



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

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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

There's excitement in the air—and relief

We can feel the excitement. Thus far this year, with two Spay-A-Thon events behind us and with lifted spirits, we are raring to go. For the first time, I can say that things are finally coming together to implement in a significant way our program of TNR in the Santa Maria area, our last front in the campaign to overcome feline overpopulation within Santa Barbara County.

It's exciting to put a group of volunteers together. We intend to establish a winning team as we fight to improve the lives of feral cats by attacking the overpopulation problem. Our group of Santa Maria volunteers trap, transport, foster sick or injured feral cats while they recuperate, and set up feeding stations.

In addition, we now have a holding area for pre- and post-surgery, as well as a site for picking up traps and equipment as needed. Working with these dedicated volunteers is inspiring because of their enthusiasm, and at the rate we are spaying and neutering this year we are making a difference.

Last year we fixed over 550 cats, with special emphasis in the Guadalupe and Santa Maria areas.

We experienced some very difficult situations where people did not want to cooperate with us in getting cats fixed, even though their yard was run over with unsocialized cats, tame cats, nursing moms, pregnant cats, and kittens. We prevailed in most of these situations, but, unfortunately, not all.

Reports of the arrival of newborns began a couple of weeks ago. We look forward to the day when we can spend springtime enjoying the colors and bursts of flowers instead of rescuing, adopting, and trying to

talk people into fixing their cats. It has been a long and difficult journey, not without heartbreak, but with many rewards.

This spring—after 19 years—I believe we can see light at the end of the tunnel in our commitment to help feral cats within the whole of Santa Barbara County. For our part, we are dedicated to this cause. I can't express strongly enough our gratitude to those of you who have supported our work to make "every cat a wanted cat."

Best wishes for a safe and wonderful summer.

Randi Fairbrother



We've got 'em covered: Draped cages filling the holding area at the Santa Maria Shelter on Spay Day in March symbolize a breakthrough in Catalyst's efforts to solve the County's feral cat overpopulation problem.

In Appreciation

We are very grateful to those who participate in our goal of preventing feline overpopulation or in improving the lives of felines in whatever way they can. Some are mentioned, but the efforts of all are appreciated.

ASAP – for being there for us when we need them for stray and abandoned friendly cats.

Belinda Burns – for her efforts in many areas of need in the Valley, and for her trapping expertise.

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

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

Orcutt Veterinary Clinic – for accommodating us with spay/neuter appointments.

Santa Maria Humane Society and **the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society staff** – for their cooperation in spaying and neutering feral cats.

Bonnie Wilson – for helping with accumulated paper work in the office.

Welcome to the miracle team of **Kathy Brandt** and **Betty Mazzetti**. We are very appreciative of their efforts to socialize and place more difficult and shy cats for adoption and for taking over the job of relocating cats.

Kathy worked as a County Animal Control officer for many years. She is to be lauded for her heroic efforts during that time to work with cats placed in the “Wild Cat Room.” We wish them great luck in their new endeavor. They are an answer to our prayers.

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:

All the cats without love – by Denise Morrison

B.B. – by Sha Smiles

Betty Armstrong – by Ali Look

Belinda Burns, dedicated volunteer and more: a support to trappers – by Kay McWilliams

Belinda Burns – by Tom and Diane Weisenburger
Catalyst for Cats, the good work you do – by Patricia Hoffmann

Victoria Blunt, my sister – by Michelle Garbarino

Jean Edwards – by Nick Priester

Kenya, the Wonder Cat – by Brien Kopeikin

Midgette, Izzue, Magic, Olumpia, Kitty-Kitty – by Larry Mitchell

Morgan Kolyn – by Marsha E. Harris

Pat Massette by Nick Priester

Gerry Place – by Stuart and Ellen Sato

Nick and Sharon Priester – by Patricia R. Massette

Mr. Puddin, our new adopted cat – by Barbara Evans Simpson

Randi, thank you! – by Georgina Coello

Randi – by Dan and Nancy George

Riley - Tim Oliverias rescue cat – by Eilleen Carroll

Tom Snow – by Richard V. Salotti

In Remembrance of:

Yadi Bertino, a very kind lady – by Randi T. Fairbrother

Cats loved and never forgotten – by Joann F. Gerfen

Marie Foss, my mother who had empathy for all animals – by Randi T. Fairbrother

Gabby – by Sylvia Talbott

Izzy – by June Whitlock

Lucy, Winfield and The Orphan, beloved furry “Kids” – by Diane and Stefan Mazur

Rose Karat – by Catherine J. Kraus

Betty McKenna, MD – a most interesting and independent woman, who graduated from University of Minnesota Medical School in 1950 with a surgical residency at Kaiser Hospital in San Francisco. She was still seeing a few patients, mowing her own lawn and driving a new bright red Prius, shortly before her passing at age 82.

Lois Robinson, a long time supporter and a lover of animals – by Randi T. Fairbrother

Mary Lee Schneider, a fun loving, kind hearted and special friend – by Randi T. Fairbrother

Sweet Pea, Quatro – by Lynne and Bernard Borderre, Jr.

T Rex, a Carpinteria feral cat rescued, adopted and very much loved – by Janet Williams

Spay Days Pay-off

Catalyst's North County volunteers assist with two memorable events

By Randi T. Fairbrother

On Sunday, January 13, the Santa Maria Shelter held its first Spay-A-Thon of 2008. *Catalyst* trappers began to bring cats into the holding area at the shelter on Saturday, so they would be ready for surgery starting at 7 a.m.

Sunday morning I delivered nine more cats. When I walked into the surgical suite at the shelter it was absolutely buzzing with volunteers doing various pre- and post-op surgery jobs. With both surgical tables being used by Dr. Lowell Novy and Dr. Ron Faoro spaying females, Dr. Brenda Forsythe did the male cats in another area of the shelter. The shelter was alive with good vibes.

