



Catalyst for Cats

A Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Altering the Future for Ferals

NEWSLETTER

PO Box 30331 • Santa Barbara, CA 93130 • Phone: (805) 685-1563 • Email: catalyst4cats@cox.net

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Our Mission:

As a feral cat organization our primary purpose is to spay and neuter feral and abandoned cats, and to socialize and find homes for rescued kittens. These services are designed to address the feline overpopulation problem and to prevent cruelty to animals by preventing the birth of unwanted and uncared for cats and kittens.

From the Founder

It's more than numbers, but TNR does the job

I doubt anyone would deny the breeding capability of cats. Every spring it seems they breed like rabbits. Charts show how a mating pair and all of their offspring — with each female producing two litters per year at a survival rate of 2.8 kittens — can produce 370,000 felines in seven years.

I find these numbers difficult to comprehend and in truth, they do not play out because of the high mortality rate, at least in our experiences.

Throughout the years we have encountered large colonies that had existed for over 25 years. The numbers were closer to perhaps a hundred or so animals, not thousands. These colonies existed in a large recreational area, a high school, a trailer park, and in a widely spread-out industrial area.

We stabilized them, and due to natural attrition, only one colony exists today. This is proof that our program of trap, neuter and return (TNR) effectively reduces the numbers of unwanted kittens in a humane manner. The adults were loved and led happy, healthy lives for many years after being TNR'd. Some were even taken home by their caregivers when they became “senior

cats,” spending their final days off the streets being pampered.

Recently we trapped 25 cats at a Santa Maria horse ranch, the result of just two pregnant females dropped off two or three years ago. Fed twice a day (most ferals are fed once a day), they were all healthy. Of the 14 males captured, three had sustained abscesses from fighting over the females. Six of the 10 females were already pregnant, with the remaining four probably not far behind.



Off The Streets: This precious kitten beat the brutal odds of kitten season in Santa Maria last year and found a loving home with the help of Catalyst and the staff at San Roque Pet Hospital.

With an average of about four per litter and assuming a 2.8 kitten survival rate, it would mean 28 kittens this spring alone at that site. This would be repeated with the following summer litter, adding another 28 kittens. The 56 kittens from these two breeding cycles plus the 25 adults would total 81 felines by the end of this season. In accordance with the feline population charts, in this two–three year time frame there should be over 300 cats instead. Obviously the chart makers are just crunching numbers, not working in the field.

“What really happens?” one asks. Consider this: in

Continued on page 3

In Appreciation

We are very grateful to those who participate in our goal of preventing feline overpopulation. Unless you are “into” animal rescue no one understands the amount of time and effort our volunteers contribute. Our volunteers are the ones who “make it happen.”

It is a true labor of love and often personal sacrifice, and we thank you all enormously. The reward is the satisfaction they get from helping the animals in whatever way they can. We rely on you, our volunteers, who give from the heart. Some are mentioned, but all are appreciated.

We are thankful for the amount of cooperation within the rescue groups this past season, despite the difficulties we all face.

C.A.R.E 4PAWS – for help with spay/neuter services in Buellton and Santa Barbara.

RESQCATS – for sponsoring spay/neuters for tame kittens and help with adoptions.

Barbara Hilaire – for her unwavering and generous support of our program.

The Santa Barbara Humane Society – for their assistance in adopting out our older felines.

Belinda Burns – for continuing to organize the feeders for the Santa Ynez Valley colonies. They are **Joe Thomas, Jill Whiting, Pete Nicklin, Joann Hammond, Gabby DeSevilla, Susan Kagy, Judy Bates, Norma Grey, Pat Fleming, Tina Anderson, Lori Tempus, and Lynn Brown.**

Even though working full time, **Debbie Merry** manages to trap, and she also recently fostered a feral cat while it recuperated from having an eye removed.

Fostering feral kittens is a vital part of *Catalyst for Cats*’ work. Our kittens are the offspring of feral moms and because of lack of contact with humans, they must be taught to trust them in order to be adopted. Once socialized, they make wonderful pets.

Debbie Walker – for fostering a litter of orphaned kittens.

Tina Hawkins family – for socializing several litters.

Marci Kladnik wears many hats: Foster Coordinator, foster, writer of a biweekly column for the Santa Maria Times and the Santa Ynez Valley News.

Donna Boggs – for trapping a feral mom and rescuing her kittens when she heard they were threatened (by a human).

