



# 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 cat and kittens.*

### From the Founder

## It doesn't get easier, but lives are saved, improved

I'm writing this during Thanksgiving weekend, when we tend to reflect on our blessings. Many of us are fortunate to have much to be thankful for, but many are not so fortunate, especially during these difficult economic times. It's the same for our feral felines.

The most fortunate felines live in a home of warmth, love, with plenty of food and companionship. Our feral felines are not so lucky, but that doesn't mean they cannot live a good life.

The most important factor in their lives is to be free from the hormonal urges that cause so much of the misery and hardship in their lives. In addition, in order to survive they must manage to find shelter and a food source.

Last year we helped over 700 felines live better lives, and this year we most probably will match that number. We also assisted with medical expenses from our Tiny Tim Fund to not only save the sight of several litters of kittens with the herpes virus, but

helped feline victims of accidents and illness as well.

We can't fathom the callous actions of some people, as they abandon their pets, or worse still, abuse them. For the lone kittens found wondering in a parking lot, or the two adorable ones found in a closed footlocker half hidden in the bushes, we are both rewarded and thankful when we are able to come to the rescue and save and improve their lives.

It's been a difficult year, but I can't ever remember an easy one. We are very grateful for the compassion of our dedicated volunteers and for the financial support extended to us. That support allows us to continue to improve the lives of the many we touch.

May you enjoy the goodness of the Christmas Spirit with family and friends and our best wishes for the New Year.



***Fortunate Son:** This poor little six-week-old kitten was abandoned in a local park on Halloween. Lucky for him, Catalyst for Cats came to his rescue. His name is Pumpkin, of course!*

*Randi Fairbrother*

# 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 they get from helping the animals in whatever way they can. We rely on you, our volunteers, who give from the heart. Some are mentioned, but all are appreciated.

**Belinda Burns** – our Santa Ynez liaison for trapping and feeding colonies has extended her efforts to spearhead relocation sites to save the lives of many ferals, both for us and for the shelters.

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

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

**David Morris** – for helping with TNR in the South County for many years.

**Beth Rushing** – for help with TNR in Santa Barbara.

**ASAP, ResQcats, Santa Barbara Humane Society** and **Santa Ynez Humane Society** – the agencies who assist us with placement of our socialized felines.

Their contribution is greatly appreciated. In addition, the **San Roque Pet Hospital** has been kind enough to show our kittens. If you are looking to adopt a kitten, give them a call – 682-2647.

**Brenda Forsythe, DVM of Orcutt Veterinary Hospital** and her staff for their help with not only neuters, but with care of the injured and sick. She has been very generous with her compassionate care.

Our fosters, who socialize the feral kittens in order for them to be adopted: **Monica** and **Lavi Gonzales**, **Rose Koller**, **Rose Soto**, and of course, **Marci Kladnik**, who multitasks on so many fronts. Welcome to our newest fosters: **Shelly Garcia, her daughter and sister** as well, **Debbie Walker and family**.

**VIVA** – for their kindness in accepting cats into their sanctuary from colonies that are down to the last one or two and for one reason or another must be removed.

**Debbie Walker** for providing transportation for a colony of eight cats from New Cuyama to the shelter for Spay Day and **Lyn Vincent** for transporting them

back to New Cuyama. They are all doing well.

**C.A.R.E for Paws** – for their assistance with getting an abandoned family of felines from Lompoc “fixed.”

**Darren Gonzalez** and his cousin **Richard Gonzalez** – while riding their bikes came across a footlocker half hidden in bushes. When they investigated, they found two adorable eight-week-old orange and white, totally tame kittens, with some dried tortillas. They have since been adopted – together.

**Fix Nation** – a permanent facility in Burbank, open Monday through Friday, providing high volume free spay/neuter services for feral and stray cats. Low cost services are also available for tame, owned cats. They also provide other services, such as loaning out traps with helpful instructions.

**Best Friends Catnippers** – a high volume spay/neuter clinic held every other month on Sundays at the Fix Nation’s clinic. **Catnippers** offers free spay/neuter services for feral, stray, un-owned cats only. They are fully staffed by volunteers and volunteer licensed vets.

