

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 over-population problem and to prevent cruelty to animals by preventing the birth of unwanted and uncared for cat and kittens.

From the Founder

Small steps, but it's still progress

With the ups and downs of cat rescue, I am often reminded of the story of the Starfish Thrower. Even for those of you who know it, it is worth re-telling:

Once upon a time a young boy was walking along the beach early in the morning after a storm. The beach was strewn with stranded starfish, so he started tossing them back into the ocean when along came a man who asked what he was doing. The boy said, "I'm throwing the starfish back into the ocean because they will die on the beach when the sun comes up."

"But the beach has miles of starfish on it," said the gentleman. "What you are doing won't make any difference." Whereupon the young boy picked up a starfish, threw it into the ocean and said, "It makes a big difference to that starfish!" And that is a very good attitude for those of us who are into animal rescue.

We were pleased with the outcome of our Cat's

Meow Raffle, which replaced our March Mouser Mixer fundraiser. It allowed us more time to do what we do best—trapping cats for spay and neuter.

The failure of AB 1634 (the spay/neuter bill) to pass disappointed us. Every year we deal with pet owners who are completely unaware, don't care or are plain irresponsible in allowing their animals to continue to breed. See more on this in Updates, page 7.

You, our contributors, have allowed us to improve the lives of hundreds of cats this year alone, thereby preventing the birth of untold thousands of kittens. Our sincere appreciation to each and everyone of you, however you helped. Unfortunately, the challenges continue, and again, it is mostly in the North County. We hope for your continued support towards our goal of "every cat a wanted cat."

Randi Fairbrother

Feral cats are the big winners in first Cat's Meow Raffle

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Cat's Meow Raffle. We were pleased with the \$6,200 gained toward our mission of improving the lives of feral cats.

Landa Parisi gets the star for selling the most tickets.

Our sincere appreciation to the donors of the five terrific prizes and to Lynn Adams, who donated her three-day Baja cruise as the grand prize.

Congratulation to Kelly Eckberg, who won the

cruise, and to Deby Dewese won the one night stay at the Chumash Casino Resort and Spa, with spa treatment and elegant dinner for two.

Pat Dowell won a night's stay at the Upham Hotel, while the gourmet lunch and wine picnic for six from El Rancho Market at a Santa Ynez winery of choice went to John Dove.

Penny Halverson, to win the Lotusland visit with a year's membership.

In Appreciation

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

ASAP – for being there for us when we need them for stray, friendly cats and also socialized kittens.

Belinda Burns – for her efforts in many areas of need in the Valley, and for her trapping expertise.

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

Jim Higman – for help with repair of traps.

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

Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society and the **Santa Maria Humane Society** – for their cooperation in scheduling multiple spay/neuter days for *Catalyst for Cats*. The importance of this is significant because large colonies of cats are most efficiently stabilized when they are spayed/neutered on consecutive days.

ResQcats – for their help in finding homes for some of our rescued kittens.

Welcome to two new volunteers: **Joanne Avelar** in Santa Maria and **Marci Prilepine** in Los Alamos.

Fostering is a very important part of our program. All of our feral kittens need socialization prior to

adoption. Additionally, all too often, they come from mothers that have not been properly nourished while in the gestation period, so many are disadvantaged from the beginning. We commonly deal with orphaned, hungry, flea ridden and sick kittens. While taming feral kittens is a daunting task, it has its rewards. The reward comes when you see them begin to trust you; you hear that first purr, and they relax, play, and “make biscuits” with their paws. It can indeed be very rewarding knowing you are responsible for the transformation that gives these wild creatures a chance for a loving home.

In appreciation to the following fosters:

Nelle Abecrombie

Lorraine Cestone

Chance Farrer*

Sandra and Mike Christeson*

Rene DeJong*

ResQcats*

Nancy George*

Monica and Lavi Gonzalas*

Nick and Landa Parisi*

Rochelle Reed

Kaitlyn Stewart

Mary and Ed Taylor*

* signifies those that fostered more than one litter.

Over-doing dry pet food a major cause of obesity

The following appeared as a letter to the editor some months ago in the Santa Barbara News-Press:

As a nutritionally oriented veterinarian for over 40 years, articles on pet nutrition always attract my attention. The Nov. 8 ('06) article in the *News-Press*, from the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, touched on an extremely important subject, which is pet obesity.

More than half the pets we veterinarians now see in practice are overweight and at least 25 percent are obese. Many articles are published each year on this subject but, as in this case, rarely address the major promoter of pet obesity. I am beginning to think it is some kind of third rail in pet nutrition literature to point out that overuse of dry pet food is the single greatest cause of fat pets.

