



# 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 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

## We're making headway for cats and the community

While sorting and discarding old papers earlier this year, I came across some statistics from past years. Happily, I found the numbers encouraging. They show that as we concentrated our efforts in the Santa Ynez Valley and North County we have made significant headway and a noticeable difference in the feral cat situation countywide. Sometimes one can't see the forest for the trees, so this is very encouraging to reflect on.

Since the start of 2000, we have averaged 495 spay/neuters per year. Our record is 714 in 2008. The result is thousands of healthier, more contented cats, and an untold number of street kittens who weren't born in Santa Barbara County. In addition to the benefits for our furry felines, this work has produced a significant contribution to the community as a whole.

As I drive through the streets of Santa Barbara I can point out area after area where feral cats once bred. Now I can actually do the same in sections of the North County, which I view as definite progress.

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, reports of new kittens surfaced early this year. We put our first litter up for adoption the first week of May at the San Roque Pet Hospital in Santa Barbara. Their story can be read on page 5. At least four more litters will be ready for adoption by the end of May. So far this year

we've encountered smaller litters (four per litter), probably because of the drought, making things easier all around for the moms, our fosters, adopters, and on the pocketbook.

These kittens, all nursed by their moms, were fortunate. Even though feral and caged, the mothers took good care of them, bathing, nursing, snuggling and comforting them. There is something very satisfying and beautiful in seeing a mom nursing her kittens. Each mom will be returned to her caregiver, vaccinated, flea treated, wormed, ear-tipped and spayed and will never struggle with kittens ever again. And these kittens were all saved from a precarious life of environmental dangers,

*Continued on page 3*



# In Appreciation

**O**ur volunteers are the backbone of our organization. They are absolutely essential to our work and we applaud and thank them for the hours and time spent away from their families and personal sacrifice dedicated to *Catalyst for Cats*. It is indeed a labor of love.

In order to appreciate the challenges of trapping one needs to do it. Not everyone is cut out for it. It's amazing what a good trapper can accomplish. As a feral cat organization trappers are essential. A special word of appreciation to **Debbie Merry**, and **Monica** and **Lavi Gonzales**, our major trappers in Santa Maria.

During kitten season we depend on our volunteer fosters. Our trappers more often than not also foster their little charges. Our steadfast fosters are **Monica Gonzales**, the **Hawkins family**, **Marci Kladnik**, **Debbie Merry**, and **Melinda Siebold**.

Thank you very much to **RESQCATS** for providing the funds to spay 36 females and neuter 27 males in the months of January through March when so many females go into heat and become pregnant. RESQCATS's dedication to spay and neuter has helped prevent the birth of hundreds of unwanted kittens.

We owe special thanks to **Marci Kladnik** for keep-

ing track of the Los Alamos feral cat situation and for her popular bi-monthly column published in the Lompoc, Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley newspapers.

To the many who may play a smaller roll in our rescue work, know that you are appreciated.

Thank you to **Sally Oullet** for stepping in and trouble-shooting an area where cats were bothersome to neighbors.

Our thanks to the **dozens of our feeders**, who feed colonies not only on their property but who faithfully leave home to be sure the waiting felines get their daily meal. Both parties look forward to the ritual. Their commitment is admirable and we extend our appreciation to them.

## A Friend Retires

**Darcie Barnes, DVM** has retired. Her quiet and persistent efforts assisted us throughout the years as she worked for the Santa Barbara Humane Society, the Santa Maria Shelter and the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society. We very much appreciate her kindness and concern for our ferals. We are losing a good friend. Thank you, Darcie, for caring and for a job well done. We extend our most sincere wishes for a happy and healthy retirement. We will miss you.

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# Tributes & Memorials

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

## In Honor of:

**All the cats that find me and their "forever home"** – by Leslie Metzger

**Baby Doll**, my dearest companion – by Bonnie Wilson  
**Bradley**, a 10-year-old RESQCAT, has attacked everything in the house – by Keith Kinealy  
**Kayann Dotty, Sally** and **Randi**, four Norwegian-American cousins – by Ethel Barclay

**Kayann** and **Jurek**, for **Sparkle**, the fourth "dog" – by Ann Titus. Sparkle, adopted as a kitten from the streets of Santa Maria last year, lives with three dogs and rules the pack.

