



# 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 rescue 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 Newsletter is a free publication distributed four times a year by Catalyst for Cats, Inc., PO Box 30331, Santa Barbara, CA 93130

### From the Founder

## Warm winter days spell 'early kitten season'

As we prepare for the 2015 season we reflect on the accomplishments of last year. In 2014 we neutered over 480 felines, mostly in the north county. The repercussions of that were far reaching, both in terms of improving the cats' way of life and reducing the number of kittens being born. The ripple effect resulted in fewer surrenders to other adoption and rescue animal groups in the county and contributed to a better community over all.

As we enjoy our warm winter days (in contrast to most of the U.S.), cats are beginning to show signs of early "heat" cycles. Naturally, this will result in an early start to "kitten season." definitely our most difficult time of year.

I hope, at least, the litters will, like last year, be small—possibly a result of the drought. Last year that was offset by many queens going into a third cycle, producing three litters instead of the usual two. A third litter is especially difficult for the mom because pregnancy and caring for her previous kittens has already taken a toll

on her. This comes into play even more with feral ones who struggle to protect their litters and find sufficient food sources.



*Photo by Debbie Merry*

**Picture of Health:** Trapped by Debbie Merry as an older kitten from a large feral cat colony in Santa Maria, Libby was to be TNR'd, but was too sick to be returned. After months of fostering by Debbie she became a bundle of love. This is how she greets Debbie when she comes home.

As female felines age, their litters tend to get smaller but their cycles do not stop. Therefore a feral female will not stop breeding her entire life. This disturbing fact emphasizes the importance of spaying ferals, which make up the largest number of surrenders to the shelters.

With owned pets, some may eventually be spayed even though they produced litters in the past. That can make a significant difference in their health, longevity, and the numbers of kittens produced.

In the light of all these "facts of life" in the cat world, we are especially appreciative for all the end of year contributions, which allowed us to start 2015 off on a good footing. Thank you all for enabling us to con-

tinue to fight the fight against feline overpopulation. Know that your donations are truly a gift that keeps on giving.

*Randi Fairbrother*

# In Appreciation

**O**ur volunteers are the backbone of our organization and absolutely essential. We applaud the dedication of our team of fosters, trappers, feeders, and all the others who contribute to saving and improving the lives of hundreds of felines every year. There are so many to thank:

**Veronica Eden** – for driving daily to feed a stabilized feral colony.

**Barbara Hilaire** – for her unwavering support of our TNR program

**Maureen Lynch** – for assistance in providing food for feral colonies in Santa Ynez.

**Debbie Merry** – for her extraordinary dedication as our main Santa Maria trapper who also feeds, transports, fosters, trouble shoots, and yet works full time. She manages to do it all.

**VIVA** – for their kindness in taking in three beloved feral cats from a foreclosure situation

**Chuck Vanderveer** – for rescuing a cat found at a

*Catalyst* feeding station in Santa Maria

**Jay Tadena** – for transporting cats to and from surgery

Many thanks to **The Animal Charitable Foundation of Santa Barbara County, Inc.** for providing spay/neuter costs. We have already complied with the terms of this grant: 20 felines (10 females and 10 males) were done in the north county in the month of January alone. This is prevention at its best.

We are very happy to be a recipient of a grant from **The Ronald and Phillis M. Bruce Foundation** for spay/neuter costs of feral, stray and abandoned cats and kittens in the Santa Ynez Valley and north county.

And we are most appreciative to the **Wendy P. McCaw Foundation** for money earmarked for general support and the Tiny Tim Fund. In addition to providing medical care for our felines we assisted dozens of companion cats last year who otherwise would not have received medical care.

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## Tributes & Memorials

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

### In Honor of:

**All Catalyst Volunteers**, for helping feral cats – by Dianne Howe

**Beth Rushing** – by Vasanti Fithian

**Catalyst**, for saving my feral cat Lucy, who had her tail amputated after being attacked by a bobcat – by Bonnie Brown

**Chaya and Taz** – by Mr. and Mrs. Dan Carmean

**Goldie** – a rescue from the streets of Santa Maria who probably lived the best two years of her life with me – by Randi T. Fairbrother

**Homeless cats** – by Martha San Agustin

**Lani Gillis** – she started PAWS (now ASAP) over 25 years ago – by Randi Fairbrother

**Michelle Garbarino**, my sister – by Victoria Blunt

**Randi**, my long time friend – by Ethel Barclay

**Solida Vino Nixon** – by Lessie Nixon

**Victoria Blunt** – by Michelle Garbarino

### In Memory Of:

**John Bissell**, who passed too soon – by Gina Bifano,

Randi Fairbrother, Ann Payrat, and A. M. Moffett  
Photography

**Boo-cat (alias Lady Bug)** – by Debra Derien and Tony Rogell

**JD**, always missed – by Marci Kladnik

**Little Girl**, a feral cat we fed for many years – by Teresa Hall

**Miney** – by Kathie and Bruce McBroom

**Jack Moir** – by Carolyn Moir

**Molly** – by Jennifer Emgmyr

**Mousie** – by Bonnie Bisoglio

**Paul** – by Natasha Carr

**Pete the Cat** – by Doug Jenzen

**Sam and Lulu** – by Lois Waldref

**Angie Scholtz, Francesca, and Miss Muffin** – by Elizabeth Scholtz

**Scooter, Cookie, Pudding, Blondie, Mommy and Daddy** – by Jill Kent (Catalyst TNR'd this feline family many years ago.)

