



[http://www.seattlepi.com/local/409028\\_cats06.html](http://www.seattlepi.com/local/409028_cats06.html)



These kittens were waiting someone to adopt them Wednesday at the Seattle Animal Shelter. Staff there has seen an increase in the number of surrendered cats and kittens. (Joshua Trujillo / seattlepi.com)

## Area shelters crawling with kitties

Thursday, August 6, 2009

Last updated 7:51 a.m. PT

By **CASEY MCNERTHNEY**  
SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF

Chloe has been hanging out in Interbay for three months now. She's a talkative 5-year-old -- timid, but affectionate. Says so right on her Seattle Animal Shelter info sheet.

Dozens of potential adopters have come to visit Chloe and her neighbors -- Abigale, Lily, Emily and Betsy among them. But so far, no one has taken the cats home. And they're not alone.

This year, 623 cats and kittens have been surrendered at the Seattle Animal Shelter -- an increase of 4 percent from the same period last year, staff said. The Seattle Humane Society has received an additional 400 cats during that same period this year, CEO Brenda Barnette said.

"We've had a lot more cats than we've ever had," she said. "But we're doing something about it."

Saturday the Humane Society is hosting **Catapalooza**, advertised as the most-meowed-about event of the year. (Really.) Seven groups are bringing cats to the event, held Saturday and Sunday at 13212 S.E. Eastgate Way in Bellevue.



zoom

Joshua Trujillo / seattlepi.com

Chloe, a 5-year-old cat, was surrendered by her former owner in May. She has been waiting for someone to adopt her at the Seattle Animal Shelter, which has seen an increase in the number of surrendered cats and kittens.

Also on Saturday, the Seattle Animal Shelter is having an [adoption event](#) at the Rainier Community Center, 4600 38th Ave. S., from noon to 3 pm.

Last week at a similar event in Phinney Ridge, about half of the 26 kittens available for adoption returned to the shelter.

"That never happens," said Kara Main-Hester, the shelter's volunteer coordinator.

Seattle Animal Shelter staff said they're not at the point where they euthanize adoptable animals. Animals put down are those too sick to help or that are dangerous, she said.

The Seattle Humane Society doesn't have time limits for cats it takes in -- one reason Barnett suspects the number of drop-offs has increased at the private, nonprofit organization.

She said staff will take cats "even if they're old and ugly," and eventually find them homes.

"If something is wrong with it, an eye needs to be removed or a leg needs to be removed, we'll do it," Barnett said.

Occasionally some animals, such as aggressive dogs or ones with severe illnesses, are euthanized. But the Humane Society's save rate is more than 91 percent, Barnett said.

Apparently word has gotten around. This year the total number of cats and kittens handled by staff is more than 2,480. That's an increase of more than 900 from the same time period last year, she said.

As of Wednesday the Seattle Animal Shelter, located in Interbay, had 337 cats and kittens. Most were ready for adoption, though some are so young volunteers have to bottle-feed them every four hours.

Main-Hester believes the increase in surrendered cats is related to the struggling economy.

Before, when a cat had a litter of kittens, people could find friends who could take in one of the animals.


"But if 10 percent of your friends are out of work, they can't take in a kitten," she said Wednesday. "We've seen a real slowdown in the number of adoptions."

The latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has the unemployment rate in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue region as 9.3 percent -- the same as the state.

That's bad news for the white kitten who was brought to the shelter Saturday after being found alone in Phinney Ridge. He doesn't have a name yet, and neither does the black-and-white kitten in a cage next to him.

That kitten, who looks the model for Alley Cat brand food, also was found wandering the streets of Phinney Ridge last weekend.



 Joshua Trujillo / seattlepi.com

This kitten, a male Siamese mix, was found Saturday in Phinney Ridge. It's one of several cats at the Seattle Animal Shelter, which has seen an increase in the number of surrendered cats and kittens.

"People just keep bringing them in," Main-Hester.

Hopefully, she said, people will bring them home.

**WEEKEND ADOPTION EVENTS Seattle Animal Shelter adoption event:** Noon to 3 p.m. at the Rainier Community Center, 4600 38th Ave. S. Get more information [here](#).

**Catapalooza:** Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the [Seattle Humane Society](#), 13212 S.E. Eastgate Way in Bellevue.

---

*Casey McNerthney can be reached at 206-448-8220 or [caseymcnerthney@seattlepi.com](mailto:caseymcnerthney@seattlepi.com). Follow his Twitter feed at [twitter.com/mcnerthney](https://twitter.com/mcnerthney).*

© 1998-2009 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*