There are other contributors as well, but in my

experience, dry food tops the list. It is high carb—read calories—and is frequently fed free choice since that is convenient for the modern working family.

In my practice we strictly control the percentage of dry food fed, from zero in tiny dogs, to a maximum of 50 percent in large breeds. Cats get just enough to clean their teeth, while small dogs get a few biscuits daily for this purpose.

This will not only extend the pet's life, as the article stated, but greatly reduce future veterinary costs as well. Pets fed nutritionally sound diets generally have healthy eyes, ears, skin, kidneys, heart, etc.

As Hippocrates said, thousands of years ago: “Let food be your first medicine.” Isn't it about time we began to listen?

Bud Stuart, DVM

Fitting Into The Family

No Need For a Trap

Some rescued cats have no trouble whatsoever blending into a loving family



My name is Sophie, and, thanks to Catalyst for Cats, I have a wonderful new home with two mothers, one sister (all rescue cats from SMHS), two dog brothers, two chickens and two humans.

Easily handled from the beginning, this obviously dumped kitten was found wandering around scared, lonely and hungry on the bank of a dry creek bed in Los Alamos. Being used to humans, she spotted one and ran to him begging for food and comfort.

Luckily for her, someone was there to take her in and make a call to *Catalyst for Cats*. I picked her up within an hour of being rescued and set up her in a large relocation cage in my garage with plenty of toys.

Even luckier for this adorable kitten, I have a friend who is, as we say, a sucker for cats, and who had mentioned that she wouldn't mind adding another kitten to the household. I knew she really wanted a black one, but with two Siameses in the family, one look was all it took. I sent Rose home with a picture of the kitten to get permission from her husband.

When I went over a few minutes later and asked what the decision was, I was informed that the kitten's name was Sophie. Whew! Another happy ending and success story for *Catalyst*.

PS: Sophie's littermate, a fuzzy black kitten, was caught two days later. Olivia, as she was subsequently named, was also lucky enough to join Sophie in her new home. With five cats now in the household, Rose's husband is threatening not to let us play to-

gether anymore.

I hear Rose really likes tabbies, and Bengals, and, to quote her exactly, "...Abyssinians are my third favorite, well, not actually in that order. I also love Siamese and black cats and medium gray ones and.... I just love 'em all! Except for maybe the hairless Sphinx."

Well Rose, there's always next season, (heh, heh).

—*Marci Prilepine*

Walking The Dog

Still feral, Brownie trusts her canine pal

Being an animal lover who has three indoor cats and an indoor dog, I realized I couldn't take in any more pets, when I noticed a mother cat and her kitten lingering in my yard. They were identical—basically solid brown with distinct golden stripes on their foreheads, patches of gold on their front feet and chest, with lighter variation of brown on the hips.

Randi Fairbrother, of *Catalyst for Cats*, taught me how to trap them to be spayed, and so the kitten was adopted and the mother returned (TNR'd).

I fed her outdoors and she made a place to sleep in my garage when she chose to. She showed her affection, I thought, by joining me when I walked my dog, Penney, until I realized it was Penney who was the attraction. I could be gardening and never see her, but as soon as I walked Penney, she would be right there.

They touch noses, nudge each other, and Brownie trills as they walk together, her tail straight up, alongside Penney. Sometimes she lags behind, then darts ahead and waits at the property line.

She now allows me to rub her ears and pet her back. Brownie has become our friendly feral companion.

—*Mal Morehouse*

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.

Off The Streets...



The Three Mouseketeers? Rescued from the streets of Guadalupe (from l-r), CNT, Jailbird and Buffy were fostered by Mary and Ed Taylor and have been adopted into loving homes through ResQcats.

Foster Mom: Kaitlyn Stewart took on the difficult task of socializing older kittens. Since this photo was snapped, they have all been adopted through ASAP.



All Eyes: One orange female and a buff male rescued in Guadalupe are presently being fostered by a Catalyst volunteer.

The Kitten Whisperer

When all else fails to soothe the feral brow, try a sympathetic Scottie dog

By Marci Prilepine

I had been doing my first solo trappings. The previous night I had caught the elusive momma cat and one of the two remaining kittens. This was a real coup for me, because the mother had eluded traps for three seasons and thus had produced three litters. I knew that her remaining kitten would be frantic, scared and hungry, having been alone for 24 hours. I *had* to catch him.

I set the trap carefully, all the while chirping and making cat sounds. I heard answering mews, and could see the kitten peeking out at me. I figured it would take only a few minutes, but in the end, it took two-and-a-half hours and almost total darkness before he had the courage to enter the trap and be caught.

When I went to check for the last time, he was flailing away, crying his little heart out. I quickly got him into my car and took him home. It was too late to get him to the foster's, so I kept him in my car overnight, knowing that it was warm, dark, and quiet.

