



# Catalyst for Cats

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

## NEWSLETTER

PO Box 30331 • Santa Barbara, CA 93130 • Phone: (805) 685-1563 • Email: [catalyst4cats@cox.net](mailto:catalyst4cats@cox.net)

Volume 21, Number 2

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

Spring 2012

### 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

## Kitten season stats show signs of progress

For the first time in two decades we've been able to say, "So far, so good."

Because of a diminished population at all three Santa Barbara County shelters, there are actually some empty cages for incoming felines. What has happened? As predicted in our last newsletter, the emphasis on spay/neuter by various agencies countywide may be paying dividends. What encouraging and welcome news.

Catalyst's first feline rescues of the year (all polydactyl) came from a homeless women in Santa Maria. She called Monica and Lavi Gonzalez to come pick up a mom and two newborns from the motel she was staying in. As so often happens, the women requested the mom and one kitten be returned to her after we had fostered, vetted, vaccinated and spayed/neutered them. Animal Services had already picked up her three dogs, which had been left in a backyard without food or water, so we were very hesitant in our response to her request about the cats.

Luckily, it was easy for us because when the time came, it turned out the woman was in no position to reclaim her animals. The two kittens were adopted out together. Mom suffered from food allergies, but the treating veterinarian fell in love and took her home.



**Taking Care:** This tame, but abandoned mom gave birth to her three kittens (can you find the others?) in the back seat of a car. They will be up for adoption in about a month.

We felt this was a good omen and a great way to start the season.

At present our kitten census totals 40–50, some in hand and others not. The feral caregivers are feeding moms who will hopefully bring their kittens to the food source when they reach five to six weeks of age. This is when a mother usually begins teaching her kittens how to hunt.

Momma starts by bringing dead rodents to her babies, followed

a week or so later with live prey. The kittens need to learn how to make the kill. This practice is necessary for learning how to fend for themselves for two reasons: their increased appetite and because soon mom will be in heat again and pregnant with a new litter.

Kittens not taught by their mother will either never

*Continued on page 7*

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

**Nancy Aquirre** – for donating many soft stuffed animals for our kitten foster program.

**The Book Loft**, in Solvang – for hosting a book signing for Lee Wardlow’s book *WON TON, a Cat Tale Told in Haiku*, and for donating 10% of their sales to *Catalyst*. In addition, **Lee** assembled and raffled off a gift basket with proceeds going to *Catalyst*.

**Ernest Bevilacqua** – for faithfully caring for a colony in Santa Maria for 11 years. He reports they are thriving.

**Belinda Burns** – for her ongoing efforts to relocate cats from the Santa Maria Shelter, thus saving many lives.

**C.A.R.E.4 Paws** – a very big thank you for their generous assistance with spay/neuter services in the Santa Ynez Valley.

**Diane Crosse** – for stepping in as assistant foster coordinator, as well as feeding cat colonies in the Valley.

**Patrica Edgerton** – for her donation of wet food.

**Hand Made On Easy Street** in Solvang – for holding a raffle to benefit *Catalyst* because we helped fix a mom and her litter. The cats were all placed together in a very good home.

**Jim Higman** – our expert repairer of traps and equipment for many years.

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

**Marci Kladnik** – many thanks for all her help, from the Wrathers.

**Beth Rushing and ASAP (Animal Shelter Assistance Program)** – They have done a tremendous job dealing with the feral cat colonies in the South County.

**David Morris** – for his generosity in donating many cases of wet food as well as kibble for the many

colonies we feed. Also for his and **Reisa Guiliani’s** extraordinary rescuing efforts on behalf of cats in need in Carpinteria.

