



Catalyst for Cats

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

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 30331 • Santa Barbara, CA 93130 • Phone: (805) 685-1563 • Email: catalyst4cats@cox.net

Volume 28, Number 2

www.catalystforcats.org

Fall 2019

From the Founder

We do all we can —with innovation and heart

Almost three decades ago we began to improve the lives of feral cats in Santa Barbara with a Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) program. At the time, TNR was a novel approach and in its infancy. We soon witnessed its effectiveness when we noticed fewer feral kittens born.

When we heard about an early spay/neuter program being done in Chicago shelters, we contacted local veterinarians, who agreed to participate in that program. Next we started our relocation program, which allowed us to save many lives by placing the ferals as mousers and barn cats. Rescue groups and shelters now practice these programs nationwide and even worldwide.

Our biggest challenge and task has always been placement of our feral adults and kittens. In the beginning the colonies were very large in numbers since they had been growing for many generations, with their population kept under control only by sickness, disease, and accidents — similar to the human population when most children died young prior to medical advances. It was all so painful to watch.

Many vets had little experience or knowledge of how to deal with ferals. Since there were far too many cats we could not find safe placement for, we asked

the feeders if the cats could be returned to them if we provided food and medical care. Few had the financial ability to provide food and care for ten, twenty and even more. That is how we became committed to feeding hundreds of cats. Even today, it surprises me how long they live.

I receive about three referral calls a week regarding spay/neuter services, adoptions, medical assistance,

and re-homing. The re-homing calls are the ones I dread. As the years go by, inevitable changes occur as both caregivers and cats become seniors, properties are sold, old age or health issues set in, and changes in living arrangements occur. Even today there are few places willing to accept older, feral, unadoptable felines. It's an ongoing concern.

Countywide other organizations are stepping up and taking over what we started. We are very appreciative of the many who have helped us along over

the years to improve the lives of feral cats. We hope for your continued support regarding our commitment towards their welfare.

My best wishes for a Merry Christmas and happy holidays with health and happiness for the New Year.

Randi Fairbrother



***Sweet Dreams:** Adopted ten years ago with his sister Star, Scout (above) was then a feral kitten. They are now trusting, happy, secure and thriving in their forever home with Colleen and Ana, who say, "The love between them is magical."*

In Appreciation

🐾 **Amy Smith** – she seems to be everywhere with a helping hand.

🐾 **Orcutt Veterinary Hospital** – for their kindness and generosity.

Kathryn Laabs and Lanette R. Perry – As our felines age the use of our Tiny Tim Fund intensifies. We appreciate your donations.

🐾 **Santa Maria Valley Humane Society** – for their weekly feral cat spay/neuter days—two days a week when feral cats are fixed without charge, including vaccines, ear tip and flea treatment.

🐾 **The Santa Maria Shelter** – for their help with individual adoptions, spay/neuter and adoption promotions.

🐾 To all **our many volunteer feeders**, and to our supporters who are able financially to take it upon themselves to feed their colonies.

Tributes & Memorials

In Honor of:

Beloved kittens Charley, Audrey, Chester – by Charlene Maltzman

The cats – by Martin Thruston

Chris and Rod Kurz – by Lorna White

Lars – by Sigurd Wathne

Rocky – by Claudia Mitchell

Memorial

Tigger's caring spirit shone most brightly as his life ebbed

By Mark Poudrier

During my recent three-month stay in the hospital and skilled nursing facilities, an older, beaten up, ginger male tabby, that Randi had called “old man Tigger” would sneak into the house—away from his vast array of outdoor colony mates—checking every room looking for me. Upon my return home, Tigger found me all crippled up on the sofa and immediately climbed up and warmly welcomed me home. He quickly became my convalescent kitty and constant therapeutic companion.

What a pair we made! Me, all broken up from a dreadful fall from a ladder months earlier and barely able to move, and Tigger, going blind and with life's infirmities leaving him unable even to purr properly. However, when Tigger would hold my hand between

Sue Stevenson: Happy Birthday – from *Catalyst for Cats*.

Randi Fairbrother, who has helped so many strays in the North County for a long time – Veronica Eden
Randi and Catalyst, for the help you've given me with the feral cats I've come to love and want to take care of – by Naomi Henn

For **Sarah's great help** with Mama and kittens and **Moocher** – from Shirley Boydston

In Memory of:

Thor the Great and Eddie the Amazing: the best rescues. We miss you. – by Kelly Fairbrother
Monty, who went peacefully with Belinda Burns at his side. He was the last of a colony of six cats stabilized over 15 years ago.

