



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 rescue 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.

From the Founder

Numbers improve, but frustrations continue

A friend recently called me with this opening statement: “I have 50 cats I have to get rid of right away.”

Not recognizing the voice, I responded with “What town do you live in?” Of course, I breathed a sigh of relief when I understood it was a joke.

I then realized it has been a while since we dealt with a large feral colony. Funny how good news creeps up on you sometimes. Even with a colony of a dozen or so kittens, the numbers now tend to be in the low twenties, or even fewer. That’s an indication that TNR is working, yet more needs to be done. (See our article on *Targeted Trapping* on page 6.)

Smaller colonies require fewer appointments, less volunteer time, and, of course, lower costs. It also means fewer cats return to live a feral life, which is an improvement even if they are fed and not reproducing.

In addition, those endless distressing, disturbing and heartless reports of kittens found in dumpsters or just discarded in boxes or left on doorsteps has decreased over time.

It never ceases to amaze me why people allow the

breeding to continue when we offer to help at no cost to them. In addition to spay/neuter we supply each feline with vaccines, worming, a flea treatment, and selective testing for FIV and leukemia. Not to take advantage of our services is unfortunate to say the least

and indicates an apathetic and uneducated mindset, but there are some people out there who refuse to listen.

Presently we are dealing with a situation where the breeding of multiple cats and dogs has been going on for years. The feeders give them away to anyone who comes by—of course, with no mention of “fixing” any of them.

Because we were delayed in tackling this job, they gave a female away. When I asked why she gave her away before we spayed her, the women responded with “Maybe they want more.” It is enough to make one livid. Thankfully, the colony will be stabilized

by the time this newsletter goes out, and hopefully they will grasp how much better life is for all with healthier, contented cats and without the endless parade of sick and dying kittens, injured cats from



Photo by Jennifer Johns

This kitten, one of ten trapped with their mothers on Rancho Tepusquet in North County, has been tamed, spayed and made ready for adoption. Some have taken longer than others, but at least their moms are no longer able to produce unwanted, unloved kittens.

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In Appreciation

Our 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:

Kia Beckert – from Belinda Burns, for always being there whenever called upon.

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

Russell from the ranch – for showing a final kindness to a feline in distress.

Bonnie Brown – for helping care for a scabies cat and her willingness to assist whenever called upon.

Davie Morris and **Reisa** – from Lynne Walsh, for help in Carpinteria .

To the **rescue and adoption groups** that took our kittens under their wing this season. Despite the numbers, heartbreak and difficulties they performed far beyond what could be expected. We are most grateful for the leadership role played by **ASAP**, the **Buellton and Santa Barbara Humane Societies**, **RESQCATS**, and finally joined by the **Santa Maria Shelter**. Each plays an essential part in saving precious little lives.

The **Diana Basehart Foundation** has never let us down. Thank you for helping an elderly cat in Santa

Barbara.

Debbie Merry – for her tireless dedication in the Santa Maria area with feeding, trapping, and general trouble shooting.

Thanks to our volunteers from the southern to the northern corners of Santa Barbara County, who we call upon as the occasion arises. They are all team players, and we depend them: **Rayma Brayton, Belinda Burns, Monica Gonzales, David Morris, Peter Mortensen, Tim Olivera, Reisa, Dian** and **Mark Poudrier**, and **Beth Rushing** to name a few. Our team makes a world of difference.

Carrie Tish – for capturing nine kittens in New Cuyama before they became too old for socialization.

Welcome to the new assistant, **Carolyn Flores, DVM**, at the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital and again thanks to **Dr. Brenda Forsythe** and **her staff** for their TNR efforts and kindness in treating and assisting sick and injured felines.

We also thank those who feed at our stabilized colonies: **Veronica Eden, Lavi Gonzales, Debbie Merry, Tim Olivera, Rosa Soto**, and many others.

And finally, we greatly appreciate everyone's generous donations throughout the year. We will be sending out donation receipts on a yearly basis, beginning in January 2016 for 2015. Call 685-1563 with any questions.

Tributes & Memorials

Each one of these names represents a level of love and caring to those remaining. They each have their own story.