Free-roaming, but not so feral, Tommy has the best of both worlds

Tommy is another of our ferals-gone-semi-tame. A big, beautiful Siamese, stuck in a cage so long that he was going stir crazy, he was let out by the kind-hearted Monica and Lavi Gonzales to roam their yard.

He began claiming parts of this yard, even chasing off some of the resident cats which had been there long before he had. Due to this, our Foster Coordinator, Marci Kladnik, decided to relocate him to her backyard as she was in need of a gopher hunter.

Apparently Tommy didn’t forgive her for caging him again, so as soon as the door was opened, he climbed a tree and disappeared over the fence into a neighbor’s yard. Marci hoped he would come back to her, but he prefers to remain aloof.

He is spotted regularly hunting in an empty lot behind Marci, and is fed by the neighbor. He is one happy cat these days, but Marci’s yard is still full of gophers!



Checking In: *Though he refuses to be fenced in, Tommy comes by to visit the yard he was hired to patrol for gophers.*

Tigger's story is a cliffhanger with a happy ending

Tigger was trapped as a feral kitten, but the Pied Pipers of Santa Maria (Monica and Lavi Gonzales) tamed him into a sweet and loving kitten. The only problem was he tested leukemia positive—normally a death sentence, and we literally feared for his life. Marci Kladnik, our board member told his story in her bimonthly column (which appears in the Santa Maria Times and Santa Ynez Valley News). Shortly after publication, we received a call from a woman in Buellton wishing to adopt the kitten. He has since been renamed Dude, and is now living a life of pampered luxury. His new friend writes...

My [formerly] feral cat, Dude, has progressed from a lifeless, caged-for-months, forlorn young fellow to an energetic, loving man in my life who plays fetch and knows his colors. He prefers the green ball. He will watch TV with me, especially those featuring an animal. Yes, he is spoiled, if, as my one grandgirl remarks, "Every time we come over, he has new toys and another flavor of food." Yes, that's what I do. I spoil my animals and children.

I hadn't intended to have a pet as my health is so iffy. "I won't read that article written by Marci," I thought to myself, but I did and figured, "He has

leukemia and I have what I have, so we will see who lasts the longest."

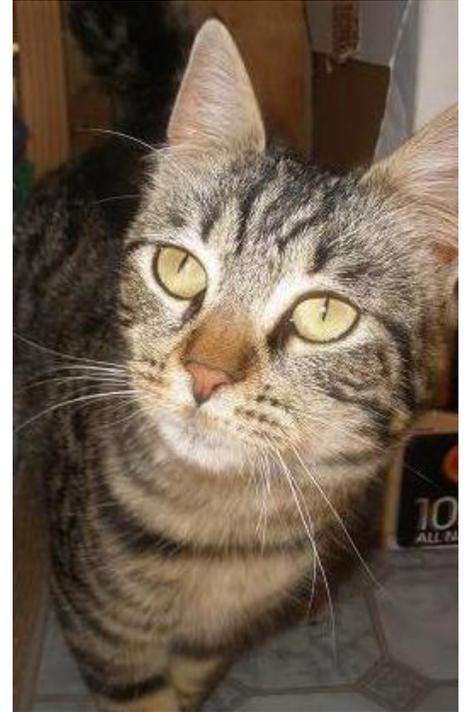
We are fortunate to have organizations, such as yours and you have wonderful, loving people who help these four legged friends.

Thank you, Ellie Andrews

A few days later Ellie sent us an update:

This morning he was so full of energy. He got his ball, dropped it in my lap 13 times for me to throw. Finally, I hid it under the paper I was reading. So, he scratched my head!

Wonder who is in charge here!



Kitten season by the numbers—perilous however you look at it

From page 1

January of this year a mother delivered her kittens and disappeared after a couple of weeks. The litter was never found and therefore died. Another litter was rescued after the mother was found dead on the road. Even Amelia (see her story page 5) was the last surviving kitten from her litter, and she lived with humans. I can relate hundreds of such stories.

Kittens face many perils. First, a dry, safe and warm birthing area needs to be found. If it is a cold, wet year, fewer survive. The mother must protect her kittens—born blind and helpless—from predators such as owls, hawks, coyotes, dogs, tomcats, and yes, even humans. Fleas can kill kittens, as can internal parasites and disease. Each time mom leaves her nest to hunt for food, she not only puts her litter at risk, but herself as well.

In the last six months or so, several groups have con-

centrated on helping the public get their cats and dogs "fixed." Prevention is the answer to unwanted litters and their high mortality rate; it looks as if the effort has started to make a difference. As we begin the 2011 "kitten season" we never lose the faith that this year will be better..., fewer kittens and healthier adults.