It’s a pleasure to see the love the volunteers bestow on these ferals, talking to them and gently stroking them while still under anesthesia. Even the scruffiest looking ones are returned looking well groomed. After release, they strut about like they know they look good and it’s obvious they feel great!

**Fix Nation** grew out of **Catnippers**, when the founders, Karen Myers and Mark Dodge, became aware of the dire need for such services. They are both exceptional organizations and **Fix Nation** may be the only one of its kind in the nation. They are exactly what is needed. The war on feline overpopulation would be won if every county had such a clinic.

Because it’s just about impossible to get a group of cats larger than three or four done locally other than on Spay Days, we have resorted to making the trip to **Fix Nation** or **Catnippers** in Burbank with a load of about a dozen or so cats. Despite the fact that it makes for a long and hard day, **Randi Fairbrother**, **Bill Long**, and **Trish Fountain** offered to make the trips. We thank them very much.

**Joanne Avelare** – for allowing us to store our equipment in her garage.

**Lee Heller, Esq.** – for helping us pass the County spay/neuter ordinance.

# One Happy Reunion

*Four months after fire evacuation this cat found his way home from Buellton*

*By Marci Kladnik*

**D**uring the Jesusita Fire several months ago, Mickey and June Wilson evacuated with their cat to Motel 6 in Buellton. Just after checking in, the frightened animal made a successful escape through the open door, and was gone in a flash.

His disappearance was sudden, and no amount of searching and calling brought him back during the brief time the owners were in residence at the motel. At last they had to leave without him. Luckily they returned to a house still standing, but they were brokenhearted at the loss of their precious pet.

The Wilsons knew their cat, Morris, had already used up at least one of his nine lives. Previously owned by a woman in Ventura, he was brought to the Santa Barbara Animal Shelter to be euthanized for “domestic reasons.” Luckily, the placement at the shelter was denied because the cat was “out of jurisdiction.”

The owner then tried to talk a nearby garden center into taking him as a mouser. Again she was denied, and as she sat in her car crying, Mickey drove up to buy “a single tomato plant.”

Kind man that he is, Mickey asked the woman what was wrong and after listening to the tale, asked to see the cat. When the woman opened the pet carrier, a beautiful oatmeal-colored tabby jumped out and into the man’s arms, snuggling close.

“I’ll take the cat. Give me the carrier,” Mickey said.

Now, seven years later and 45 miles from home, Morris was lost.

A couple of weeks after the fire, a new cat showed up at one of our Buellton feeding stations. The animal obviously had belonged to someone as he was very vocal and sported a blue collar with tag. He was very

skittish, however, and could not be touched.

Four months went by until on October 18, board member Belinda Burns was putting out food when the cat walked up and rubbed against her legs. At last his collar tag could be read, revealing the name “Morris” and the owner’s contact information.

That was one happy phone call. Morris is now back at home enjoying his favorite sleeping spots—under the avocado tree during the day and on the bed at night. Reportedly he spends more time indoors these days, probably keeping closer tabs on his people.

Cats are amazing animals, knowing when and where to seek shelter, food, and human help. Tagging an indoor/outdoor pet is important for reuniting them with their owners in the event they are lost. Morris is one lucky cat to have owners with foresight.

Tagging pets in the face of disaster is critical. Even if you prefer to not have a collared cat, have tagged collars prepared for each pet in your “disaster kit” just in case. A simple plan can bring amazing results, as this happy reunion proves.



***Blue Ribbon Cat:** The presence of Morris’s blue collar allowed Catalyst feeders in Buellton to identify and return him to grateful owners in Santa Barbara*

## *Facing Disaster: Be Cat-wise*

*By Marci Kladnik*

Our beautiful corner of the world is often plagued by fire, as the past year has shown with brutal reality. Now with the winter rains upon us and an El Nino predicted, flooding is to be expected in the coming months. Do you have a disaster preparedness plan that includes your pets?

