



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. Catalyst for Cats, PO Box 30331, Santa Barbara, CA 93130 is a free newsletter published four times a year by Catalyst for Cats, Inc.

From the Founder

Prevention still the best remedy, but it all costs

The quest continues. Each year seems to bring a different challenge. This year it appears to be an early kitten season. We received the first report of a dropped litter the first week of February. Courtship rituals usually begin end of January and are in full swing by February. We are scrambling to TNR as many as possible as quickly as possible. Because of the unseasonably warm weather this winter, the breeding cycle moved up a couple of months—ironic, since much of the U.S. has been suffering with extreme cold and severe storms. It distresses me to think of the feral felines as well as other animals coping with those freezing temperatures.

Feral cats do tend to be relatively strong because they are the survivors. The same cannot be said of the kittens. The mortality rate of feral kittens runs about 50%, a very sad statistic. When we say “prevent unwanted kittens from being born,” it means much more than that. It means prevention of starving, sick, blind, flea-infested, orphaned kittens and mothers struggling to feed them. It is an ugly and painful picture. Those that do survive will breed and repeat the cycle over and over again.

So what did we accomplish in 2013? We concentrat-

ed most of our efforts in the Santa Ynez Valley and the North County, with Santa Maria and Guadalupe our main focus. In these areas we fixed over 400 felines last year. Sadly, much more needs to be done.

Through our Tiny Tim Fund we were able to provide medical care for over two dozen felines. Often this is not an easy task with feral cats. We are very thankful to the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation for their generous

support of the Tiny Tim Fund. Being able to provide relief from pain and suffering is enormously gratifying to us. Relatively few had to be euthanized, but that in itself provides relief.

Adoptions are difficult for us since we do not have a central place to show our socialized rescued kittens and because our fosters are

spread throughout the county. We are grateful to the adoption agencies that assisted us in placing our kittens last year. This year we have a new Facebook page where we will be able to “market” our sweet kittens.

It surprises me when I come across people who assume the services we offer are free to us. This is far from the truth because we pay out of pocket for every

Continued on page 4.



***Pals For Life:** Rescued in Los Alamos, this pair is reportedly settling in nicely in their forever home.*

photo by Kevin Baird

In Appreciation

Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization. They are absolutely essential to our work and we applaud and thank them for the hours and time spent away from their families and personal sacrifice dedicated to *Catalyst for Cats*. It is indeed a labor of love.

Lavi and Monica Gonzalez – for organizing the food supplies for our assistance program for cat colonies in Santa Maria and fostering.

Debbie Merry – for her trapping and fostering expertise. She’s out there every day, before and after work feeding, trapping and overseeing sites.

Jane Smith – for donating funds for setting up a Facebook account which will enable us to advertise our rescued adoptable kittens.

Our Feeders: Thanks to the dozens who feed colonies not only on their property but to those who faithfully leave home to be sure the waiting felines get their daily meal. Both parties look forward to the ritual.

Santa Ynez group: Belinda Burns – for coordinating our Santa Ynez feeding stations and relocations, and **Kia Beckert**, trapper, substitute feeder and trapping coordinator for the Valley.

Our Fosters: Monica Gonzales, the Hawkins family, Marci Kladnik, Debbie Merry, and Melinda

Appreciative:



photo by Debbie Merry

Helped by the **Tiny Tim Fund**, this handsome fellow underwent surgery for removal of a toe mass.

Siebold.

Thanks to: Marci Kladnik, Mark Poudrier and Monica Gonzales, who were all called upon to TNR several colonies in their areas. An additional thanks goes to **Marci** for continuing to write her bi-weekly newspaper column, getting the word out to the communities about *Catalyst*.

To those who graciously drop off food for our colonies. It helps a great deal. Please know you are appreciated.

A Job Well Done:

In mid-December Mark Poudrier and I trapped 27 cats over a three-night period at one site—not on a ranch or hidden area, but in a business area in Guadalupe. We found out about the feeding station by accident. Last year our volunteers distributed flyers all around Guadalupe, yet no one ever made a call to us. One might wonder why. At 4.5 kittens per female, this colony had the capacity of producing three dozen kittens this spring alone. Scary isn't it?

We are most appreciative to the **Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society** for their assistance in getting these cats done and to **Kia Beckert**, who held the cats pre- and post-op before being returned.