Your financial assistance allowed us to "fix" over 600 felines last year, as well as subsidize colonies throughout the county with vet care, vaccines, food and emergency situations.

Your support is vital. We appreciate our donors as well as our dedicated volunteers who participate with the "hands on" approach to improving the lives of our ferals. All of you are a part of our goal of making "every cat a wanted cat."

Randi Fairbrother

Extraordinary efforts by colony's caretakers and Tiny Tim Fund come to the rescue for Shadow

A difficult recovery period proves worth the trouble and expense

She was the most friendly of the cats in the colony of 20. While all the other cats scrabbled for food, she held back and rubbed against Mark's or Diane's legs, wanting to be stroked before being fed.

One morning a couple of months ago, when they opened the back door leading into the garage they found her lying at the foot of the stairway badly injured. I told them to rush her to the Orcutt vet.

She was indeed in bad shape. Dr. Brenda (as we lovingly call Dr. Forsythe) concluded Shadow had been attacked by a dog.

Her left front leg had to be amputated as well as her tail and the other front leg had multiple bite wounds.

In the beginning, she had to be in a cage, and wear a collar – how they all hate that!

It has been a long, difficult and expensive recovery process for all concerned. Diane and Mark have spent many hours caring for her, dressing her wounds,



Road To Recovery: Shadow is once again the friendliest cat in the colony.



Look Ma, No Collar! A specially-fashioned vest keeps Shadow from harming herself, but without the dreaded plastic collar.

encouraging her to eat and giving the required antibiotics. The injuries to her right front leg proved difficult to treat because of repeated infections. There were times when Diane and Mark had difficulty changing her dressings because of the pain she was in. That was the most difficult time. Each evening they placed her on the

sofa petting her and letting her fall asleep in their laps. As she improved she began to play; then she wanted to join the rest of the colony and eat with them. Since then she has been seen climbing the Yucca tree. Her stump at the amputation has finally healed and the skin has gradually filled in where it was ripped open. After these long months of recuperation we are confident she's well on her way to recovery. She sometimes gets angry at the dressing changes, but her anger is short lived.

When I related the story to a few people, some of them felt she should be "put out of her misery." Our problem with that is, our cats are very precious to us and once they are in our care we feel they deserve the best we can do for them. I think, if you were to ask Shadow, she would agree with us.

We are most grateful to the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation for designating part of their grant for the Tiny Tim Fund, which helped with the cost.

—Randi Fairbrother

Amelia The Fearless—flying blind, but with great co-pilots

By Marci Kladnik

Amelia's story is rather confusing, as we continue to receive differing reports as to how she was found and the circumstances of her life before she came into mine. Despite her unconfirmed past, she is now safe, healthy and happy and has wormed her way into my heart and those of my four resident cats and one dog.

I received a call in mid-March about a little black kitten picked up in Santa Maria; it appeared to be blind in both eyes. Randi and I discussed having to put her down if her sight could not be saved and/or if she tested positive for leukemia. I told our volunteer to take the kitten to the vet.

When Dr. Brenda Forsythe called me personally with the results of the test (negative), she said both eyes would need to be removed. I could hear in her voice as she described how healthy and friendly this kitten was that she did not want to put her down. She went so far as to offer to set up an adoption cage in the waiting room until a forever home could be found for her. I called Randi to say I was going to pick the kitten up and bring her to my house for further assessment before we decided her fate.

It is always risky for me to bring a single, "special" kitten into my home as I fall in love with them so easily. Even my resident pets are suckers for these babies, accepting them as new members of our family almost



***Making Friends Fast:** Amelia (right, with plastic collar) quickly bonded with the four cats and a dog who also occupy her new home.*

immediately. This one was no different.

From the very moment I set her carrier down in the kitchen and opened the door, Amelia boldly stepped out and began exploring her new surroundings with barely a hint of hesitation.

Within two days she had both downstairs and upstairs mapped out in her tiny head, and I had named her after that fearless flyer of old, Amelia Earhart. I knew then that she would be staying, though I told people I was just fostering her.

Four days after she came to live with me I took her in for surgery. When I picked her up she was sporting the expected stitches, tubes and rigid plastic collar. Luckily she was also still groggy from the anesthesia, but not so much that she couldn't greet me with a purr.

