

# **"Please Understand Me" says Kitty**

**by Cheryl Wicks, Sammie's Friends Animal Shelter**

**Cats are cats. We are people. We mostly take the world in through sight and sound. Cats experience the world through scent. New born kittens will crawl back to the same nipple on Mama because they recognize the scent. If you pull the kittens off and bathe mama's tummy the kittens become confused.**

**So much of cat behavior is related to smell and their sense of territory. Their sense of territory can be mama's nipple, other cats, dogs and people in the household, objects and furniture that are in the house they live in.**

**Cats are territorial, but so are we. We put locks on doors, set up alarms and build fences. We consider this normal human behavior and we do it to have a sense of security. When a cat expresses his territoriality we get upset and think the cat is being spiteful.**

**The most important thing you must do when you bring a kitty home is help her adjust to her territory. The cat will be stressed because she is moving to a new territory. The cat may express this by hiding. There are things you can do to make the adjustment easier. The smaller the area to begin with the quicker kitty will adjust. Go to a quiet room, put the kennel down with an open door; do not force kitty to come out. If kitty jumps out and hides under the bed; wait for kitty to come to you, do not force. This may take days or in some cases even weeks.**

**Put a litter box close to where kitty is hiding. Put food and water near by but not too close to the litter. Set up scratching posts and toys. Stay in the room for a bit. You can try sitting on the floor reading a book and leaving some treats near you. Don't take it personally if kitty doesn't leap at the chance to sit in your lap and purr.**

**If it looks like kitty has come out during the night leave some treats not far from where kitty is hiding. As kitty takes the treats move them further away from kitty's hiding place each day until kitty becomes familiar with the scents of her territory. Some kitties will progress rapidly, others slowly. They are all individuals like we are. Kitties will respond to treats and patience. They will retreat punishment, even more than dogs and people do. They are small in comparison to us and the world doesn't look safe.**

**I found a stray cat in my neighborhood that I fed outside for six months before I could catch him. It was a long road, but I was richly rewarded. I have been loved and loved people, dogs, horses and cats. I have never been absolutely totally and unconditionally loved and adored by anyone the way Putter loved me. Who wouldn't want that?**

**I love you Putter!**