her, rolling over for her tummy rubs, and, get this... she started purring very loudly when being petted. If humans could purr, well, you can imagine how I felt. I’ve told my friends at Thundering Paws that these are the kinds of things that make being born a great thing.

By January 8th I could really see China’s weight gain. She even had a little belly on her. Her fur looked much better too, and I saw her grooming herself for the first time when I came in from the office in the evening. She hardly resembled the kitty from only a week ago!

But along with this great progress has come some bad news. My vet called me with a report on China. She said that China’s blood test results came back indicating an “overwhelming” infection in her body, likely from the stomatitis. The blood sample was taken right before her surgery. The question in my mind is “why was China eating so well, even before she had her teeth extracted?” Fortunately, when China had the surgery last week, she received a powerful antibiotic, and has been on a daily round of antibiotic (Zithromax, to be specific). So I’m still optimistic that she will make a full comeback. For a fleeting moment at the vet’s office I wasn’t so sure, though.



Athena and China

When I thanked the head vet for “saving another Thundering Paws kitty,” he said “well, I don’t know if we can, but we’re trying.” I think he may have been surprised that she had eaten well and had gained weight, considering the extent of the effects of the stomatitis.

By January 10th or so, China started raising her tail slightly for the first time to greet me. That’s always a good sign, and a pretty amazing one for a feral cat!

As of January 11th, China continues to improve and become more tame. She still needs to gain weight but I would bet she’s put on a pound or maybe two in only one week. She reached a new milestone tonight when she played with streamers on the end of a rod. It was the first time I had ever seen her play! It wasn’t just a little bit of play; she was having a great time (and so was I).

Since last week, China has decided that she much prefers dry food over canned food, so getting the antibiotic in her is a challenge now. But I was able to squirt it in her mouth this morning (much to her displeasure) so she’ll still be getting her medication.

Late January. Since the last update China kitty has continued to make incredible progress in getting well and becoming more tame. She has not returned to eating canned food with her antibiotic mixed in, but she will gobble down as much dry food as I give her without ever seeming to get full. With-

out her teeth, she sort of inhales her dry food! As for her antibiotic (and a steroid she has to take for a while), she has become much more tolerant of my squirting it in her mouth, probably because it is mixed with salmon juice. She typically runs from me when I approach her at medication time (I guess she knows my body language) but is very compliant once I start to give it. She’s also very forgiving and quickly resumes purring and talking after being medicated.

Last night was another huge milestone in China’s progress. Remember, this cat was feral only three weeks ago. At least she acted feral back then. Well, last night I thought I would see what would happen if I made a bed for myself on the floor of her room (there are no beds in there, and the tile floor is hard and cold!). I got a bunch of blankets and pillows, turned off the lights, lay down, and waited to see what would happen. It wasn’t but a few minutes before she jumped down from her perch on top of the scratching post, burrowed into the blankets, and cuddled right up to me. Then, she rolled over on her side, braced herself against me with her legs, and started “making biscuits,” all the while purring about as loud as a cat can purr. This went on for quite a while until I got to where I couldn’t get comfortable in my makeshift bed on the floor. I went on to my own bed, and when I came to visit her first thing this morning, she was ready for more attention (but only after her food arrived and was eaten, of course).

China had a checkup this morning, and her vet was really pleased with how China’s mouth has been healing. I told her how sweet China’s disposition has become but China’s feral nature came out during the exam. I told the vet I wish she could see China’s new personality, but I would be surprised if China ever shows her friendly side at the vet. That’s even rare for some kitties who have never been feral.

February. Since the last update on China the formerly feral kitty, she has made even further amazing progress. Her weight is up to what it should be for a kitty her size (between 7 and 8 pounds) and she looks so different than she did when she was sick.

Every one of my other cats likes China, but China and Athena (also from Thundering Paws) have formed a very special friendship. The day they met, they ran toward each other and started walking up and down the hall, tails entwined.

In the book (more like a novel) on Best Friends Animal Society, there’s a description of two kitties who walked together with their tails entwined. I honestly wondered if this would really happen with two animals, but having seen it myself with China and Athena, I know it happens.

China has done so well that the director of Thundering Paws (Anne Zabolio) and I agreed that it would be best for China to be fostered long term at my house. I can’t imagine China leaving, since she has come such a long way and is so happy living here with her pal Athena!

Newsletter Contributors

Pictures contributed by Kay Rolfes, Sean and Daniela, and Dave Harper.

Formatting, art selection, and layout by Kay Rolfes.

Editing by Anne Zabolio and Kay Rolfes.

Our Direct Deposit Form

AAAKKK! GAAAKKKK! HELP! [Choke] YEOW! HISS! WE NEED MONEY! Oh yeah, that's nothing new. I can stop panicking, because we haven't been kicked out, starved, or even had the electricity cut off...yet. You can help by sending money.

Better yet, won't you let us draft \$7.14 or more from your bank account monthly, using the form below? In this way we are building an operating budget. It takes close to \$6000 a month to run the sanctuary. One wonderful donor—my mother—provided our largest support for three years and she can no longer afford to do so. Right now, we have pledged donations of only about \$500, and we make an additional \$600 “tabling,” which is begging money outside of a sympathetic establishment, like Bookpeople, Mother's Café, or The Blue Willow in Wimberley. Our benefits make approximately \$4000 a year. That we come up with the rest is miraculous! To do so, we wrack nerves which could better be used to save animals. So please become one of our regular contributors. You will save many, many lives.

Thundering Paws

A Program of Central Texas Animal Sanctuary

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Authorization for Direct Deposit (ACH Deposit) of Monthly Donations

I authorize *Thundering Paws Animal Sanctuary* to initiate variable* entries into my account described below:

Account Number _____ Checking _____ or Savings _____

Name and address of Bank, Credit Union, or other financial institution _____

Name on Account _____ Telephone (____) _____

Address _____

Amount \$ _____ Draft funds on the 5th of the month _____ or the 20th of the month _____.

Signature _____ Date _____

This authority is to remain in full force and effect until Thundering Paws Animal Sanctuary has received written notification from an authorized individual of its termination in such time and manner as to afford Thundering Paws a reasonable opportunity to act upon it.

Please attach a voided check.

* The word “variable” in this instance pertains to the ability of Thundering Paws Animal Sanctuary to draft monies out of the above account and, if a cancellation order is received after a monthly draft has been taken, to refund that donation back into the account.

To cancel this authorization, please send a copy of this form with the word “CANCEL” prominently written across it to the above address.

Thundering Paws Animal Sanctuary thanks you for your tax deductible donations. You will receive a yearly summary of your donations in January.