

# Mews & News

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RIVERSIDE CAT HOSPITAL



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## Celebrating Our First Year!

It's hard to believe it, but we've checked the calendar, and it's true. We will be celebrating our 1-year anniversary on September 6, 2007! We'd like to thank everyone who has helped to get our clinic off to a great start! All of our clients who have visited us in our first year have been truly wonderful in making us feel welcome in the community.

In addition to getting the regular

day-to-day workings of the clinic in good order, we were able to finish off our playroom for boarding kitties and finish up with landscaping improvements to the outside of our building. We have also been able to start working with the Ingham County Animal Shelter to help them get their cats spayed and neutered before adoption.

Thanks for getting us off to a great start!



*Thanks to everyone who has helped us to reach our 1-year anniversary!*

## Inappropriate Urination—a Frustrating Feline Problem

Despite the cat's reputation for fastidious cleanliness, house-soiling is the number one behavior problem of our feline friends. Many cats are turned outside, given away, or even put to sleep for this behavior problem.

Urinating in odd places can mean either a behavior problem or a medical problem, and sometimes the difference is not clear cut. Cats often urinate in unusual places to get their owner's attention when they are feeling unwell. Some cats have purely behavioral motivations without illness. Some cats simply have litter box aversion.

### Should the Approach Be Medical?

*Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease* (also called "Feline Idiopathic Cystitis") involves straining to urinate, genital licking/discomfort, bloody urine, and often urinating in unusual places. There are many causes for this syndrome, including psychological stress. It may be hard to determine if a cat urinating outside the litter box has this syndrome and it is important to observe for the signs listed in addition to inappropriate urination. Cats with this syndrome often (but not always) receive a medically oriented approach addressing inflammation in the bladder. Your

veterinarian should evaluate your cat before you conclude that the problem is behavioral and you embark on a long-term behavioral approach.

### Urine Marking/ Territorial Anxiety

Cats use urination and defecation as a means of communication with other cats. By leaving their mark, they are telling other cats "I was here on this date at this time." Other cats may then know this land has been claimed and may act accordingly. Psychological stress, such as the presence of other cats, prolonged absence of the owner (who is usually

*(continued on page2)*



## Feline Housesoiling (cont. from pg.1)



If your cat is having trouble with using the litterbox, a trip to the vet is in order.



viewed as a parent by the pet cat), or other problems may create a need for a cat to reassert a territorial claim. Signs that this kind of stress is causing the problem might include some or all of the following:

1. Spraying on an upright surface.
2. Urinating in the litter box sometimes and sometimes urinating elsewhere (as opposed to never using the box at all).
3. Defecating in the cat box but urinating outside the box.
4. The cat (either male or female) is not neutered.
5. There has been a change at home leading the cat to feel he/she must reassert his/her territorial boundaries. (Examples: a new pet has been added, a new roommate has been added, a recent move to a new home, remodeling, the owner recently returned from a vacation, other neighborhood cats are visible or smellable in the yard.)
6. The area marked is near a door or window.

7. The problem did not start until new furniture was added or the furniture was rearranged.

8. The cat appears to be responding to a punishment for another behavior.

9. The area marked involves the owner's bed or laundry.

10. The area marked is the same each time.

If any of these scenarios seem to fit, anti-anxiety medications may be tremendously helpful if the source of stress cannot be identified or cannot be altered.

Odor eliminators should be used in marked areas to discourage the cat's tendency to return to these areas.

### Feliway

Recently a new alternative treatment has become available in the approach to territorial marking. Feliway spray is a spray for the area rather than a medication administered to the cat. The spray consists of feline pheromones of the type that cats deposit when performing facial marking (i.e., rubbing their face/checks on

things to scent mark). These pheromones have a general calming effect that helps neutralize the urge to mark.



If Feliway spray is used, it cannot be expected to work if it is casually used. It should be used twice daily for at least one month before determining if it is effective. Alternatively, a plug-in diffuser version is available, with refills lasting 1 month.

It is important to note that neutering is the first step in addressing this problem. Hormonal motivations to mark territory are potent and must be removed from the picture.

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Tune into our next newsletter for helpful litterbox tips!

What's  
in a  
name?

