



Catalyst for Cats

A Non-Profit Organization

Dedicated to

Altering the Future for Ferals

NEWSLETTER

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Volume 17, Number 3

www.catalystforcats.com

Winter 2008

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 cat and kittens.

From the Founder

Community spirit shines in face of fire, economy

The Tea Fire started in Montecito last month and extended into Santa Barbara. A few months ago the hills of Goleta were denuded by the Gap

Fire. We live in a drought area with densely overgrown vegetation. This combination can be a veritable tinder box and should be a great cause for alarm, as proven twice this year alone. Please be prepared for emergencies—not only for yourselves, but your pets, as well.

Santa Barbara, in general, is animal friendly and it manifested itself during this fire with offers of assistance. Many citizens have multiple pets due to rescue situations, including the added responsibility of fostering animals. Our community stepped up to the plate in terms of offering help.

First came offers for evacuation assistance, then provisions for safe havens from family and friends as well as hotels, animal hospitals, the rescue adoption agencies in town, and pet boarding facilities. Earl Warren Show Grounds provided a holding area for large animals, such as horses. We can be thankful for all the kind and generous offerings.

As the year comes to an end, one tends to reflect. An increasing number of people face economic difficulties. These difficulties often extend into the animal

community as more and more pets are discarded and surrendered, making it more difficult to adopt the newest offspring.

Presently, all the agencies are dealing with the harsh reality of this grim situation. A very long list of cats and kittens, as well as our rescued felines still need placement at this time.

We plan to TNR as many colonies (all in the Santa Maria area) as possible before spring. Unfortunately, with no shortage of colonies, our work is cut out for us. They range in size from over 20 felines to three elusive females who have persistently avoided capture.

Despite the difficulties we remain committed to our cause. It's never been easy, so we are used to that. We owe our gratitude to so many and there is much to be thankful for; to all of you who give of yourselves in terms of "hands on," as well as those who give financial support, which we could not succeed without. You are all part of our goal of making "every cat a wanted cat."

My very best wishes for the holiday season with family and friends as well as a Happy New Year.

Randi Fairbrother



Catalyst Founder Randi Fairbrother provides some "hands on" support for a rescued kitten.

In Appreciation

We are very grateful to those who participate in our goal of preventing feline overpopulation or in improving the lives of felines in whatever way they can. Some are mentioned, but the efforts of all are appreciated.

Belinda Burns – for using her organizational skills in the Valley: establishing and maintaining feeding stations, trapping expertise, and general trouble shooting for the area.

Suzanne Canas – for faithfully maintaining a couple of feeding stations in the Santa Maria area, despite working long hours.

Debbie Johnson – for saving many cat lives by taking them as mousers on her property.

Kelly Harmon worked at St. Francis Pet Clinic for many years as a veterinary technician—and an excellent one at that. She left that post, though, to go to UC Davis and become a veterinarian. When she departed on that path, she assured *Catalyst for Cats* that she would help us upon her return, and she has kept her word. Thus far, she has helped with two Spay Days at the Santa Maria Shelter. And she has returned to St. Francis Pet Clinic. Congratulations, Kelly, upon your new title, DVM.

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

Jim Higman – at age 92, Jim still helps us maintain our equipment.

Teresa Mitton – for her generosity with spay/neuter of dogs and cats in the North County.

Santa Barbara Hunane Society – for their generous help in accepting our socialized kittens for adoption.

Kathy Brandt and Betty Mazzetti – for their help in placing, socializing and adopting rescued felines.

Risa, who faithfully feeds in the lower east side of town. She befriends dozens of felines daily.

Thank you to the team that gets the newsletter out:

Charles Clouse – typesetting,

Corrine Gallager – mailing list,

Gerry Place – bulk mailing,

The Stevenson's – labeling.