She slept for most of the next three days, for which I was thankful, considering how bold she was. When she came out of her fog, she was very confused and frustrated about being trapped in that collar, and repeatedly tried to back out of it.

She also seemed to have forgotten the layout of the house. I attributed that to the fact that her all important whisker and ear senses were hampered by the collar. The poor baby had to wear that dreadful thing for three weeks.

As I write this, she is once again a carefree kitten, dashing around the house—really!—playing hockey with noisy balls, chasing the dog, and trying to sneak up on the big cats. She knows where the litter box is, the treat jar and my lap.

What else does she need, since she has already found her forever home?



***What Disability?** Active play with string balls, noisy toys, and other pets is not beyond this blind kitten. And she knows her way around the house.*

Tributes & Memorials

Each one of these names represents a level of love and caring to those remaining. They each have their own story.

In Honor of:

All feral cats – by Geri Ellerbrock

Cody and Karen – by Barb Evans

Inky – my little friend – by Mary Mason

Lily and Rufus – by B. Calado

Mekmek, age 11 – by Karen Littlejohn

Miss Muffin – by Angie Scholtz

Randi Fairbrother and the little white kitten she saved – by Joy and Keith Castaing

Randi – by Dan and Nancy George

Randi – by Bill Long

Randi – by Gerry McConaghie

Beth Rushing – by Vananti Fithlan

Tom Snow – by Richard Salotti's Family

Belated acknowledgements:

Victoria Blunt – Christmas greetings from her sister, Michelle Garbarine

Mrs. William Nelson – “Merry Christmas from Gary” – by Gary Peterson

In Remembrance of:

Bebe – companion for 22 years – by Bonnie Brown

Bootsie and Willow – by Marlene Mills

Felicita P. Rivera, wife for 54 years – by Ernesto Rivera

Krinkle, Domino and Spook – by Lois Waldref

Turkey Lamphier Forkush – by Susan Forkush

LBK, best cat ever – by Mary Mason

Little Missy, our beloved companion – by Lanette and Michael Perry

Maggie, in gratitude for our 13 years with Maggie, the center of our lives – by Jim and Joanne O’Roark

Molly – by Jennifer Engmyr

Nutmeg, our 17-year-old friend who died in July – by Rita Fleming

Old Yellow, a big yellow kitty who died and is buried in my back yard – by Peter Mortensen

Bud Paxton, this “life is not a dress rehearsal,” – by Randi Fairbrother

Phoebe – by Clete and Sandy Knowlton

Sweet Siamese mix kitten – who needlessly died from neglect – by Randi Fairbrother

Rae, who we’ve feature a couple times here, has gone over the Rainbow Bridge. With only one visit to the vet, when she was TNR’d 14 years ago, she was healthy until the day she died in a car accident. She lived life on her own terms, as so many ferals do.

Gary Spiegel for Alex, Fluffy and the Carp Cats – by David Morris

Sweet Pie and Quatro – by Buddy and Lynne Borderre

Tiger – by Chicki and Dick Kitagawa

Wrigley – by Shelly Peet

Sheila Pratt, a most loving caregiver to the neighborhood cats for many years – by Randi Fairbrother

Hannah, my friend. Rescued as a kitten from a dumpster in St. John (Caribbean Island). I will always miss her – by Enjil

Not yet adopted, but this one has it all—beauty and charm

Gray Girl is a playful, young female cat who needs a family to love. Her pretty, soft fur is gray with orange highlights of muted tortie. Although she is shy with strangers, once she gets to know you she is very sweet.

She loves to be petted and will purr constantly, often rolling over to have her tummy rubbed. Some of her favorite activities are playing with string, chasing balls and hunting flies!

Sadly, she has spent her whole life in a cage and watched as her littermates left one-at-a-time. Please open your heart and consider taking this beauty into

your home. She will reward you with years of love in return.



Grey Girl would really like a home.

If you are interested in Gray Girl, contact *Catalyst for Cats* at 344-4663.

Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

Spay/Neuter Ordinances

Last year when the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors passed a spay/neuter ordinance for the unincorporated areas of the county to encourage the altering of cats and dogs, they started a local trend. In the fall a similar ordinance was passed unanimously by the Santa Barbara City Council, and following suit, in March the Buellton City Council voted unanimously for a similar spay/neuter law covering the city of Buellton. Most recently, the Solvang City Council met on April 25 to consider adopting the county's animal control codes, including the Responsible Pet Owner Ordinance. They have agreed to the principle of the ordinance and are continuing to work on the issue of adapting the city's code to the county code. The result so far has been a noticeably increased interest from the public in getting their pets altered.