Have a carrier handy for each animal and a container with food, dishes, water, litter and litter pan, your contact numbers, health and veterinary information,

*Continued on page 4*

# The Continuing Saga of Rae

*Sometimes a feral cat prefers the freedom of the life it knows*

*By Tori Blunt*

**R**ae's story begins in 1996, when I worked at the County's Social Services Department. I had been feeding feral cats that lived on the hill between us and the Sheriff's Department. One of them had a litter of four orange tabbies. I contacted *Catalyst for Cats*, and Randi and I made arrangements to trap and spay/neuter the adults in the colony.

I housed the cats for several days after their surgeries, before we returned them to the hill. The week the cats were living with me I was able to get to know them, bestowing names according to their personalities.

Of all the cats, the kitten named Rae (because her light color reminded me of a ray of sunshine), was what I considered "salvageable." She was friendly and would "talk" to me. I would gladly have given her a home but at the time I already had five cats, all of them rescued from the eight acres behind my house, which was a dumping ground for unwanted animals.

I continued to feed the cats on the hill until only Rae

was left. A dark orange tabby named Charles moved up the hill where a lady who worked nearby fed him and changed his name to Rusty. What happened to the other cats is unknown.

Late in 2006 I retired and wanted to trap Rae to give her a safe place to live at my house. At that time I only had three remaining cats living with me, Earthangel, Bronwen and Shadwen. It took three months, but with Randi's help, Rae was finally trapped and I took her home.

At this time Rae had been living and surviving on the hill for ten years. Rae was a very smart feral. Now inside for the first time, she lived under the dresser in my bedroom during the day. At night while I slept, Rae and my other cats would play around the house.

One night about a year later, I heard a racket in the dining room. I got up to see what was going on and saw Earthangel, Bronwen, Shadwen and Rae standing in front of the French doors. Shadwen, a large Maine Coon, was holding onto the handle of the French door.

*Continued on page 5*

## Emergency kit for cats can save a lot of grief

*Continued from page 3*

and any current medications. It would also be good to have a bottle of Rescue Remedy in the kit; a couple of drops added to the water or rubbed in the ears have a calming effect. Store the carrier and kit together, and refresh the contents every Daylight Savings Time change.

If you haven't already, consider having your cat micro-chipped, especially if it is an indoor/outdoor pet. This is common practice for dogs these days, but cats are often overlooked in this regard. If nothing else, have a collar with contact information tags on it and tag the carrier as well, including the pet's name and description or photo.

When something unexpected happens, mayhem abounds and cats react quickly, dashing off to find a hiding place to hole up in. It's a good idea to keep tabs on favorite nooks, as felines change spots often. This will be very important in the event that you need to

find an animal in a hurry.

Stay calm and move slowly so as not to frighten the animal more than it already may be. In an emergency, the only thing you will want to grab is the carrier.

If indoors, first locate the cat and then close any openings to the room to cut off all means of escape before trying to pick the pet up. Have the carrier with you. A thick towel is good for wrapping a squirming animal in and makes a quick efficient bed in the transport. It is also easily washed if the cat messes itself during confinement.

If your cat is outside, call it in offering a special treat. If you are unable to locate the animal before you must evacuate, leave food and water out in the event that it survives and returns to find you gone.

We all procrastinate with disaster preparedness. It is a form of denial that it will happen to us. Wouldn't it be better to put a simple kit together now, than to potentially lose a family member?

## Rae knew what she wanted

*Continued from page 4*

Before I could do anything, the door opened and Rae ran outside. Rae's escape was a group effort.

The next day I saw Rae hiding in my next door neighbor's backyard. The day after that, I received a telephone call from a neighbor who lives a block away saying that Rae was in a tree in her backyard. I rushed over there and found Rae still up in the tree. After I saw the look on Rae's face I knew she did not want to come home with me. I told her how much I loved her and left.

Then as I walked my dog one day in July 2009, I saw a light colored orange tabby run down the sidewalk and scoot under a fence. I was a couple of blocks from my house and I knew it was Rae. I rang the doorbell but no one answered. I walked that street every day for two weeks hoping to see Rae again and to find someone home. Eventually I did see Rae, and I definitely knew it was her because her left ear had been tipped when she was spayed.

