



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

From the Founder

We've come a long way, Kitty, with a ways to go

In the previous Catalyst newsletter we began marking our twentieth year of helping cats in our community by recalling how things got started and reflecting on the sense of satisfaction that came with launching such an effort from nothing. The saga continues:

I had never occurred to me that people would not want to “fix” their companion pets. I sure had a lot to learn. But somehow things slowly started to come together. Beginning with Berka’s one trap and her rabbit hutch, we took the cats in for spay and neuter. Over time, we were able to improve our techniques and purchase more traps. I remember our excitement the first time we trapped five in one night.

Then we started to rescue kittens and expanded our veterinarian base. It was a learning experience for us all, since saving feral kittens and neonatals was generally not done at that time.

My faithful Honda held six traps and six carriers. The cats would be placed in the carriers post op, leaving the trap available for the next night’s trapping. Sometimes I had to enlist someone to pick the cats up from the vet because of my work schedule.

Fortunately, the need to help these feral and stray cats was becoming apparent to several of us in town

at this time. When I visited the “Pound,” hoping for information and assistance, I spoke with Rick Cerele, who suggested I contact Leni Gilles. Leni had been there—looking for her lost cat—and found the conditions appalling.

That was the beginning of PAWS. Leni’s goal was to build a larger holding area for the cats so they could be held longer and given time to find homes. The early heroes who were taking these cats home were Karen

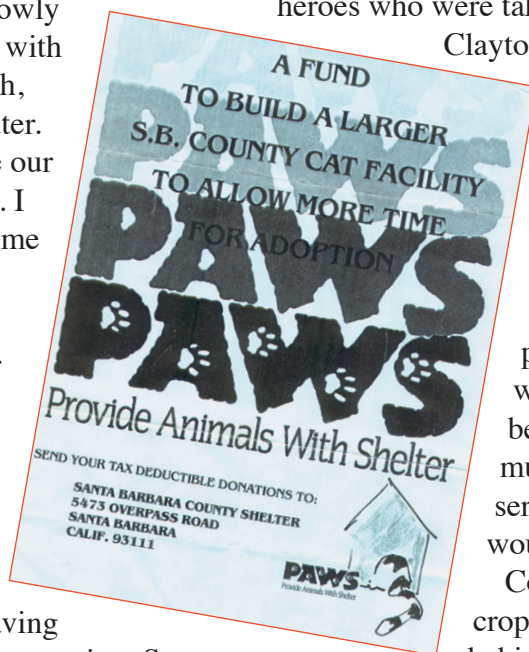
Clayton, Barbara Hilaire, Shirley Hall,

Julie Mock, to name a few, but there were others. Cindy Iliff and Dr. Leslie Seimans, DVM bare mentioning as well.

A board was set up called PAWS (Provide Animals with Shelter), which became a non-profit, and the fundraising began. I was a charter member, but soon left because I felt it didn’t matter how much room a facility had; without seriously promoting spay/neuter there would never be enough room.

Colonies were large back then and cropped up everywhere: schools, parks, behind fast food places, backyards,

apartment complexes, businesses. I can’t even remember how we managed to pay for those cats. I thought if I had to worry about the money on top of the cats I’d



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In Appreciation

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

Sharon Betzenderfer and **her elderly mother** – for their extraordinary kindness towards any feline.

Belinda Burns – our Santa Ynez liaison. She coordinates the volunteer feeders and more for the Santa Ynez Valley as well as doing most of the trapping. On weekends she feeds colonies and has now extended her efforts in spearheading relocation of cats on Saturdays, thus saving lives of many ferals from the shelters who would otherwise be killed because they are not adoptable. Did I mention she works full time?

C.A.R.E for Paws – for their assistance with spay and neuter at several clinics throughout the county, for the public as well as *Catalyst for Cats*. They also assist with dog neutering.

Dr. Brenda Forsythe of the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital – for the many ways she and her staff help us.

Jim Higman – despite being in his mid 90s he is a whiz at repairing anything in metal for us.

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

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

The Santa Barbara Humane Society – for their assistance in adopting out our older felines.

The Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society – for giving us the day to spay and neuter 20 cats.

