



# Catalyst for Cats

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

## NEWSLETTER

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Volume 25, Number 3

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

Winter 2016

### From the Founder

## Tiny Tim fund fills medical care gap

**T**his issue focuses on some of the many felines who have benefited from the Tiny Tim Fund this past year. It is a small percentage of all those we helped, but we are grateful to be able to assist these cats.

Not only do we maintain our colonies, but we also provide services to the public-at-large, who may be unable to bear the medical costs for their feline pets. Also, if a medical problem arises for a cat prior to neutering, we must use a full-service vet clinic because neither the shelters nor the humane societies are set up to deal with medical issues except on a very limited basis. Once cats are treated we neuter them as well and provide vaccines, testing, flea prescriptions and worming.

We continue to be a referral service for a variety of calls, many from out of town. I find it very distressing when a community does not have a TNR program nor the capacity to spay and neuter pets when the need is so great and people are desperate for it. Unfortunately, there are many such within the state and the country. We are very fortunate

that Santa Barbara County has programs set up for neutering pets, both tame and feral.

Our former TNR volunteers still use our equipment and their expertise to trap and deliver felines for spay and neuter to the humane societies or the county shelter for which we are most grateful. The greatest need remains primarily in North County.

Considering we TNR'd 400 to 600 felines annually for many years, the number we feed and maintain is a tiny fraction of the hundreds of colonies we stabilized over the years. Without the hormonal urges that make their lives so difficult or the stress of caring for kittens, their lives improve dramatically. All cats must be "Fixed and Fed!" We hope for your donations, which allow us to insure their welfare.

At year's end I extend my appreciation for your support of our work and wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays,

with health and happiness for the New Year.

*Randi Fairbrother*



*Photo by Debbie Merry*

**Tiny Tim beneficiary:** *This charming, but wild buff tabby came into the care of Catalyst's Debbie Merry last July at about six weeks old with an eye injury that required removal. That surgery and neutering were done at the same time. He has tamed quickly, acquired the name Sampson, and been adopted into a loving home.*

# In Appreciation

- 🐾 **Debbie Merry** – for her dedication in the North County to help felines.
- 🐾 To **Renee Giles** – for the excellent graph on page 5.
- 🐾 **Richard Wilson** – for taking over five feeding stations in Santa Maria Monday through Friday.
- 🐾 To **those who give monthly donations** – they are very much appreciated.
- 🐾 To the **donor** who FedEx'd a large quantity of food for our feeding stations.
- 🐾 To **those who lovingly care** for their colonies.
- 🐾 The **staff at the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital** for their kindness in caring for injured and sick cats.

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**“You can accomplish anything in life, provided that you do not mind who gets the credit.”**  
—Pres. Harry S. Truman

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🐾 Once again the **three shelters** and the **three humane societies** within the county participated in the annual **Beat the Heat Program**. This program provides free spay/neuter for owned cats. 148 cats were neutered in September of this year. This is a most worthwhile program and we extend our appreciation to all who participated.

## 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:

**Beth Rushing** and **Debbie Merry** – by Sharon Kantanen

**Randi Fairbrother** on her September birthday – by Ethel Barclay

**Randi Fairbrother**, my cousin – by Sally Troscher  
**Our Norwegian Heritage** (Dotty, Randi, Sally and me) – by Ethel Barclay

**Tigger**, my old man – by Allison Coleman

### Memory of:

**Lefty**, a great cat – by Lynn Nichols

**Sandra D. Pray** – by Norma Caloudes



*Photo by Debbie Merry*

***Feeling Better Now:** This pure bred Persian named Ermie was left at a volunteer's doorstep. He was badly matted, with snotty nose, very goopy eyes, undernourished, and just plain not feeling well. After a little TLC and a regimen of antibiotics, he was much improved and handed over to a sister organization, where he was adopted by one of their volunteers.*

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## A note of appreciation from a dedicated Santa Maria feeder

**I**am still feeding eight feral cats at the apartment complex. This is a big improvement from when I first started feeding. I am also feeding 11 cats in Tanglewood and seven at my grandmother's house every evening. All these cats have been "fixed" and are doing well. Every time I see a new one I feed it so it sticks around and TNR it asap. It makes me happy to see the populations decreasing and how much has changed for the better in these areas. I'm beginning to have fewer cat food receipts. Thanks so much for helping me with the cat food; it means a lot to me and the kitties. They all told me to thank you for all you've done for them because without you they would probably all be gone and many more would have taken their places.