Our gratitude to the major trappers, who got the cats in for Spay Day: **Denise Ables, Suzanne Canas, Lavi and Monica Gonzalez** as well as family members, **Rochelle Reed, Chuck, and Pam Van der Veer.**

And to the many others in our community not mentioned, who contribute to our accomplishments, please know that we appreciate your contribution.

Tributes & Memorials

Honoring or remembering a special person or pet provides a means for the donor to recognize the richness and happiness brought to someone, and allows *Catalyst* to improve the lives of cats less fortunate. Donations have been made....

In Honor of:

All who come for food and water – by Lois Robinson. (Lois has been feeding her colony of cats, which we trapped in her yard almost 10 years ago).

Kitsy, Cali and Angel - by Debbie Johnson

Freddie, best cat in the world – by Barbara Mc Curry

Kali and kittens with cracked feet – by Andrew Sharpe

Snow (the Greatest Cat) – by Richard V. Salotti

In Remembrance of:

Dr. John Butler, who cared about *Catalyst for Cats* – by JJ Tompkins

Charlie – we miss you terribly. What a great cat – by

Kelly, Leah and Bryon Fairbrother

Mary Christian, age 93 – by Randi Fairbrother. Mary lived in the Paradise Camp area and I remember well, her calling me for help with several feral cats she was feeding. In her 80s at the time, she followed my instructions and after she trapped the cats, drove them to Goleta to be neutered, not once, but several times until the colony was stabilized. She was of the old school— no excuses, just get the job done.

Clem, Johnny, Pepper and Stella – by Louise and Jim Reginato.

My beloved husband, Jack – by Cahrlene Maltzman

Jack Moir and Maja – by Carol Moir

Khumbu – by Margery Nicolson

Sher- Khan by Debbie Johnson

Troubles, we miss her – by Barb Evans Simpson

Your kindel of kittens – by Amy Locke

Mittens – by Randi Fairbrother

The Tale of Four Kittens in a Tree Trunk

Two months of hard work and unconventional trapping techniques finally pay off



By Ann Marie Rose

The tree trunk above may look like a regular old tree trunk, but to me, it was a big challenge. Inside one of the hollows of this trunk were four little kittens, less than two months old. It took calls to many agencies, help from several cat lovers, and nearly two months to finally rescue all four of the kittens.

I walk every day with my dog, Shep, and one day we saw four little lonesome kittens sitting on the trunk of a tree in a vineyard. Someone had placed food for the kittens outside the trunk on the ground, but each day as I passed by, the food level in the pan remained the same. Those kittens were not leaving the tree trunk to eat, so I took some dry food, mixed it with some wet food and placed it inside the tree trunk.

I immediately began to search for a way to rescue them, knowing that they were in harm's way with the coyotes and the highly traveled road just behind the tree. After calls to several agencies searching for a cage that would fit into the tree trunk, I finally reached Barbara, a wonderful person who rescues cats in our area.

Barbara came out and we took her trap to the trunk, only to be disappointed. The trap would not fit inside the trunk, and the kittens were still not leaving the safety of the trunk. We shook our heads and agreed that I needed to find a smaller trap. Or I needed to devise some other method of catching the kittens.

Time was passing by and each day I would check on them, feed and water them, and hope for a solution to rescue them. No mama was ever in sight and I finally found the man who had left the food outside the tree trunk. He said that the mama had disappeared several weeks ago so he began leaving food. He wished me luck catching them. Each night I heard the coyotes, I worried about the kittens' safety.

My daughter and I decided to head to the tree one sunny afternoon to check on the kittens, and startled them from their nap in one of the trunk's crevices. Three of the kittens leaped down a hollowed-out branch, and when I peeked in the hole, I saw that they were trapped. Though one escaped, Elizabeth and I were able to catch the other two by hand and put them in the cage. We were so pleased to have a start on the rescue effort!

It was a full three weeks later when I was able to trap the third kitten using a humane rat trap. Similar to the regular cat traps, it was much smaller and the kitten I caught was half the size of the two males we had rescued. One kitten left, and it seemed not to fit into the trap because several days passed and the kitten would not enter the trap, though the only food was inside the trap.