Lee Schneider – by the Fairbrother family

Mini – by Enjil Harrah Ray – by Victoria Blunt

Leo Nolan, aged 90, for a life well lived – by Randi Fairbrother

Leno, a feral who passed too soon – by *Catalyst for Cats*

Marble, Van Gogh, Rocky, Romeo and Buster, forever in my memory and in my heart – by Allison Coleman

Sammy Homer Dickens – by Nan Cisney

Spencer the Magnificent – by Claudia Mitchell

Stubby – by Dan Andrade

Trini – by Anna Mackuse

his paws and gently gnaw on my fingers, his caring spirit was plain to see and he touched me deeply.

But Tigger seemed to be fading, even as my mobility improved. It was on a Sunday, that Tigger withdrew to his heated bedding. Dian and I had doctors' appointments the next morning, so Amy Smith volunteered to take Tigger to the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital. I received good medical news, but Amy reported that Tigger was in congestive heart failure. Amy and Tigger were good friends and she comforted him as he was put to rest. I am forever in debt to her and I so wish that I had been there for him.

This episode is the third time a homeless kitten or cat has seen me though the lowest times in my life. For me, volunteering for *Catalyst for Cats* is an obvious choice and made me a believer in Karma.

Sometimes you just can't avoid fostering desperate cats!

For the most part we no longer foster kittens or facilitate adoption placements. Other, larger non-profit groups and agencies in the north county have taken up that banner.

But this spring, when our volunteer feeders came across some colonies needing stabilization, they jumped in to help. Because so many of these cats were very sick, the rescuers hesitated to surrender them to the shelter for fear they would be euthanized. That is how we ended up with 27 cats and kittens in foster care.

We cared for them for months, providing medical care until the adults were well enough to be returned to their colony locations and the kittens surrendered to the shelter.

Fostering kittens, especially sick ones, is a labor of love, but very expensive and time consuming as anyone who has done so can attest to. The fosters adopted some of the kittens.

Working together with the Santa Maria shelter, the others were neutered and adopted.

Unfortunately we lost **Gizmo**, a one-eyed black kitten. Comforted, cared for and loved by Amy Smith, he will leave a scar on her heart.

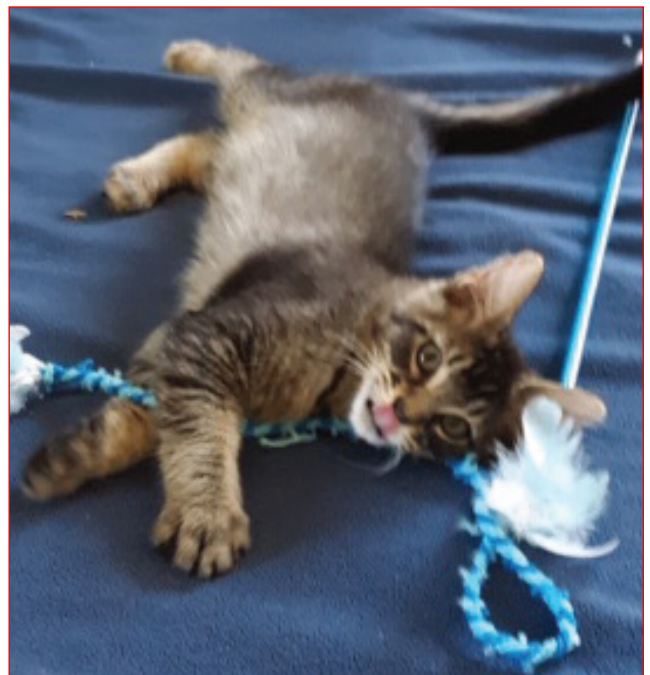
A second kitten, **Addy**, despite her impaired vision is adorable, happy and loved, living with Cara Hough-



Photos by Cara Houghton

***Above and Beyond:** Though fostering kittens is no longer our domain, some Catalyst feeders recognized a difficult situation this spring in Santa Maria and stepped up to the task for several cats and kittens in need of care. Addy, came to Cara Houghton with eye problems, but now is growing up in a loving home, with the prospect of care from a veterinary ophthalmologist.*

ton. Plans are underway to have her eyes examined by Dr. Schmidt a veterinary ophthalmologist in Arroyo Grande.