–Randi Fairbrother



photo by Marci Kladnik

It took a little while to socialize this beautiful tabby, but he's now ready for a loving home. Call 685-1563 if you're interested.

Feed your cat on a saucer

Deep bowls can waste food and irritate whiskers

By Marci Kladnik

Go to any pet store and you will find a plethora of cute feeding dishes for cats. They come in all sizes; some are shallow and others deep. For water and kibble, choose the deeper ones, but for wet food go shallow.

Cats have whiskers, very sensitive specialized hairs used for measuring the width of openings and in hunting. Having to stick their faces into a deep dish to feed causes the sides of the bowl to press on the whiskers. Some cats might not mind this but others may find it uncomfortable on a daily basis.

Perhaps you have noticed your cat scooping her food out of a bowl onto the floor before she consumes it. Cats eat off the ground in nature, so maybe your kitty is trying to tell you something.

One of my cats does this with water! On several occasions I have found him scooping water from the bowl to form a “river” on the floor, which he then drinks from. This has happened often enough that I have had to put the bowl in a tray with a waterproof mat underneath in order to protect the wood floor, previously damaged from said water play. He does the same thing to the water bowl in the patio.

I probably should invest in a kitty fountain, although

some cats won't use them. Case in point, my front porch kitty prefers drinking from the gutter even though there is a running water feature by the front door.

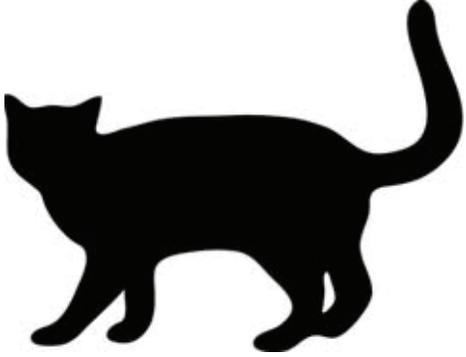
I used to feed wet food in bowls but there was often food left in the corners. These dishes also did not stack



well in the dishwasher.

One day I found some 4” glazed plant saucers on sale and thought I'd try those. The cats love them and so do I as they take little room in the dishwasher. If you want to try this yourself, be sure to buy glazed saucers as clay or plastic ones can harbor bacteria over time.

Just stop to watch your cat when things are amiss in her world. She really can communicate with you if you'll only listen.

MOUSERS	<p>We Have Cats <i>DESPERATE</i> for <i>Employment</i></p> <p>Please call Belinda: 688-6359</p>		MOUSERS
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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 cats everywhere – by Leland & Diana Walmsley
Belinda Burns, “She’s tireless!” – by Ramon Becerra
Chaya and Taz – by Dan & Maria Camean
Juanita Funkhouser – by Patrick Funkhouser
My mother, **Irene**, and my brother, **John Tapia** – by Irene T. Kasper
TNR for the four cats that own me - by Jean Jacobs
Teresa Mitten, for her many kindnesses – by Randi T. Fairbrother
Birthday greetings to **Suzanne Shanellec** – by Jeffrey and Leslee Sipress
Squeaky, a new rescued addition to our family – by Rita Flemming

In Memory of

All of our wonderful kitties – by Claudia and Larry Mitchell
All the wonderful cats who have graced our lives – by Leland and Diana Walmsley
Robert Burns, husband of Belinda Burns – by all the *Catalyst* board members
Claire – by Martin Thruston
Dusty and Kali Tai – by Mary and Eric Hanson
Maggie and Joe Foss – by the Courson Family
Marion Masi, from our tennis group – by Randi T. Fairbrother
My mother, **Eleanor Stecker** – by Diana Palmer
Noah – by Joanne Molitor and Randi T. Fairbrother
Nutmeg and Princess – by Rita Flemming
Paula and her cats – by Keith
Sam – by Lois Waldref
Sam and Snow - by Richard Solotti

Founder: Free to you, not to us!

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cat we treat or fix. We must depend on you to provide the financial support needed to carry on. Please donate now to help us continue our fight against feline overpopulation. Prevention is the best approach towards our goal of making every cat a wanted cat.