I called my sister and we both agreed to begin feeding the last kitten again and to take the trap out. That poor kitten, it cried and cried whenever we came to feed it. I called Randi and told her that I was going to just leave it in the tree, but she encouraged me to catch it. We talked about using a trap designed for kittens and I was ready for another try.

The next morning I went down to check on the kitten. I was startled to see all its dishes toppled over and the food inside the trunk was gone. Even the plastic container where I stored the food had been moved from its hiding place next to the trunk. Something had happened and I could hear the kitten crying. I kept calling it and finally looked in the cranny where I had caught the first two kittens. There she was where she had once escaped from me, looking up, and crying.

I quickly stuffed my sweatshirt into the hollowed tree branch to keep the kitten inside. Fortunately, I had

(Continued on page 4)

November Spay Day—another great success

By Marci Kladnik

On November 9, the County held a Spay Day at its Santa Maria shelter on Foster Rd. The total number of cats that came in that day was a whopping 99; VIVA brought in 38, and the remaining 61 were from *Catalyst*. As you can imagine, it was a long day.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the following veterinarians: Dr. Darcie Barnes, Dr. Ruth Corbo, Dr. Kelly Harmon, and Dr. Frank Stanton. A special thank you is in order for Drs. Corbo and Stanton, who stepped in at the last minute to fill in for the injured Dr. Ron Faoro (see sidebar).

Techs and volunteers stepped up as well, and we couldn't have done it without them. Thank you to Michelle, Megan, and Emma from St. Francis Pet Clinic; Erin from C.A.P.A., Lompoc; Debbie S. of ASAP, Santa Barbara; Linda, Larry, Camille, Tami, Debbie L., and Kerry of the Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation; Linda and Heather of VIVA.; Randi Fairbrother, Belinda Burns, and Marci Kladnik of

Catalyst; and Toni, Stephanie, Deanna, Stacia, Dianne, Sharon, Trish, Beth, Crystal, Anaysa, Scott, and Chris, who are all Santa Maria Animal Center Volunteers. Our trappers, too, must be thanked, for it is they who stayed up late, got up early, and brought in the cats. If I have forgotten anyone, my humble apologies.

Tribute to Dr. Faoro

In early November Dr. Ron Faoro of St. Francis Pet Hospital was injured in a paragliding accident. Four days later his house burned down in the Tea Fire.

Dr. Faoro has been a kind and generous supporter of *Catalyst's* efforts, doing reduced cost spay/neuter as well as medical services for us for many years. He has participated in several Santa Maria Spay Days and currently serves as Chair of the Santa Barbara County Spay/Neuter Task Force. Please keep Dr. Faoro and his family in your thoughts during this difficult time.

The ol' sweatshirt down the hollow tree limb trick

(From page 3)

my cell phone and was able to call my kids from the tree. I asked them to get a cage ready and I ran to the house. We arrived back, and after some nervous moments, managed to reach the kitten and put her safely in the cage.

I can't tell you how relieved I felt to not have to worry about those kittens. The kids and I have worked harder for these kittens than I believe we have ever worked for any other animals.

The individual outcomes for these lovable creatures, though, has been bittersweet: The two part-Siamese boys (pictured at right) are now completely socialized and have been adopted. And Tea, an all-black female, is doing well, though still in social transition, but I am heartbroken to report that Mittens, the beautiful black and white female and the last to be rescued, died following the spaying procedure. Everything appeared normal during the surgery, but she never woke up from the anesthesia. We found it so distressing that we decided to do a necropsy, but could find no apparent cause.



Saved First: Two part-Siamese boys have found a cushier life than seemed to be their fate when they were trapped in a gnarled tree trunk too scared to eat and easy prey for coyotes.

Besides our encounter with the kittens from the tree trunk, we have four cats at home, each from separate litters, all feral, but now tame. As I watch our own cats, I am reminded of how well the ferals tamed up.