Finally, one day the lady of the house answered the door and told me the orange tabby and a black and white cat had been living under her shed for the past two years. She did not feed them, nor was she interested in doing so, even if I bought the food. Now I walk over there every day and feed them both.

The owner of the shed told me that Rae and the black and white cat come out at night and she can hear them playing in her back yard.

Rae is now 13 years old and looks healthy. She has begun to greet me and rub against my leg, and I would love to bring her home again. Perhaps food will entice her back to my yard.

*Editor's note: This saga may ring a bell for some of you. We printed the story of Rae several years ago, including a picture of her pulling the food dish towards her, under the dresser, where she spent the day. This is an example of how some cats simply do not want to live indoors, regardless of all its comforts. The outside is what this cat has known most of her life and that is what she likes. Perhaps as she gets older she may change her mind. All the time she was missing she knew where she could have gotten food, but she chose not to. I think it is quite remarkable. We will keep tabs on her.*

## Spay/neuter law asks pet owners to be responsible—nothing more

The following appeared as a letter to the *Santa Barbara News Press* after the Nov. 10, 3–1 vote by the Board of Supervisors in favor of the spay/neuter ordinance. *Catalyst* would like to thank Supervisors Janet Wolf, Doreen Farr, and Salud Carbajal for supporting this approach to benefitting animals.

**T**he county Board of Supervisor made the right decision last week in approving the Responsible Owner Ordinance developed by the Spay/Neuter Task Force.

The ordinance benefits not only animals, but also taxpayers, who must shoulder the financial burden of overcrowding at the county's animal shelters. Since nothing like it has been tried before anywhere in the country, no one can accurately say it won't work here.

The ordinance is not a mandatory spay/neuter law, as several supervisors correctly pointed out. It clearly states only that owners shall behave responsibly when considering whether or not to breed their pet, and spaying/neutering is recommended.

Every person who wishes to keep his or her dog intact may do so by complying with what is already state law for canines: Visit a veterinarian to receive a rabies vaccine. At that time, an owner may request a veterinary exemption certificates to keep the pet intact, and the doctor can issue one free of charge.

Even if found in violation of the ordinance, an owner may still keep the pet intact by visiting a veterinarian. That is, it's a "fix it ticket." It is the owner's choice. No one need ever get their pet altered if they object to having the procedure performed.

Current efforts at reducing pet overpopulation have not been very effective. Despite claims to the contrary, this ordinance cannot and will not do any harm.

Now that it will become law, proponents and opponents alike will have the opportunity to judge its merits objectively a few years down the road. Since we all share the same desire of reducing needless euthanasia and saving taxpayer money, let's all hope it works as well as we believe it will.

**Ron Faoro, DVM  
Chair, Spay/Neuter Action Plan Task Force**

## Tributes & Memorials

**H**onoring 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 the volunteers** – by Kay McWilliams

**Belinda and all of you!** – by Mickey Wilson. Morris had been missing since June 2009. Great cat, great people. (See story on page 3.)

**Claya and Taz** – by Dan and Marie Carmean

**Carole Confar**, a wonderful friend, neighbor, and lover of all animals – by Victoria Blunt

**Randi Fairbrother** – by Ethel Barclay

**The amazing Randi Fairbrother** – by Eileen Carroll

**Susan Forrush** – by Victoria Blunt

**Joseph Paal Hausser** – by Trudy Fernandez

**Merry Christmas to our furry friends** – by Don and Linda Fareed

**Dr. Jeanne Trabold** and **Ruth Hoffman** for their faithful support. Jeanne died only 17 days after Ruth. They were true friends of felines – by Randi T. Fairbrother.