**RESQCATS** – for assisting with altering several tame cats for people of low income.

**Smart Translating Team** – for translation of our revised brochure into Spanish for more effective distribution.

We would also like to mention and express sincere appreciation to our fosters thus far this year:

**Arrianna Daphne**

**Lisa Marie Foug**

**Monica and Lavi Gonzalez**

**Tina Hawkins and family**

**Marci Kladnik**

**Deanna Koens** – our expert bottle feeder

**Debbie Merry**

**RESQCATS**

**Melinda Siebold**

**Grace Tobias**



**Not For Sale:** These five youngsters—none spayed or neutered—were being offered for free at a local swap meet. Luckily we got to them before the customers lining up did. The kittens have since been fixed and adopted out properly.



# Marathon trapping job in Los Alamos nets nine kittens and one adult

By Marci Kladnik

There is a litter of kittens in the hay,” the caller said. “We are concerned the dogs will get them. Can you come?” It was a Friday morning in April; kitten season in Los Alamos had started in earnest.

With the presence of hunting dogs on the property, it was imperative that I get there quickly. This was not my first time to the ranch, and I knew what would happen to those kittens if I didn’t get there right away.

Luckily there was a young woman named Michelle living in the barn apartment; it was she who had alerted the owners to the presence of kittens. She had already counted heads, and thought there were three, one of which seemed eager to make friends with her. This was surprising, considering they were feral and appeared to be about five-weeks-old.

I loaded a kitten trap and some food into the car, and headed out.

Considering the dangerous presence of dogs, the queen had picked a perfect nest for her babies. Tunnels and cubbies between bales of hay made it impossible for anything or anyone to catch them. We’d see a kitten face peering out at us, only to disappear and reappear somewhere else. Trapping them might be harder than I thought.

The disturbing sight, though, was a set of large eyes reflecting light back at me as I peered into one of the

hay tunnels. Momma was in there guarding her kittens! The eyes moved and I backed away, fearing an angry cat was about to charge my face.

I squeezed as far back against the

wall as I could to look behind the hay, seeking the best place to put a trap. That’s when I noticed something dark on the ground, about kitten size and moving slightly. But it was 15 feet

away and no way to reach it without moving bales.

We recruited a ranch hand to move enough of the hay so that he could reach the kitten. What he pulled out was not another five-week-old, but a days-old kitten, still with its eyes closed! It was then that I realized there was a second litter in that hay stack.

We had no idea where this one had come from, though. I didn’t know how long he’d been there, or how hungry he might be, so I called our bottle-feeder foster and took the newborn straight to Santa Maria.

Back at the barn in Los Alamos an hour later, Michelle told me that she had been able to pick up the “friendly” kitten, which was now in the carrier I had left. Yay! Only two more to go.

I set up the trap and waited within hearing distance, hoping the older kittens were hungry enough to investigate. I had now been on the job for about four hours, and was getting restless. Michelle came out to see how things were going and wandered over to peek at the trap. “Momma’s in the trap!” she said.

Sure enough, momma had squeezed herself into the kitten trap and tripped it. Being feral, she’d remained silent and because she was an adult, the trap hadn’t snapped shut as loudly as it would have on a kitten.

I quickly transferred her to a larger cage, so I could reset the kitten trap. Then I took momma and her kitten home with me as I needed a break. Michelle would check on the traps and keep me informed.



*Continued on page 5*

# A Life-Changing Experience:

## *How to manage a feral cat colony—and love it!*

By Rochelle Reed

Greetings from a happy and successful feral cat colony!

The story begins seven years ago when I moved into a 100-year-old house with a secret garden in a lovely fenced in backyard in Santa Maria. Two weeks after moving in I began to see little green eyes peeking out from behind the storage shed. A week later a litter of six hungry black and white tuxedo kittens showed themselves—the cutest little things I'd ever seen. Being a renter I knew cats were not allowed; however, these little cuties were already here, so what could I do?

After Googling “feral cat” I found *Catalyst for Cats* and called them. Randi Fairbrother delivered equipment to my home with instructions on how to catch the kittens as well as how to socialize them for adoption.