San Roque Pet Hospital – Where we sometimes show our adoptable kittens. It works out well for everyone and the staff is very caring.

Glenda Stafford – for caring.

And finally, to those who donated cat food, towels, and other items.

Appreciation works both ways. While we are sincerely grateful for what our community of friends and supporters do for our efforts

on behalf of feral cats, we frequently receive thank you notes *from* our supporters—even as they send us a donation. Here are a few of those expressions of gratitude:

Dear Randi, Little Mommy was the last feral who passed away last month. Almost 15 years ago you helped me trap all the ferals—six, plus Mommy’s litter of five. My one domestic, Cookie, also passed away two months ago. My last love—Scooter—is the last one of Mommy’s litter and still my faithful companion. He is very lonely and is happy I’m around to take care of him and love him. — **Jill**

(Editors note: I remember Scooter because he had to have an eye removed).

Randi, Thank you, for helping with Shadow, the abandoned cat (*see story on page 3*). I’m sending this donation to help with her expenses. Shadow is a lucky cat now that she has been re-homed. She loves her new family, and they love her. — **Judy Kelley**

Dear Randi, Here’s my donation to renew my membership. I’m too old, broke and broken down to do this kind of wonderful work anymore but news of what you do makes me feel so good. — **Pat**

Dear Randi, Thanks for everything you do for the feral. What would we do without you? — **Rose Sato**

Dear Belinda, Thank you for your extraordinary efforts to help us with Oreo. Hope he found a good home. You are a very special person. Thanks again. — **Mary and Kit Williams**

Dear Mrs. Fairbrother, Thank you and your wonderful *Catalyst for Cats*, and a very special thank you to Belinda Burns for her untiring patience and kindness in trapping a mother cat and her three babies, and being able to place the whole family in a wonderful home. They had been in the mobile home park that I live in. Belinda to the rescue! Thank you again. I’m so proud to be a member of your association. — **Jill Whiting**

Thank you Randi for all that you do. — **Betty**

Belinda, Thanks so much—the cats seems to like it here—a win-win. Perhaps the donation can help with your costs, etc. — **Craig**

Dear Randi, We really appreciate all your efforts regarding cats! Thank you for *caring!* You are saving *all* cats a lot of misery for years to come, by helping

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Shadowing strangers pays off for desperate kitten

By Judy Kelley

Thanks to *Catalyst for Cats*, another abandoned cat has been restored to health and adopted by a loving family.

I first encountered Shadow while I was walking my dog Max. A wide-eyed, scrawny little black thing hurried across the street, straight toward us. I waited cautiously concerned that something was wrong. It is uncharacteristic for a cat to approach a stranger in this way—especially a stranger with a dog.

The little cat began rubbing against my legs and meowing. As I petted her I could feel crusty patches behind her ears and on her neck. She was so skinny that her ribs and hip bones were visible. She had scabs on her skin, and her fur was thinning and falling out in patches while she braved the cold March wind.

I went home to get her some food, but when I returned, she was following someone else down the street—sort of shadowing strangers—meowing desperately.

I knocked on doors and asked people in the area if they knew where this cat lived. People repeatedly pointed toward a house on the block. I looked through the curtainless windows and saw that the home was clearly vacant. Obviously, this sweet little waif had been left behind.

I'd never brought a stray cat home before. I wasn't sure I had the resources to take this on by myself, so I called Randi Fairbrother for advice. *Catalyst for Cats* offered to help with veterinary care and I agreed to foster the cat until we could find a home for her.

I set the cat up in the guest bathroom, and over the

next two days she was treated by Dr. Brenda Forsythe at the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital.

As fortune would have it, my niece, Trish, and her 12-year-old daughter, Angie, were visiting from Garden Grove on the day I brought the cat home from the vet. Angie took one look at the homeless kitty and said, "Shadow! Her name is Shadow!" Shadow had found her new family.

She is now regaining her health and happily adjusting to her new home with Trish, Angie, Shaggy the dog, Tweetie the bird and a hamster. Trish reports that Shadow sleeps cuddled up around her neck under the covers. That's quite an improvement for a cat that, just two weeks earlier, was sleeping under bushes out in the cold.

