



# Catalyst for Cats

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

## NEWSLETTER

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

Winter 2014

### 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

## Licking Our Wounds, Counting Our Victories

**W**e received the first report of kittens on February 2 of this year. We hope that by the time this newsletter goes to press this year's long kitten season will be at an end.

One thing I know for sure is fighting the feline reproductive urge is a difficult job. Third litters were dropping this year into October—perhaps a result of the drought. “Normal” is two litters a year unless, for whatever cause, one is lost. When that happens, the female will go into heat again in a few weeks and produce a third litter, which is extremely debilitating for her and discouraging for us.

As a feral cat organization our emphasis is on trap, neuter and return (TNR) to improve the lives of community cats and prevent unwanted kittens from being born. Our emphasis is in the Santa Ynez Valley and North County, where the need is greatest, and our tactics must be adaptable.

A recent example illustrates how vigilant we try to be and how tricky our task is at times. I received a call from someone in Guadalupe regarding her neighbors' feeding many cats. She declined to leave a phone number or address, but did mention the street. A couple of weeks later Monica Gonzales (who speaks Spanish) and I canvassed that block, going door to

door inquiring if anyone fed cats and needed help getting them “fixed.” One young man we spoke with was not interested in getting his cat fixed, and at another house we saw four adults, a teenager and a kitten, but they refused to answer the door. We left our literature at the door and continued on our way. Guadalupe has passed a spay/neuter ordinance (*see pg. 7*), so we may eventually be able to help these cats.



*Flower: 12 wks., “super-friendly,” ready for adoption.*

By the end of the year we will have fixed well over 400 cats, and the ripple effect of our work carries over to benefit other feline rescue and adoption groups throughout the county.

Please keep in mind, very few of the people we assist are in a position to reimburse us for our services. We depend on your kindness and generosity

to continue to fight feline overpopulation.

In August alone, we dealt with two large colonies of over 20 cats each (*see pg. 7*) and received no donation whatsoever. I hope that those in the community who know our work or support our efforts will be part of enabling us to continue our mission.

In that spirit of humane endeavor, I extend my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays with health and happiness in the New Year.

*Randi Fairbrother*

# In Appreciation

**O**ur volunteers are the backbone of our organization and absolutely essential. We applaud the dedication of our team of fosters, trappers, feeders, and all the others who contribute to saving and improving the lives of hundreds of felines every year. There are so many to thank:

**Rene Akamine** – for assisting Gerry Place with the raffle responses.

**Belinda Burns** – for coordinating our Santa Ynez feeding, rescue, and relocation program.

**Lavi and Monica Gonzales** – for daily feeding of ferals, fostering, trapping and distributing food to feline caregivers.

**Debbie Merry** – for her extraordinary efforts in trapping, fostering, recuperating, and feeding in addition to working full-time. She goes nonstop!

**Kia Beckert** – trapper, substitute feeder, and trapping coordinator in the Santa Ynez Valley.

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

**Charles Clouse** – for design and typesetting of our newsletter.

**Dian and Mark Poudrier** – for fostering, feeding, and trapping, caring for recuperating cats, and coordinating our efforts in Guadalupe. The cats under their care are blessed.

**Anne Marie Rose** and family – for fostering socializing, and caring for several litters from one site in

Santa Maria.

**Our Fosters**, who socialize kittens and, when called upon, help injured or sick cats recuperate: In addition to those mentioned above, **Tina Hawkins family, Rose Koller, Deanna Koens** (expert bottle feeder), **Rochelle Reed**, and **Karen Voorhis and family**.

**Our Feeders** (partial list): **Jeanne Bello, Veronica Eden, Kat Pirky, Mary Soto, Joe Thomas, Chuck Vanderveer, Debbie Walker**.

**The Buellton Veterinary Clinic, The Humane Societies in Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Maria Shelter and Orcutt Veterinary Hospital** – for their help with spays and neuters.

Several of the above also accepted some of our socialized kittens for adoption. During the year we rescue many kittens, but the adoptions are difficult for us because we don't have a central place to show cats, and the fosters are scattered throughout the county.

We appreciate the help of the **San Roque Pet Hospital** in showing our kittens. We adopted over thirty kittens directly and socialized many others, which several groups accepted for adoption. Our main thrust remains spay and neuter of ferals to improve their lives and stop the breeding.

