



Catalyst for Cats

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

NEWSLETTER

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From the Founder

Remembrance of Things Past and Done First

I've heard from many people congratulating me on my "retirement." While no longer doing TNR as of the end of 2015, we remain committed to supplying food for our many feeding sites, providing medical assistance through our Tiny Tim fund, and relocating cats when possible.

We also provide spay/neuter services through the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital when a sick or injured cat needs the attention of a full-service clinic or testing for leukemia or FIV. And last but not least, we are an excellent source for anyone needing referrals.

I've had a chance to clear out old records and it brought back many memories, especially of our early days. Feral cats were everywhere—at fast food restaurants, parks, schools, backyards, businesses, and downtown Santa Barbara and Goleta. As I drive through these areas now, I am filled with gratitude that this is no longer the case.

In addition to starting the TNR program in the community we were the first ones to promote early spay/neuter. When I first became aware of early spay/neuter, I found it surprising that a kitten could be safely "fixed" at eight weeks of age. I did a lot of research on it. At the time the concept was new and we found it difficult to find veterinarians in Santa Barbara to

participate, but I understood the enormous significance of it. It is now accepted procedure for adoption agencies and rescue groups, and has done much to prevent litters from being born.

A few months ago I received a call from someone

wanting to adopt a kitten. She was interested in only one not fixed and lamented the fact that the landlord's permission was required prior to adoption. I tried to explain to her how things have changed and the need for those changes. Another call came from Texas, requesting assistance with TNR for feral cats she was feeding in her backyard. She found us from our website. She followed instructions and got the job done. So you can see *Catalyst's*

usefulness and influence has not gone away.

In closing, I have very much appreciated your notes of support, as well as your year-end donations. It meant a lot to me, and I thank you all for your kind words. We are still helping to improve the lives of many felines even though we can no longer TNR hundreds of them annually as in the past. I hope for your support in order to continue to improve the lives of our feral feline friends.



Photo by Veronica Eden

Looking fat and healthy, Sissy is from a long-standing feeding station. More than three years ago Veronica Eden took over the site, and has loyally continued feeding and watching out for these cats. She says, "The responsibility of caring for these strays and orphans has given me a certain structure in my life that had been missing."

Randi Fairbrother

In Appreciation

🐾 To **Angela Walters Rockwell** of Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP) in Santa Barbara, who led the team of **organizations** and **individuals** who worked to transition over our TNR program.

🐾 We are most grateful to the donors who generously gave startup funding to the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society for the **Catalyst TNR Fund**. This allows the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society to TNR feral and stray cats.

🐾 To the many **feeders** who faithfully feed at our feral feeding sites, be it rain or shine, wind or darkness. It's one thing to feed in your own yard, but another when you must go to the feeding site each day. Sometimes they are not welcome and must deal with uncooperative people who don't understand the importance of what we do to prevent unwanted litters of kittens.

Thank you to **the Halls** for adding two more feeding stations to their evening rounds, and welcome to **Ambria Meyers** for taking on two sites. Your efforts are much appreciated by us and the cats.

One of our oldest feeding sites in Santa Maria is no longer in service. With only one remaining cat, **Shirley Cram** from VIVA has agreed to place that lone survivor in the **Feral Cat Sanctuary**, where she can live the rest of her life in comfort and safety, yet be outdoors, which is the only life she has known.

🐾 To **Beth Rushing** for her patience and extreme kindness in fostering an adult cat from Santa Maria until potential adopters were able to take her. We were really stuck and she came to the rescue. Thanks Beth!

🐾 **Brenda Lewis** – for her invaluable assistance with the New Cuyama colonies.

🐾 **Rayma Brayton**, who spent many hours trapping a couple of “strangers” at a feeding site of a dozen or more cats (all TNR'd previously), in Guadalupe. It is always more difficult to selectively trap cats from a site. Even though we explain over and over again the importance of reporting new cats at a site, some think newcomers will just go away naturally. The situation never does get better without interference. Luckily these two cats were male, and will not spend their lives roaming looking for females with all its inherent dangers. Rayma spent many hours at the site in order to get these cats and returned the following night to check if she had missed any, which she did not. Thank you for your heroic effort. This is not the first time she

has responded to our request for help at this same site.

