



# Catalyst for Cats

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

## NEWSLETTER

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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 cat and kittens.*

### From the Founder

## 'Tis the season for desperate kittens

*Taking on the annual influx of feral and abandoned newborns is a huge challenge*

**K**itten Season 2008 proved a very challenging one indeed. The kittens, along with their moms, dads, aunts, uncles, siblings, step siblings, etc., came from many sources: yard sales, the swap meet, the street and under bushes.

Four kittens were placed in a box and deposited in the darkness of the night at the front door of one of our volunteers with a note saying "seven weeks old." In Santa Maria, dozens at a time were left at abandoned or foreclosed houses. Of course, none of them were spayed or neutered.

This season we dealt with several jobs in Santa Barbara, attesting to the fact that we must stay vigilant locally in our program of TNR. We continue our activity in the Santa Ynez Valley year round, but the calls increase with the sighting of kittens.

Our kittens, who come from a life in the outdoors, present a special challenge. The feral or abandoned mothers of these kittens are seldom well feed, resulting in health issues for not only the kittens, but the moms as well.

This season, we not only dealt with the usual severe infestation of fleas, but we found kittens covered with lice, ticks, severe ear mites, congenital problems, and one darling little orange kitten—covered with blood— who was almost pecked to death by chickens. When we come across a litter of healthy and plump



kittens, we tend to be astonished. Even though summer is over, we anticipate the arrival of kittens to continue for a couple of more months.

The nature of a feral cat organization is to face these sad situations head on, yet it is a two-edged sword because it is this rescue work that gives us a deep-seated reward.

We owe so many people our appreciation: the financial supporters, who make it possible to sustain our work, as well as our volunteers, and those who participate in the "hands on" approach of improving the lives of ferals. You are all a part of reaching our goal of making "every cat a wanted cat," and you have my sincere thanks.

*Randi Fairbrother*

# In Appreciation

**W**e are very grateful to those who participate in our goal of preventing feline overpopulation or in improving the lives of felines in whatever way they can. Some are mentioned, but the efforts of all are appreciated.

**ASAP** – for adopting some of our kittens.

**Belinda Burns** – for her efforts in many areas of need in the Valley: organizing feeding stations, trapping expertise, and general troubleshooting for the area.

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

**Teresa Mitton** – for her generosity with spay/neuter of dogs and cats in the North County.

**Orcutt Veterinary Clinic** – for accommodating us with spay/neuter appointments, which has proven to be enormously helpful to us.

**ResQcats** – for helping us with adoption of our socialized kittens.

**Santa Barbara Humane Society** – for their coöperation in adopting some of our socialized kittens.

**Santa Maria Humane Society** and the **Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society staff** – for their coöperation in spaying and neutering feral cats.

**Beth Rushing** – for a terrific job of trapping locally.

**Kathy Brandt** and **Betty Mazzetti** – for their help in

placing, socializing and adopting rescued felines.

**Lois Waldref** – for assisting with a trapping situation.

A special thank you to **Denise Ables** for dealing with a most difficult trapping situation in Santa Maria. Despite her efforts being repeatedly sabotaged, she persisted over many months and finally completed the job. With the help of Animal Control, more than twenty adult cats and about a dozen kittens were dealt with and the colony is finally stabilized.

**Our major trappers:**

**Carpinteria:** David Morris and Reisa Guilaine

**Santa Barbara:** Beth Rusing

**Santa Ynez Valley:** Belinda Burns

**Guadalupe:** Patty Farnce

**Santa Maria:** Denise Ables, Suzanne Canas, Chuck Van der Veer

There are many others not mentioned who contribute to our accomplishments. Please know that we appreciate your contribution.

Those who feed the colonies are another very important aspect of our program. Many feed in the their backyards, but some must make a special trip to feed the colonies in their care. Often times it is not convenient, yet they make the sacrifice because they love those in their charge.

## Wish List

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

- Fosters for socializing kittens
- Trappers and transporters for Santa Ynez, Lompoc, and Santa Maria
- Feeders for Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley areas
- Safe relocation sites for mousers. They will earn their keep. We often try and socialize our older kittens because we prefer they have loving homes. Also, some of them need to have medical care because of upper respiratory or other problems. After a lot of time, love, sweat, and tears we sometimes realize they must go to a relocation site more suitable to their temperament, such as a barn situation. With time they still have the potential to warm up to the feeders.
- People who understand the importance of getting their pets “fixed.”