### In Remembrance of:

**Alisol** – by Heloise Power

**Buddy and Joanne Cason** – by Tom and Teresa Hall

**Carrie and Joaquin** – by Marlene Maes Mills

**My sister Karen, who loved her cats** – by Barb Evans

**Little Cat**, in loving memory of Marian's cat – by Ruth Butler

**Max, who loved walks on the leash** – by M.L. Ingram

**Midnight**, who lived for 15 years – by Maureen Lynch

**Miss Muffin** – by Angie Scholtz

**Scratch-Happy** – by Karen Littlejohn

**Tom Snow and Lindsey** – by the Salotti Family

**Wally** – by Benjamin Duggins

**Woodie**, a feral kitten we saved, who lived for 14 years – by Robert Malone

## We Get Letters

**O**ur Outreach Education Coordinator and over-worked foster and adoption advocate Marci Kladnik frequently receives grateful correspondence and photographs from the lucky people who have opened their homes and hearts to our cats:

*Marci,*

*Thank you soooooo much for your loving kindness to my new kittens. Happiness abounds in my heart and home now. God bless you,*

**Sioban**

*Thank you very much for your help with "Trouble," the abandoned cat in our neighborhood. The surgery and the vaccinations seem to have gone well. I wish you continued success with your mission. May God bless you one hundred-fold for the good you do for cats and people. Take Care. With gratitude,*

**Diana**

*Hi Marci –*

*Just wanted to thank you so much for our lovely kitty... we met you on a week-end at Albertson's in Buellton, and you were so nice.....and of course the kitty just loves Michelle and they have made quite*

*a pair – she named him "Nutmeg" and so we are calling for "Nutty" all the time.....thanks again for making our family even happier.*

**Mary**



**Looking Forward:** Riley and her mom adopted this sweet little one the day after having to put their 18-year-old cat down. The little girl named her new kitten Miley.

# Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

## Last Spay Day for 2009

Animal Services held another successful spay day at the Santa Maria Shelter on November 15. Spay days offer us an opportunity to deal with large colonies, which abound in Santa Maria and Guadalupe. It takes a great deal of preparation to arrange for 55 cats to be brought in from Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and New Cuyama.

Many thanks to the veterinarians: Ruth Corbo, Ron Faoro (of St. Francis Animal Hospital), Nicole Martinelli and Frank Stanton, as well as the dozens of volunteers who helped make the last spay day of the year a success.

## Wish List

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

- Trappers, transporters and feeders for Santa Maria/Guadalupe areas
- Safe relocation sites for mousers. They will earn their keep. We try and socialize our older kittens because we prefer they have loving homes, but depending on circumstances and personalities it's not always possible. Sometimes we 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 caregivers. When they do, it's satisfying for everyone.
- More people who understand the importance of spaying and neutering.
- Sheets—all sizes and colors—to use for covering the traps immediately after capture to calm cats and kittens down.
- Small to medium sized cat carriers.
- Cat food for our many, many colonies we subsidize.
- **Special Christmas Wish:** Two acres of land. A two-acre or larger parcel of land is desperately needed for a cat sanctuary. Homes for semi-ferals and ferals are not easy to come by, and these poor animals often lead brutal lives on the streets. Relocating them to a sanctuary where they will be safe and cared for until placements are found is their best bet for a quality life. If you have acreage to spare, please consider this in your yearly gift-giving.

## Supervisors Approve Spay/Neuter ordinance.

After more than a year of meetings, the county spay/neuter task force concluded its findings and the recommended ordinance was adopted in November. We thank Ron Faoro, DVM for agreeing to chair the task force, which turned out to be a difficult and unpleasant job. His letter to the editor of the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, expressing the rationale behind the ordinance is reprinted on page 5 of this newsletter.

## Note to Supporters

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

## Cat Genome

Scientists report they have decoded most of a cat's DNA, adding felines to the roughly two dozen mammals whose genomes have been unraveled.



**Resettled:** One of the roles an organization like Catalyst for Cats fulfills is to make possible the humane intervention on behalf of ownerless cats that are the target of mistreatment. This handsome white and black mom cat and her two 12-week old kittens were removed from harm's way at a feeding station in Santa Maria, where they were being abused by neighbors. They were trapped by Catalyst volunteers Lavi and Monica Gonzalez. After being spayed and neutered, they were relocated as a family to a ranch near Santa Barbara by Belinda Burns. At last report they are safe, warm, and comfortable in their new home.

## 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.

# Happy Holidays *from Catalyst for Cats*

*These adorable kittens were left at our feeding site in Solvang. There were five in all, and each was successfully adopted out to loving homes.*



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

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