🐾 A special thank you to the tireless efforts of **our volunteers** who contribute and continue to make a world of difference. Even though we disbanded our TNR program, many of our volunteers, using our equipment, continue to trap in the North County as well as the Valley. They know the importance of doing so, and we all owe them a great deal of thanks. We are also grateful to the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society and Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society for their spay/neuter services.

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 the cats I've ever loved – by Vasanti Fithian
Audrey, Lori's wild Princess – by Charlene Maltzman
Victoria Blunt – by Michelle Garbarino
Kobe and **Lucy** – by The Engmyrs
Rose Koller for her foster care of kittens – by Peggy and Larry Greer
Mrs. Christine Kurtz – by Lorna White
Pat Massette – Happy Birthday from Nick
Randi, my longtime friend, since she and I were three – by Ethel Barclay
Tiny Boo-Kat, 21 years, a Snowshoe Siamese – by Gloria Shepard
To the many who have let me know them – by Christopher Dyer

Memory of:

My brother Ben, an animal lover – by Marie Tripi
Enana – by Carol Moir
My cat Freddy, I miss him so much – by Irene Kasper
Molly – by the Engmyrs
Raven, the bravest cat I've ever known – by Tori Blunt
Ping – by Deborah and Martin Lynch
Sam Xavier – by Lina Maria Xavier
Scooter, Cookie, and all the family Sweet Pea and Quarto – by Lynne and Buddy Borderre
My dear brother, **John Tapia** – by Irene T. Kasper
Tharin, Reckless, and in particular **Fremesley**, who was special – by Christopher Dyer

Our year's first litter—history almost repeats itself

By Debbie Merry

Our first litter of the year was rescued as newborns on February 10 in Santa Maria. Deanna Koens, a longtime volunteer who specializes in caring for kittens, was alerted by All Valley Veterinary Hospital in Santa Maria regarding a client in need of help with a litter of kittens. A few hours later Deanna made a “house call” to check it out.

The queen, a semi-feral orange tabby, had dropped her litter under some bushes just hours prior to the client's finding them and placing them in a box by her front door. Mom showed up, entered the box with the kittens and began nursing them. All seemed fine, except for the fact that neither

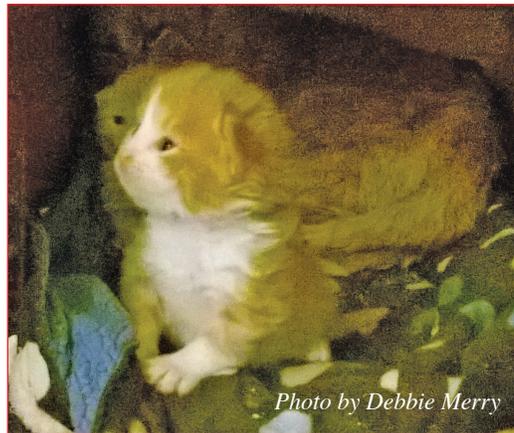


Photo by Debbie Merry

Twelve Days Old and Counting: One of the surviving kittens from our first litter of the year. Feral kittens face long odds, even with the helping hands of experienced caregivers.

Deanna nor the caregiver could foster this family, so the job fell to me.

Last year this same queen had given birth to a litter under some bushes and the caregiver contacted two volunteers. They saw the kittens, but said they were too far in the bushes to reach. Unfortunately, the volunteers did not follow up, and the litter was left to die when the mom did not return.

These people are familiar with rescue groups so I don't understand why they didn't contact others who would willingly have stepped in.

This time I gathered the family up and took them home. As I did so I was filled with trepidation because last year I had TNR'd a colony less than two blocks

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TRANSITION UPDATE

Directing your TNR support to County's new providers

By Randi Fairbrother

When *Catalyst for Cats* was founded, 26 years ago this spring, I quickly realized boundaries needed to be established. At the time it seemed logical to make it Santa Barbara County. And we have indeed made a meaningful difference. We hear the expression “it takes a village...” and certainly our community has come together with many organizations and individuals working towards the goal of improving the lives of animals.

