



# 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](mailto:catalyst4cats@cox.net)

Volume 21, Number 3

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

Summer 2012

### 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

## The Difficult Existence of Feral Moms

**T**his year started out with the best spring ever. We kept up with our calls and easily TNR'd many cats. As the year progressed, though, the

demands for our services increased and became more difficult to deal with as reports of kittens in various stages of life started showing up.

Many kittens from feral mothers are sickly because frequent pregnancy takes so much out of a female, they are not healthy themselves. Rarely do we see fat, healthy kittens being cared for by a healthy mom.

All caring rescue groups work very hard to do the best they can, to save as many as possible. I wonder if those who don't bother to spay and neuter would change their minds if they spent a few days with one of these groups or at a shelter and saw the results of their irresponsible behavior.

It distresses us when we abort the kittens of a feral mom, but the alternatives are all difficult. Sometimes we don't even know the mom is pregnant until she is anesthetized. Once trapped, our policy is not to release the cat until it is "fixed."

We are not doing any feral cat a favor by letting her

deliver. For starters, she is held in a cage usually for a couple of weeks before she drops her kittens, which alone is very stressful. Once the kittens arrive, hope-

fully she'll nurse them for five to six weeks, all the while contained in the cage. During this time several potential complications can develop.

She may refuse to nurse her kittens, and then bottle-feeding every two hours around the clock for several weeks is required. The time interval between feedings gradually gets longer until the kittens can eat on their own. Painful mastitis may develop and prevent nursing. And in a cage, mom cannot do the natural thing of teaching her kittens to hunt. This year we encountered a mom who was so protective of her kittens that we could not get to them until they were older and more difficult to socialize.

Sometimes people refuse to let us trap a pregnant mom. We must then wait until she delivers, hoping she'll survive and eventually bring her kittens to the food source. The

mortality rate for feral kitten is very high—more than 50%—because dangers lurk everywhere: owls, hawks,



*Well-fostered: Marie Gonzalez—our youngest volunteer—enjoys socializing feral kittens. The kittens enjoy it too!*

*Continued on page 5*

# In Appreciation

**W**e are very grateful to those who participate in our goal of preventing feline overpopulation. Unless you are “into” animal rescue no one understands the amount of time and effort our volunteers contribute. Our volunteers are the ones who make it happen. It is a true labor of love and often personal sacrifice, and we thank you all enormously. The reward is the satisfaction you get from helping the animals in whatever way you can. We rely on you, our volunteers, who give from the heart. Some are mentioned, but all are appreciated.

**CARE Hospital** – for giving us their non-profit discount and an anonymous donation towards the care of Johnny Jump Ups.

**C.A.R.E.4 Paws** and **Buellton Veterinary Clinic** – for their help with spay/neuter.

**Diane Crosse** – transporter, feeder and assistant to Marci Kladnik in her fostering and adoption efforts.

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

**Marci Kladnik**, our Foster Coordinator – Since our fosters are scattered throughout several towns, it’s a job in itself to keep track of them. She also takes care of the trapping jobs in Los Alamos and fosters as well.

**Lavi and Monica Gonzalez, Debbie Merry and Melissa Munez**, our small, but power-house team – for trapping, fostering, as well as feeding colonies in the North County.

**Tina Hawkins and family, Deanna Koens** (expert bottle feeder), **Gerry Place, Grace Tobias, and Rose Koller** (partial list) – our fosters are a vital part of our rescue efforts, especially this time of year.

**Jeffyne Telson** of **RESQCATS** – for placing our adoptable kittens and cats on Facebook and Pet Finder, fostering, support, and assisting us in numerous ways. **Nancy Aquirre**, Jeffyne’s able assistant – for providing those terrific kitty pictures.

Those who participated in getting the Guadalupe Colony cats fixed at the SYVHS: **Darcie Barnes, DMV** and **Nicole Marinelle, DMV**, assisted by **Alan, Brettani, Sue, and Stacy**. Thanks for a job well done and for saving the day!

We appreciate the opportunity to show our socialized kittens at **Montecito Pet Shop** on the Mesa, **Orcutt Veterinary Hospital** in Orcutt and **San Roque Pet Hospital** in Santa Barbara.

We thank the dozens of feeders who faithfully feed colonies throughout Santa Barbara County.

