



# 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 cats and kittens.*

### From the Founder

## Keeping the Faith

The success of spaying and neutering was the focus of an Associated Press feature earlier this summer. The article stated it has taken years of campaigning to change attitudes about sterilizing pets, but that it has paid off. This year fewer than four million unwanted dogs and cats will be euthanized—down from as many as 20 million forty years ago.

The reasons are many, but animal experts agree that spaying and neutering has played the biggest role in saving so many lives. Nearly every shelter and animal welfare organization donates money, space and/or time for low-fee spay/neuter services. Pet sterilization has even become the law in some states, counties and cities. With early (as young as eight weeks) spay/neuter available, animals are “fixed” prior to adoption through reliable agencies.

While shelters are firmly on board, the biggest challenge continues to be selling the concept of sterilization to pet owners. We deal with this struggle on a daily basis, but the resistance continues to amaze us.

Some owners feel their pets should enjoy a “natural life” and that it is somehow against nature to “fix” an

animal. The public needs to learn just what “natural” living means for these poor animals and their offspring who suffer and die needlessly.

Of course, to those of us in animal rescue the euthanasia numbers are still far too high. Considering the overwhelming number of animals we deal with, and how over-worked we are, it might help us to “keep the faith” if we look at the big picture and remember

that overall progress is being made in curbing feline overpopulation. We care so much, but there is still far too much pain.

So let’s hope the numbers continue to improve over the next few years. Maybe some spring, instead of trying to save a kitten’s life we will be able to stop and smell the roses instead. That day can’t come too soon, but until then we must hope and ask for your financial assistance. These economic times make it difficult for so many—animals as well as people. Your

generosity will be greatly appreciated as we continue our quest towards “every cat a wanted cat.”



*TNR Poster Child: A contented cat from a newly stabilized colony.*

*Randi Fairbrother*

## In Appreciation

One can not find enough kind words to say regarding our dedicated volunteers. Unless one is active in animal rescue, it is hard to understand the amount of time and effort our volunteers contribute. They are the backbone of our organization and the ones that make it happen. Their personal sacrifice is a true labor of love and concern. Some are mentioned, but all are appreciated.

**Belinda Burns** continues to organize trappers and feeders for the Santa Ynez Valley colonies and also coordinates relocation sites

**C.A.R.E.4Paws** – for help with spay/neuter services in Buellton and Santa Barbara.

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

**The Santa Maria Shelter Clinic**

**Trish and Mike Fountain** – for their remarkable commitment and willingness to assist in a multitude of ways.

As a feral cat organization we do not have a shelter, which makes it difficult to show our kittens for adoption; therefore, we often rely on adoption agencies to help. We thank them for their cooperation despite the many challenges they all face: **ASAP (Animal Shelter Assistance Program)**. A special thank you to **RESQCATS** for their help in adopting out dozens of our feral socialized kittens. And for their generosity in helping spay and neuter tame felines from the Santa Maria area. **San Roque Pet Hospital** – where we show our kittens, and especially to **Kat Niksto**, who coordinates the successful program.

Fostering feral kittens is a vital part of *Catalyst for Cats*'s work. Our kittens are the offspring of feral moms, and because of lack of human contact, they must be taught to trust us in order to be adopted. Once socialized they make wonderful pets.

Thank you to our fosters from the Santa Ynez Valley: **Kia Beckert** (who also traps), **Arianna Daphne**, **Julie De Marcus**, **Tina Hawkins** (litter after litter), **Melinda Siebold**, and **Marci Kladnik**, who wears many hats— foster coordinator, foster, trapper, and writer of a biweekly column for the Santa Maria Times and the Santa Ynez Valley News.

Thanks also to our trappers, fosters and feeders from Santa Maria, all of whom hold jobs in addition:

**Suzzane Canus** and her daughter Valarie. **Lavi and Monica Gonzalez** (The Pied Pipers of Santa Maria), and **Debbie Merry**.

It was especially difficult for **Debbie Walker**. A feral mother cat tested positive for leukemia, as did five of her kittens. Debbie and the family made a huge sacrifice and commitment to foster the kittens for over eight weeks to be retested. Sometimes the kittens are able to throw off the virus but this did not happen and all had to be euthanized. This was heartbreaking as we waited for the test results. Thank you, Debbie, for going above and beyond.

**Diane and Mark Poudrier** of Guadalupe for their commendable efforts in the Guadalupe area.

**Dr. Brenda Forsythe** and the staff of the **Orcutt Veterinary Hospital** for their many kindnesses.

**Pauline Simes and family** of Santa Barbara.

*Catalyst for Cats* is very happy and relieved to again be in possession of a reliable van for transporting cats and equipment. A few weeks ago we purchased a 2008 Honda van with less than 30,000 miles on it, with help from many kind people: the **Bull Foundation**, **C. J Enterprises**, **Barbara Hilaire DeLoreto**, **Toyota of Santa Maria**, sponsorship from **Honda of Santa Maria** and an **anonymous donor**— along with funds from last year's Cat's Meow Raffle. We thank all the benefactors for understanding the importance of a reliable van for a feral cat organization's work.