## Serving All of Your Cat's Healthcare Needs

Many people think that because we are a "hospital", we only provide care for cats who are ill or in an emergency. While it is true that we do handle those types of cases, we'd like you to know that we're also here for your cat's health

needs year-round! In fact, the majority of patients that we see on a day-to-day basis are visiting for health maintenance examinations or for management of a chronic condition. In addition, we spend lots of time caring for kittens and getting them up

to speed with all their healthcare needs!

So, rest easy knowing that we are here for you when your cat is sick, but we are also dedicated to keeping him happy and healthy! Call us today to schedule your cat's next wellpet visit.

## Ask Izzy

Izzy, our Resident Cat, likes to help out around the clinic by answering questions from our patients and their families. If you have a question for Izzy, you can send it to her via mail, or e-mail from our website, [www.RiversideCatHospital.com](http://www.RiversideCatHospital.com), and click on the *contact us* link.

Dear Izzy,

My cat has really big paws, and seems to have more toes than she should. Have you ever heard of this? Is it common?

Signed, *Curious*

Dear Curious,

It sounds like your cat has a condition called *polydactyly*. Cats with this condition have extra toes and/or claws, affecting just the front feet, or all four feet. It is not a problem for the cat to have extra toes. In fact, it is just another thing that makes her special! But you do need to be careful to check the toenails periodically to see if they need to be clipped. Sometimes the extra claws are

between toes, or on a "thumb", where they won't be worn down, and can grow into the toe pad. So, they need to be trimmed at least monthly.

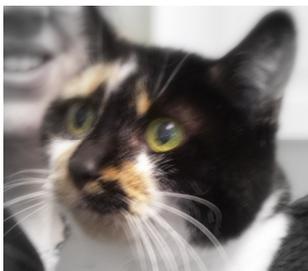
Polydactyly is not a common condition, perhaps 1-2% of cats are polydactyl. Thanks for the question, and enjoy your special kitty!

Signed, *Izzy*



## In Memoriam

In memory of those kitties who have left us in the past year— They give so much and demand so little in return.



*Dinah Pike  
Yoda Bates  
Zero Morse  
Harley Corbett  
Earl Deans  
Flower Kenney  
Hobbes Caswell  
Madigan Newhard*

*Moses Long  
Musty Leshner  
Nova Deatricks  
Pumpkin Lansberry  
Rumpleteaser Murphy  
Sylvia Berry  
Toshimomo Kelly  
Abner Corning*

*Hear our humble prayer,  
O God,  
for our friends, the animals,  
especially for those who are suffering;  
for any that are lost or deserted  
or frightened or hungry.*

*We entreat for them all  
Thy mercy and pity,  
and for those who deal with them,  
we ask a heart of compassion  
and gentle hands and kindly words.*

*Make us, ourselves,  
to be true friends to animals  
and so to share  
the blessings  
of the merciful.*

*Albert Schweitzer*

## Employee Spotlight

Dr. Kerry Lewis is a 1999 graduate of the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, she worked with cat hospitals in Kalamazoo and Brighton before opening Riverside Cat Hospital in 2006.

Dr. Lewis lives



in East Lansing with her husband, Andrew. Their children Gavin, Elizabeth, and Iain attend East Lansing Public Schools. When she is not taking care of cats, Dr. Lewis enjoys traveling with her family, camping, reading, gardening, and classic movies.

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**PEOPLE AND PETS**  
 .....  
 • Kudos to Riverside client Abby Fairbank! She had  
 • the wonderful idea of using her 8th birthday to  
 • raise donations for a local cat rescue. Instead of  
 • gifts for herself, she asked her guests to bring a  
 • donation for the cat rescue! Way to go, Abby!  
 • .....  
 • .....

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AS MUCH AS YOU DO.*

**Visit us online!**  
**[www.RiversideCatHospital.com](http://www.RiversideCatHospital.com)**

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## Fall Open House! Sunday, September 16 from 2-4pm

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our open house on Sunday, September 16, 2007 from 2-4pm. We have accomplished a lot in our first year, and we hope you can join us to celebrate!

Join us for a tour of the clinic, meet our team members, and share a snack. Bring your cat for a complimentary

nail trim. Register for a chance to win free boarding or health services for your cat. Or just come to meet other cat lovers!