In Honor of:

Grace, Maybe and Chairman – by the Richard Salotti Family

JJ and my big wonderful boys – by Charlene Maltzman

Marley – by Lynne Walsh

Claudia Mitchell – she was loved by her cat

Pywachette – by Sandra Owens

Randi, in appreciation of your selfless work – by Carol Donovan

Randi Fairbrother – by Kelly and Byron Fairbrother

Randi Fairbrother's Septembers special birthday – by Ethel Barclay

In Memory of:

Cecil, the lion – by those of us who don't understand
Florence Dunn, a true cat lover – by *Catalyst for Cats*
Aunt Eileen, who loved and was loved by her cat – by Larry and Claudia Mitchell

“Gene” (Philip E. Olsen) - by Anna Braman

Hershey, you left us far too soon. When we met I always felt we already knew each other from a different place in time and so until we meet again, my little friend, we love and miss you dearly. Run free my handsome boy and say hello to your brother Jade for us – by Debbie Merry

Katie, our sweet cat that crossed the Rainbow Bridge – by Teresa Hall

Marmalade – by Ernest Pratt

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Missing Maggie, the unlikely Kitten Whisperer

This amazing Scotty dog put a terrified kitten at ease when nothing else seemed to work

By Marci Kladnik

Even though Scottish Terriers are notorious for hating cats, I had no fears that Maggie would ever hurt one. Ten years ago I adopted a kitten that my older cat was not eager to accept. Maggie took charge of protecting that kitten, standing guard at the bottom of the small cat tree while he napped above her. I thought it was cute, but didn't realize it was a sign of greater things to come.

Two years later when I began TNR volunteer work for *Catalyst for Cats*, I trapped an especially feral 10-week-old kitten on my first job in Los Alamos. As small as he was, he did not hesitate to launch an attack at me even while still in the trap.

Since it was late, I had to keep the kitten overnight before sending him down to Santa Barbara to join his littermates for socializing. I slipped food, water and a small litterbox into his trap, leaving it in the back of my car in the garage, and went inside.

In the morning I found the kitten backed into a corner of the trap, shaking and mewling in fright, but as I approached with food, he went into attack mode again and I backed off.

It broke my heart to see this poor little terrified gray and white kitten. Wanting to ease his pain, I did something that in hindsight might have been foolish. In this case, however, the result was nothing more than mind-boggling.

In my innocence I brought an older male black cat out in my arms thinking the kitten might mistake him for his mother, or at least be assured that I was not to be feared. That didn't work so I tried it again with the other cat. Another failure. Then for some reason, I picked up Maggie and held her for the kitten to see.

That's when the magic happened. The kitten immediately stopped shaking and mewling. Then a very loud purring burst from of his little chest and he came forward in the trap trying to get to Maggie! He even reached through the fencing with his paw.

I let them touch noses. Not a hiss; not a bark.

Still afraid he'd attack me, I tentatively reached a finger in to touch the kitten's side. He totally ignored me and continued to purr and reach out to Maggie. I gently opened the trap, reached in and picked him



Photo by Marci Kladnik

Scared of What? Maggie and Barney on the window seat in 2007, just after the magic happened.

up. I placed him on my lap and he and Maggie just touched noses while the kitten continued to purr. I was astounded to say the least. Only a few minutes had passed and this very feral kitten was totally tame!

I took the pair into the house and put them together in an upstairs bathroom, then went to get a litterbox, dishes, and toys to make it a foster kitten room. I hadn't planned on adopting or even fostering another cat, but I just knew this little one would not be leaving my house. I named him Barney.

During the following eight years, scores of feral foster kittens came through my home. Maggie played a huge role in helping to tame and teach them not to be afraid of dogs. The games of chase she'd play with them up and down the hallway near my office kept me busy with the camera—a very pleasant distraction from working at the computer. The kittens would even nap with Maggie on the window seat in my office, another site of many photo ops. Barney also was very welcoming, responding, I'm sure, to Maggie's gentle example.

Many stories of Maggie's work with foster kittens have graced the pages of this newsletter. She reached stardom and became known internationally as The Kitten Whisperer when the one about Barney's taming was published in the January 2012 issue of *Guideposts*

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Burger King cat family spared the drive through

By Marci Kladnik

At the end of June, *Catalyst* Vice President and dedicated volunteer, Belinda Burns, began working on a trapping job behind the Burger King in Buellton. A mom with a litter of three kittens was living in the bushes by the dumpsters. The fast food staff was keeping an eye on them and occasionally dropping off burger patties, but the kittens needed trapping soon in order to have time to tame them.

Belinda began stopping by to feed the beautiful tuxedo queen who would come immediately to the food. Very friendly and obviously a former pet, she sometimes waited in the middle of the driveway for Belinda. In between these meals, mom would hunt to feed her kittens that were about eight weeks of age.