And to many others for their efforts on behalf of the felines throughout the county.

### 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, feeders and trappers for Santa Maria.
- Fosters for the kittens that need socializing.
- Cat food for the many, many colonies we monitor and maintain. We spend thousands of dollars helping to feed these colonies. We prefer meat flavors from Purina, Friskies, or Costco rather than fish flavors..
- More people who understand the importance of spaying and neutering.

## New colony in Goleta finds stability through TNR

By Randi Fairbrother

Many years ago—before *Catalyst for Cats* evolved and started our program of TNR (trap, neuter and return)—Goleta was swarming with large groups of breeding feral cats everywhere. It took many years to change that, but we eventually turned things around.

So I was a bit surprised awhile back when a new Goleta colony was called to our attention.

It all started about a year ago when a family of cats showed up at a business site in Goleta. People put out food for them, but after a few days the cats disappeared, which was kind of strange.

About a month later, though, another cat showed up and we did manage to catch him right away and find a loving home for him, since he was a tame stray and not feral. Intact males will spend their lives roaming, seeking out females whether they have caregivers or not.

Then early this year I received a phone call about a group of cats in Goleta. I recognized some of the cats as the same as those reported from the previous call from the business site. This was a fairly large group of cats and it just shows how we must stay vigilant.

The cats had traveled quite a distance—perhaps half a mile or so. At that time the feeding was done on a hit or miss basis, and that may explain why they traveled so far and then disappeared.

I called Beth Rushing, our trapper for the Santa Barbara-Goleta areas, and we formed a plan. Within a two-week period we TNR'd 14 cats. Over the next month or so, we TNR'd another six as they showed up at the feeding site.

While that process was going on we received an encouraging email regarding this colony. One of the group's feeders, named Lani, wrote, "I saw your posted sign to not feed the cats because they are to be fixed. Thank you for doing this. These specific cats have many fans and people who feed them and give them attention when they are up to it. The "fixing" part we can't do. We are in much gratitude. Keep up the great work."

As we struggle to change the public's perceptions of the value in spaying and neutering domestic animals (see this month's essay *Keeping the Faith*, page 1), that email was certainly gratifying.

Also many thanks to ASAP for assisting us with this colony. The cats are fed and watered daily, and some are now able to be petted. Fortunately, this was done early in the year before

any kittens or even pregnancies had occurred. A happy ending to what could have been a very different story.



*Mealtime: Catalyst volunteer Beth Rushing feeds hungry customers at a Goleta business site early this year, prior to carrying out a TNR plan to stabilize the (then) recently formed colony.*



*A Few Months Later: Altogether 20 cats were TNR'd at the Goleta site, where population growth is zero and food is plentiful.*

Last March a beautiful little eight-week-old shiny black kitten was rescued from a man on the street in Santa Maria. Perfect she was, but for her eyes which were both damaged beyond repair by the herpes virus most likely contracted in the birth canal. Finding a forever home for a one-eyed kitten is always a challenge; finding one for a totally blind one would be a daunting prospect.

Still, before the final decision was made to put her down, we asked Dr. Brenda Forsythe of Orcutt Veterinary Hospital to examine and test her. She tested clean and the staff fell in love with her, so we made the expensive decision to have both eyes removed. I volunteered to foster her through the recovery period and Dr. Brenda offered to set up a cage in her waiting room when it came time to find her the perfect home.

I had this little kitten for only three days prior to surgery, but during that time I, too, fell in love with her spunk and total fearlessness. I dubbed her Amelia after that legendary fearless flyer.

Amelia came home sporting the expected rigid collar which would not be removed for three weeks. She was very groggy, having not only undergone double eye removals but a spray as well. Since she was such an active



*Black Is The Color of My True Love's Hair:* Amelia naps on the window seat as Freeway makes friends with Maggie.

kitten, this made it much easier to care for her in those first couple of post-surgery days.

As time went by, Amelia was not content to stay upstairs in the bathroom and office. She wanted to be downstairs with my other cats, and so I began to let her mingle. Things went well and I told Randi that I would be keeping her myself.

Every day she amazed me by adding some new trick to

her repertoire, proving she was anything but disabled. She'd scamper up the tall cat tree without pausing, then swing herself over the side to shimmy back down.

Playing soccer with her favorite noisy crinkle balls through a room full of furniture was no problem at all. Her hearing was so acute that she would stop short of running into things because the toy had bounced off first. She could even track birds flying across the yard if she were in the patio or leap in the air after a toy tossed over her head.