It's a testament to Shadow's sweet and trusting nature that she persisted in asking humans for assistance. So many pets in her situation become fearful, wild and totally unapproachable. I'm glad I paid attention to her pleas.

I am so grateful that *Catalyst for Cats* was there to help make this possible and to live up to Shadow's faith in human kindness. Thank you!



Shadow with Trish and Angie

Appreciation and gratitude flow both directions

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the females to avoid multiple pregnancies. And I am sure the males also benefit by this service. —**Miles & Charlyne Dennis**

Dear Randi, Please accept this donation with my thanks for Beth Rushing's assistance to me in trapping two feral unneutered cats at a cat colony on W. Micheltorena St. I volunteer with Charles Romanus's Santa Barbara Animal Rescue organization and feed feral cat colonies around Santa Barbara.

There were two boys out of ten kitties, who still weren't neutered and with kitten season upon us, I

wanted to make sure these two boys weren't adding to the population.

Beth and her husband came out with me 2–3 times and assisted me with trapping these two boys and then taking them to the Humane Society, getting them neutered and then returning them to the location. Without her assistance and the vouchers to get them neutered, they might still be running around mating and creating unwanted kittens.

Thanks for all you do and I hope this kitten season isn't too stressful for you!—**Lisa Mathiasen** (formerly of ASAP)

We Get Letters

Our Outreach Education Coordinator and over-worked foster and adoption advocate Marci Kladnik frequently receives grateful correspondence and photographs from the lucky people who have opened their homes and hearts to our cats: Marci,

These kittens are the funniest little bundles of love I have ever encountered! They run, they jump, they spill, they lick, they run some more...it is hysterical! They



Lexi and Murphy

nibbles on her ear, too, just to show her he can!

are also very much inseparable! Thank you, thank you, thank you! Did I mention we love them SOOO much?

Big bro Murphy is always looking out for his little sister while she naps and he occasionally

—Patty Murphy

Marci,

I just want to thank you again for the wonderful addition to our family. You are right, [The new kitten] is fearless! Unlike Zoey, he found the safe haven of our bathroom too confining within the first two hours and has now fully explored the bedroom.

What I most want to tell you is that this has been one of the most amazing “cat introductions” I have ever experienced. I was going to keep them separated for as long as it took for them to get comfortable with each other, but Zoey was not having anything to do with this plan. She followed the carrier into the bathroom, and was upset when I put her out. I let her sniff the carrier, and within minutes the two of them were nose to nose across the grate, with no fear/anxiety in either of them. I took the baby out, and both of them seemed very taken with each other pretty much right away. When I finally put the baby down, they got

along right away! Right now they are both playing like crazy with each other! I’m supervising, and occasionally Zoey seems to freak the kitten out temporarily, but he comes right back and asks for more play! I just adore him! At the moment, he seems like a Charlie to me, so that’s what I’m calling him for now. Thank you so much for letting him be part of my family.



Charlie and Zoey

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—Jan Schultz

6/23 update: Charlie and Zoey are still the best of friends. They absolutely adore each other! (And we adore both of them!) Charlie has been a wonderful addition to our family; he entertains us every day. He’s also getting so big now! He totally holds his own in the daily Zoey/Charlie wrestling matches, and is usually the instigator. They also like to play hide and seek in the bedroom closet (often at 10 p.m., but oh well!)

—Jan

And our Santa Ynez liaison for trapping and feeding, Belinda Burns, also gets her share of appreciative correspondence. This one came from folks in Solvang who adopted a pair of barn cats. Hi, Belinda.

I haven’t done the 100 percent official ground-squirrel census yet, but they certainly seem to be less active. I hope our little kitty cowboys have either rounded them up or driven them off.

Having pets that you never see is really pretty odd. Last night Casey laughed and said, “What if we’re just feeding the neighbor’s cat?” I guess the only way we can know for sure is to get high-tech with some automatic spy camera, which I have no plans to do, by the way. Thanks again.

—Dave and Casey Bemis

Bad news leukemia test still ends happily for all

By Marci Kladnik

Towards the end of last season, dedicated fosters Monica and Lavi Gonzales took in two more kittens. The six-week-old orange tabby male had been picked up in a public place in Santa Maria, the other, a fluffy gray female about eight weeks old, had been left in a box on their doorstep.

