

ISLAND SCENE

Must love cats



Sitting in the "kitten room", Linda Levine, the shelter manager, has been volunteering with For the Love of Cats for about two years. "You do get attached to them," Levine said. *Kristin Poppenhouse/Staff*

Kitten room is 'free therapy' for shelter worker Linda Levine

By Kristin Poppenhouse

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Hearing a cat cry, Linda Levine knows which cat is making the noise.

Levine is the manager of For the Love of Cats, a no-kill shelter on Marco Island. With 17 cats in the shelter, she's familiar with them all.

"This is my love," she said. "My husband says I'm here more than I'm home."

She's been a Marco resident for three and a half and a volunteer for the

shelter a little more than two years.

She joined them because she admires what they do.

I don't see the need to euthanize," she said. "You can control the population by spaying and neutering."

She grew up with animals and has always had a love for them. She also learns from her daughter, who is a veterinarian.

Levine helps with the cleaning, feeding and "spa treatment" of the cats, which includes a bath and pedicure. She monitors the cats' health, trains new volunteers and manages the other volunteers to make sure

everything is done correctly.

The organization also works closely with local veterinarians to care for the animals.

Levine enjoys helping the animals get to homes where they are going to be loved. "It's really terrific to see them adopted," she said. "It's hard for us to say so long to some of them. You love some more than others."

Levine volunteers about 10 hours a week at the shelter, but she stops by for quick visits, too. "I like to just come over and just check in to see what's going on." She admits that after a stressful day she goes to the "kitten room" to relax because it's like getting free therapy.