Meet Sailor

No longer lonely at the gas station, this guy really fits in

By Risa

I started feeding Sailor at a gas station in Santa Barbara about eight years ago. Over the years, the other cats left, and eventually he was the only one there. I knew he was lonely, and I felt bad just seeing him briefly once a day, but I had eight cats of my own already.

One day I realized the water dish was always half empty. This concerned me, so off to the vet we went. When the results came back, I had a diabetic street cat on my hands. There was only one solution, I now have nine cats!

I would never have believed how easily he would move in, but he did. My cats hissed a little, but Sailor did not care; he just wanted to be part of the family. It's been quite a few months now, and he causes no

trouble. He doesn't even mind his medicine. It has been a real roller coaster ride, but I think we finally have his health issues under control for now.

He moves around the house like he has been here forever, "talking" as he follows me, and leading me to his dish when he thinks it time to eat. Sailor sleeps on the sofa, jumps in my lap, and even likes his belly rubbed. He is such a joy to have around. I don't know what I would do without him.

I sometimes wonder if he misses his old life, but one look at him, and I know the answer. He is very happy; he is home.

Sailor and I would like to thank Lee Heller. With as busy as she is working for the animals, she always takes time to sit Sailor when I go out of town. I don't know what we would do without her.



Another Successful Adoption: This little girl picked out her very own kitten at the home of Pied Pipers Monica and Lavi Gonzalez. The girl's mother reports, "The cat is doing great. Perfect fit."

Getting Ready for Winter

For a warm bed for outdoor cats, line the bed with straw rather than towels or blankets, which hold moisture and are cold. The bed needs to be out of the wind and rain. Also, remember to bang on the hood of the car before starting it because cats may be hiding under the hood for warmth. We rescued a kitten this year from under the hood of a truck.

For a very good cold climate winter shelter, go to Animalkind, Inc. Click on Feral Cat info.

New Year's Resolution's Idea

The rallying cry is "Feed and Fix." Bring the subject up at your place of work, social events, gatherings, the laundromat, over the dinner table, to the children, at church, etc.

Feed and Fix! Each of you can do your part by mentioning the importance of altering companion pets.

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.

Tucker could have been our *Catalyst* poster cat

By Randi Fairbrother

This is how it's supposed to work: *Catalyst* gets the call, sizes up the colony, overcomes the trapping obstacles, spays/neuters the kittens plus Mom, finds good homes, and...they all live happily ever after.

Tucker was a perfect example. He was a beautiful all grey kitten when Kathleen Horton saw him in my van just after he had been neutered. When she asked if she could keep him I was elated.

That was several years ago, and I recently received this email from Kathleen, telling me the rest of the story:

"I received your note on my newsletter asking about the grey kitten I adopted from you in the early 1990s. I wish I could remember the exact year. I named him Tucker and he was the sweetest cat I ever had. He was scared and timid towards others, but very attached to me, as I was to him. I had to euthanize him in January, 2008 due to abdominal lymphoma. He was the

largest cat I've ever had, huge, not only in weight (he weighed about 26 lbs. until he became sick), but in height and length. It was like picking up a medium size dog. I miss him terribly and keep his ashes on my Hoosier."

Tucker came from property owned by the County where kitten production had gone on for many years. Some of the employees would remove as many kittens as they could catch. Finally, someone called *Catalyst*. It was a difficult situation because the cats were scattered throughout the area and fed in several places.

I finally captured all of the kittens as well as the older cats, except for the mother cat. I noticed she'd hide her kittens on the roof of one of the buildings—a secure place. I borrowed a ladder and placed a trap on the tile roof, thinking she had a sense of security there. It worked. It didn't take long before she went for it. It helps if you can think like a cat.

This mother cat was known by many in the area, and it was a happy day indeed when she was caught. A feeding station was maintained in the area for years. They are all gone now, but if not for TNR, they would still be producing unwanted kittens twice a year.

