



# Catalyst for Cats

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

## NEWSLETTER

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Volume 28, Number 1

[www.catalystforcats.org](http://www.catalystforcats.org)

Spring 2019

### From the Founder

## Our part of the big picture: 300 cared-for cats

**A**t first it looked like a dead cat in the road. As I approached closer, I saw it was just some piece of trash and gave a sigh of relief. It had stirred memories from the old days and our Sunday drives—you old-timers will remember those—when I dreaded the all-too-frequent sight of a dead cat in or beside the road.

According to shelter records most feline road kills are intact males—apparently seeking females in heat. It got me thinking: It has been a long time since I've seen that sad sight and I realized why. Neutered cats (and dogs) tend not to roam. That's a big deal. Their lives are forever changed for the better once the raging hormones no longer dominate their lives.

After 25 years of battling this very common and evident problem, *Catalyst for Cats* has curtailed its large-scale programs of Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR), fostering, and adoption. We heartily applaud the efforts of the other dedicated groups in the local community for taking up the banner of making “every cat a wanted cat.”

On a much larger scale, Best Friends Animal Society is on a quest to make our whole nation “No Kill” by 2025, which is a tough goal to achieve. According to

their statistics California and Texas are the two states most in need of spay/neuter services. It surprised me to see California because Santa Barbara County has made great strides in that area, but we are a relatively small part of a very large and diverse state.

For our part of the big picture of animal welfare, though, *Catalyst* continues to supply food for several feral cat colonies, feeding over 300 felines daily. Since these colonies do not experience “kitten seasons,” most of these cats are reaching middle and old age, and we lose some each year. Our Tiny Tim Fund goes for medical care, and we are sad to lose those we cannot save.

To see the members of a stable colony resting, washing themselves peacefully after a meal, enjoying sun baths, mingling with companions, and sometimes pursuing a hunt is indeed a happy sight.

The contrast between such an idyllic picture and my grim memory of dead cats by the

road is something made possible over the years by our generous donors. We appreciate every one of you and trust in your continued support of our endeavors.

As the community continues to recover from the devastation of fires, floods and mud flows of yesteryear, we wish for a pleasant summer without any fires.

*Randi Fairbrother*



**Meal Time:** These contented felines on private property in Guadalupe are just a portion of *Catalyst's* largest colony. All those tipped ears are a beautiful sight to behold!

# In Appreciation

🐾 **Belinda Burns** – for her continued efforts in relocating cats and colonies as needed.

🐾 **Lorraine Cestone** – for her maintaining our mailing list.

🐾 **Charles Clouse** – for his work in editing and typ-setting our newsletter for nearly 20 years now.

🐾 **Orcutt Veterinary Hospital**

🐾 **Amy Smith** – for her tireless efforts assisting our rescue efforts in the Valley and North County. She is a most dedicated, efficient and loyal advocate.

## Tributes & Memorials

### In Honor of:

**Choe** by Sharon Lee Tate

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

**Tiger** – by Jill Dore Kent

### In Memory of:

**All my kitties past and present** – by Ann MacKuse  
**Big Daddy**, neutered well over 10 years ago, leaving behind some of his offspring from a large group of auto repair and supply shops in Goleta. Fed twice a day and friendly – by *Catalyst for Cats*.

We cherish the memory of my beloved **Buster and Romeo** as the only certain immortality by Allison Coleman

**Cookie, Scooter and all the babies** – by Jill Dore Kent

**Eddie**, a well-mannered Chihuahua abandoned at a boarding facility in Santa Maria and adopted by Byron, Kelly and Leah Fairbrother. He gave them 17 years of wonderfulness. A most gentle and sweet dog; he is missed – from Randi Fairbrother

**Sweet Pie** – by Lynne and Bud Borderre.

**Tacl and Maja** – by Carolyn Moir

**Tiger and Kung Pad** – by Sarah Burns

**Trouble** – by Richard Wilson

**Mr. and Mrs. Adil Mohamed Yaqub**, for their many years of devoted care for their colony on the Mesa. One of our favorite stories is from this colony of very feral cats. It took several years before they even ventured to the safe and warm place in their garage. Then on a cold and rainy morning the last remaining cat walked into the kitchen and became a lap cat. We have a photo to prove it! – by *Catalyst for Cats*

## Memorial

### Meghan always had it tough

**M**eghan, a gray-stripped tabby feral, had always had a tough life on the streets of Santa Maria, but had finally found a place to be herself in a colony there, tended and consistently fed by a caretaker named Orlando. Last fall, though, Orlando turned to our go-to North County cat person Amy Smith when he noticed abdominal bleeding.