## 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 the good works you do** – by Catherine G. Percy

**All those who work to better the lives of cats** – by Ernest Pratt

**Felix**, the greatest kitty in the Universe – by Peter Mortensen

**Kitties adopted** – by Dee Schuck

**Danielle McGrew** – by Veronica Eden

**Beth Rushing** – thanks from Hope Bryant

**Sassy**, my new cat – by Margaret Jone

**Linette St. Vrain** – by Marci Kladnik

### In Remembrance of:

**Cloe**, our cat – by Allwyn Brown

**Marie Foss**, who raised such a caring, dedicated daughter, Randi, Founder of *Catalyst for Cats* – by



**Ethel Barclay**

**Green Eyes** – by Mary Roscoe

**Mew-Mew** – by Ann Titus

**Nutmeg and Princess** – by Rita Fleming

**Old Yeller** – by Peter Mortensen

**Paula** and her three boys, **Gin Gin, Stripey and Leo** – by Keith Kinealy

**Sheila Pratt** – by Ernest Pratt

**Edmund Serratore** – by Elizabeth Galewski

**Tom Snow and Kitty Kat** – by the Salotti Family

**John Tapia**, my beloved brother, who loved his Grace – by Irene Kasper

**Home Willett** – by Bonnie Wilson.

# Hope & Despair:

## *The Challenges of a Large Feral Cat Colony*

By Randi Fairbrother

**O**n June 12 I received a call from a family in Santa Maria with 30 cats that needed to be spayed and neutered. They had been looking for help and found us on the Internet.

The next day I received a referral from Project Pet-Safe in Santa Maria for a gentleman inquiring about getting a large colony of cats fixed in Guadalupe. Cats had occupied his property for years, but he had never considered surrendering any to the shelter because he was afraid they would be killed. So the breeding went on and on indiscriminately.

I decided to tackle the colony in Santa Maria first because they contacted us a day earlier. It takes a tremendous amount of time and planning when we take on a job of a large feral colony. We need informa-

tion such as the number of cats we will need to trap so that we can plan how much equipment is required and how to schedule appointments for spay and neuter surgeries. In North County, we rely on Orcutt Veterinary Hospital and the Santa Maria

Shelter Clinic (SMAC) for those surgeries. The Orcutt hospital is private and limited as to the number of cats they can handle at one time.

On June 27, we dealt with the Santa Maria colony of over 30 with full cooperation from SMAC. We then started to make preparations to go on to the next large colony in Guadalupe. Their surgery was set a month later, for July 26. In the meantime we spayed and neutered over 20 cats from North County between the Orcutt Vet Hospital and SMAC.

The caretakers in Guadalupe estimated that there were about 30 cats. We were able to get seven sick kittens out and into treatment prior to trapping. Sadly, two died from flea anemia. I figured there would be another 20 or so to trap. SMAC had arranged for an extra vet and even added staff for the day the surgeries were to be done. So everything was coordinated.

Stacy Silva, SMAC's Community Outreach Coordinator, offered to help with transporting the cats after they were trapped. I began trapping the night before the scheduled surgery appointments and caught 15. I showed the caretakers how to trap and left for the evening. When I returned the next morning, 27 cats and kittens had been trapped and were waiting for me; several others were still running around. I knew that some of the kittens were sick, and I felt it very important to remove them so they could receive proper medical treatment.

Stacy arrived with a helper and an Animal Control truck and off we went to the shelter with all 27 cats and kittens divided up between their truck and the *Catalyst for Cats* van.

When we arrived the shelter personnel were appalled by the number of sick kittens and elected to discuss this with administration.

Though Animal Control and *Catalyst* had worked together planning and coordinating this operation, they made the decision then and there to refuse to take *any* of them.

**I** understand sick kittens cannot be given anesthesia, and that it was important to remove as many as possible in order to save them. But there are many unknowns and often surprises when dealing with ferals. It comes with the territory. What I could not comprehend was their refusal to take those not sick and follow through with at least *their* scheduled surgeries.

I stood there in shock and couldn't believe what I had heard... "You won't take any of them?" I finally mustered up the courage to add, "And what am I to do with them?"

Stacy Silva went directly to the phone and called Darcie Barnes, DVM, the vet at Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society (SYVHS). Once she received permission from the director, Kathy Pierce, DVM, Dr. Barnes offered to do the surgeries for us. Dr. Marinelle had

---

***I stood there in shock and couldn't believe what I had heard... "You won't take any of them?" I finally mustered up the courage to add, "And what am I to do with them?"***

---

*Continued on page 4*

# Unhealthy and healthy cats alike were turned away

From page 3

been scheduled to perform surgeries at SMAC, and offered to assist Darcie.