My beloved **Paula** and **Freddy** – by Irene Kasper  
**My mother**, she taught us to love animals – by Barb Simpson

**Victoria A. Shepard** – by Gloria Shepard  
**In Memory of**

**Jack Moir** – by Carol Moir

**Paula Hathaway**, who took good care of a colony of ferals in Goleta for many years; now only one remains to be cared for by her brother – by Randi Fairbrother  
**Mekmek**, 1999 – 8/27/2013 – by Karen J. Littlejohn

**Morris #2** – by Mickey and June Wilson

**Nutmeg** and **Princess** – by Rita Fleming

**Robert J. Burns** – by Sandra Johnson

**Robert J. Burns** – by Mary and Donald Dascomb

**Sam** – by Lois Waldref

**Sam** and **Snow** – by Richard Salotti and family

**Spookie** – by Naomi Greene

**Spud** – by Leslie Metzger

**Tonto** – by Martha San Augustin. Thank you for your help

**Venus** – by Leina Xavier



# This is why we call it "kitten season"



***All In The Family:** While Debbie Merry was in the process of trapping at an address in Santa Maria in early April, this mom delivered her litter (left and above). The remaining colony is now stabilized. Catalyst's Marci Kladnik reports, "The feral mom is taming up!" but if she proves unadoptable she will be TNR'd. The kittens are being fostered by Tina Hawkins and family.*

*photos by Marci Kladnik*



*photo by Marci Kladnik*

**Absolute Newborn:** Weighing in at only 3 ounces, this calico female was birthed by her feral mom on a piece of patio furniture and then abandoned. She and a brown tabby brother quickly found their way to Catalyst rescuers and have a shot at survival.

## Founder's Letter continued.

### **We can see the improvements**

*From page 1*

disease and the struggle to survive. It's a good thing.

The poster featured on the front page of this season's newsletter speaks volumes about how difficult and yet simple our mission is. Your support enabled us to achieve the stats mentioned above. I view it as a good beginning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, although the battle is far from won. Yes, you can help 100 cats just by spaying one female. Keeping in mind how far your donated dollars go, I hope you will help us continue our fight against feline overpopulation. It is indeed, prevention at its best.

My best wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer.

*Randi Fairbrother*



# Amelia and Freeway are still bonded and thriving

By Marci Kladnik

Some of you may remember these two special kittens from our summer 2011 *Newsletter* story, “The Purrfect Match.” I had the pleasure and honor to be their foster, find their purrfect forever home, and visit them now and then to watch their progress.

To recap, Amelia had been born blind from a massive herpes eye infection on the streets of Santa Maria. She underwent double eye-removal at the tender age of 10 weeks, recovering in my home under the tender attentions of my Scottish terrier, Maggie, and his formerly feral sidekick, Barney. During her convalescence I fell completely in love and decided to adopt her myself.

However, a few weeks later the other four-legged feline residents in the house told me that Amelia had to go or they would never stop peeing on everything. I sequestered the now four-month-old kitten upstairs, but she was not happy and seemed very lonely.

About that time another black kitten found its way into my care. Little Freeway was only about eight-weeks-old and also very lonely. After his testing and neutering, I introduced him to Amelia. It was only a couple of days before she let him comfort nurse on her

bed and walked right up to me for a good sniff! She didn’t hang around, but I was thrilled that she still remembered me.

Amelia and Freeway are now allowed to play outside in the sunshine—under strict supervision, of course. She runs with abandon and total fearlessness until Dina calls her to come in. Although Freeway is sighted and now larger than his “mom,” he also stays in the backyard and within sight.

I didn’t get to see their backyard time, but I did see

Amelia making herself at home on the top shelf of an open cabinet. I watched as she swung down to the floor in the same manner I remembered from her kittenhood when she’d exit the 6-foot cat tree in my living room.

Watching Amelia stride fearlessly through life confirms again that we made the right decision to give her a chance—thanks to our Tiny Tim Fund, which paid for her surgeries.

If you’d like to read their original story, you can find it on our

website under the Newsletters in the sidebar. Choose the Summer 2011 issue and go to pages 4 and 5.