*Calm and Comfortable: A cute pair rescued in Santa Maria*

# Two, three...no, four kittens found

*Trapping at a North County job site saves a young family in transition*

*By Marci Kladnik*

As the “Cat Woman” of Los Alamos, I’ve been getting a lot of calls of late. Early one morning my phone rang. A neighbor had two kittens which had just crawled out from under the bathtub in a house under renovation. Could he bring them right over?

What was delivered into my hands were two, obviously still nursing, tiny kittens. I asked about the mother, but the man didn’t know where she was.

Unless I wanted to bottle feed these two, I’d have to catch her. I also worried that there might be more kittens about, as a litter is usually four to six in size.

The workers would be on-site until 4:00 p.m., so I made plans to

be there before they left. Bringing the kittens to use as bait, I loaded a trap into my car and headed across town. One of the men informed me that a cat had been coming in and out of the house all day. It had to be the mom looking for her babies.

Left alone, I set the trap and kittens near an entrance the cat had been using. I retreated from sight to watch and wait. Shortly, a beautiful fluffy cat glided close by the gate behind which I was hiding. She strolled warily to the trap, and peeked in. This is going to be easy, I thought, as she tentatively put one paw into the trap. Changing her mind, she backed out. I stood there for over an hour listening to my stomach growl and thinking of my hungry animals at home. What to do, what to do? I decided to run home to feed my brood.

Back in 45 minutes, the trap was still empty. I waited for another 15 minutes with no signs of movement, then left to feed myself. Upon returning, the trap was obviously occupied. I was elated!

The kittens were starving as they had not been fed in nearly 12 hours. Nursing kittens need to eat every two hours. I set mother and kittens up in a large cage. It

was gratifying to watch as the kittens piled onto their mom, getting reacquainted and clamoring for food.

Next morning began again with a ringing phone. Another kitten had been found at the same house, this one in the woodpile. I hurried over, and by the time I arrived, there was a pail with two kittens in it. Now the litter was complete. These kittens had also been without food for 12 hours, so I rushed home. What a reunion! Mom checked them over carefully and welcomed them back into the fold.

Obviously the mother was in the process of transferring her kittens, when interrupted by the men coming to work. Soooo, if you come upon a single kitten or even a pair of them, it is best not to scoop them up. Just wait to see if Momma comes to fetch them. Note where she takes them, and then give *Catalyst for Cats* a call so we can rescue the whole family.

This family was lucky. Momma cat was not completely feral, as she would only hiss if I reached inside the cage too closely to her. She watched carefully as I would remove the kittens to take them into the house for socializing and to give her a break from nursing.

One of the little cuties was a Manx, a tailless cat originating in Asia. I subsequently named her Tweety and added her to my household. Her two brothers and sister were taken to ASAP and successfully adopted out to good homes. The mother was spayed and taken by 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Cat Rescue for socializing in the hope of eventually finding a good home for her as well.



**Family Reunion:** Momma’s not too happy about being caged. You can tell by the flattened ears.



**She’s a keeper:** Tweety hiding in the basket used to transport the kittens between garage and house.

# How to Bathe a Cat—No, Really!

By Marci Kladnik

**M**y rescue cat, Dodo, had a brush with some Tanglefoot while chasing a bird in a tree. If you've ever gotten this product on yourself, you'll know what I mean when I say he was *sticky*. (Tanglefoot is effectively used to stop ants from marching up tree trunks and hummingbird feeder posts.) I grabbed him away from his prey, meaning to give him a time-out in the house, discovering, too late, the Tanglefoot. Now there were two of us needing sticky-removal.

Faced with the dilemma of how to remove the offending product from Dodo before he tried to do it himself against the sofa, I searched my brain for remedies. What did my mother use when my sister put gum in my hair so long ago? Peanut butter? Oil? I grabbed the not-so-expensive olive oil from the cupboard, in case he decided to lick it off, as I clung desperately to a squirming cat.

## Cat's Meow Raffle Results

**T**he cats are the biggest winners again in the second Cats Meow Raffle. The drawing was held on August 14, at the Encino Meadows Clubhouse in Goleta. We made over \$6,600 towards our mission of improving the lives of feral cats. We extend our sincere appreciation to the donors of these excellent prizes.

Congratulations to the lucky winners:

Grand prize: **Fess Parker's Wine/Spa Los Olivos Certificate** (donated by Sue and Al Stevenson), won by Ricky Johnson.