Amy came to help right away, but the frightened cat proved tough to trap. It took most of a day to get her into a transfer cage and to see a veterinarian, who, along with an exam, gave her own name—Meghan—to the previously unnamed feline.

It was an apparently old injury that had turned serious, and the best that could be done was to put her out of her suffering.

The positive note, however, is that this hard-luck creature of the streets got needed medical care at the end and was so deeply loved and cared for by Orlando—as are all his feral fur babies.



Photo by Amy Smith

# Checking in with Santa Maria: hard work, good outcomes

Amy Smith keeps track of old friends from the street and gets new ones off to a good start

Our primary North County cat wrangler, Amy Smith, who has been busy all spring trapping and shepherding needy cats to shelter, reports some good news about three of her favorite rescues: **Jasper, Toby, and Buddy.** (Also see page 4 Updates about TNR training Amy has taken part in.) To retain the emotion along with the facts and photos we keep things in Amy's words:

"Jasper (right) is lying on top and Toby is hiding underneath the bench at the [Santa Maria Valley] Humane Society cat room. They are both male and lovely. I took this photo not knowing that later that day Jasper would be adopted. Happy I saw him again.

I hope they love him as much if not more than me. It was a father and daughter that picked him out. The little girl fell in love.

This is the latest on Toby (below) at his forever

home in Santa Maria. He is so loved and happy.

I worked on him for almost a year to get closer and trusted by him. I found him wandering the streets and hungry. He was so scared. But now not to worry; he's safe

and sound.

Jasper was found as a forlorn kitten (below) and brought in to see Dr. Jean Greek, a veterinary dermatology specialist in Santa Barbara for a skin condition. He was adopted with the help of Denise Clift [Rescue Coordinator] at the SMVHS. He is happy and very much loved in his home.

As for Buddy (below), my beautiful gray handsome cat. He is so friendly and loves his pets, but outdoors is where he is most at home. I tried to get him adopted through the humane

society in SM, but he completely shut down. I had no choice but to put him near his colony and check on him daily. He recuperated and started eating again. He's back to being Buddy and very happy.

Thankfully, I get to see him often and check on his health."



## Community Cats to the rescue!

Sixteen cats were TNR'd over a few days this spring from one residential location in Santa Maria by Amy Smith and Sara Ganschow, fortunately before any kittens were dropped.

They were all brought in traps to the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society for neutering under their Community Cats program, which includes vaccinations for rabies and distemper, a flea treatment, and ear tip—all without charge.

## Updates:

### *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

#### TNR Training

**C***atalyst for Cats* sponsored Amy Smith and Cathy Farrell's participation in a TNR workshop offered by Feral Cat Caretakers Coalition in Culver City in March. The workshop provided helpful ideas regarding good trapping and boarding techniques and our trappers were each given a trap of her own.

"We met energetic and enthusiastic people, all of whom care about the welfare of these precious felines," Cathy Farrell and Amy Smith Amy reports. "We also made new contacts for support and got help in answering questions we might have. It was a great experience for both of us."

Because *Catalyst* receives so many referrals from North County asking for help, we are trying to re-establish a core group of trappers in that area. If anyone is interested, please call 805-685-1563.

#### Writing Award

**F**ormer *Catalyst* board member, columnist, trapper, foster and rescuer Marci Kladnik has won another Muse award from the Cat Writers' Association for her story about Maggie and Barney that appeared in the dog anthology book *Second-Chance Dogs* published last fall. Barney was the feral kitten Marci trapped

during her very first TNR job for *Catalyst* in 2007.