The decision to transition our TNR program was not taken lightly. After many years of working in the North County I realized their needs far exceed our capacity to carry out the changes and concentrated effort required to deal effectively with the overwhelming challenges they face. Many of us breathed a big sigh of relief when the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society (SMVHS) agreed to establish its own TNR program.

Some very generous donors have given the SMVHS startup funding under the **Catalyst TNR Fund**. This provides a good start for their program and is great news.

For those of you interested in supporting TNR efforts in the North County simply make a donation check out to the SMVHS with a notation for the **Catalyst TNR Fund**. Those funds will only be used for that purpose and will not go into the General Fund. Making the notation **Catalyst TNR Fund** is very important if you want the funds to be used only for that purpose. You can send the check directly to Santa Maria Humane Society P.O. Box 1700, Santa Maria, CA 93456-1700 or use our response envelope and I will send it off to them.

Additionally, the same holds true for the Santa Ynez Valley. The Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society (SYVHS) has agreed to take on a TNR program as well. For those of you who wish to support them in their efforts please make the donation to the SYVHS with the notation **Catalyst TNR Fund**. The address is 111 Commerce Dr. Solvang, CA 93427, or you can send it in our response envelope and I will forward it on to them. This will insure the funds will go for that purpose only and not into the General Fund, if that is your wish.

Our Last Hurrah!

As we turned over TNR duties to others, we hit the jack pot with our final job.

By Debbie Merry

This was the second large colony we TNR'd in New Cuyama last year. We did the first one about five miles out of town and this one smack in the center of town.

It was a long time in coming, but finally we gathered enough information to proceed on a long-standing TNR job in downtown New Cuyama. Randi contacted Brenda Lewis, a caring and responsible woman, who agreed to be our contact person to assist us in getting the neighborhood feral cats TNR'd.

New Cuyama is a very rural area east of Santa Maria with a population of less than 600, one restaurant, one motel, one grocery store and lots of coyotes. It's a good hour's drive on Hwy 166 east from the 101 freeway along a curvy and dangerous two-lane road with many 18-wheelers coming to and from the oil fields of Taft, as well as trucks carrying produce. It also tends to flood during heavy rains.

Brenda had knocked on doors, posted flyers and by word of mouth identified four homes needing our services. I made the initial trip to check the area out and figure out how to proceed in capturing over a dozen breeding felines. Using the *Catalyst* van, I returned about a week later to trap and transport the cats to Santa Maria for surgery. I held them overnight at my house for transport the following morning for their surgery.

The Santa Maria Valley Humane Society had kindly agreed to save 14 appointments for us. After dropping off the first group to the Humane Society I returned to New Cuyama, meeting Brenda half way to pick up the remaining cats. After dropping the second group off at my house, I picked up the first group of 11 cats from the Humane Society, that had had surgery that day and made the return trip to New Cuyama, where Brenda would release them the following morning.

I kept the second batch at my house the first night post op, and the following day I returned to New Cuyama to release them. As I was about to release a young tortie, she turned her head such that I noticed a serious wound on her left cheek. It was 3 p.m. on a Friday afternoon, and cell phone service in New Cuyama is at best dicey. I rushed her as quickly as I

could safely drive (it would take an hour and a half) to get to the Orcutt Vet Hospital, where I had alerted them to this emergency.

They discovered she had two smaller wounds that joined to one larger wound that had exposed muscle tissue and was open to the back of her head. Poor baby, I'm sure she must have been in pain and if I had released her she would not have survived.

Carolyn Flores, DVM and her team did a marvelous job. I took the cat home with me that evening with sutures, a drain, and antibiotics. The drain was removed in a couple of days and sutures in two weeks. I figured if I was to foster her for three weeks I would not return her to New Cuyama. She was going to get well, learn a few social skills and be put up for adoption through one of the adoption agencies.

Two sibling kittens, brother and sister, from another house were as different as night and day, literally—one is solid black and the other white with one blue eye and one hazel. I think of them as Ink and Paper.

They started out at the Santa Maria Animal Shelter and transferred to the Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP) in Santa Barbara for adoption.

The final count for two days of trapping: 16 felines (3 males and 13 females—think of all those litters that would have been born this spring!), with three adoptions, five round trips to New Cuyama, two flat tires and a gas station with no air available.