—Melissa Muñoz

# Tiny Tim's Friends

Photos by Debbie Merry

## Checking in with cats that needed more than just spay/neuter

By Debbie Merry

As we come to the end of 2016 I would like to take the time to say thank you to the many organizations and people that have helped and made it possible to help so many stray, feral, homeless, sick and injured kitties. Without your help it wouldn't have been possible.

So often we write stories and share pictures of the beautiful kittens and the awesome cats that get adopted, but this time I wanted to showcase a few of the cats and kittens that I have come across just in the past few months that needed our help desperately.

As most everyone is aware of by now, *Catalyst for Cats* is no longer heading up TNR and not adopting or taking care of kittens. We are, however, still feeding hundreds of feral and homeless cats and most definitely providing medical care for the many sick and injured cats and kittens that some of our volunteers run across or the public calls us about.

The ability to carry out this aspect of our work has for several years now been provided by what we call **The Tiny Tim Fund**. Our supporters can specifically direct their donations toward paying the medical bills of cats who need veterinary interventions beyond the usual spay/neuter, vaccinations, and de-worming. Treatment for abscesses, injuries, upper respiratory infections, parasites and more can be provided for cats that have no one else to depend on.

I hope I never have to see the day that I cannot get these poor little innocent beings the help they need even when they so desperately do not act like they need it.

In order for *Catalyst* to continue helping our feline friends we must continue to receive donations from the public.

Here are pictures and my brief commentary on just a few of the cats and kittens that *Catalyst* has treated and saved this year. Some are feral and some are not; some have been remarkably tamed while being in our care.

I wish everyone a very joyful holiday season and wish it could be the same for all our little furry friends out there.



A Catalyst volunteer called to say that her grandma had been feeding this cat and she thought he was dying. Could I help? When I arrived he was curled up in the little shed in the yard and lay there quietly. His eyes were full of mucous and hardly open. The vet said he had entropion and needed surgery. That's where the eye lashes grow inward and irritate and infect the eyes. He had to sport stitches for two and a half weeks, but he is healing up nicely and the eyes look 100 percent better.



Sampson had an eye problem (see page 1) that required removing his left eye. He, too, has healed nicely and clearly is still able to keep watch over what's going on outside. He has been adopted by someone with an eye for a handsome cat!

Continued on page 4

## *Tiny Tim's Friends* (cont. from page 3)

“I hope I never have to see the day that I cannot get these poor little innocent beings the help they need even when they so desperately do not act like they need it.”

—Catalyst's Debbie Merry

Scabies before treatment



After



*Scabies is a contagious skin disease marked by itching and small raised red spots, caused by the itch mite. This poor guy not only had scabies but also some pretty bad internal infections along with some parasites. A senior cat, now recovered, he hopefully can live out his remaining days in peace!*



*These gorgeous little red heads had an awful upper respiratory infection, but not for long. All went up for successful adoption in Santa Maria.*

