

From the Desks of Michael and Karen Budkie, S.A.E.N's Founders



**It isn't about what is easy – it is about what is right.
This is our way of life personally and professionally.**

Last fall, while at a rural rest area on a return trip from visiting our daughter in Florida, two adult cats appeared near our car - they must have known that we are animal people. Since the cats would not come near us, we checked to see if anyone was giving them food and fresh water. That is when we learned from the rest area staff that one of the cats had three kittens about two months old.

A rest area is no place for cats to live especially this one which is located in the Osceola National Forest and home to some fairly inhospitable wildlife. Our minds were filled with two thoughts – these cats needed our help and there was no one else. Also, if we did nothing, these cats would be left to reproduce uncontrollably and many of them could die horribly -- either killed by a car or eaten by a wild animal.

We were confronted with a choice. The easiest thing to do was simply to drive away. The feline population in our home did not need to be increased, but these cats were clearly in danger. On this trip, after lingering in the rest area for hours, we were able to rescue the three kittens and vowed to try to help the other cats, too.

On a subsequent trip in January, we stopped again at this same rest area and were able to rescue the mother cat, too. She had learned to beg for food from people who stopped at the rest area. Karen distracted her with food so that Michael could grab her from behind. Unfortunately, before we could get her into the carrier, she was able to get a hold of Michael a couple of times and scratch him, too (and of course, she would have to have extra toes which mean extra claws - ouch!).

Michael is all healed now. All three of the kittens, Trudi, Florrie, and Penny, and their mother, Osceola, are all spayed and getting acquainted with each other again and the other cats in our lives. Check out the photo album on Michael's personal facebook page which outlines the rescue of the kittens and their mother. We felt that we did the right thing, because not only had we saved three kittens and their mother, but we had prevented them from increasing the feral cat population.

It would have been much easier to have simply driven away last fall without the kittens and to not have returned again to rescue their mother. But it isn't about what is easy - it is about what is right. These cats had done nothing wrong and did not deserve a life of abandonment.

This is exactly the same for the over 25 million animals in laboratories, too. They also have done nothing wrong and do not deserve a life of abandonment and deprivation. They are in need, and it is up to US.

It is up to us to expose how much pain these animals endure, to reveal the negligence and incompetence which causes even more suffering and death. It is up to us to see that criminal labs pay the price for their heinous acts. We MUST NOT condemn these animals to abandonment, suffering, and death in secret, with no one to fight for them. We MUST stand up for these animals, because they have no one else.

Today, as we look on as Trudi, Florrie, Penny, and Osceola are playing, we cringe remembering what happens to their relatives in labs, or to dogs, rabbits, rats, mice, primates, or goats who share the same fate. This feline family never fails to remind us that we must continue our crusade until every single animal is freed!

Michael Karen

Your donation of \$25, \$50, or \$100 will help us to fight the cruelty and abuse that is intrinsic to animal experimentation. Special gifts of \$250, \$500, or \$1000 will enable us to target specific animal facilities that blanket the U.S.

Trudi, Florrie, Penny, and Osceola thank you for your gift!