***Ready for love:** Courageous George (right) and several other kittens (left) in need of fostering this season were cared for by Amy Smith, Cathy Ferrall, Sara Ganschow, and Cara Houghton before being moved to the shelter in Santa Maria.*

Never quite domesticated, but Shadot always felt at home

By Cathy Ferrall

What can I say about Shadot (pronounced Shadow)?

He was born in a junk pile in the yard nextdoor in August of 2006. It seemed as if his mom (Sunday) a Siamese mix, not even a year old herself, saw the potential for a lifetime playmate if he cooperated with her plan.

She began by adopting two unsuspecting humans, who were not looking for a cat and definitely not two. By November 2006 Sunday and Shadot had joined our family and would touch our hearts and souls for thirteen years.

Unfortunately, Shadot had never been socialized and was at least fourteen weeks old. It took many evenings with a feather and mom close by to begin to touch him. He was never truly domesticated.

But despite his feral tendencies he lived in a home where he was loved, given space to love on his own terms, which was not always easy for his human companions.

We had been warned early on that it might not be possible to treat him if something happened. The vet reassured us, though, that



Nap Time: Shadot (top) with his mother Sunday

he would have a better life in a home than on the streets.

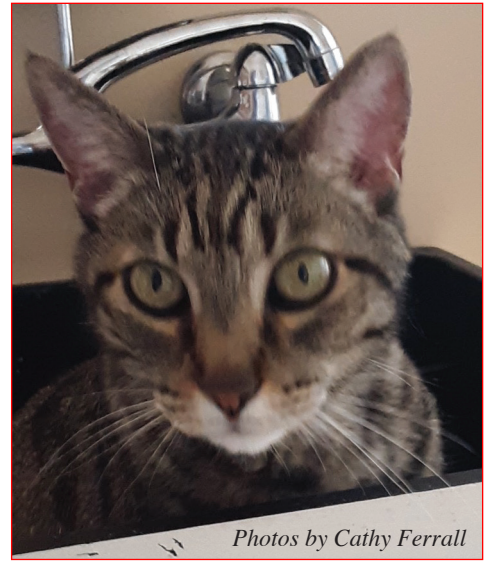
Shadot enjoyed thirteen years of good health. Sadly, as predicted, he became ill and taking him to a vet was non-negotiable. On October 19, with the help of Amy Smith, angel on Earth, we netted him and got him to the vet, where he was peacefully put to sleep.

Shadot loved his morning feeding and pets, his bird window, time in his yard, and spooning with his humans each night at bedtime.

His 20-pound presence has left a large hole in our hearts, but at the same time it reminds me of why we attempt to keep these precious creatures safe from harm and provide homes or safe feeding sites.

They have a way of showing us how to open our hearts to love and to being loved. Shadot has left a pawprint on our hearts, and for that we are grateful.

RIP my furry friend.



Photos by Cathy Ferrall

Proper feeders must stay vigilant to keep colonies stablized

Seven kittens were dropped off at one of our feeding stations this past kitten season. Fortunately, our expert feeders knew that to maintain a stable colony, they must keep a lookout for this sort of activity.

Ideally you want the cats waiting when you show up so you can then take a quick census. Food should be eaten within 10-20 minutes without leftovers. Newcomers usually lurk at the outskirts of the colony or remain hidden and venture forth for any leftover food only after the feeder is gone.

If food is left over, new cats and kittens will not be observed until they are too old to be trapped, socialized and adopted.

In this case our volunteer feeder called for help when she observed kittens at the site. They grabbed seven kittens, who are now in foster care with our volunteers, and when old enough will be taken under the wing of the Santa Maria shelter for surgery and adoption.