Then World War Pee broke out in my house! I don't know if it was because the lack of eyes frightened my cats or if Tweety, the only other female, decided one princess was enough, but someone was definitely *not* happy with Amelia's presence.

Amelia was once again sequestered upstairs and a large 4' high barrier was put up to keep her there. By now she was no longer a tiny kitten but a four-month-old teenager and she would *not* be blocked in. It wasn't long before I caught her scaling the wall and I had to raise it another four inches.

Now she was really upset, and I could tell

she was very lonely. Maggie (my Scottie) and I spent a lot of time upstairs with her, and I let her out in the patio for a few hours every day for some fresh air and sunshine, but I could tell she was missing feline companionship. She especially needed another kitten to wrestle and play with. She was, after all, still a kitten herself.

A few long weeks later I was driving Amelia down to Santa Barbara to what I expected to be her new for-

## The Purrfect Match

### A Tricky Adoption Made Possible by Patience and Good Luck

By Marci Kladnik

under the 101 overpass. He wanted to know what to do with it. Luckily I had a large just emptied cage in my garage and there was a neighbor with a key to my house, so that is where I found another black kitten when I returned home without Amelia.

That evening—and all night long!—I was consumed with worry for Amelia. I had been less than thrilled leaving the kitten in the home I'd brought her to, and now I had the strong urge to rescue her. The next afternoon, I drove back down to do just that, even though I'd have to barricade her upstairs again, which she hated. I knew if I were patient I'd find the right home for her.

An hour before I went to recover Amelia, I received a call from an interested couple in Santa Ynez who had read about Amelia in the local paper. They were wondering if she were still available. There was a potential problem, however. They already had two FIV+ cats on the premises and there was the question of whether or not it would be a safe environment for the kitten.

I would be passing their home on my way to Santa Barbara, so I stopped to meet them and see their house. I was very pleased with both the couple and the layout of the home. I even met their two cats. I told them that I thought it would work with some precautions and that I would stop on my way back home with Amelia so they could meet her. I did and they in turn fell in love with her at first sight.

Amelia and I left them to mull things over, returning home to a new waiting kitten.

Now with this other smaller black kitten in the garage, my fostering took more hours of the day. Both cats needed companionship, and I could only spread myself so thin.

Luckily, little Freeway, as he'd been named, was old enough to be neutered and tested. Testing clean, I introduced the two kittens and let them work it out for a

ever home. My cell phone rang at the top of San Marcos Pass. It was a shop owner in Los Alamos where I live saying that a couple had just dropped off a tiny kitten they'd found



*Tubular!* Amelia teaches Freeway how to use two toys at once.

few hours each day until the trilling and playing became more than the hissing and growling. It was only three days before little Freeway was attempting to nurse on Amelia, and she seemed to be enjoying it. With the bond made, much stress was relieved for all involved. However, now I had a double dilemma. I now had TWO black cats, one eyeless and older, that needed to be adopted out together. I wondered how I was going to break this to the Santa Ynez couple.

The weeks dragged by with only a couple of phone calls between the couple and myself. Finally I was told that they wanted to give it a try but that they were going to have the house cleaned, the carpets shampooed, and the other cats set up to be outside or in another part of the house. All good news, but now I had to mention Freeway and hope for the best.

I needn't have worried as there was no hesitation at all. Everyone agreed that there is nothing sadder than a single kitten. The deal was struck, the kittens were transferred. It was a purrfect match all the way around. Thank you so much Dina Joseph and Stephen Harper for rescuing not one, but two beautiful kittens. May they bring you years of purring pleasure.