**Chumash Casino – One Weeknight Stay and Elegant Dinner for Two at Willows**, won by Alicia Foster.

**Lake Tahoe Cabin – Two Night Stay** (donated by Allison Coleman), won by Charles Clouse.

**El Rancho Marketplace – Lunch & Wine Picnic for Six at a Santa Ynez Valley Winery**, won by Deanna Hearth.

**Windhaven Glider Rides – Scenic Glider Ride for One Over Beautiful Santa Ynez Valley**, won by Sue Hillyard

**Handmade Quilt by Susie Freese**, won by LeAnne Hagarty.

He calmed down, as I knelt on the kitchen floor, backing him up between my knees. This manner of holding a cat is great when trying to administer meds, as the animal is cornered in this position. I then applied some oil with a paper towel. I rubbed, and nothing happened. I tried again. Nothing. Now I had a sticky and *oily* cat on my hands. His interest in the matter of being cleaned was rapidly dissipating, as it clearly did not involve food.

Clinging ever tighter to Dodo, I ran him to the bathroom and tossed him into the shower stall, slamming the door behind him. Ok, now what? By then, I needed a shower myself, so I stripped out of my sticky, oily clothes and slipped into the stall with the cat. I knew this was risky, as there was now nothing between my tender skin and his sharp claws, should he attempt to climb his way out of the shower, using me as a tree. Therefore, I ignored him as I turned the water on.

I was amazed to see Dodo calmly sitting there! Before he changed his mind, I grabbed the dog shampoo and lathered him up. Still he remained calm! The moment of truth came, when I took the hand-held shower head and held it over the cat. Wow! Easy! That's when it dawned on me, bathing a cat from *above* is the way to go. Dunk a cat, he'll think you're trying to drown him and he'll fight like crazy. I've given 21 flea baths in the past few weeks to foster cats, and only was scratched by one, so I guess this method works. Note: I did not take them into a shower with me.

## Winterize for cat comfort and safety

**F**or a warm bed for outdoor cats, line the bed with straw. Blankets and towels hold the moisture and thus are cold. The bed needs to be out of the wind and rain. Also, remember to bang on the hood of the car before starting it, because cats may be hiding under the hood for warmth. We rescued a kitten this year from under the hood of a truck.

### Cats come with claws!

**N**ever 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.

# Kelli On My Mind

## *The Tiny Tim fund gives a special cat a fighting chance*

By Marci Kladnik

**T**his kitten season has seen a number of oddities. The most heart-breaking one concerned Kelli, a beautiful tortie kitten picked up in Los Alamos this summer. She was covered with cobwebs and, with her prominent ribs and backbone, obviously starving,

I flea-bathed her, picked a tick from behind her ear, and she settled into the regular meals and socializing routine, rapidly gaining weight. She progressed so quickly, that within two days I moved her from the garage into the upstairs bathroom where she had more room to explore.

But there was also something odd about her. She would always hiss when I reached into her cage, but then would snuggle up against me, purring loudly as she lay in my lap. Once in my lap, she never moved, not even when my cats and dog came to sniff. And even stranger, she was always in her box when I came to visit her room and, although the food was gone, the toys obviously had not been played with.

A couple of days passed before I realized why. She was blind. I named her Kelli in honor of Helen Keller.

Randi and I discussed her situation at length, and the decided to dip into the Tiny Tim Fund and take Kelli to the Veterinary Ophthalmologist, Dr. Schmidt, in Arroyo Grande. After a series of tests, we found that she had partial sight, since her eyes responded normally to light. Her vision loss might have been from a brain

injury or other neurological problem. I took her home with some eye meds and a follow-up visit scheduled.

That night while I worked on my computer for a couple of hours, I set her on the window seat near me. Quiet as usual, she didn't budge, until she suddenly became very animated and vocal. I thought she needed the litter box, so I took her to her room and set her down. She immediately started acting "normal," chasing a ball and bouncing around like any other kitten would! I was both mystified and overjoyed.

Alas, it was short-lived, and the next morning found Kelli lethargic and refusing to eat. She lost weight rapidly, and I was truly worried about dehydration. I took her in on Monday, and sadly, the vet determined that Kelli had the deadly and highly contagious FIP virus. This little darling is now happily chasing butterflies in the garden on the other side of the Rainbow Bridge. Such a beautiful sweet kitty. I miss her still.