Stacy came to the rescue for me and for the cats. She found a solution in what seemed to have escalated into a hopeless situation. We separated the healthy ones from the sick and away I drove on cloud nine with a load of cats to Santa Ynez to be fixed.

It was a pleasure working with the staff at SYVHS.

They graciously worked overtime and were genuinely happy to help. We all left well after 6 p.m. I was on my way back to Guadalupe with 11 spayed females and 5 neutered males.

When I arrived back in Guadalupe with the 16 healthy and fixed cats, I was happy to see an extermination company was preparing to spray for fleas. I had told them this was something that absolutely needed to be done especially since several kittens had died from flea anemia.

Every cat returned had been given a flea treatment, worming injection, vaccines, and ear-tipped to show they had been fixed. That night, they slept in a quiet, safe and warm place with the plan to release them the next morning.

Then I went to meet Stacy at the Santa Maria Shelter to pick up the sick ones that had stayed behind. She showed such kindness when she had to euthanize a kitten that was hydrocephalic.

From there, I drove to Monica Gonzalez's house. She and her whole family are *Catalyst for Cats* volunteers and fosters. Monica has a huge heart and she took more than half of the remaining felines into her home to foster, while I took the rest.

We will socialize as many as possible and find them adoptive homes. The rest will be returned to the property once they are well enough to undergo surgery.

Over the following weekend, I brought one of the kittens into CARE Hospital in Santa Barbara. He

was weak and failing fast with anemia from fleas. He received a blood transfusion and within a few days became a healthy kitten who loves to eat and play. I named him Johnny Jump Ups because he bounced back so quickly from the brink of death.

**D**espite the successes, though, I am devastated and stunned by the refusal of administration at the Santa Maria Animal Shelter to spay and neuter the



***Johnny Jump Ups:** Suffering from anemia due to the flea infestation at a Guadalupe colony, this kitten received a blood transfusion at CARE Hospital in Santa Barbara and made a remarkable recovery that inspired his name.*

healthy cats as planned and scheduled. Our volunteers work long hours and at great personal sacrifice to trap hundreds of cats each year in North County alone. *Catalyst* volunteers also place themselves in precarious situations feeding colonies of ferals and trapping at night. *Catalyst for Cats* feels that our efforts have contributed significantly to lessening the number of cats surrendered to the shelter. The ferals that have been fixed live healthier, happier lives because of our mission. And we have

prevented thousands of kittens from being born. Many of these feral colony situations are referred to us by the County. We are there to help and many are surprised to hear we pay for each cat.

In addition to helping the County through our TNR program, Belinda Burns, a *Catalyst* board member and volunteer, who works full time, spends most weekends relocating the unadoptable ones for the County in order to save their lives. As of July of this year, when my story takes place, she has relocated over 70 cats from the Santa Maria Shelter alone! Surprisingly, many of these cats become friendly and loving once they are out of the shelter and given a chance to live, as many of you know from reading our newsletter.

It is so important that we all work together to solve the problem of over-population. And although the administration left us to fend for ourselves, I do sincerely thank all of you who came to the rescue for the sake of the cats.

# Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

## Almost Homeless in Santa Ynez Valley

We receive many calls throughout the year from people who have kittens in their backyards. We often ask for cooperation from the property owners in gathering the kittens and helping us tame them for possible adoption.

One family in Solvang did nothing for almost a year. Someone had attempted TNR last year, but never completed the job. The family didn't even respond to our phone calls in a timely manner once they contacted us. After several litters were born, they demanded we come and trap all the cats and take them away because they did not "belong" to them even though they had been feeding them for almost a year.

In July there were 14 cats in their yard of all sizes—all grey except for one little orange kitten. At first we tried to help them with TNR, but they refused to let us return them. These are terrible situations and since we had no relocation sites and don't use our traps to kill cats we were unable to help them.

They contacted Animal Control, who in turn trapped them and called us a day or two before the shelter was going to kill them because they were not adoptable.

## Fire House Cats on Patrol



These two female cats, relocated by Belinda Burns to a County Fire Station, were saved from euthanasia at Santa Maria Animal Shelter. According to firefighter Chris Hansen, they are doing great in their new home. Named Pachanga and Jitters, they've been a great addition to the station. The firefighters say they haven't seen a live mouse since the cats moved in. They like to hunt together at night and lounge around during the day. They are quite friendly and tend to hang around the crew when they are outside. Hansen says, "Thanks for the service that Catalyst provides"—not only for pest control, but also for saving the lives of these cats.

The feeders did not care about this even though they had a cat of their own in the house.