Unfortunately these feral babies were over six weeks old and it was not an easy task. After they were all spayed or neutered and tested for leukemia, I released the three wildest ones back into the yard. I never did get a look at the mother, but thanks to *Catalyst* this was the beginning of what turned out to be a life-changing experience—the managing, caring for and loving of a feral cat colony.

As time went on, three new young gray cats began to show up at mealtime, so out came the traps again. These three now sleep under my house and during the day contentedly sun themselves in the yard.

On another evening I heard mewing coming from the corner of my garden. Beneath a hydrangea bush I found two tiny kittens, their eyes not yet open. The next thing I knew Mama Cat jumped over the fence with a third kitten. Once I had the kittens in hand, Randi instructed me on how to trap the mom. We caged the family together until the kittens were weaned and then moved them to another foster home. We spayed Mama and released her back into my yard.

For some reason, my backyard colony cats refused to accept Mama Cat and ran her off. She lives across the street in a vacant lot, but every evening she comes



*Not So Feral:* “Mama Cat” bore several litters—including one in an attic space—before she could be trapped and spayed, but now she enjoys many of the pleasures of a civilized household.

to the front door for dinner. Eventually I was able to entice her inside to eat dinner in a little corner of the kitchen, and now she sleeps on a blanket in a chair for the entire night, every night like clock work. When she wakes up at five or six a.m., I let her out and she runs back across the street to her little hideaway. I worry about her crossing the busy street, but she will not stay here during the day. She is the sweetest little lady and allows me to pet her, though not hold or pick her up.

I found out Mama Cat originally come from another colony at the other end of the alley, cared for by Sylvia. That colony was difficult to stabilize and this particular female, being the very sly girl she is, could not be caught, and thus bore litter after litter. She even had a litter in Sylvia's attic, where one of the kittens fell into a wall and needed to be rescued by cutting a hole in the bathroom wall. We found the remaining kittens by climbing into the attic, but not mom.

Then unexpectedly and unfortunately, Sylvia moved and abandoned the cats without notice. My daughter and I tried to feed them for a couple of weeks, but it became apparent more needed to be done. Randi retrapped and relocated as many as possible, but with a disgruntled landlord and renters we had to stop our efforts. Eventually, the remaining cats began to show

*Continued on page 5*



# Adventures and rewards of a successful colony

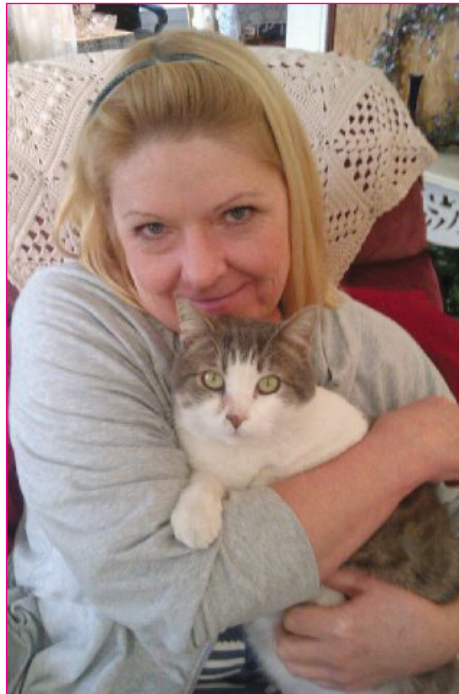
From page 4

up at my house.

Five of the abandoned cats found my secret garden and now enjoy safety and care in my backyard. In addition, Blue, a large, long-haired gray cat—the dominant male of Sylvia’s colony—shows up now and then. So with this latest capture of Mama Cat, our kitten sightings, we hope, are at an end.

The cats in the colony tend to be very territorial and two of them have been hit by cars while chasing new cats away. At other times they allow new cats to assimilate into the group without problem. I don’t understand why they like some cats and not others, but there is definitely a hierarchy and a pecking order.