# Here's what we've accomplished together

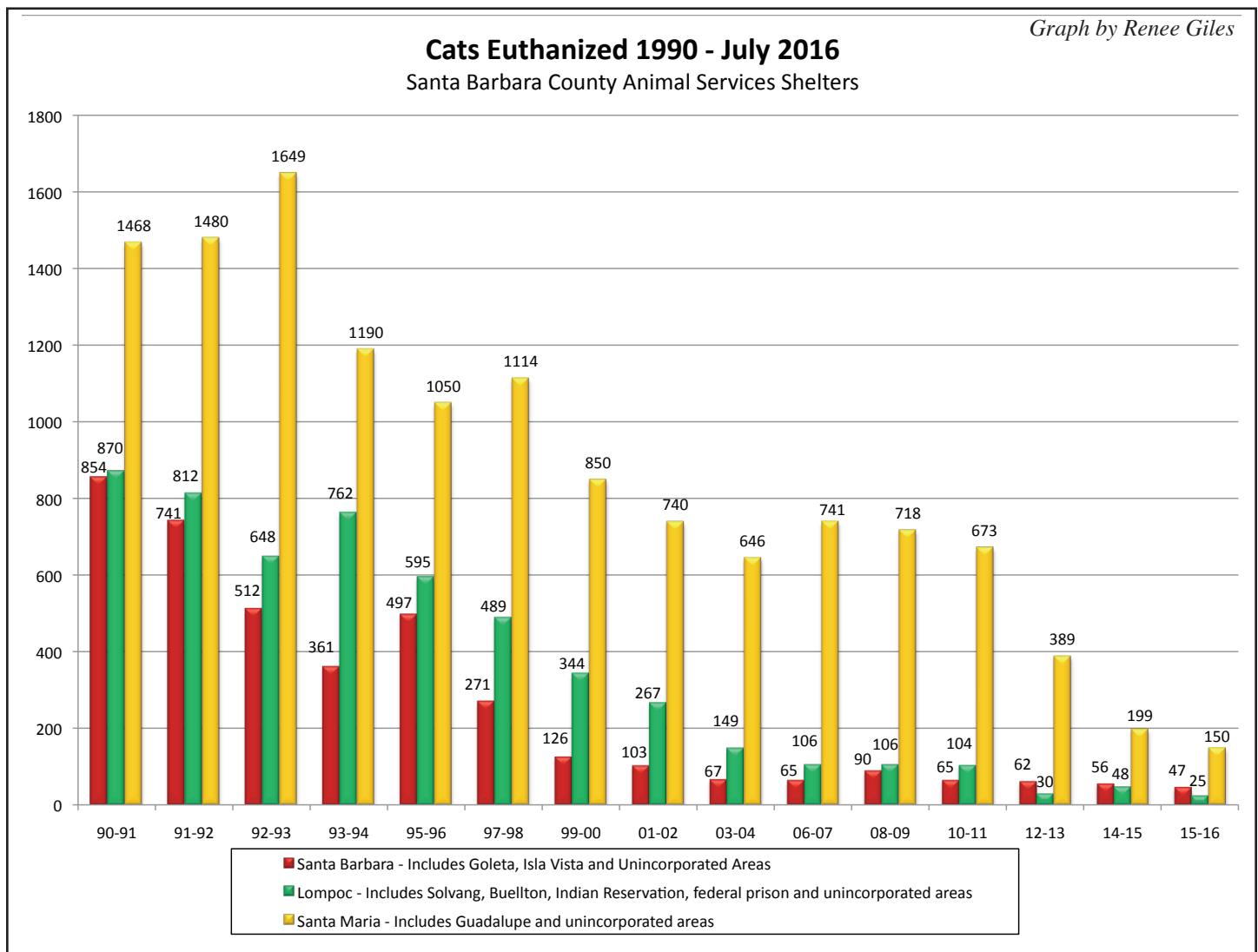
*Euthanasia numbers in SB County steadily decline over past 25 years*

The graph below charts statistics for the number of cats that were killed by County Animal Services from 1990 through the 2015-16 fiscal year (June 30 to July 1). Not every year is included for lack of space, but it gives you an idea of the dramatic progress made and the lives spared.