**Sweetpea** – by Lynne and Bud Borderre, Jr.

**John Tapia**, my dear brother, who loved his Gracie and Lil Red – by Irene Kasper

**Tippy-Tulip**, always in my heart – by Lani Gillis

# 4-H Youth and Catalyst: An On-going Connection

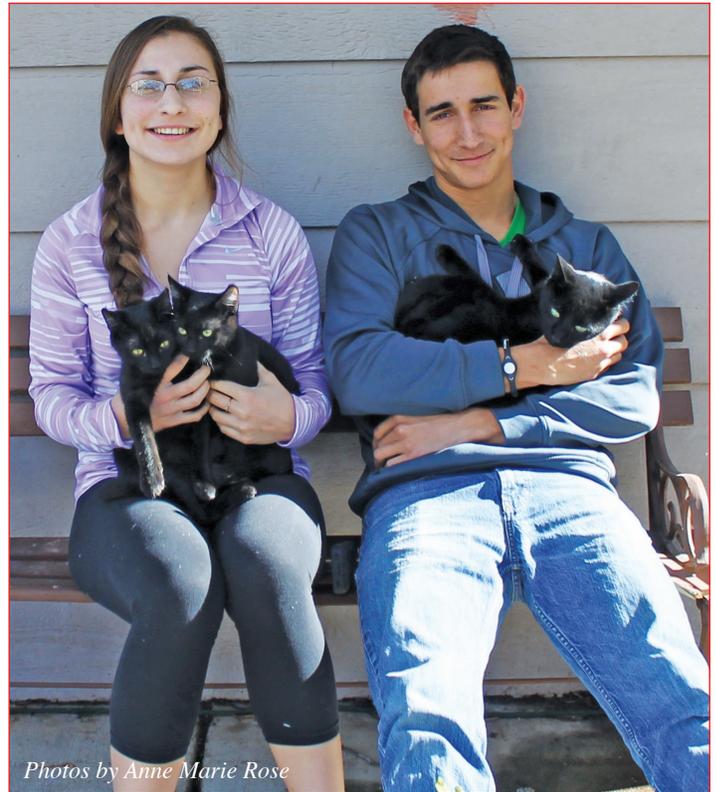
By Anne Marie Rose

In our fall 2014 newsletter (page 3), four Los Amigos 4-H members, Alex and Caleb Thompson along with Elizabeth and Samuel Smith, were recognized for their efforts helping fifteen feral kittens rescued in central Santa Maria.

The 4-H students spent the time necessary to socialize the little felines in preparation for their new homes. Six months later the last two of these fifteen kittens, Browsy and Welly (now Winston), have now found their new home thanks to a collaborative effort with the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society.

On December 12, all four 4-H youths were invited to celebrate their service at a pizza party in their honor. Community service awards were presented to each student to acknowledge their time and effort helping the local feral cat population. Alex and Caleb Thompson received a certificate for 50 volunteer hours from *Catalyst for Cats*.

Elizabeth and Samuel's history of working with *Catalyst* goes back to 2008 and was captured in *Catalyst's* winter 2008 newsletter in the article "The Tale of Four Kittens in a Tree Trunk." With their help four abandoned kittens were rescued from a tree trunk along Telephone Road. Elizabeth and Samuel helped trap and socialize the four kittens and also knocked on doors to successfully place two of the kittens in a wonderful home.



Photos by Anne Marie Rose

Elizabeth and Samuel Smith hold just three of the seven tame and semi-feral cats adopted in their household through *Catalyst*.

Since that time, both of the teens have rescued and socialized two additional groups of kittens besides the fifteen kittens rescued in Santa Maria this past July.

Elizabeth is pictured with the newest additions to their feline family, Halle and Violet, three-month old kittens from Randi Fairbrother, while Samuel holds Theo—rescued one year ago from the engine of a truck after it had traveled from Atascadero to Santa Maria. Theo lives at the Smith house permanently.