Belinda once spotted her chasing quail under cars at the car dealership next door. I saw her myself trotting down the sidewalk by Tom's Gas when I was filling up one day. Others saw her and the kittens at different nearby businesses. Even a local homeless guy fed them occasionally. At least there were lots of eyes keeping track of them, but we were all afraid cars zipping in and out of the drive-thru lane would hit the family.

The first attempt to catch them was both a success and a failure. Mom and two of the kittens went right for the food and were caught together in one trap. The third kitten, a tuxedo like mom, had remained outside, watching. Just then the trash men came to empty the dumpsters, adding to the kitten's stress, and he retreated to the bushes.

Over the next nearly two weeks, both Belinda and I tried to catch the last kitten. He would answer our meows with tiny meows and taunt us by peering down from the branches of a small tree, just a few feet over our heads. I brought mom back in a carrier in hopes that she could call him out and into a trap. That didn't work; they just "talked" to each other and the kitten stayed hidden. Nothing worked, not even when

Belinda smeared the tree trunk with cat food!

On July 8th, desperate to catch him, Belinda set three traps and left since the trapping site was secure, returning to check them periodically. After nearly seven hours with no luck and extremely frustrated, she decided to call it quits for the night. As she began shutting the traps down, the kitten suddenly dashed across the driveway in front of cars, passed her legs and into the bushes!

Not one to give up while there was still a chance, Belinda reset the kitten trap baited with a whole can of food and slowly put it in the bushes near him. Then she walked away and out of sight.

Peering from behind a parked car and holding her breath, she watched as the kitten entered the trap, tripping it at last!

Her ecstatic scream of joy raised a concerned look from a nearby Burger King patron, but Belinda didn't care. She now had the whole family that was finally reunited a few minutes later.

Mom was taken to the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society for spay the next week. She was lucky because I had a home waiting for her in Los Alamos.

Dubbed Queenie because of her association with that "kingly" establishment where she was trapped, mom settled right into her 6' x 6' x 6' temporary relocation cage, outfitted with a 5' cat tree and an old bird cage castle.

Her adopter, Olivia Vazquez, reports, "She's perfect and seems very appreciative of being off the streets."

The following week Belinda took her own cat into the Buellton Veterinary Clinic. While there she mentioned Queenie's kittens. As luck would have it, the BVC offered to take them for their adoption cage and would handle their surgeries.

Thank you Olivia and BVC for taking this family off the streets. And thanks Belinda, for your dedication. That's four more lives you've saved!



Queenie immediately made herself right at home in her castle.

THE TEPUSQUET TEN

Photos by Jennifer Johns

Three adult females and their ten kittens trapped on North County's Rancho Tepusquet were one of this summer's most rewarding accomplishments. *Catalyst* arranged fostering with **Jennifer Johns**, whose early July in-the-midst comments below reflect the patience and joy involved in the task of preparing feral kittens for adoption.



"He is so sweet, a gentle soul. He has a forever home with me."



"These two are fraidy cats, the gray tabby the most. Both will now eat in my presence, and I have held both of them. The buff boy gave me a tiny purr yesterday."



"She is so unique. Her stripes are variegated, one gray, one brown, on a light brown background. She lets me pick her up, but has not yet rewarded me with a purr... any day now I think I will have her!"



"He is the spirit of play and cuddle. I love him!!!"



"These two have been my most frightened. The tortie always hides from me, but tonight she came out of hiding to eat dinner while I was in the cage. She sat 18 inches from me and ate her kibble. I think in the next few days I will be able to work with her. Her tabby friend has decided I am not so very scary."

Extra effort makes a difference

When Karrie Tish, of New Cuyama called for help with a cat, she also told us about a breeding colony of cats. I mentioned the pressing need to catch kittens while still young so they could be socialized and adopted.

Loading a large dog crate into her car, Karrie drove to the site and captured nine out of the 12 kittens of various ages. One of the kittens' eyes were glued shut, which can lead to blindness if not treated. Since there is no veterinarian in New Cuyama, she drove the kitten to the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital in Santa Maria, a good hour and a half away.

She took the time to save this kitten by going well out of her way, and the result is one healthy adopted kitten. Lillie McNear, who works at the Orcutt vet, fostered him and he is now a pal of the calico Lillie adopted from us a couple of years ago.

—Randi Fairbrother



Photo by Lillie McNear

'Targeted trapping' could be key to North County challenges

Dealing with feline overpopulation requires both resources and sound strategy. The TNR approach is a proven winner, but unfocused trapping can be a poor use of volunteer time and donated resources.