The movement to save and improve feline lives locally began in Santa Barbara with PAWS (now ASAP) and *Catalyst for Cats* in 1990. Gradually we worked our way to the Santa Ynez Valley and then North County. As you can see, South County (shown in red) has always been more favorable territory for homeless or unwanted cats, but the improvement has been amazing, if not proportionate, in all parts of the county.

Over the years new programs and groups have formed and established themselves with the goal of saving and improving feline lives. With a great deal of hard work from individuals we've all sustained a vast improvement within our community over the years. Every one of the groups, their donors and their volunteers constantly strive towards combating feline overpopulation countywide.

*Catalyst for Cats* itself spayed and neutered 230 cats from July 1 to December 31, 2015, the first six months of the fiscal year before when we ended our TNR program due to lack of volunteers. This contributed to many more contented cats and significantly fewer kittens this past spring.



# A Community of Cats in Old San Juan

*Catalyst stalwart sees TNR success during a Caribbean vacation*

*Since there are feral cats in every country, one of the drawbacks of traveling is coming across intact feral cats and kittens. When Debbie Merry took a cruise to the Bahamas with her family a few months ago we discussed the possibility of seeing these cats and the distress it might cause. My last words to her upon departure were, “I hope you don’t see any feral cats.”*

*When she returned, though, she told me an amazing story of the cats in San Juan. She said they are lying around napping and looked healthy as well as fat—just like our stabilized colonies. Here is her report on the San Juan cats. —Randi*

*By Debbie Merry*

San Juan is an old walled city in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a United States Territory, and San Juan belongs to the National Parks System.

In 2004 the city was overrun with hundreds of feral cats. It is said that some of them are descendants of cats dating back to the Spanish ships that first came to the islands centuries ago. The problem was a real one. Under pressure from tourism, they decided to exterminate the cats by any means possible.

As often happens in so many rescue stories, a brave group of women took matters into their own hands. In an effort to save the cats, they asked the powers that be to give them six months to spay and neuter the feral colonies—and thus “Save a Gato” was born.

After a successful trap-neuter-return campaign, more than 95% of the cats were vaccinated, spayed, neutered and ear tipped. But the group didn’t stop there. Ten feeding stations were set up around the city, and the group started a much

needed adoption program with the help of local shops and specific shelters in the U.S. Using the power of social media, the rescue team now has a steady stream of volunteers who help feed, clean and oversee the cats. With some help from the government, they acquired the Casita (little house) where they take care of kittens and sick cats.

The healthy cats now roam in fairly specific areas. The feral ones stayed where they have always lived, at the Paseo (boardwalk), under rocks and close to the water, perfect for those no-filter-needed Instagram shots. The Casita is also home to the friendlier felines. Most of them had their chance at adoption sites, but couldn’t find an appropriate home. So, instead of keeping them in cages they returned them to their site to chill in the awesome ocean-view area, and charm the humans that come by. It is a very touristy area and the cats take full advantage of it. Many even get adopted by loving tourists. Of course

they have a job to do—keeping the rodent population down—and they are very good at it.

“So who pays for this?” you may ask. Good old donations from anyone who wants to help and acknowledge the wonderful work the organization has done and continues to do. Out of those 400 cats back when Save a Gato started, the colonies now number about 250. The system is working and the humans are finally accepting them.

The inhabitants of Old San Juan now see the cats as part of the neighborhood and they have earned the people’s respect. Like so many around the world, the volunteers for “Save a Gato” do an amazing job educating about TNR and being a responsible cat guardian.



*Photo by Save a Gato*

*Faced with serious feline overpopulation a dozen years ago, the cat-friendly residents of Old San Juan instituted a successful TNR campaign. Now stabilized, the remaining ferals are treated humanely and valued as part of the tourist economy.*

# Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

## Calming Products to Ease Aggression and Stress

By Marci Kladnik

Since joining the Cat Writers' Association six years ago, my cats and I have been treated to bags of kitty swag at conferences, and I'm sometimes asked to review products from the pet industry. These are the best feline calming products I have tried. Used appropriately, they will make those stressful trips to the vet and aggression between fur siblings a thing of the past. They are essential if one is planning on a move, be it across town or across the country.