Randi Fairbrother

Quatro and Sweetpea – by Lynne and Buddy Borderre
Post-Christmas greetings to **Pat Massette** and **Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Kurt** – by Lorna S. White
Victoria Blunt – by Michelle Barbarino



Abandoned in Guadalupe, Lars is now feeling at home in Santa Barbara. A micro-chip means he can enjoy a bit of the outdoors.

Wish List

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

- Cat food for the many, many colonies we monitor and maintain. We prefer meat flavors from Purina, Friskies, or Costco rather than fish flavors. Wet food is a treat. Past donations have been very helpful.
- We need to reach out to the Latino community more. Ideas are welcome. Our bilingual flyers are available for distribution to any individual or group interested in taking on this sorely needed project.
- If you see a stray cat, or start to feed one, it’s best to call us within a week or so. We will do our best to get to you as soon as possible. TNR-ing one cat is much easier than waiting until the kittens show up.
- Abandonment continues to be a big problem and is a punishable offense with fines and possible jail time. For many years we rarely came across a fixed cat in the North County, but in one week in February it surprised us when we trapped three cats that had been fixed, two from one address and one from another.
- We will soon be looking of fosters for our feral kittens. It can be a rewarding and fun experience to turn these hissy little creatures into purring love bugs.

Updates: *Catalyst* Action & Related Issues

Wendy P. McCaw Foundation

Many thanks to the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation for a generous grant. The money is earmarked for food, supplies and funding for our Tiny Tim fund, which covers medical care. This allows us to begin the year with vaccines and other needed supplies for our TNR efforts as well as preparing for our Adoption Program. We are fortunate, honored and most appreciative to be a recipient.

Ronald and Phyllis M. Bruce Trust for the Protections of Animals.

We are also very grateful to the Ronald and Phyllis M. Bruce Trust for the Protection of Animals for giving us funding for spay/neuter services. This is prevention at its best. It's not just the felines that benefit, but the untold number of unwanted kittens that will never be born, thus dealing directly with the feline overpopulation problem.

Trapping Workshop

Catalyst for Cats held a Saturday trapping workshop on Jan. 25, at the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society's beautiful new facility on Stowell Road in Santa Maria. Jill Tucker, the Director, generously offered the space and helped with publicity, resulting in a good showing of interested people. Some of our trappers, feeders and volunteers showed up as well.

We are in the process of training a few new trappers and we are delighted to welcome them to the world of trapping. We hope those who came from Grover Beach and Nipomo will volunteer for Feline Network

(a feral cat organization in San Luis County).

That evening we were on the local TV station and to top it off the Santa Maria Times featured us on the front page the next day (Sunday). In addition they followed up on a story a few days later to encourage the public to take advantage of our services and other low-cost spay/neuter opportunities for companion pets. This resulted in several calls for TNR jobs, some of which we have completed and others are still pending.

Hungry, Thirsty and Aggressive Coyotes

Keep your pets in at night. Don't leave food out. Coyotes have been seen during daylight hours. They, too, are suffering for lack of water.

Catalyst in the Press

Recently the Santa Maria Times and San Luis Obispo Times ran an Associated Press story regarding runaway house cats. *Catalyst for Cats*, Marci Kladnik, and Morris—a cat whose long-distance return was featured in our Winter 2009 Newsletter—were all mentioned in the story. The Wilson family, who live in Montecito, evacuated with Morris during the Jesusita Fire. Morris escaped from their motel room in Buellton, about 40 miles north of Santa Barbara.

Four months later Belinda Burns, a *Catalyst* board member, was feeding at a Santa Ynez Valley site, and the cat walked up and rubbed against her legs. Because of the nametag he was wearing, Morris was quickly reunited with the Wilsons. It was a happy reunion and Morris, who had already used up several of his nine lives, enjoyed another four years with the Wilson's.



Learning to Trap: *Catalyst* founder Randi Fairbrother (back to camera) instructs a group of potential volunteers and trappers at a January seminar at the new Humane Society facility in Santa Maria.



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!**

Catalyst for Cats is now on



Help Catalyst for Cats When You Shop Online

Every time a purchase is made through

AdoptAShelter.com

at any one of over 400 top name online stores, 100% of the amount displayed is donated to the animal organization or shelter chosen by the shopper. You can buy just about anything online and earn a donation, all without logging in or remembering a password.

Check us out at www.AdoptAShelter.com

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



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.