A final amusing story needs to be told. Sparky showed up about six months ago. He was mean, very mean, spitting and



*Not So Nasty:* Considered mean and ill-tempered upon arrival, Sparky has become a lovable companion to the author’s daughter.

actually slapping me as I put food down for him. When I trapped him, he was like a Tasmanian Devil in that cage, spitting and hitting the cage so hard it actually moved.

But his nature improved after neutering, and he started talking to me and rubbing against my legs. We’d play on the steps with a cat toy, and one day he let me pet him. With this encouragement, I became brave and picked him up and he actually started to purr. My daughter Julia and I enticed him into the house, where we kept him for several weeks, until he stopped crying and hiding.

Today, big, fat, beautiful Sparky is my daughter’s constant companion, following her and sleeping in her bed, and he cries when she leaves for work. It shows what an amazing transformation can be accomplished with love and patience.

## Long hours of trapping in Los Alamos barn pays off

From page 3

My last trip to the barn was at 11:30 p.m. for a final check of the traps. They were empty so we called it a night, making plans to resume in the morning.

Thinking about that tiny kitten the next day, it occurred to me that perhaps it had fallen from somewhere at the top of the hay. I called Michelle to check it out, and a few minutes later she called to say she’d found a nest with two more kittens in it! I was on my way, I told her. Now I had to catch their momma.

The two older kittens were finally hungry enough to brave the trap and be caught. The bad news was that Michelle had spotted two more! So the litter of three had swelled to five. The good news was that they weren’t feral, just scared.

Late that afternoon, the last two older kittens were captured, but still no momma of the little ones. To complicate things further, Michelle had climbed up

to the top of the hay once more “just to be sure” and had come face-to-face with momma in the nest with *another* tiny kitten! At least we knew she was still around, but another bottle-baby we didn’t need.

The cat count so far came to 11, nine kittens and two adults. This all from one hay stack!

I spent six days, approximately 16 hours, 330 miles of driving and countless phone calls and text messages trying to finish this job. In the end, the last momma was never caught and two of her babies sadly died. Of the remaining two, one is fighting for his life despite the heroic efforts of our bottle-feeder foster, and the first one I found on the floor behind the hay is doing well. The older five beauties were fostered by Jeffyne at RESQCATS and ready for adoption in mid-April. Their momma was spayed and relocated to a safer barn in Buellton. Just one more bittersweet story.

## 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:

**All cat lovers** – by Barb Evans Simpson  
**Amber**, a feral cat that believes she's a dog – by Sharon Graner  
His Dudeship **Sir Russell Fairbrother**, Duke of Nipomo – by John Weber  
**Norma Anne Hanson**, friend/rescuer of over 75 cats, feral and/or abandoned – by Roseanne Niemi  
**Lucky** – by Pat Johnston  
**Penny** – by Margaret Jones  
**Ann Titas** – by Kayann Zadrozny

### In Remembrance of:

**All the abused kitties** – by Anna MacKuse  
**All my cats and all strays and rescues** – by M. L. Ingram  
**Betty Boots** – by Linda Starnes  
**China Blue**, 15 years and one of a kind – by Kay Harrison  
**Krinkle and Domino** – by Lois Waldred  
**Faith**, who was old and tired and now joined by his brother Apollo, both 13-year-old collies, and now waiting at the Rainbow Bridge for Jeffyne  
**My Isla Vista colony** – by Randi T. Fairbrother