There are many others to thank. Know that you are all part of our team and appreciated.

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## 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 Cats Everywhere** – by Evergreen Landscape Architects. Inc.

**The many dedicated Catalyst volunteers** – by Ethel Barclay

**Lucky** – by Elizabeth Gralewski

Our cats, **Emma** and **Rosia** – by Melissa Curtin

**Callie** and **Cico** -by Linda Clough

**Whitney** – by Luce Merritt

### Memory of

**All the wonderful cats that have graced our lives** – by Evergreen Landscape Architects. Inc.

**Meg**, who was my friend – by Melissa Muñoz

**Bobolina** – by Carl Anderson (*see pg. 3 for a full tribute to Bobolina*)

**Gloria Colleen Diaz** – by Irene Kasper

**Enana**, greatest cat ever – by Carolyn Moir

**Ruth P. Demms**, mother – by Susan Eselgroth

**Girl Cat** – by Bryon and Kelly Fairbrother

**Kingston** and his dad, **Steve** – by Susan G. Stevenson

**Lorraine McIntosh** – by B. B. McIntosh

**Mousey** – by Charles and Mary Stone

**Noah** and **Pasha** – by Nick Preister

**Romeo** and now **Buster** – by Allison Coleman.

**Sam** and **Snow**, by Richard V. Salotti and family

**Our Siamese** – by Martha St. Augustin

**Tinker** and **Boop** – by Richard Wilson

## Feral, trapped, returned, & revered:

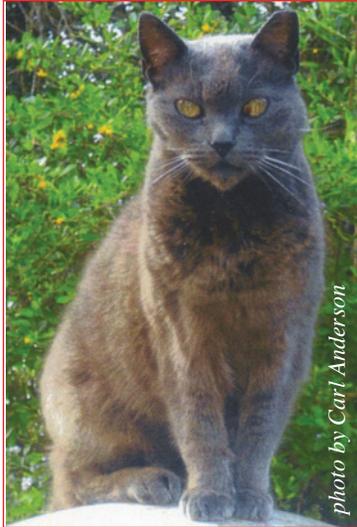
### Bobolina

September 1997 – September 2014

By Carl Anderson.

In 1997 Randi and I trapped a group of 11 cats at my place of work. She found homes for six, returning five. I've cherished each one's distinct personality traits, as I've lovingly cared for them throughout the years.

Bobolina, with her glowing grey coat and a nice thick undercoat, was the youngest of the three females of the Tabby Clan. Feral by nature, she trusted no one, not even me for many years. Yet I persisted in my quest to be granted the trust and affection that is the prized gift that a feral can give. Eventually each tries to reciprocate in their own way. With Bobolina it was only at night when she showed affection, purring and nuzzling as I rubbed her ears. She'd give me a most disdainful look whenever I applied flea meds. She was good company. She loved the fresh tuna I'd bring back from Baja.



She had always been a healthy cat until the last year of her life. When she became ill, I called upon Dr. Lunsden, the mobile vet, to come on-site and check her out. Diagnosed with high blood pressure and a hyperthyroid condition, she became blind in one eye. As soon as she received blood pressure meds, though, the retina in her eye reattached.

I medicated her for the next 10 months, but about a week before her designated birthday she quit eating. When she became wobbly a week or so later I took her to the vet and in a cool, quiet and peaceful room with me, her pal, talking to her, Dr. Wallace gave her the shot that put her to sleep.

Being 17 years old for a cat is equal to 84 years-for a human, and that is my radio number at work, where these cats live in the forested area behind my work station. She will be missed.

Thank you Randi for all you do for these incredible creatures.

## FROM THE CLASS OF 2014



Sisters **Katniss and Pom** were adopted and named earlier this year by Maureen Burke and her two daughters.



**Gray and Spot** have the run of the house and their choice of sleeping spots. Their new guardians, Bud and Mary Emrich report they are "still very mischievous, but make up for it by being very affectionate."



These two "Snowshoe" Siamese kittens were found by Monica Gonzales in a "nest of feathers" in a garage in Santa Maria. They were named **Rosa and Luigi** when adopted by the Pinnella family after fostering by Marci Kladnik.

