

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Do you have more than one cat? If there is a problem regarding cats, do you know where the problem came from?

At the Northwoods Shelter, Lisa Lew our ‘cat woman’ is attuned to the behavior of each cat. Now at night most of the cats are in their own cage and a few of the long-term visitors have free range of the play areas so identifying where the problem is, is a little easier than a house of free ranging cats. Lisa, Angie Larson and their fabulous crew of volunteers continually watch for the slightest change in behavior: Did Callie not get up the minute she saw me, did Cleo not eat her food from the night before, does Meadow’s hair look different, is there fluid in Susie’s eye, is Reno’s stool different than yesterday, did I hear a cough? It is the little things that are important to pay attention to – when the little things are immediately addressed, big things may be prevented. This is so true with our pets in our homes.



Cat Fancy had an article entitled “Who Done It?” on March 2007 – this is an old issue but possibly a current problem. The article addressed the issue of a full house of cats and determining which cat was having problems. When cats vomit and you are within ear range of the act – rush to see who is having trouble. If that is not possible, sometimes you can tell by the content of the vomit. For instance, some cats prefer dry food, while others eat canned. Hairballs contain more obvious clues, such as the color of the fur. Sometimes you can tell who did it by where it happened. Some cats vomit only in a corner; others need plenty of room for the deed. Others move backward while vomiting so as to affect a larger area. If you don’t know who did it – check their gums for fur.

If an accident involves bowel movement, check the tail area for bloody poop or dried tapeworms stuck to the britches. While performing scoop duty twice daily check the contents of the litter box closely. You can isolate a cat for 24 or more hours, one at a time to determine the culprit that is not using the litter box. If there is no improper urinating or defecating during that time, then you may have your culprit.

We have never done the following, but the article suggests putting very finely chopped colored rubber bands in one cat’s wet cat food and examining the stool and if that cat isn’t using the litter box you know who the problem is. You can give different colors to each cat, log the colors and begin to problem solve. If the problem is urination, they suggest adding fluorescein to individual cats’ water or give orally to discover who urinates outside of the box. Fluorescein-marked urine glows a bright green in ultraviolet light. You can only do one at a time with this type of detective work.

Several products can help you narrow the field of suspects before resorting to mass urine analysis. For example, there are litter products that include a blood indicator that can alert owners to an unhealthy urine pH or indicate the presence of blood in the cat’s urine.

That cat needs to go directly to the vet. Vets may be able to recommend specific products.

Here are a list of warning signs that your cat may have a health problem and not a behavioral problem: changes in eating habits; not eating, dropping food, sudden preference for canned food. 2. Increased water consumption, 3 normally outgoing cat suddenly hiding or normally shy cat hanging out in the open, 4 Biting, 5. Sudden weight loss or gain, 6 shaking head or scratching ears, 7. Straining when using the litter box, with no stool or urine produced. 8. Tenderness to your touch.

There are some basics regarding cats that aren't using their boxes that should also be checked. 1. Are there enough boxes for each cat? 2. Do you change the litter frequently enough? 3. Have you moved the liter boxes? 4. Have you changed litter? 5. Is there a new cat in the house? 6. A new family member of any kind? 7. Is their new turmoil in your home? 8. Have you been gone more than usual?

If the problem is physical – see you vet immediately. If it is mental/emotional problem work on solving the problem and you can ask your vet for guidance too.

Dates to save:

- May 28 – Summer Sizzle – Dining for Cats and Dogs – Lynn's Custom Meats and Catering – Highway 63 N in Hayward – 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- June 3 – Purple Cat Van – Free Spay and neuter for cats of fixed and low-income families and for feral cats. Call NHS from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. to schedule an appointment – 715-634-5394.
- July 25 – Lakeview Golf and Pizza Car Show – 11 a.m.to 2 p.m.
- September 12 – NHS and OCSA Dog Walk and Ice Cream Social – NHS Shelter – Noon to 2 p.m.
- October 6 – 10th – NHS On-line Auction sponsored by Kubarek Auction House