This story would not be complete without a special thank you to *Catalyst* founder Randi Fairbrother for all the trapping support, spay/neuter services and vaccines for the rescue cats at the Smith home. Tea, a black female, was one of the "tree" survivors that remained semi-feral. Ritzzy, a marmalade semi-feral male, was rescued from a business and relocated to the Smith household. Nigel, a feral male (and Ritzzy's buddy), came from the same business location and lives successfully with Wicket, a semi-feral male, in the hay barn.

*Catalyst* was instrumental in helping each of these cats have a forever home.



Alex and Caleb Thompson are officially recognized for their community service of socializing rescued kittens.

# Trapping Truths

*One site in a Los Alamos vineyard had occupied more than three weeks, but the exertion and emotional toll were beyond our trapper's limits*

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*Conclusion of a two-part saga begun in our previous issue*

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*In pursuit of what was originally estimated as 15 kittens and three moms, Marci Kladnik had her hands full setting traps, luring cats, driving to the vet, and dealing with kittens dying of flea anemia. Now it was time to finish the job and do the math.*

*Story and Photos by Marci Kladnik*

I returned to the vineyard with the dead kitten for burial with its littermate and to pick up the flame point for her spay the next day. I did not tell the woman that I thought the cat was pregnant because I feared that as a Catholic she would not let me take her.

While administering flea meds, I noticed some scabby stuff on her ear tips. Skin cancer crossed my mind. Through broken English the woman told me it was from fighting, but I had sincere doubts about that. The cat was spayed the following day and was indeed pregnant. I named her Snow.

By the sixth day I had removed 13 cats and kittens, two of which were dead and both flame points sported suspicious ear tips. I dubbed the second one Lily. Besides trapping, I was fostering her, Snow, and the four orange and white kittens. They were an obviously bonded family.

When Lily went in for her spay, the vet confirmed my suspicions regarding the ears. I was told to bring Snow back in. The vet would amputate their ear tips to arrest the spread of the skin cancer.

For the next week no surgery appointments were available. During this down time the woman and I continued feeding at the trapping site to keep the cats coming around.



*One not-so-feral trapped cat awaits surgery.*



*Scarface got his name after trashing his face against his cage.*

A recount showed 16 more cats and kittens still out there!

Finally a Spay Day for 10 was scheduled and trapping began in earnest. Over the course of two long days and nights I filled my quota. As I trapped, the animals were placed in a barn for holding until surgery day. Some tried frantically to get out of their cages, bloodying their noses against the wire. The kittens cried and it was difficult to walk away with their meows ringing in my ears. They were fed and watered and soiled papers changed, but still confined.

After surgery the cats needed to be held until the last of the colony was trapped. The granddaughter showed me a building on the property, a single large room with exposed rafters and unfinished walls. Perfect! It was large enough that holding a dozen cats in it for possibly a week would not be a problem.

Having observed their friends and family disappear one after another, the last ones in

*Continued on page 5*

# Trapping Truths: Lives saved at cost of burn-out

*From page 4*

a colony are always the most difficult to catch. I trapped two more on surgery day, but it took another five before I caught the next one. Now, as I sat in the darkness, it was day 23 and there were only the two kittens and their daddy left.

The kitten that cried so plaintively for its colony braved the trap that night. The remaining kitten disappeared and the daddy, being trap shy, wandered off.

Three-and-a-half weeks on the job, 29 cats trapped, and I was done, physically and emotionally. My body ached from



*Fortunate cats find safety in the rafters.*



*The post-surgical "holding cell" served nicely while every last cat was trapped.*

all the heavy lifting. Two kittens were dead from fleas, 14 more aborted and one had disappeared—probably supper for a hungry coyote—and two had ear amputations. I turned in my resignation and cleared house and garage of equipment. Burned out, I even stopped writing my bi-weekly newspaper cat column!

I say I'm done, but I know that I would never turn away an animal in need.

## Skin cancer survivors, Lily and Snow, still waiting for a home

*photos by Marci Kladnik*

**F**or all the lives saved and all the lives lost in the marathon trapping episode in the Los Alamos vineyard described above, two young cats—Lily and Snow—tug most strongly at the heartstrings.

Twin sister flame point Siameses, they are blessed with incredible good looks, which unfortunately are composed of pale blue eyes with pink pigment, predominantly white fur, and very pale orange points. All



*Lily is just as sweet as ever despite the loss of ear tips due to squamous cell carcinoma.*

that made them highly susceptible to a skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma, which led to the surgical removal of their ear tips.



*Snow after surgery*

The surgery saved their lives, and they have recovered entirely, but these two are obviously not candidates for return to an outdoor environment. They are, however, very fine prospects for an indoor forever home together—stubby ears and all.

If you are interested in giving Lily and Snow a loving indoor home, please contact us at 685-1653.