# Trapping Truths

*Three weeks of work at one Los Alamos site saved two dozen lives, and will open your eyes to the realities of feline overpopulation*

*Part One of a two-part saga to be concluded in our next issue*

*Story and Photos by Marci Kladnik*

Sitting quietly in the shadows, drop trap string in hand, my eyes scan the partially lit lawn for any sign of movement. In the cool night, bats fly around me catching bugs. I've been here an hour waiting for the kittens and their elusive daddy to appear—the last three from the colony I have been trapping for 23 days.

Suddenly two small forms scamper out from under a building. I watch as they stop in the circle of light on the grass. One kitten raises his head and meows beseechingly for the missing colony. My heart breaks for him, as the only answer he receives is silence.

From the corner of my eye I see daddy strolling into the compound. He trills to the kittens as he saunters down the driveway just a dozen yards from me. Hidden in the shadows they are oblivious to my presence. I watch the kittens run, tails up in friendly greeting, to the big longhaired orange tomcat. They touch noses and little chirps pass between them.

I am grateful to witness such a private moment but am desperate to finish this assignment. "Go! Go to the yummy food in the traps," I urge silently. "Aren't you hungry?"

On any night, coyotes yip in the darkness, heralding



*The kittens on the porch were easy to pick up.*

a kill while mean feral pigs roam the long aisles of grape vines. The lawns are alive with fleas, and owls search for prey from above at night, hawks by day. This is not a safe place for kittens!

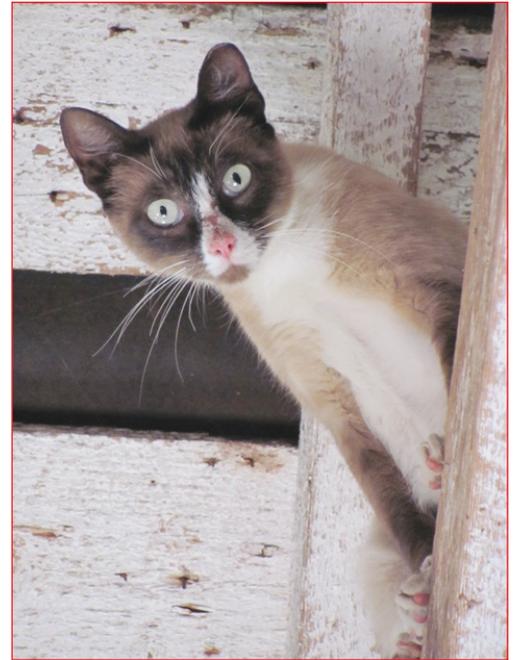
On my reconnaissance visit to the site, the number of kittens romping in the yard and

lounging on the wrap-around porch overwhelmed me. A seven-foot tall cactus was full of kittens poking their heads out to peer at me from the safety of the thorns. "Fifteen kittens and three mommas," reported the Hispanic woman who had finally called asking for help. There were surely more than that!

Five kittens frolicked just outside their den beneath the porch. Mom hovered nearby ready to protect. Six in the litter, but one had been missing for two days.

A beautiful white flame point sprawling on the porch leaned into my scratches and purred. Her paws made biscuits in the air as she gazed up at me with the bluest of eyes. A firm rounding belly... probably pregnant. Four orange and white kittens played nearby; one rubbed against my ankles.

My plan was to remove all the friendly cats and kittens from the property and adopt them out after spay/neuter surgery and vaccinations. The kittens under the porch were young enough to socialize, although prob-



*In the rafters of a Los Alamos barn, one of several mommas trapped awaits release after spay surgery.*

# Trapping Truths: Los Alamos vineyard yields more than grapes

From page 4

ably not their mom, and the ones on the porch were definitely on the list. There was another flame point, sister to the pregnant one. I would pull her as well.

With the granddaughter translating, I was informed they wanted to keep the “white” cats and kittens.

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Unfortunately, light-colored cats are beacons at night for predators and their pink pigment makes them susceptible to skin cancer. I relayed this information to the woman and hoped she would understand. I had no intention of leaving them behind!

I returned the next evening with equipment to catch the smallest kittens before momma moved the litter. I was able to scruff two and trap the mom. I needed



Bath time!

her as she was still nursing. The other kittens ran under the porch to hide. They were old enough to survive the night in their den, so I left.

The next morning I called three hungry kittens out of hiding using “catspeak,” learned during my years of fostering feral moms and their litters. As I meowed softly and trilled, the kittens came forward slowly licking their lips. One by one

I was able to pick them up. I now had five.