*Kelli was a beautiful Tortie. More pictures of her can be seen in the slide show on our website.*

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## Letter to *Catalyst*

### *Tale of a Small Colony of Cats*

**I**saw your note asking about the colony of cats we fixed seven years ago. When you came to the maintenance shop we caught all five cats and had them fixed. We released momma cat and a male and a female kitten back to the yard. I continued to feed them daily. A couple of years later one of the female cats disappeared and a year after that, the male cat was gone. The last to survive was Momma, who died about a year ago. It broke my heart that she was alone, but she never came close enough to pet her.

I ended up adopting two of the female kittens. Unfortunately, several years later one was diagnosed with

cancer. Regretfully, I had to let her go.

Her sister is still with me and she is the only one left alive from the group. But, she had a rough start. A year after I adopted her she disappeared only to return three days later with horrific wounds. I took her to the emergency vet and rather than having her euthanized I opted for the surgeries. The doctor removed one eye and wired her jaw in place. That was six years ago and she has been a perfectly happy and spoiled cat from thereon. She runs the show and hogs the bed and has a meow loud enough to be an alarm wake up call.

Thank you for all you do. Your service is so needed in the community. I'm so glad *Catalyst* is a success.

—Karen Kozak

## Tributes & Memorials

**H**onoring or remembering a special person or pet provides a means for the donor to recognize the richness and happiness brought to someone, and allows *Catalyst* to improve the lives of cats less fortunate. Donations have been made....

### In Honor of:

**Belinda**, a loving Cat Light! – by Sha Smiles

**Chaya** and **Taz** – by Dan and Marie Carmean

**Fred** – by Jill and I. T.

**Harry**, the cat – by Gayle T. Woodard

**Mr. Kitty Kitty** – by Betty Scott

**My brother and his wonderful wife** – by Mr. and Mrs. Nick Priester

**My mom**, who taught us the love of animals – by Barb Evans

**Peaches** – by Clelland R. and Yvonne F. Downs

**Ralphie**, 18 years and pretty as ever – by Kay Harrison

**Randi Fairbrother** – by Bill Long

**Rosie** – by Kathi D. Backus

**Spenser** – by Larry and Claudia Mitchell

**Sweet Boy**, a beautiful white boy from the salt marsh, who adopted me – by Charlene Maltzman

**The sick kittens** Belinda helped us with – by Tom and Jennifer Deppmeier

To the “**Little Old Ladies**” I’ve helped TNR their stray cats throughout the years. They grew up on family farms and are a vanishing breed. They taught me the difference between straw and hay and can tell you stories about life on the farm and farm cats. – by Randi Fairbrother

### In Remembrance of

**All of our wonderful kitties** – by Larry and Claudia Mitchell

**Bob** – by La Cumbre Feed

**Bjorn** – by Karen Pick

**Bruse McIntosh** – by the McIntosh family

**Charlie** – a most interesting cat. He has gone over the Rainbow Bridge and is now with **Pearl**; they were buddies and both Catalyst Cats – by the Fairbrother Family

**Duke** – by Deby Laranjo

**Gabriel Silva** – by Mary Silva

**Gene Lovato**, my son, who died two years ago. He loved cats. – by Cyrilla Foster

**Ivy**, a foster kitten from Catalyst in 1997 – by Stepha-

nie Welch

**Jack Moir** – by Carolyn Moir

**Jasmine**, the stray kitty – by Jamie King

**Jim** – by Bonnie Wilson

**Joaquin** and **Carrie** – by Marlene Moses Mills

**Joyce Hart**, cat lover and my sister – by B. Thornburgh

**Junior, Frankie, Sammy Weeds** – by Kelly Lewis

**Krinkle, Domino** and **Spook** – by Lois Waldref

**Love**, my beloved feral cat – by Karen Pick

**Lucy** – by Rebecca Hardin

**Noelle**, again and always – by Eileen Carroll

**Peachie** – by Dale Lundt

**Rambo, Sparky** and **Nike** – by Dan and Marie Carmean

**Rosie Rivers**, a good soul who loved animals and gave so much to those in her care – by Randi Fairbrother

**Sam** – by B. Calado

**Sher-Khan**, my loved and missed, stolen boy – by Debbie Johnson

**Tom Snow**, our beloved cat – by the Salotti Family

**Tyler** and **Miniver** – by Jeanne Trabold

**Valentino** – a beautiful and special orange tabby adopted by Joanna many years ago – by Randi Fairbrother

**Willow**, our daughter Betsy’s feral adoptee – by James and Joanne O’Roark

**Yadi Bertino** – by A.J. Billington

**Teddy** – We told the story of Lil-Bit, a small orange tabby, who was removed from the parking lot of a bank in 2005 as a young teen kitten. He was skinny and sickly when captured and we worried he wouldn’t make it. Gerry and Chuck Place fostered him, fell in love with him and then adopted him. They changed his name to Teddy, because of the way he hugged you when held.