## LaVern: Another Catalyst Alum



photo by Sandra Chisteson

Many years ago a ranch cat named LaVern was removed from a neglectful home in the Valley. Sandra Chisteson, who had helped us often in the past with fostering and adopting, ended up adopting LaVern. Now at the ripe old age of 19 she still looks contented and youthful. She is one fortunate kitty!



photo by Marci Kladnik

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and I knew they were bonded for life.

Soon thereafter, Dina Joseph and Steve Harper stepped up to adopt the pair together. A better fit could not have been found, and I love the fact that I get updates and invitations to visit.

One such visit was just a few weeks ago. Dina cautioned me that Amelia was even more shy about strangers now since she’s grown up. Imagine our surprise when, moments after I had settled on the floor and called her name, Amelia came out from under the

# Trapping “Grandma” required new tricks of the trade

Spayed mom returns home unbowed, but leaves adoptable kittens

By Randi Fairbrother

**I**t's been quite a while since we've had to come up with new tricks of the trade to catch a trap-shy cat. But for over two years this black short-hair cat in Guadalupe eluded our efforts. We named her Grandma since she'd had so many litters in those two-plus years.

Last year we renewed our efforts and succeeded in TNR-ing nine of her previous offspring, leaving only her intact.

Peter, the caregiver, had parked an old truck in his driveway with a cover over it. The cover had a couple of holes in it, and the cats went back and forth into the bed of the truck through those holes. A sliding window opened from the bed of the truck into the driver and passenger section, allowing the cats an additional place to go. They had free access into either section, which provided a dry and warm place for them.

This spring Peter called to say Grandma was pregnant again. We repeated all of our tricks, but still she didn't go for any of them. If the only food source was in the traps, she'd return from the fields with a gopher in her mouth. She wouldn't go near the Drop Trap. We even tried our “Big Gun”—a trap made decades ago by Jim Smock of the Ten Lives Foundation, a pioneer of local cat rescue (*see Updates, page 7*). It's a relic now, but still used very effectively.

In the first week of March she chased all the other cats out of the truck and dropped her litter on the floor below the passenger seat of the truck. Soon after, I went to Guadalupe hoping I could come up with something. Peter uncovered the truck cover just enough for me to see mom on the floor of the truck with her kittens, as she glared at me. I hesitated to use the kittens as bait because it had not worked previously, and I didn't want her to move the kittens if again we didn't succeed.

Then the idea came to me. Peter assured me the open back window of the truck was the only way in or out of this space, so I asked him if he could make a platform or secure a trap so that the front opening of the trap could fit into the window opening into the front of the truck. He said he could do that.



**Facebook Ready:** Kitten season started this year with the last litter of a longstanding trap-wary mom in Guadalupe, dropped on the cab floor of an out-of-service truck. It's a long saga that had a happy ending on St. Patrick's Day. Read all about it [here!](#)

We knew we only had one chance to get it right. We set the day to try the plan. It was St. Patrick's Day and I was trapping in Santa Maria. I could hardly believe it when Peter called and told me Grandma was safely trapped, and her three kittens placed in a transfer cage. I asked them to take all of them to the Orcutt Vet Clinic, and I'd stop by with the voucher and instructions. The three kittens, all black and white were plump as can be.

Debbie Merry fostered them and Grandma did a good job of nursing them, even though caged. She is now back home spayed, tested, vaccinated, wormed and flea treated and ear tipped.

Peter said that when all the cats gathered at feeding time they greeted her one-by-one upon her return. Her kittens are up for adoption at the San Roque Pet Hospital in Santa Barbara.



## Finding Diamonds in the Rough



**The Comforts of Home:** These four Siamese wannabes (above) were born in a nest of feathers over a hole in the dirt under a truck in Santa Maria. Catalyst trappers Monica and Lavi Gonzales say they have never seen quite such a set-up like this before, but nonetheless recognized classy kittens in spite of their humble origins.

The nest building mama cat (above right) was safely trapped, given a clean bill of health, and has been released back to her familiar surroundings.