All of the cats were given their distemper and rabies vaccinations, a flea treatment, and worming meds to give them a good start in their new life. With the help of some very kind and caring people, I'd say the final big job done under the auspices of *Catalyst for Cats* was a huge success.



Photo by Debbie Merry

Paper and Ink

Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

Results for Last Year

C*atalyst for Cats* is pleased to report we managed to “fix” 413 felines during 2015 (194 males and 219 females). (See “*Our Last Hurrah!*” on page 4 for the story of our final TNR project.)

Snip N Chip Program

One hundred fifty-one felines were neutered for free during the month of February this year under Santa Barbara Animal Services’ annual “Snip N Chip” program for County residents. This most worthy program—part of the County’s Project PetSafe—also included microchip service to help shelters return lost cats to their rightful homes. Microchips are inserted via needle into the skin layer between the cat’s

Our first litter of the season

From page 3

away. Sadly, 14 out of 24 kittens plus three queens from that colony had to be euthanized. I brought the mom in to be tested that day and you can imagine my relief when she tested negative for leukemia. Unfortunately she tested positive for FIV, the feline form of AIDS. (For information regarding kittens from FIV-positive queens see Updates, above.)

Despite being semi-feral this mom was a very well-behaved kitty, never made a mess and looked after her kittens. Her caregiver will take her back. I explained to her the meaning of FIV and the importance of proper care. The plan was to continue to care for the kittens until weaned. Sadly, it was not to be.

They were growing like weeds when one became ill. I called Deanna, who, with the permission of RESQCATS brought them to Advanced Veterinary Specialists in Santa Barbara. One died of pneumonia, but they were able to save the two remaining kittens. Deanna is presently caring for them until weaned, when they will be given to RESQCATS for adoption.

Mom, at about seven years old, has undoubtedly had several other litters. After letting her dry up, we had her spayed at the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital. She has been returned to her home.

There is no excuse for not fixing a cat in Santa Barbara County. Many programs are easily available. One only has to reach out with a phone call or two to find help and get the job done.

shoulder blades, and the chips are programmed with numbers that lead back to the cat’s registered owner.

Many thanks to the participants: Santa Maria Animal Center, the Humane Societies of Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Santa Ynez Valley, and Buellton, and also the Volunteers for Inter-Valley Animals (VIVA) and CARE4Paws.

FIV-Positive Queens and Kittens

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is not transmitted by prolonged close contact. The primary mode of transmission is through bite wounds. FIV *in utero* or through mother’s milk is very rare. It could possibly occur if the queen is infected during pregnancy. Kittens from queens infected with the FIV virus prior to pregnancy usually are not infected, but may test positive due to the presence of antibodies from the queen. Once the antibodies from the queen are gone the kittens should be retested.

McCaw Grant

The **Wendy P. McCaw Foundation** has graciously given us funding for assistance with food supplies for the many cats we feed throughout the County as well as the Tiny Tim Fund for medical care. We are most grateful. Our community is very fortunate to have such a kind and generous supporter of animal causes within our community.

Our Standard Practice

Reminder: *Catalyst for Cats* does not share its mailing list with anyone or group. And receipts for donations throughout the year are sent out in January. Call Randi (685-1563) for any questions.

Wish List

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

- **Feeders:** We welcome feeders and substitute feeders for our colonies in the North County (call 685-1563) and in the Santa Ynez Valley (call Belinda at 688-6359).
- **Cat Food** is always welcome, wet and/or dry. Meat flavors are best.
- **Safe Relocation Sites:** For feral cats who will earn their keep by keeping rodents at bay.



Catalyst for Cats, Inc.
 Post Office Box 30331
 Santa Barbara, CA 93130

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



**Can you help feed us in
 the Santa Ynez Valley?**

**Volunteers needed to help feed
 established cat colonies.**

All food provided by Catalyst for Cats

Feeding time can be as little as 5 min. to half an
 hour, depending on location
 & number of cats

Volunteers appreciated for sub. feeding too!!

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.

No-hassle donating can now be done using
PayPal or **credit card** using the Donation Form
 button on our website. Catalyst is also regis-
 tered with **Cars for Causes**,
 also accessible through our
 website.