Santa Maria Valley Humane Society "Cat Nips"

In a collaborative partnership with Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties' Animal Services, a "Cat Nips" program has been launched to reduce the number of unwanted litters this spring. For a limited time the SMVHS is offering spay/neuter services for the low price of \$20 per cat for the first 200 cats to sign up. Appointments can be made by calling the SMVHS at (805) 349-3435.

Project Pet Safe

Animal Services of Santa Barbara County continues to offer low-fee spay/neuter services to the public at its three shelter locations. In addition, they offer vaccinations, licensing, and micro-chipping. Go to www.projectpetsafe.org for more information. Or in Santa Barbara call 681-5285, in Santa Maria, 934-6119 or in Lompoc, 737-7755.

These programs are the direct result of the new ordinances to encourage responsible pet ownership. We expect to see fewer kittens (as well as puppies) as a result of these ordinances. The best and also most cost-effective answer to the sad pet overpopulation problem is prevention.

Spay Day Success

Animal Services held a successful Spay Day in February at the Santa Maria Shelter Clinic. This gives us an opportunity to "catch up" on the larger colonies we were in the process of stabilizing. We

brought in 57 cats, all trapped, except for four young tame females, rescued by low income families. It takes a great deal of preparation to trap that many cats, and the level of cooperation by the caregivers helped significantly with the success of the day.

Many thanks to the veterinarians: Drs. Teresa Brinn, Ruth Corbo, and Taralynn Meusel, as well as the dozens of volunteers. In all 77 cats were "fixed."

C.A.R.E.4PAWS

C.A.R.E.4Paws arranged free spay/neuter services for 16 owned cats at the CARE Emergency Hospital in Santa Barbara on April 20.

Grant Gratitude

It pleases us enormously and we are most appreciative to be the recipient of grants from the following sources: The **Ronald and Phyllis M. Bruce Trust for the Protection of Animals**, for the spay and neuter of feral felines, and The **Wendy P. McCaw Foundation**, for food and supplies and in support of the Tiny Tim Fund for medical care.

Diatomaceous Earth Flea Control

Several of our caregivers have reported success in using diatomaceous earth to discourage fleas and also as a de-wormer. Placed on cat beds it dries up the flea eggs and also kills fleas if sprinkled on their fur.

One of our caregivers reports using ½ to 1 teaspoon of DE per cat added to the food every day. "We use four feeding bowls and anywhere from 12-20 cats eat. We mix 2-3 teaspoons of DE in each bowl, then mix in the wet food and sprinkle the dry food over the top. We have been doing this for over a year and it seems to work well.

The directions online said it is better to give too much than to give too little, so we figured it would be ok to do it this way." To help with the fleas it can be sprinkled on their fur.

It is important a *non-toxic* diatomaceous earth be used, which can be gotten from Nitron Industries, (800) 835-1777, at a very reasonable price. It can also be used in the garden. Please note, it must be *non-toxic* diatomaceous earth.

Note to Supporters

Catalyst for Cats wants donors to know that we do not share our mailing list with anyone or any other group.



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**Every litter adds to the problem
Every spay/neuter adds to the solution!**

Wish List

Catalyst needs the following in order to carry on its charitable and educational goals. If you can help, please call 685-1563:

- Our 13-year-old van has nearly 200,000 miles on it and is on its last legs (wheels?). The repairs have become more frequent and costly, and the possibility of breaking down with load of cats is very real. The money from the raffle is designated for the van and we have received an additional donation of \$2,000 towards it. We are working with a local car dealership for the best price and have also applied for two grants, but we still need several thousand dollars to make the full amount. If anyone is able to send a donation, please do so. We need the vehicle as soon as possible since we are in the midst of kitten season
- Cat food for the many, many colonies we subsidize. We spend thousands of dollars helping to feed these colonies. For dry food we prefer meat flavors of Purina or Friskies rather than fish flavors.
- A dedicated volunteer to help organize feeding stations, trapping, etc. in the North County—a “project manager” of sorts. If interested, please call 685-1563.
- Trappers, transporters and feeders for Santa Maria/ Guadalupe areas

The date of your last donation is noted by the address. We hope for your continued support.



Cats come with claws!

Never declaw a cat! Declawing often results in irreversible physical and psychological damage. An excellent scratching post is available from **Felix Company (206) 547-0042**. Ask for their catalog. The **#1** (large) is a good selection.