Teddy always sought out the sunny and warmest places. During the day, he looked for sunny spots to lie in and had his own heating pad available, which he often used, especially at night unless he joined his loving caregivers in bed. He never was what you would call a healthy cat, but he was kept happy and comfortable and given the best of care by Gerry and Chuck Place. He went over the Rainbow Bridge and is now healthy and warm as can be. Good-bye little Teddy.

# Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

## Another Santa Maria Spay Day

**W**e did it again, and it's almost getting routine. The third Spay Day of the year was held on June 8, at the Santa Maria Shelter Clinic. Organized and overseen by Animal Services Outreach Director Stacy Crump, with Tuesday Cool, RVT, the event was another huge success. A total of 98 cats were sterilized, and of those cats, 66 were *Catalyst* cats—far exceeding our expectations and the largest number we have done on a Spay Day.

We are tremendously appreciative to the three participating veterinarians: Dr. Ruth Corbo, who works with various clinics in the Santa Maria and Lompoc areas, Dr. Ron Faoro of St. Francis Pet Clinic in Santa Barbara, (this is his third tour of volunteering), and Dr. Lowell Novy of the Valley Veterinary Clinic in Simi Valley. Dr. Novy travels with his team to various cities promoting intensive spay/neuters events such as this. Now that he has twice shown us the “ropes,” this is probably his last time to participate. Good luck to him and his team, as they share their expertise with others.

They worked right on through without a break until the last cat was done. It's been a pleasure working with them and we thank them for their generosity of time and service.

The day went smoothly with over two dozen volunteers participating, plus the trappers, who were responsible for getting the cats in. These Spay Days are a moral booster. We owe everyone a big hand of applause.

## Grants

**P**etSmart Charities donates to hundreds of animal charities across our nation. We are very excited to have been one of those charities awarded a grant this year in the amount of \$10,000 to spay and neuter feral cats. We look forward to fulfilling the obligations of this grant.

Our major efforts will be proactively fighting the North County's dire feline overpopulation problem. This money is only a portion of the funds needed to maintain *Catalyst for Cats*' work, but it will help us tremendously this year because of the slowed economy that so many have experienced.

We would ask that you support PetSmart as they are supporting one of your favorite charities, *Catalyst for Cats*.

## Foster Coordinator

**W**elcome to Marci Kladnik, our new Foster Coordinator. She not only has done an excellent job of filling this position, but has managed to increase the number of fosters as well. It's very important to capture the kittens between five to eight weeks for the socialization process to go smoothly to allow for more easily adoptable kittens.

In addition, she wears a multitude of other *Catalyst* hats: she is our liaison person for the Los Alamos area and writes a weekly column featuring cat issues for the Thursday edition of the Santa Ynez Valley News as well as an article for the Valley Life Section every two weeks. She is bursting with energy and ideas.

## The *Catalyst* Website

**M**ost of you are probably not aware of the fact that we now have a wonderful new website. Our heartfelt thanks go to Jennifer Siegel (board member Marci Kladnik's daughter) who created it for us.

There is a fun slide show of photos, which begins when you reach the site, as well as an abundance of information. We have included past newsletters, Marci's newspaper columns, and forms for donations, volunteering, and fostering.

There are also links to low-cost spay/neuter organizations. Please take time to visit us at [www.catalystforcats.com](http://www.catalystforcats.com). Email us your comments; we'd love to read them.

## Volunteers Needed

**T**he shelter in Santa Maria continues to be in need of volunteers. Stop by the shelter for a visit. For volunteer opportunities call Stacy, outreach coordinator, at 934-6981, or for general information call the Santa Maria Shelter (934-6119). The opportunities to help are many and varied.

## Note to Supporters

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





Kittens fostered by Lavi and Monica Gonzalez

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

Catalyst for Cats, Inc.  
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