*photos by Monica Gonzales*

### A Cat's Last Wishes

**B**efore humans die, they write their Last Will and Testament, giving their homes and all they have to those they leave behind. If I could, with my paws, do the same, this is what I'd ask:

*To a poor and lonely stray I give my happy home, my bowl and cozy bed, soft pillows, all my toys. and the lap which I loved so much. Also the hand that stroked my fur and the sweet voice that spoke my name.*

*I will to the sad, scared shelter cat, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there was no bounds.*

*When I die, please don't say, "I will never have a pet again, for the loss and pain is more than I can bear."*

*Instead, go find an unloved cat, one whose life has held no joy or home and give my place to him.*

*This is the only thing I can give—the love I leave behind.*

—Anonymous

### Wish List

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

- 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. Past donations have been very helpful.
- We need to reach out to the Latino community more. Ideas are welcome. Our bilingual flyers are available for distribution to any individual or group interested in taking on this sorely needed project.
- If you see a stray cat, or start to feed one, it's best to call us within a week or so. We will do our best to get to you as soon as possible. TNR-ing one cat is much easier than waiting until the kittens show up.
- Fosters to socialize our feral kittens. It can be a rewarding and fun experience to turn these hissy little creatures into purring love bugs.

### Join our new Facebook community!

Go to our page, 'Like' us, then watch for adoptable kittens and event announcements. Please 'Share' the adoption posts to help these kitties find homes quickly.



# Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

## Canvassing in Santa Maria

A few Saturdays ago Suzanne Canus, Debbie Merry and Randi Fairbrother spent a couple of hours going door to door around a few blocks of the 93458 ZIP code. We chose that zip code because it's the area of the greatest number of calls for us as well as for the Santa Maria Animal Shelter.

We approached several people to explain spay/neuter assistance for dogs and cats. We were especially interested in reaching the Latino community.

Santa Barbara County Animal Groups are offering free spay/neuter services for the first 400 Chihuahuas (and Chihuahua mixes) scheduled for May.

Any dog in the 93458 ZIP code will be spayed or neutered for \$10 each.

Project Pet Safe (Countywide) will assist with low-fee spay/neuter services for companion cats or dogs.

And *Catalyst for Cats* will assist with capture and spay/neuter of feral cats without charge.

With all the opportunities available for low-cost and free services, there really is no excuse to not have your animal fixed. Please help us get the word out. If

anyone is interested in passing out flyers, please call us at 805-685-1563.

## Ten Lives Foundation

Jim and Berka Smock started the Ten Lives Foundation and were one of the very first to rescue felines in Santa Barbara. All of us "old timers" knew them. They have both passed now, but their Ten Lives Foundation for elderly and special needs cats is still in existence, and they welcome donations. Please send yours to 615 Bradley St, Santa Barbara, 93101, or call 805-962-3987.

## Fence Us In

There are many fence options available to keep entirely—or occasionally—outdoor cats within a contained area. Just search Google and decide which system or product best suits your needs.

## Think What Global Warming Means to Cats!

Cat owners, cat sitters, and anyone adopted or appointed by cats to take care of them should make an effort to provide fresh drinking water for them during these hot summer days. This is especially true for ferals and strays who have to fend for themselves.

## Lovable and Adoptable! Call Us at 685-1563



*photos by Cameron Siebold*

*These kittens were rescued from adjoining areas where cats have been breeding for many years in Santa Maria. Although fed by well-meaning people, no one took responsibility for them regarding spay and neuter. Catalyst stepped in this year, hoping to stop the continual parade of kittens being born.*

*Fortunately, hunger is not a problem; it's the breeding that*

*needs to be stopped. So far we've fixed about 12 and the trapping is presently "on going." These darling kittens—two males and a female—have been fostered by Catalyst's Melinda Siebold and are ready for adoption now. Remember, even if your favorite has already been selected, there are many more, just as precious, to choose from.*



*Catalyst for Cats, Inc.*  
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**Every litter adds to the problem  
Every spay/neuter adds to the solution!**

If your address label includes an asterisk (\*) it is a reminder that your membership is due for renewal. Please accept our apology for any mistakes. Also, we do not share our mailing list with others.

## 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)

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.



## Cats come with claws!

**N**ever 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.