Searching with a flashlight under the porch for the missing sixth kitten, I saw a lifeless little body lying in

the dirt. Using a rake, I retrieved it.

I was angry with the woman for letting the situation get so out of hand. Now she was witnessing the needless death of a kitten that should never have been born in the first place.

I was glad to see her wiping her eyes as I lifted the cold, stiff body up and put it in a nearby bucket for burial. Feel my pain, lady!

Death is a part of TNR. Each one that touches me takes a bit more of my heart. After seven years of working in the trenches, compassion fatigue has set in marked by perpetual bitchiness and a propensity to break into tears. I was physically and emotionally tired, trying to hold it together, but overwhelmed by what I was facing. And it was only day two.

Back home I flea-bathed the kittens. It was a nasty job, rinse water running red from the copious amount of flea “dirt” full of dried blood. I had to get as many fleas off as I could before taking them to the foster.

Bathing done, I loaded the family into carriers for a trip to the vet to have momma tested for FeLV (feline leukemia) and FIV (feline HIV).

Another heartbreak. The smallest kitten—a beautiful tortie—was fading rapidly as I waited for momma’s test results.

The fleas had sucked this poor baby so dry that her gums and tongue were



white. She was lethargic as she lay in my lap while I picked off dozens of fleas that had survived the shampoo. The floor at my feet was littered with their bodies, crushed between my fingernails. I made the painful decision to put her down rather than let the suffering continue. The vet tech commented, “Even her blood wasn’t red!” as she handed me a box with the lifeless body in it. We both wiped tears from our eyes as I turned away and carried it to the car. Flea anemia had claimed its second victim.

*This tortie kitten suffered from serious flea anemia.*

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Watch for the spring issue of our Newsletter for the conclusion of Marci Kladnik’s account of her attempt to salvage precious life from a nest of misery.

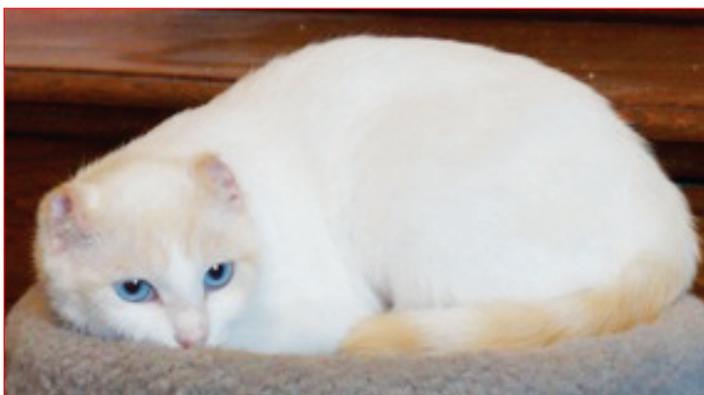
# Skin cancer survivors, Snow and Lily, need homes

photos by Marci Kladnik

By Marci Kladnik

Lily and Snow are young flame points I pulled from a vineyard in Los Alamos during a marathon TNR job (see pgs. 4 & 5). Although only about 1-1/2 years of age, the twin sisters both developed squamous cell carcinoma (SCC).

I knew immediately what I was looking at when I first saw the scabby-looking skin, despite the fact that the woman who lives there tried to tell me it was from fighting. These cats are not fighters; they are way too sweet! They are also predominantly white with pale orange points, blue eyes and pink pigment. Prime



Lily is just as sweet as ever despite the loss of ear tips due to squamous cell carcinoma.

subjects for SCC to strike.

It pained me to take these beautiful friendly cats to the vet for the necessary surgical removal of their ear tips. Even though Lily's ears were much worse, it was decided to treat both cats aggressively as a preventive measure against the spread of this deadly disease.

Obviously not candidates for release after spay and amputation, the cats were put into a foster home to heal.



The vineyard sisters are lucky. While stubby ears might be disfiguring, it will save their lives. Now healed, they are looking for a forever home together—inside only of course!

If you are interested in giving Lily and Snow a loving indoor home, contact us at 685-1653. Until then, they are safe in foster with volunteer Rose Koller.



photo by Tessa Corrie

**Adorable and Adoptable:** This Catalyst rescue kitten is up for adoption from the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society – 688-8224.



photo by Anne Marie Rose

**Trio:** These studies in black and white are from two different rescue sites, but are now fast friends and available for adoption.