Available for Adoption

Contact Marci Kladnik 344-4663



Gizmo



Abby



Sarah



Simon

Wish List

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

- Homes for kittens and cats
- Trappers and transporters for Santa Ynez, Lompoc, and Santa Maria
- Feeders for Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley areas
- Safe relocation sites for mousers. They will earn their keep. We often try and socialize our older kittens because we prefer they have loving homes. Also, some of them need to have medical care because of upper respiratory or other problems. After a lot of time, love, sweat, and tears we sometimes realize they must go to a relocation site more suitable to their temperament, such as a barn situation. With time they still have the potential to warm up to the feeders.
- People who understand the importance of getting their pets "fixed."

Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

Spay/Neuter Task Force

The County's Spay/Neuter Task Force began meeting in September. It consists of 11 appointees, and is chaired by Ron Faoro, DVM of St. Francis Pet Clinic. The meetings up to this point have been primarily informational, or involved general brainstorming about ways to address the problem of pet overpopulation. Because several of the task force members know little or nothing about the issue, a good bit of time has been spent on information, including requiring that they tour all three county shelters.

From the onset, the task force has had an audience in the form of dog breeders, even though all of them would be exempt under the proposed ordinance from last spring. They have dominated public comment, and at times badgered the chair. Also, the focus has been almost exclusively on the dogs, although one task force member is on the Board of ASAP (Animal Shelter Assistance Program).

Due to the fire, the next two meetings have been postponed until January. In the interim, *Catalyst* and VIVA will be submitting a joint letter, discussing the problem of cat overpopulation, the role of ferals, and the need for an ordinance. It would also be very helpful if a few people were willing to come to a meeting next year and speak up for our side. Anyone willing to do so should call Lee Heller at 695-8101.

Volunteers needed

The shelter in Santa Maria continues to be in need of volunteers. Stop by the shelter for a visit. For volunteer opportunities call Stacy Silva, out reach coordinator, at 934-6981, or for general information call the Santa Maria Shelter (934-6119). The opportunities to help are many and varied.

Note to Supporters

Catalyst for Cats wants donors to know that we do not share our mailing list with anyone or any group.

Catalyst For Cats, Spay Day

We held our first *Catalyst for Cats* Spay Day on Sunday, Sept. 28. We are excited about this new program, which we hope will be on-going. The idea is to take advantage of the excellent Santa Maria shelter clinic facilities on days it is not being used.

Using our own vets, techs, volunteers and sup-

plies, we spayed 10 cats. Since the program is new, we wanted to start out small to be sure things ran smoothly.

The plan envisions at least double that number once a month. This will allow us to do a large colony of cats at one time, by far the most efficient way to do TNR. Perhaps the most attractive aspect of this program is that we hope to keep up with the incoming calls in a more timely manner. If we can do this, the chance of getting more trappers and interested people greatly improves. We can't increase our volunteer base if we can't get cats spayed and neutered.

We extend our appreciation to the following—all volunteers—who participated: Kathy Brandt, Belinda Burns, Debbie Clement, Kelly Eckberg, Randi Fairbrother, Marci Kladnik, Deanna Koens and her teen-age daughter, Stacia, Summer Turner, and the veterinarians, Drs. Hilary Conant, Kelly Harmon, and Laura Putnum. Thanks, also, to Elizabeth Mazzetti for organizing the day and Tuesday Cool, RVT who oriented us and played an important role in seeing that things ran smoothly.

For anyone interested in participating in this innovative program, call Elizabeth Mazzetti at 687-4674.



It Takes A Village to Spay a Cat: Three generous vets such as Dr. Laura Putnum, above, and a host of willing volunteers like Kelly Eckberg, right, launched *Catalyst's* program of proposed monthly spay days in September.

Available for Adoption from *Catalyst for Cats*

(see page 6 for more choice!)



Ozzie and Harriet



Tina

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

Catalyst for Cats, Inc.
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