The remarkable part of this story is some wonderful people opened up their homes to take in all of these cats. Our thanks to Karen Gibbs who took the first three grey kittens and the one little orange tabby. And, our extreme gratitude to John and Crystal Arbelaitz who opened up their hearts and doors and took in the remaining 11.

There was no good reason for the four females not to have been fixed months before they even became pregnant. This also took away relocation sites for others in dire need of placement. It is an example of the best of people—and the opposite.

—Belinda Burns, Santa Ynez Valley Liaison  
**Founder's Note:** Belinda called me at 8:45 one evening recently; she had just gotten home and had not yet eaten. After leaving work at 5 p.m. she began the relocation process mentioned above; first cleaning cages, picking up the cats and finally transferring them to their relocation site. These 14 could easily have been added to the statistic of unadoptable cats killed at the Santa Maria Shelter.

## Dilemmas of Feral Motherhood

From page 1

dogs, raccoons, automobiles, fleas, people, sickness or starvation if the mother dies.

We are all too familiar with these situations and it is heartbreaking for us. If mom does bring the kittens to the food source, we must trap her and the kittens and determine if they are young enough for our foster program (if space is available). The socialization process is time-consuming as well as a costly endeavor.

At adoption time, the older ones are passed over for the young kittens, causing them to remain behind in cages. We are not callous when we spay a pregnant feral cat. We are doing the best for mom and trying to prevent kittens from suffering while dealing with the reality of what is all too often a cruel world.

Our sincere appreciation to all those who have given and helped in the past. Our goal remains "every cat a wanted cat," and every donation you make helps us towards that goal.

Randi Fairbrother

# Catalyst's Tiny Tim Fund to the rescue

## Chin-Chin's Jaw Repair

The Gonzalezes saw a tame tuxedo cat with an odd-looking chin line struggling to eat from their cat's food dish in their yard. Dr. Brenda Forsythe confirmed the cat had a broken jaw. Later we found out a family dog had attacked her. She was lucky to be alive.

Many years ago we trapped a kitten in Carpinteria with a broken jaw. His chin was repaired, and Sweet Pea was adopted by a most kind couple, who lovingly cared for him for many years. He needed special food and care, and drooling presented a constant problem.

We didn't want a repeat performance of that for Chin-Chin, so we decided to take her to Dr. Sikes at Animal Surgical Group in Arroyo Grande. He confirmed the break was a complicated one requiring insertion of pins.



*Chin-Chin's chin is healing.*

At first Chin-Chin was fostered by Monica Gonzalez in Santa Maria, but soon Sharon Betzeldorfer who lives in Nipomo took over, because of the shorter drive for post-op visits to Dr. Sikes. Chin-Chin is recuperating well with pin removals scheduled for mid-September. Her bill amounted to over \$1,200, but we expect a full recovery.

## What is This Cat's Story?

While riding his bike home one evening, Philip Espinoza, Monica Gonzalez's cousin, came across a white cat lying on a parking strip of grass between the sidewalk and the street in Santa Maria. In passing he spoke to it, but the cat didn't move. He thought it might be dead, but he got off his bike and saw it was alive. Cradling the cat in

his arms, he rode on to Monica's. Not only was he very hungry and thirsty, but the tips of his ears were red. After a day or so, Monica said she thought the cat was



*Blind and deaf, but safe and sound.*

blind. An all-white cat, we thought, might also be deaf.

Dr. Forsythe confirmed this was a neutered senior cat, both deaf and blind, and appeared to have been an indoor cat. The ears were sunburned, but not cancerous as many white-tipped cats get from sun exposure. One wonders, how did this cared-for cat end up on that grass strip by the sidewalk? They found no reports of a lost white cat listed at the Humane Society or shelter. He is a senior cat and is safe, cared for, and in a loving home until his time comes.

## Monstro Defeats Scabies

This poor feral cat looked terrible when we first laid eyes on him. He was trapped, brought to the Orcutt vet, neutered and diagnosed with scabies, a painful skin disease.

After several treatments over nearly an eight week period, he looked quite handsome again and was released back to his colony. He returns every once in a while and looks fine. A very happy ending for what once was a miserable cat.



*Monstro on the way to recovery.*





*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!**

## Wish List

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

- Santa Maria is in dire need of trappers, transporters and feeders.
- 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.
- Someone to post the bilingual flyers (**see page 7 for copies**) at laundromats, libraries, vet offices, parks, etc. throughout all the towns within SB County, from Carpinteria to Santa Maria. Please help get the word out wherever you can find a bulletin board.

## 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)