**Paula Kinealy** – by John K. Kinealy  
**Lilith and Rizpaw** – by Kim Kenny  
**Maggie O'Roark** – by Janet Sterling  
**Monty**, who was 19 years old – by Karen Jostes  
**Morris**, who started out as a dumpster diving feral kitten and became a loving, but feisty house cat – by Marie Tripi  
**Miss Muffin** – by Augie Schoatz  
**Ninnie**, Randi's childhood mamma cat – by Ethel Barclay  
**Nutmeg and Princess** – by Rita Fleming  
**Loreta Roberts**, passed at age 93 – by Lynne and Buddy Borderre  
**Dwayne Ribley**, long time ASAP member – Karen R. Segroves  
**Teso** – by Shirley Cram  
**Tommy, Lacey and Cleo** – by Stephanie Welch  
**Sandy Whittington**, fellow animal lover – by Tom Garner and Mona Nicall  
**To the forgotten and neglected felines**, who deserve better – by Randi T. Fairbrother

### John Hoyt 1932-2012

Under the leadership of the John Hoyt, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) grew into the nation's largest animal protection organization, with 3.5 million members by the time he retired in 1996.

The group was founded in 1954 as an advocate for the reduction in animal suffering. It limped through the 1960s with part-time leadership, a staff of 10, and membership of 10,000 before Mr. Hoyt took charge in 1970.

Born in Marietta, Ohio, the son of a Baptist minister, he said he was influenced by his grandmother, a vegetarian, who had a farm in West Virginia. She had 40 pet sheep and each one had a name.

Mr. Hoyt expanded the group's mission to include combating animal fighting, changing slaughtering practices, preserving wildlife and lobbying for regulation of medical testing that used animals. He created an investigations unit that sent undercover agents into cockfighting rings and puppy mills, then publicized what he found.

His work continues today on many fronts. It is not the dates that are important – it is the dash between the dates.



*Tigerlily: One of the "Swap Meet kittens." (see photo page 2)*



# Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

## Tiny Tim Fund

The Tiny Tim Fund helps pay for medical expenses. The generosity of the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation has allowed us to help many felines in distress so far this year—from eye removals to mouth and dental problems; from repair of broken bones to painful skin conditions; and from moderate injuries to severe traumas as a result of motor vehicle accidents or attacks from dogs. A special thank you to Dr. Scott Smith of Animal Medical Clinic of Carpinteria and Dr. Brenda Forsythe and staff of Orcutt Veterinary Hospital for their care.

## Pet Lovers License Plates

With the passage of AB610 pet owners and supporters have been given another year to gather enough orders for the California's Pet Lovers License Plate to be produced. Approximately an additional 3,000 plates need to be pre-ordered before production can begin. It will generate funds for spay and neuter. Pre-order yours now – [www.petloversplate.org](http://www.petloversplate.org).

## Wish List

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

- Transporters, feeders and trappers for the Santa Maria areas. We also need a coordinator for the Santa Maria Valley; someone to organize trapping and spay/neuter appointments.
- Cat food for the many, many colonies we monitor and maintain. We prefer meat flavors from Purina, Friskies, or Costco rather than fish flavors. Wet food is a treat.
- Someone to post bilingual flyers at laundromats, libraries, vet offices, etc. throughout all the towns within SB County, from Carpinteria to Santa Maria.

## 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.

## Animal Alliance Event

*Catalyst's* CPA Allison Coleman and Founder Randi Fairbrother attended an event held by Animal Alliance in early May at a private residence in Beverly Hills to honor Fix Nation Founders Karen Myers and Mark Dodge. A display in the home's screening room cited animal care groups by the number of cats brought in for spay/neuter in categories of 100. We were in the first group of 1-100 (92), but a few names were listed in the over 1000 category.



*Almost Ready To Go: Razzle will soon be shown for adoption at the San Roque Pet Hospital at 3034 State St. – 682-2647.*

## Kitten numbers looking better

*From page 3*

be good hunters or may learn from watching other cats; occasionally they figure it out instinctually, but hunting is a learned behavior.

As we are now deep in kitten season, your financial support is vital to our success. Your donations go towards medical supplies, vaccinations, spay/neuter services, veterinary care, and food for colonies we assist. Every donation helps make a difference in our goal of “every cat a wanted cat.”

My best wishes to all of you for an enjoyable summer.

*Randi Fairbrother*



*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)