In the morning, I went to check on him. I found him shaking in the corner of the cage and crying piteously. My heart broke as I searched for ideas on how to ease his pain. I tried one of my cats first, thinking that the sight of another feline in my arms might do it. My cat just hissed, of course, and the kitten continued to cry. Then I had it—Maggie!

Maggie is my three-year-old black Scottie. I had gotten her a kitten before, so I knew she would be gentle and motherly, but I never dreamed what was about to happen.

As I held Maggie up to view the kitten, the mewling stopped instantly! Suddenly, loud purring erupted from the cage and this tiny, terrified being began inching forward to head-butt the bars, trying to get to Maggie.

I brought Maggie in closer, and they touched noses. The purring never let up, not even when I tentatively put my finger through the wire to stroke the tiny side.

By now, less than 15 minutes had passed. I could see that the kitten desperately wanted to be close to Maggie, so I opened the cage. By the end of the hour, this “slash-and-dash” feral animal was sitting unrestrained and purring in my lap!

I ensconced the kitten in the upstairs bathroom and then went to fetch his mother from the vet. Since I had to keep her for two nights before releasing her back from whence she had come, I made a tented bed next to the cage so the kitten could cuddle near his mom. Interestingly, the kitten did not purr when he saw his mother, but continued to every time he saw Maggie. He would not even eat unless Maggie was in the room!

The rest is history, as they say. It appears that I have a new cat (or that Maggie has a new son). Maggie spends lots of time licking her tiny charge, especially after a meal or if he sneezes, while at the same time trying to sidestep the kitten's attempts to nurse. To this day, he purrs whenever he sees Maggie. It's a crack up to watch them play together and lick each other. I know that Maggie will protect her charge from the resident cats as I begin socializing, because that is what she did last time she had a kitten.

By the way, I named him Barney because the paperwork at the Humane Society had his name listed as “Barn Cat,” so it seemed fitting.

Footnote: The first night Barney was allowed to run free in the house, another delightful thing happened. I was just dropping off to sleep when the distinct sound of purring began emanating from Maggie's kennel next to my bed. There was Barney curled up next to his “Mom” with Maggie scrunched in the corner making room for him. Barney insists on sleeping there every night, now.



Mother and Son? Panicked by his new surroundings after being trapped, Barney (right) found a gentle parent in Maggie the household's black Scottie.

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 cats – by Heather Hovey

Kane Karp, my sister and animal lover – by Eileen Carroll

Love of Cats – by Charlette Grant

Pearl – by Evelyn Alberts.

Rae – by Victoria Blunt. Rae was TNR'd many years ago and fed by Victoria. When Victoria retired, Rae was re-trapped (it took three months to trick her into being re-captured) and Victoria took her home. Rae still spends daylight hours sleeping under the dresser, but roams at night and gets along with Victoria's other cats. When it's time for a refill of her water dish, she pushes it out from under the dresser.

Randi and our long friendship – by Ethel Barclay

Randi Fairbrother – by Bill Long

Randi Fairbrother – by Geraldine McConaghie

Thank you Randi – by Evelyn Alberts

Rascals and Girl Sister – by Barb Evans Simpson

Sisko, a *Catalyst* Kitty – by Tracy Johansen

In Remembrance of:

Barbara Gerstenberger, loving mother and friend.

Lover of all animals. Guardian to Chewbacca and Oreo – by Chuck and Rebecca Logan

Barbara Gerstenberger – by Belinda Burns

My dearest courageous **Blondie** and sweet, shy, “**Daddy**” – by Lynette Malone

Buddy, our daughter Betsy's "beloved 14-year-old Aussie" – by Jim and Joanne O'Roark

Dotty – by Kay Harrison

Eva Carraso – by Randi Fairbrother

Emmy Lou, a feral cat that insisted upon living outdoors. Captured and spayed after she had a litter, she was given a loving home for ten years. Five years ago she had a leg amputated after a motor vehicle accident. She died this summer.