## Join our new Facebook community!

Go to our page, 'Like' us, then watch for adoptable kittens and event announcements. Please 'Share' the adoption posts to help these kitties find homes quickly.



# Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

## **Tiny Tim Fund**

**O**ur Tiny Tim Fund helps with medical bills and is tremendously important. Not only does it help cats who need medical care but it means a great deal to our volunteers that we have the capacity to aid felines in need. We are the only ones in the North County that I know of that offers help with veterinary costs. We appreciate the assistance given to us by the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital.

The Tiny Tim Fund enabled us to provide medical assistance for over 40 felines since the end of September this year. It included treatment for abscesses, injuries, trauma repair, amputations (leg, tail and ear), eye removals, treatment of severe skin conditions, oral and dental care, etc. Sometimes we were called upon too late, but for the most part we succeeded. We are most grateful to the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation for providing the funds which have done so much to prevent and relieve pain and suffering.

## **Spay/Neuter Law for Guadalupe**

**T**he City of Guadalupe has joined the County of Santa Barbara, along with the cities of Solvang, Buellton, Goleta and Santa Barbara, in adopting the Responsible Pet Ownership Ordinance. (Only Santa Maria and Carpinteria do not currently have this ordinance on their books.) This is an important step in addressing the rampant breeding and overpopulation that has plagued Guadalupe for far too long.

No one spoke against the ordinance at the City Council meeting, and it was passed unanimously.

## **Cat's Meow Raffle Winners**

**T**his year's Cat's Meow raffle netted \$2,275, with every penny earmarked for Santa Barbara County cats. It will allow us to improve the lives of dozens of cats and prevent the birth of thousands of kittens over time.

The winners' names were drawn on Oct. 16, National Feral Cat Day, at the Coffee Cat in downtown Santa Barbara. Lorraine Cestone drew the lucky winners' names.

Thank you to all our sponsors and supporters. Without you, we could not carry out our work.

This years winners are:

**Michael Curtin:** A weekend getaway at a Lake Tahoe condo

**Florence Dunn:** A month's membership at the Cathedral Oaks Tennis Club

**Rose Koller:** A round of golf for four players at the Glen Annie Golf Club

**John Weber:** A one night stay at the Historic Upham Hotel in Santa Barbara

**Edgardo Abando:** A Laurel Burch tote bag with a crisp \$100 bill inside

**David Brogren:** A big feline-themed gift basket from Lemos Feed & Pet Supply

**Allison Coleman:** \$35 gift certificate to Cielito Restaurant and a \$25 gift certificate to the Vineyard House in Santa Ynez

**David Brogen:** Guadalupe Nipomo Dunes Center docent led walk for up to 15 people and a black and white Jules Reuter photo

**Melinda Siebold:** \$60 gift certificate to Brophy Brothers Restaurant

**Barbara Evans:** \$60 gift certificate to Clementine's Restaurant

**Joe Mayhew:** \$60 gift certificate to the Shoals Restaurant

## **A Very Busy August**

**I**n the month of August *Catalyst* tackled two colonies of over 20 cats each. We started the second colony as soon as equipment became available from the Los Alamos ranch job (*see pgs. 4 - 5*).

What started out as a group of eight cats became one of 26. This puts a lot of pressure on us because of lack of both equipment and appointments, and in this case we had to scramble for fosters for the litters of kittens we rescued. All the adults were healthy. In all we TNR'd 15 adults and removed 11 kittens.

All the kittens needed special care, and fosters needed to be found quickly. Without our intervention most, if not all, of the kittens probably would have succumbed to flea anemia. We put in an emergency call to Deanna Koens, who specializes in bottle feeding. We drove to her house in Santa Maria and assessed the 11 kittens in total. Fortunately RESQCATS agreed to take seven bottle feeders, and Deanna would foster them while they received medical care and until they were older and healthy. Four older kittens—the only truly feral ones—were accepted into our foster program. One need an eye removal and has been adopted.



*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!**

## 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)

## 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.

No-hassle donating can now be done using **PayPal** or **credit card** using the Donation Form button on our website. Catalyst is also registered with **Cars for Causes**, also accessible through our website.