I have tested products from two companies, Ceva (Feliway line) and Sergeant's (Sentry line), and all are effective. Both product lines contain ingredients that mimic feline "happy" pheromones. They come in several forms: wipes, collars, a spray for carriers/cages, and a plug-in diffuser for rooms. Choose the one that corresponds to your specific need.

Plug-in diffusers are excellent for use in the rooms frequented by your cats and also wonderful for a foster kitten nursery to make it welcoming. Always use these when introducing a new cat into the household as it calms everyone down.

The sprays and wipes are perfect for pre-treating a carrier or cage a few minutes prior to putting a cat into it. Wipes can be taken on airplanes and so are great for traveling to refresh carriers en route. Feliway has just introduced a large pump spray bottle for use in shelters and veterinary offices to treat staff clothing to make them less threatening to cats. Great for use with unsocialized foster kittens.

I gave a sample of the spray to a neighbor who was moving halfway across the country. She treated the cat carrier, refreshing it along the way, and the cat made the trip easily.

In 2011 I received samples of the Sentry Calming Collar. At the time my only female cat in a house with four males was making a run for the alpha position after the eldest male passed away. She began to lie in ambush near the litterboxes and cat door that led to the patio. As soon as the collar arrived I put it on her and immediately her aggression stopped.

For the first three days she lay around totally relaxed, almost in a drugged state, but gradually began acting normal but without any aggression towards her

"brothers." She no longer needs the collar, but I keep one on hand for when she falls off the wagon.

A collar was also used during an all-day magazine photo shoot that included Barney (my cat) and Maggie (my dog). Barney was so calm he just lay on the table next to Maggie and I was able to reposition him as needed for the photographer.

My only caution about these products is for the collars. They MUST be fitted correctly to avoid a cat catching his lower jaw in it in her attempts to remove it. Although labeled as "breakaway" there are reports that they don't always. If your cat will not tolerate a collar, use diffusers or sprays instead.

## Election Victories for Animals

There are many things one can say about the recent election, but one thing is quite clear: when it came to state ballot measures, animals did very well.

In Massachusetts, in what was the widest margin of victory for any animal protection ballot measure in American history, 78 percent of voters supported Question 3, prohibiting the sale of eggs, veal, and pork not from cage-free sources.

In Oregon, voters overwhelmingly passed Measure 100 to restrict the trade in endangered wildlife parts, while in Oklahoma voters admirably rejected State Question 777, which would've prevented any regulation of agribusiness. And finally, California voters approved Prop 67 to ban single-use plastic bags, a major threat to wild animals. These are all stellar results for animals.

## Our Standard Practices

Remember, *Catalyst for Cats* does not share its mailing list with anyone or group. And receipts for donations throughout the year are sent out in January. Call Randi (685-1563) with any questions.

## Wish List

- **Volunteer Feeders:** We welcome feeders and substitute feeders for our colonies in Santa Maria (call 685-1563) and in the Santa Ynez Valley (call Belinda at 688-6359). Feeding times can be as little as 5 - 20 minutes, depending on number of cats
- **Donations of Cat Food:** Wet or dry. Meat flavors are preferred.
- **Trappers:** For North County, call 685-1563



*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!**



**Can you help feed us in  
 the Santa Ynez Valley?**

**Volunteers needed to help feed  
 established cat colonies.**

**All food provided by Catalyst for Cats**

Feeding time can be as little as 5 min. to half an  
 hour, depending on location  
 & number of cats

Volunteers appreciated for sub. feeding too!!

**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.

No-hassle donating can now be done using  
**PayPal** or **credit card** using the Donation Form  
 button on our website. Catalyst is also regis-  
 tered with **Cars for Causes**,  
 also accessible through our  
 website.