There is nothing sadder than seeing a single lonely kitten in a cage. Kittens are meant to play and socialize with others of their own kind, so the decision was made to combine the two for companionship.

It didn't take long before they were bonded, but Monica and Lavi were planning to leave on vacation about this time, so the two kittens were transferred to a friend, Mary Hoag, for continued fostering.

Shortly thereafter, when the little orange guy was ready for neutering, both kittens were taken in for

surgery and testing. We were horrified to learn that the male showed a positive result for leukemia. This meant that the female had been exposed, and now her chances for adoption were compromised.



Answering the Call: Catalyst supporter Becky Jacobsen took on extra fostering duty to see Mitzie through possible exposure to leukemia and ended up adopting her.

Dr. Forsyth at Orcutt Veterinary Hospital suggested that we separate the kittens, and retest them in eight weeks. She said that sometimes a young kitten will “throw” the disease and turn out fine.

Now another foster needed to be found, and Mary's friend Becky Jacobsen stepped in, taking the gray kitten home.

Fostering kittens for the usual four to six weeks is easily managed. Add another eight weeks on top of that, and it can become a burden.

Luckily both Mary and Becky rose to the challenge, and in the end succumbed to the charms of their charges and adopted them.

Thank you so very much, for being there when two small beings needed you most.

Twenty years working together to improve cats' lives

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go crazy, so I left that to the Great Good Spirit, and miraculously it worked out.

In 1991, *Catalyst for Cats* became a non-profit, and our fundraising began. Fortunately, we found several cooperating veterinarians in the community, (ABC, Adobe, Dr. Prentice of Fairview, and St. Francis Pet Hospital) all willing to give us a discount and support our work. As we expanded our services to Carpinteria, both the Animal Medical and Carpinteria clinics joined our efforts.

For many years, I used to think about how to stop cats from having litter upon unwanted litter, but couldn't figure out how to determine which had been “fixed” and which had not. After “tipping” of the ear became the universal sign, it was easy. To this day it thrills us to see a tipped ear on an unknown cat.

At the time, I had no idea of the enormity of the stray/feral cat situation. The experience of the past twenty years has been an education as well as a rude awakening. I thought the overpopulation problem could be solved in a few years. Twenty years later the struggle continues, as everyone in this field knows.

Thank you to everyone: the volunteers, our financial supporters, all the rescue agencies and those who work for a common goal. We have come a long way; we are not there yet—the recession has proved that—but we will keep on trekking.

If you are fortunate to still be able to give to a “cause,” we hope *Catalyst for Cats* is on your list. It takes so little to change the life of a cat for the better.

Randi Fairbrother

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:

Belinda Burns for relocating cats from Santa Maria – by Larry and Donna Dimock

Randi Fairbrother – by Rene de Jong

Randi Fairbrother – In honor of her special birthday. We have known each other since we were three years old. New Friends are like silver, old friends are like Gold. Randi is Pure Gold – by Ethel Barclay.

Randi Fairbrother – by Bill Long

Russell Fairbrother – by John Weber

Inky and Winky – by Karen Herringa

Lucky – by Patricia Johnston

Mystical, who was helped by *Catalyst* – by Karen R. Segroves

Princess and Bosco – by Charlene Dennis

Shadow and her new family – **Trish and Angie**

Schroeder – by Judy Kelley

Five grateful cats – by Audrey Farmer

In Remembrance of:

Baseo – by Harlow Connors

Baxter, our short time visitor – by Barbara Evans

DoDo – Marci Kladnik's beloved kitty – by Randi T. Fairbrother

Pat Duesler – by Bonnie Wilson

Nicole Carter Forsythe – she passed away just five weeks after John Forsythe (of Dallas fame) – by Randi T. Fairbrother

Gray Gray and Patty (cat) – by Karen R. Segroves

Isabel Beck and Mink – by Donna Donnelly

Linsey, Al and Sophie – by Richard Salotti

Nick Parisi – by Dan and Maria Carmean

Sarah Cat, never to be forgotten – by Joann Gerfen

Sheila Pratt – by Ernest Pratt

Stripper, from a colony in Isla Vista, faithfully fed by Moby – by Randi T. Fairbrother

What was her story? Monica and Lavi Gonzales came across a black and white cat lying in the middle of the street in Santa Maria. They picked her up and brought her home.