# Catalyst Cares



Photo by Debbie Merry

*GiGi may once have lived rough, but is now ready for a home.*

## Homeless, But Not Feral

By Debbie Merry

I trapped her on the outskirts of a business park in Santa Maria, where she just showed up one day at a feral cat feeding station monitored by *Catalyst for Cats*.

After getting her spayed, vaccinated, de-wormed and flea treated, I had the feeling she was not feral. I started to approach her and she let me touch her. Then she let me pick her up, hold and pet her. She never hissed or tried to bite or run away. She has been in my bathroom and purrs as soon as I enter “her room.”

We’ve called her GiGi, and she’s totally ready for adoption. She is a young teenager and will make a lovely pet for someone for many years to come. Call Randi at 685-1563 if you are interested.

This happens far too often and disturbs us greatly. Seldom are these cats fixed and we are all too familiar with the tragic results of that.

*What a Difference a Trim Makes! This badly matted cat was rescued by Melissa Muñoz in Santa Maria. It took two people two sessions with clippers and comb at the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital to remove the mats. One might wonder how anyone could let this happen.*

Before:



After:



*Just Chillin’:* These three cats hang out at volunteer Marci Kladnik’s house. Bill, the newcomer, looks on while Randi eats and Tommy protects his catnip. Tommy was rescued from Santa Maria, Randi “came with the house,” and Bill just showed up recently hoping that Randi will go into heat. Plans are made to TNR him!

# Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

## Guadalupe Spay/Neuter Ordinance

On Tuesday Sept. 23, the City of Guadalupe joined the County of Santa Barbara, along with the cities of Solvang, Buellton, Goleta and Santa Barbara, in adopting the Responsible Pet Ownership Ordinance. (Only Santa Maria and Carpinteria do not currently have this ordinance on their books.) This is an important step in addressing the rampant breeding and overpopulation that has plagued Guadalupe for far too long.

With the room filled to capacity, the City Council members heard speakers in support of the Spay/Neuter Ordinance, with no opposition. The room broke into applause when the ordinance passed unanimously.

The ordinance does not require spaying and neutering *per se*, but it does require owners who want to keep their dogs and cats intact to get a certificate from a veterinarian in order to purchase an unaltered license. Licenses are not required for altered cats, but they are for intact ones. The license fee is substantially higher for unaltered animals, as required by state law. The goal is to motivate pet owners to save money by choosing to have their dog or cat fixed rather than having to obtain a veterinary certificate and pay the higher license fee.

Thanks to Mayor Frances Romero, who made a personal commitment to have Guadalupe adopt this ordinance, and also to the City Council members who listened to the will of the people.

—Lee Heller

## Wish List

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

- Transporters needed intermittently for the Guadalupe area to deliver and pick up cats after surgery.
- Santa Maria is in need of trappers, feeders, and fosters for the upcoming kitten season. training and supplies provided.
- Cat food for the many, many colonies we monitor and maintain. We prefer meat flavors rather than fish.
- We are in desperate need of suitable relocation sites for mousers. It's a win-win for our talented cats and property owners alike.



*A Wothwhile Scare:* Dr. Brenda Forsythe of Orcutt Veterinary Hospital and her husband Jerry Beatty entered a Halloween costume contest with their horses, dressed as the members of the music group KISS. A prize of a \$100 donation to the “charity of your choice” was offered to the winning contestant. Dr. Forsythe, her husband, and their horses won the contest and had the prize sent to the charity of their choice, which was Catalyst for Cats!

## Risks in FIV diagnosis grossly exaggerated

New research by Annette Litster of Purdue University’s Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences published in the *Veterinary Journal* shows that FIV positive cats can live long, healthy, and relatively normal lives with no symptoms at all and need not be isolated from non-infected housemates. Litster discovered that FIV was not passed between infected and non-infected cats during normal day-to-day interaction in a shared living environment and was not transmitted to kittens when their mothers were already infected prior to birth.

An infected cat can fight off the infection and become totally immune or can become a carrier that never gets sick. Furthermore, FIV is not easily passed between cats since it cannot be spread casually between litter boxes, food and water bowls, or through snuggling or playing. The disease is transferred when an infected cat bites another cat and breaks the other cat’s skin. This means that a neutered cat in a home is highly unlikely to infect any other cats as long as they are properly introduced or are not particularly aggressive in nature.

Litster’s studies document FIV positive and negative cats living together without the disease being transmitted among the group members, despite sharing all the same bowls, litter boxes, bedding and engaging in mutual grooming and even episodes of mild aggression.



*Catalyst for Cats, Inc.*  
 Post Office Box 30331  
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**Every litter adds to the problem  
 Every spay/neuter adds to the solution!**

## 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](http://www.AdoptAShelter.com)

## 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.

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.



## Join our new Facebook community!

Go to our page, 'Like' us, then watch for adoptable kittens and event announcements. Please 'Share' the adoption posts to help these kitties find homes quickly.