Barney imprinted on Marci's resident Scottie dog Maggie and was instantly tamed.

Marci, a former president of the Cat Writers' Association, is now the proud recipient of eight Muse awards in all.



Marci Kladnik (right) with the editor of the anthology containing her story.



## One calamity after another befalls Guadalupe colony

**S**ad news from our large colony in Guadalupe. Sited for many years in an enclosed patio outside the home of Mark and Diane Poudrier, the colony of about 30 cats was recently attacked by an animal, probably a large dog let out at night, which is a very common practice although unlawful.

Consequently, several of the cats are no longer with us. **Big Grey**, the excellent alpha male died in defense of his colony. **Silver Dollar**, a recent arrival, also was killed. **Black Cat** was attacked and injured. The Poudriers were unable to trap him for treatment, but he seems to have recovered on his own.

**Spot**, a young bright-eyed friendly male is believed to have been poisoned, likely from snail bait. **Miss Kitty-Kitty**, the colony's first kitten of years ago, was suddenly very needy for several weeks and then just disappeared.

The perimeters of the property have been checked and there have been no further attacks.

Mark, who suffered considerable injuries last year when he fell from a ladder while trimming a hedge, continues to make a slow, often painful recovery.



Amy Smith and centenarian Tigger

He and **Tigger**, one of the original members from years ago, spend most of the day together except when Tigger ventures outdoors for short visits. He is always in at night.

The Poudriers also noticed that Tigger, was bumping into things as he moved about the patio and suspected he was going blind. Amy Smith took him to be checked out by Dr. Kristiane Schmidt, a veterinary ophthalmologist in Arroyo Grande, who confirmed "blindness due to complete diffuse retinal degeneration." She estimated his age to be about 100 in human years.

## Disaster clean-up, fostering, trapping—Florida style

After 11 years of cat rescues, tricky trapping missions, emergency transports, and daily feeding of feral colonies in Santa Maria and North County generally, *Catalyst's* Debbie Merry relocated to the Florida panhandle about two years ago. Not surprisingly, as our *Newsletter* updates have captured since then, she took her humane heart and dedication for animal welfare with her to her new home.

Last year alone she was responsible for neutering 72 felines, fostering several litters, and surrendering dozens of cats to the local humane society for adoption. And our reporting has prompted one of *Catalyst's* generous supporters to provide sponsorship to help carry out Debbie's activities.

### Stepping Up After Natural Disaster:

When Hurricane Michael hit last year in mid-October, the devastation was overwhelming to the area's residents and animal population, as the pictures below show. It was the first Category 5 to hit the U.S. since Andrew in 1992 and it was a whopper!

Naturally, Debbie became part of the recovery effort. One hearty cat (*below right*) also seemed to be involved with the clean up as well. Debbie was pleased to see its already tipped ear.

### A Day's Work:

This past April the national group Alley Cat Allies sponsored a free seven-day

spay/neuter event for the Florida panhandle called Operation Spay Bay. On the day that Debbie brought in eight cats herself—two in heat and one pregnant—they had already taken 106 cats and were still accepting more. They received penicillin shots, and a male she brought in needed treatment for dematitis. All that was free.

Since she'd had the day off, Debbie did some extra trapping the previous evening. She writes us that once she saw the scale of the operation, "I wished I had three days off to do some more trapping."

A local television station had been dispatched and Debbie reports several of her cats showed up on the evening news.

### Florida Fostering:

One aspect of Debbie's devotion to animals has always been making sure kittens are properly fostered and socialized before



Photos by Debbie Merry

adoption. She reports having recently found a mom and two kittens offered at 4 - 5 weeks old on Facebook. Debbie, of course, took them all in and after three weeks of fostering, contacted the local humane society, who finished the job and put them up for adoption.



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



*Photo by Ruth Barish*

***Cat Lovers Re-united:*** Catalyst founder Randi Fairbrother and Ruth Barish were classmates throughout elementary and high school in Pearl River, NY. Ruth, who now lives in Pennsylvania, recently tracked Randi down via the Internet and re-established contact by sending a picture of her current home and garden decor. Obviously, they still share a passion for cats.