Ernie cat, we will miss him – by Cathy and Jim Glenn

Felicity – by Yasvda Kim

Fredal and Princess – by Joanne Gerfen

Hobo – by Ingird Scherberth

Krinkle, Domino, and Spook – by Lois Waldref

Leo – by Joanne White

Love, beloved feral – by Karen Pick

Michael – by Don and Lois Sorg

Misha, beloved family pet – by Eileen Carroll

Trevor – by Marie Trip

Pumpkin – by Jeanne Trabold and Ruth Hoffman

Rae Baby – by Kathi D. Backus

Birgit Kristina Nyman Romasanta, my loving Aunt Birgit – by Ellen Kristoffersen

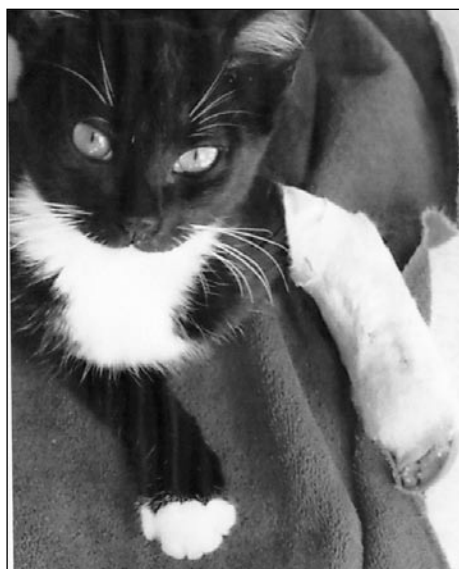
Speedway and Cindy, my two loyal friends for 18 years – by Dianne Howe

Sugar – by Elizabeth Gralewski

Wish List

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

- Fosters for socializing kittens
- Trappers and transporters for Santa Ynez, Lompoc, and Santa Maria
- Feeders for Santa Barbara area
- 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. 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.
- Twin sheets for covering the traps up after capture
- Small cat carriers



High Energy:

Nikki had suffered a severely fractured leg that required amputation.

Fostered by Nancy George, she shows no sign of feeling handicapped, and, according to Nancy, "races around like a banshee and has a fantastic personality." Adoption could be near, and Nikki's full story will be told in the holiday newsletter.

Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

Santa Maria — Volunteers Needed

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

Opportunities to help

Catalyst also needs trappers, fosters and transporters, even places to hold cats for pre- and post-op surgery. Call 685-1563 if you can help in any capacity.

Note to Supporters

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

Grants

We are very fortunate and appreciative to have received grants for our program of altering feral cats from the **Henry W. Bull Foundation**, the **Herbert and Gertrude Latkin Charitable Foundation**, and the **Solvang Rotary Foundation**. It pleases us greatly to have their support. Our work enhances the community as a whole and we are fortunate to live in such a giving community.

The California Healthy Pets Act

AB 1634, a bill pending in the California legislature, would make spay, neuter mandatory for most dogs and cats in the state. The bill provides numerous exemptions, for everything from health concerns to breeding stock, for police dogs, and competing purebred dogs and cats.

The bill was introduced last February by Assembly member Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys) and is co-authored by our own assemblyman Pedro Nava.

There has been widespread misunderstanding about the content of the bill, a deliberate campaign of misrepresentation by groups such as the AKC and PetPAC, which oppose any form of government regulation of pet ownership. As a result, additional voting on AB 1634 has been delayed until 2008, to give legislators time to work towards compromise legislation that stands a better chance of passing.

Some national animal advocacy organizations have stood neutral on, or even opposed, AB 1634, fearing

that the requirement to spay/neuter would result in “dumping” of pets (especially cats) in shelters or on the streets.

For the few municipalities that already have such laws in place, that simply has not been the case. The best example is Santa Cruz County, which has had mandatory spay/neuter (MSN) since 1995. In the 12 years since, their shelter intake has gone down roughly 60 percent and their euthanasia rate has dropped 75 percent. In fact, the trend towards MSN nationwide indicates that other communities want to imitate the successes of Santa Cruz, as well as Denver, Colorado, which eliminated euthanasia on adoptables some years ago. The entire State of Rhode Island passed MSN for cats in 2006.

If you are interest in AB 1634 and its progress, visit www.cahealthypets.com. If you would like information on Santa Barbara County’s own plans for local MSN ordinance, contact Lee Heller at lee@leeheller.net.

Our Stance on AB 1634

Catalyst was disappointed by the lack of support—for instance, from Best Friends and Alley Cat Allies—and even outspoken opposition to AB 1634, by some national rescue groups. Those organizations’ assertion that passage of mandatory spay/neuter would result in the large-scale abandonment of cats is not borne out by the evidence of municipalities that have had MSN for some time.

Another objection, which we think is misplaced, is the belief that not enough spay/neuter services are presently available in most communities. That argument puts the “cart before the horse,” rather than “the horse before the cart.” Passage of the law will create more incentive and opportunities for increased spay/neuter services.

As it is, many just don’t bother to pursue the availability of low-fee opportunities that already exist within the community. We deal with this first hand far too often.

Bottom line: Animal Services will not suddenly be showing up on every doorstep, demanding to inspect all the dogs and cats inside (or outside). They don’t have the personnel or the resources. But mandatory spay/neuter would allow them to force irresponsible, repeat offenders to do what they otherwise wouldn’t—to alter their pet.

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



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