She was very thin and you could tell she was an old lady. She loved to snuggle in a comforter she found in the room she shared with a caged feral mom and her litter. She gave a funny purr when petted and looked up at you as if to ask for more. Her white nose had no evidence of cancer so it was a good guess she was mostly an indoor cat.

Was this cat abandoned? We will never know her story. The good thing is she was well fed, warm, comfortable and loved for the few months she lived before crossing over the Rainbow Bridge.

A PRAYER FOR A FERAL

Do not be afraid dearest little ones. Today I am returning you to the place you call home. It is not what I would have chosen for you, but for now, it is all I can offer. You are dear to my heart and special in my life. I embrace your spirit as I lovingly care for you in the years ahead. Be safe and hearty and know that you are loved.

—From *Feral Cat Caretakers*

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.



Mother and Son: This young mom and her three remaining kittens were rescued from a carport in Santa Maria. North County has become the center of greatest need for our trapping and rescue efforts--and the source of some very handsome cats and kittens up for adoption.

Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

Hollywood Ordinance on Sale of Dogs and Cats

In February the West Hollywood City Council voted unanimously to ban the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores (except for shelter animals) This law guarantees that dogs and cats from cruel puppy/kitten mills will no longer be sold in that city.

The audience was packed with supporters, and several speakers and Council members noted the historic nature of the evening. Let's hope other communities will take note and consider following the lead of West Hollywood.

Good Mews for Catalyst's Star Cat Writer

Marci Kladnik, *Catalyst for Cats* board member extraordinaire, has been accepted into the international Cat Writers' Association. CWA is an



Marci Kladnik

organization of professionals writing, publishing, and broadcasting about cats. Members include writers, editors, publishers, artists, public relations specialists, broadcasters and others.

Marci's membership of Professional Status is a step up from the Associate level for which she initially applied. Nancy Peterson, Cat Program Manager with Companion

Animals of the Humane Society of the United States in Washington, D.C., was Marci's sponsor into the writing group.

Known in the Santa Barbara County area for her regular cat related column in the Santa Ynez Valley News and Santa Maria Times, Marci also spends countless hours each week furthering the *Catalyst for Cats* mission of addressing the feline overpopulation problem.

She has recently appeared as a guest on two animal talk shows featuring feral cats—one an Animal Magnet web podcast (5/4/10) and the other an edition of Animal Party on Pet Life Radio, originating out of Vancouver, BC.

Born and raised in Santa Barbara, Marci is a retired graphic designer and technical writer. She lives in Los Alamos with four cats (all rescued) and one Scottie, a "kitten whisperer." She has two grown daughters.

Cars 4 Cats

Catalyst for Cats wants supporters to know that it is part of the Cars 4 Causes charity car donation program, which is the #1 choice for donating vehicles. You can donate cars, trucks, boats, RVs, and motorcycles, running or not, to the charity of your choice and qualify for an IRS tax deduction. If you want more information on the car donations process, visit the Web site <http://www.cars4causes.net/>.

Feral, Fostered and Befriended

We are happy to report that the feral mom and her five kittens featured in our spring newsletter as a sort of case study in fostering practices ("Tricks of the Trade") have all been successfully adopted—the mother into a barn situation and her kids have all found loving homes.



At Your Disposal: Butler was part of the family featured in the last newsletter article "Tricks of the Trade." Momma has been relocated to a wonderful barn and all five kittens were adopted.



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

Wish List

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

- Trappers, transporters and feeders for Santa Maria/ Guadalupe areas
- Safe relocation sites for mousers. They will earn their keep.
- More people who understand the importance of spaying and neutering.
- Cat food for our many, many colonies we subsidize. We spend thousands of dollars helping to feed these colonies. For dry food we prefer meat flavors of Purina or Friskies rather than fish flavors.
- More fosters for our rescued kittens.
- A dedicated volunteer to help organize feeding stations, trapping, etc. in the North County—a “project manager” of sorts. If interested, please call 685-1563.