It is far more effective to think in terms of community needs and concentrate efforts on a chosen area such as a ZIP code or neighborhood with known concentrations of un-spayed felines.

This involves personal, marketing outreach to the public via radio, TV, direct mailings and other forms of advertising as well as going door to door with brochures and information on specific services.

In many cases the message is not readily received and a certain amount of neighborly persuasion is needed. When applicable and possible, a bilingual approach needs to be taken. Surgeries need to be easily available and they need to be low fee or no fee.

Targeting parts of the community rather than TNR-ing scattered colonies here and there definitely increases the pace of population reduction, but it takes money and volunteers. This is the approach that is needed in Santa Barbara's North County.

Catalyst for Cats uses a limited version of "targeted trapping," but we do not have a large enough pool of volunteers to draw from nor the capacity to generate the funding needed on the large scale required. This is an opportunity for the North County to take the bull by the horns and move ahead with the job we started.

—Randi Fairbrother

Tributes & Memorials continued:

From page 2

Maggie, the best four-legged kitten-tamer ever. The house is so empty without you – Marci Kladnik

Mekkie Mouse – by Karen Littlejohn

Micio, the best boy in the world, for 19 years of "adorable" – by Jan and Chas. Clouse

My beloved **Paloma** and my brother **John Tapia** – by Irene T. Kasper

Reggie – by Jill and Richard Mosher

Sam – by Lois Waldref

Angie Scholtz – by Jenny Pauletto

Elizabeth Smoot – by Don Smoot, friends and *Catalyst for Cats*

Founder's Letter continued

Improvements and frustrations

From page 1

fighting, and caterwauling.

Our few, but truly dedicated volunteers bring a steady supply of cats into the clinics for life-changing surgery of spay and neuter, making a difference not only in their lives but to the community at large.

We ask for your support because it makes a difference and is truly a gift that keeps on giving.

Randi Fairbrother

Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

Top Cat Writer

Marci Kladnik, *Catalyst* volunteer and former board member, was recently elected President of the Cat Writers' Association. CWA comprises nearly 300 talented writers and artists from around the world. Marci was accepted as a professional member in 2010 and went on to win first place awards for writing and photography in their annual contest. *Catalyst for Cats* "jobs" were the subjects of most of her wins. We wish her the best of luck in her new leadership role, even while she continues to TNR for *Catalyst*.



Spay/Neuter Ordinance for Carpinteria

In September, the Carpinteria City Council will take up an ordinance that will require most dogs and cats to be spayed or neutered. There will be exemptions for health, working dogs, and show dogs and cats. The goal is to reduce the City's pet overpopulation problem. Low income pet owners will be able to get their pets altered at no charge through C.A.R.E.4Paws, which provides free spaying and neutering throughout Santa Barbara County. Low cost services are also available at the Santa Barbara Humane Society. The meeting is planned for Sept. 14 at 5:30 p.m. at Carpinteria City Hall.

Wish List

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

- We are now looking for volunteers in the Carpinteria area.

And for the Santa Maria area:

- **Trappers** – an exciting and rewarding job that will keep you on your toes. We will show you the ropes. Guaranteed to never be boring.
- **Transporters** to deliver cats to the clinics in the morning and/or afternoon post-op pick up.
- **Feeders** – We feed many colonies from the Santa Ynez Valley and north county. Substitute feeders are also welcome.

How NOT to feed a feral cat colony!



An essential element of successful TNR is to establish a proper feeding schedule. It is difficult and challenging to deal with well-meaning but misguided individuals who feed indiscriminately and end up destabilizing the colony. This example from Santa Maria shows how NOT TO FEED. Also note that leftovers draw flies, bees, and ants as well as dogs, rodents, skunks, and other wild animals.



Photo by Michael Brian

Maggie and Barney on the window seat during the Guideposts photo shoot.

Maggie, the cat calmer

From page 3

magazine. Their special bond lasted for eight years until a few weeks ago when Maggie succumbed to acute and sudden renal failure. Until the end, Barney purred whenever he was in Maggie's presence.

When Maggie passed away, I don't know whose heart was more broken, Barney's or mine. But "their" window seat will be forever empty in my eyes. This last photo is how I will always remember Maggie and Barney, snuggled up together for hours every day, looking out over the *cul-de-sac*.



Catalyst for Cats, Inc.
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**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

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.

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.