## 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:

**Belinda Burns** – by Ken Reed

**Clay and Beth Rushing** – by Cheryl Imp

**Copper**, an adopted *Catalyst* cat, by Tom Garder and Mona Nicall

**Felix**, thanks Beth – by Jan and Robert

**Itty Kitty** on your ninth birthday – by Wilma Titus

**JJ and Charley**, my constant companions – by Charlene Maltzman

**Davic Morris**, for all the great volunteer work he does – by Jaccie Wheeler

**Orange Juice** – by Deby Larango

**Ranch Cats** placed by Beth – by Fred Rohrs

**Randi** – thanks for all you do to help the cats – by Carl Anderson

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

**Tonka** – by Natalie Werk

### In Remembrance of:

**Cisco**, whom we miss so much – by Elizabeth Hillis

**Cole**, our beloved cat – by Teressa Hall

**Flipper** – by Carl Anderson

**Foster** – by Margery Nicolson

**George** – by Mary Roscoe

**William “Bill” Francis De Loreto** – by Barbara Hilaire DeLoreto

**Darren Hall** – by Gloria Shepard

**Lilith**, who I loved for over 17 years – by Kim Kenny

**Love and Joey**, two marvelous feral cats – by Karen Pick

**Juba**, always with us – by Jan & Chas. Clouse

**Mittens**, Maureen Lynch’s cat – by Leslie McGann

**Molly** – by Jennifre Engmyr

**Mousie** – by Bonnie Bisoglio

**Nutmeg and Princess** – by Rita Fleming

**Paula**, died one year ago on June 13 – by John Keith Kinealy

**Rae and Shadwen** – by Victoria Blunt

**John Sakmar** – by Veronica Eden

**Sheba** – by Tamera Bowles

**LeRoy E. Stecker**, my late father – by Diana Palmer

**Tom Snow** – by the Salotti Family

**Toby** – by Bonnie Wilson

**Nelie Wyse** – by Patricia R. Masette

**Barbara Thornburgh**, my friend for over 40 years, and a cat lover – by Randi Fairbrother

## Tragedy of feline leukemia strikes the Santa Ynez Valley

Our very busy Vice President, Belinda Burns, has been working on a huge trapping job in Santa Ynez. Since 2007 we have “fixed” over 45 cats from this hot spot at our expense. Now the situation has reached a crisis point again, but this time the surrounding community will be picking up the tab.

By the time Belinda got the call for help, 17 kittens were already being held in cages, but she saw many more darting through the yards and across the street to empty fields. The first seven kittens taken in tested positive for feline leukemia (FeLV), and another tested positive the next week – with yet another ill from severe Upper Respiratory Infection.

In the last few weeks, 21 cats and kittens have gone in for surgery with eight testing FeLV positive. Another twenty-some are yet to be trapped. We don’t know how many of those carry the disease.

The saddest part is that had someone called us at the first kitten sighting four years ago, this breeding of

contagious cats would have been nipped in the bud.

This is also a warning to the residents of the Santa Ynez area: FeLV is now very much present in the Valley. Santa Maria has been a problem area for years, and we know that it is also now spreading in Santa Barbara. If you have outdoor or indoor/outdoor cats, you should have them tested and vaccinated against this deadly disease.



These seemingly healthy kittens were put down due to FeLV.

## A Gaviota Trapping Adventure of Daunting Scale

by Beth Rushing

A call came in from a woman who lived on a ranch in Gaviota. She said the coyotes had previously kept the feline population at bay, but now cats and kittens were everywhere. Could I help?

Two days later, my friend Helene and I drove out to the ranch to check the situation out. As I looked around the property, I realized I was looking at the highest number of cats and kittens I had ever seen in one place (other than the shelter, of course). They were hiding under mobile homes, bushes, and out-buildings, so it was hard to get an accurate count.

I estimated it was somewhere between 20 and 40. As we were getting ready to leave, some young children came up to us and handed us five three-week-old kittens, so we put them in a carrier and took them directly to ASAP. That was only the beginning.

A plan was made and several days later, Helene and I returned to the property with as many traps and transfer cages as we could fit in my van. In order to catch as many as possible in the beginning, we used a string to trigger the traps so we could catch more than one kitten at a time. Two and a half hours later, we had captured 22 cats and kittens and the van was full to the brim!

ASAP agreed to help with this huge job by allowing me to use one of the outdoor runs at the shelter as a staging area for the cats I brought in from the ranch. The younger kittens were sorted into large cages in the runs while the adults waited until the next day for their spay/neuter surgeries.

The day after the surgeries were done at ASAP, I was able to place eight fixed cats from the colony as mousers on a different ranch. Two days later, my invaluable

### Exclusive Coupon Offer for Catalyst

**FIZZION**, the fantastic new cat pee stain and odor remover that really works. Order online at [www.fizzionclean.com](http://www.fizzionclean.com) and enter Catalyst1211 in the Coupon Code box at checkout. Can be used repeatedly through 12/31/11. Spread the word!

assistant Helene and I returned to the property to trap once again. We returned with eight more.

Again they were held in the run overnight, fixed the following day, and all eight were then placed on a third ranch together. More kittens were spotted that evening so I returned the next morning to trap two more adults and two more kittens who had moved to a large woodpile just down the road.

When I took a final count, it added up to 39 cats and kittens from that property in less than one week! Many of the kittens are still in foster care as I write this, and seven cats have been returned to the original site, leaving a stable and much healthier colony to live out their lives there.

What an exciting and rewarding feeling to know that all of the cats and kittens are so much better off now than when we began. Thank you to everyone who made it possible!

During the last couple of years **Beth Rushing** has done an outstanding job of trapping for us in Santa Barbara and Goleta. As a long time volunteer and past Board Member of the Santa Barbara’s Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP), she has been a valuable resource in facilitating a working relationship in conjunction with ASAP.

The trapping activity described in this article occurred in July of this year.

## 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)



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



***Catylst Cuties:** Two once-wayward felines—one feral and the other merely “stray”—were trapped, neutered, and after a short while, adopted into the household of Catalyst supporter Veronica Eden of Santa Maria.*

### **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.