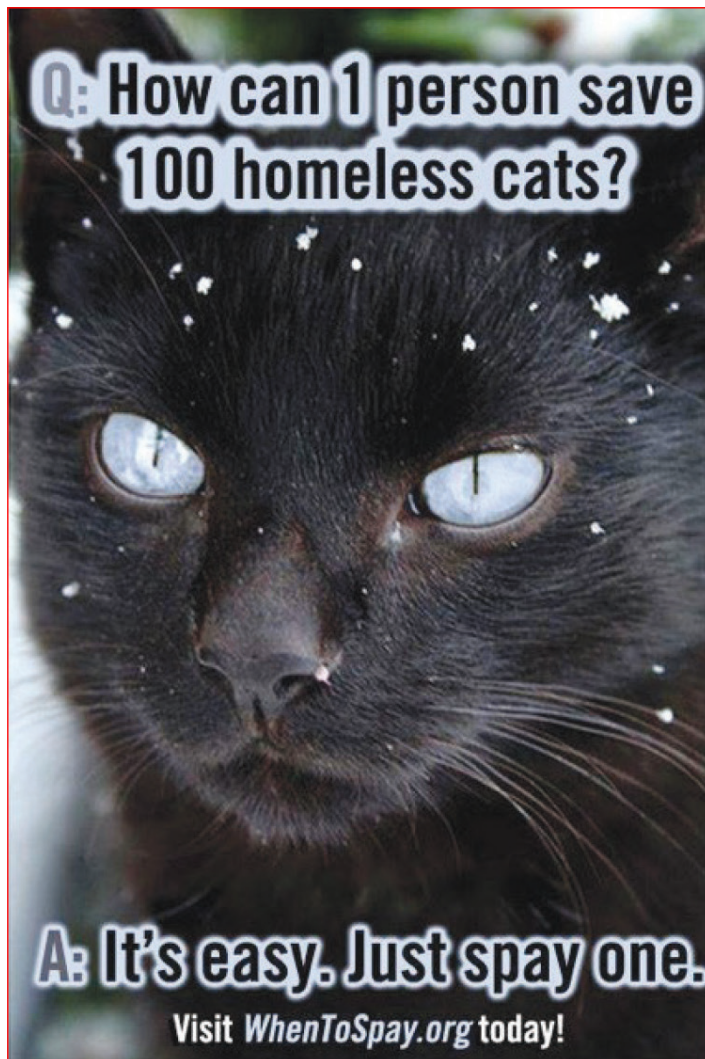
Photo by Amy Smith

Charlie: One of the lucky seven.

Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

Spay Day in Santa Maria

The Santa Maria Animal Shelter's Beat the Heat Spay Day in September neutered or spayed and vaccinated 49 cats, and the Santa Barbara County Animal Foundation, thanks to a grant, reached 83 cats at a similar event in October, making a total of 132 felines. This is by far the best way to control cat populations.



Tips for feral cat comfort in winter

Feral cats need extra food during winter and fresh water. Wet food freezes, so put out dry food as well. To keep water from freezing, pour into deep rather than wide bowls and place in sunny areas.

Cats prefer to sleep together and cuddle for warmth. Heat disperses quickly if there is too much space. Place the shelters out of the wind as much as possible. Upgrade and clean shelters for winter weather. Replace with a lot of fresh straw. Never use hay, blankets

or towels because they do not repel moisture and will stay wet and cold.

Finally, even when temperatures are not freezing, remember to rap on the hood of your car before starting the engine. Cats sometimes find shelter under the hood of a car during inclement weather.

New York becomes the first to ban declawing

Cats in New York can officially keep their claws. On July 23, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill to make declawing of cats illegal statewide. This bill prohibits declawing unless for medical reasons, and vets who perform the surgery outside of the legitimate bounds face fines of up to \$1,000.

Removing the claws involves removing all or most of the bones of the toes of the front paws, including tendons, nerves and ligaments. It has a lasting negative effect on a cat's quality of life. Scratching is usually the first means of defense for a cat. Consequently, declawed cats become biters and often end up in shelters.

California seems to be the leader in banning declawing of cats. Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Culver City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Monica have all passed declaw bans. Worldwide, Canada, England, France, Germany, Spain, and Australia have issued bans against it.

California's Wildlife Protection Act of 2019

Governor Newsom signed the Wildlife Protection Act of 2019 in September. It ends the centuries-old practice of commercial trapping of native species, including gray foxes, coyotes, badgers, beavers and mink, whose pelts were often sold in foreign fur markets. AB 273 prohibits fur trapping, eliminates wildlife torture and the state's trapping subsidy, and supports science-based wildlife management. AB 273 was authored by assemblymember Lorna Gonzalez (D- San Diego) and co-sponsored by Social Compassion In Legislation and the Center for Biological Diversity.

Flea treatment

We are trying out a new flea treatment and thus far it seems to be working. It is called Free Flea from Wolf Creek Ranch. It is a liquid that can be placed in the drinking water. We are hoping this is a breakthrough for ferals. To place an order call 951-674-0921 or visit the company website at wolfcreekranch.net.



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!