The next Spay Day, Sunday, March 3, Dr. Faoro and Dr. Scott Smith did the surgeries. Over the two Spay Days, *Catalyst* trapped 80 cats for surgery, stabilizing most of the colonies we dealt with.

This encouraged and elated us. With the dedication of these marvelous volunteers, we are beginning to make a positive impact on the feral cat population in Santa Maria. In fact, last week, I received a call for help for a mom cat who had dropped many litters, and upon hearing the address, asked them to check for an ear tip. Low and behold, the ear had been tipped. These are my favorite kinds of calls.

We are extremely grateful to the many people, in ad-

dition to those at the shelter, who made this all happen. Ann McKuse and others collected sheets at home and at thrift shops, which we used for covering the cats after capture. Peggy Escobar sewed and cut to size over seven dozen covers, while Joanne Avelar provided her garage as a holding area for equipment and also for post op care.

And, of course, we appreciate the work of our trappers, Denise Ables, Suzanne Canas, and Chuck Van de Veer. This is hard and intense work.

The day after surgery, Bill Long loaded the cats into the *Catalyst* van and returned them for release. Bill, who is new at his job, remarked that seeing the cats released back to their homes made it all worth while. Despite everyone being tired we were indeed a happy and enthusiastic group.

Lastly I want to acknowledge Jan Glick, head of Animal Services of the three county shelters, and Lee Heller, whose persistence made the Spay Days a reality. Lee arranged for the veterinarians, all of whom volunteered their time. Lee also hosted the post-surgery happening at the Addamo Tasting Room in Old Town Orcutt, where we enjoyed the hospitality of these giving and caring people, all with a common cause—getting together after a job well done. All in all, it was very successful and a great way to begin the year.



Dr. Scott Smith prepares to spay one of the 80 feral cats trapped and transported by Catalyst volunteers for two North County Spay Day events in January and March.



Technicians ready a female cat for spay.

An Alisos Canyon Family Reunion

By Marci Kladnik

This was a sad case of an irresponsible cat owner who left six kitties behind when she moved out of her ranch house in the hills near Los Alamos. A concerned neighbor, Denise Morrison, saw the cats (two kittens and four adults, one with an abscess in his side), and contacted *Catalyst for Cats*, pledging her willingness to help trap and care for them.

Having never owned a cat herself, this thoughtful woman was even determined to take in all six of them as barn cats!

Due to the heavy surgery schedule of kitten season at the SYVHS, separate trappings had to be set for two weeks apart. One kitten and two toms were caught the first night, altered and relocated to their new home in a new, warm, clean barn to await the rest of the family.

The second night of trapping saw the capture of the remaining kitten, and two adults. We stood back and held our breath as the cats eagerly moved towards the food. Soon we heard the anticipated snap indicating a catch.

The first to be caught was the mother. Her cries of distress brought the kitten and tabby running to circle my car with anxious mewings. Not wanting her to upset them anymore and risk not catching them, I whisked momma next door to the barn, leaving Denise and her husband behind to continue trapping.

As I brought the momma in, still crying in her cage, her previously-caught kitten and one of the toms came running. Setting



the cage down, I stood back and watched in delight as they all got reacquainted.

The tom lay down next to the cage, reached out a paw towards her and started making soft chirping sounds. On the other side, the kitten stuck two paws in to touch her. Momma relaxed immediately and lay down. Just then, Denise and her husband arrived with the kitten. We quickly put her cage down near her mother's and I dashed back up to the trapping site.

I didn't see the third cat, but still, I set a trap. Then I saw the tabby heading for the trap. Seconds later, I had her. Now the family was complete. As each member was reunited with the others, the crying stopped and they all relaxed. The newly trapped ones—all females—were fixed the next day.

All told, the irresponsible owner had left behind two toms and four females. In cat societies this means that there was a potential for a population explosion of, let's see...average litter of four, times twice a season, times four females equals the chance of 32 new cats running wild at that house! But instead, after

proper TNR, a stable feline family has found contentment.

These pictures say it all. No more scrounging for food and shelter! And the mice population—"fast food" as cats see it—has dwindled. Now the only question is whether to climb a tree, sleep on a bale of hay, hunt, or wait for the next regular meal. Ahhhhh, what a life!



Can Humans be Trusted?

It all depends on perspective

By Peter Mortensen

My name is Yum Yum. My sister and I have 13 beautiful kittens. The father, Big Red, is an orange cat, a very handsome fellow in spite of the facial scars and torn ear from fighting. This is our tail, uh tale...

Humans are large creatures, quite ugly compared to cats. They walk on their hind legs, and are often irritatingly noisy. Humans, however, are useful.

Our human, Peter fed us. This was most welcome as we lost weight birthing. Nursing mothers have little time for hunting. We needed strength to protect our litters from foxes, coyotes, and the dog next door.

We trusted Peter. Our kittens grew, and he increased our wet food rations as they sampled it. Then Peter began putting the food inside wire boxes. That was a bit disconcerting. If we wanted to eat, we had to go into them. But we adjusted.



Meal time: Several of Yum Yum's kittens and extended family enjoy a meal together. Most of the kittens, though, were adopted.

Then it happened. One after another the boxes closed behind the kittens. Trapped! Even Big Red, another adult, and I were caught. It was scary. Peter and Randi, another human, covered our boxes, which calmed us somewhat.

They put us into a place which moved for a long time. When it stopped, we were in a strange place.

We received no food for the rest of the day, and in the morning more humans came to get us. Something pricked, and I went to sleep. When I awoke, my tummy hurt and so did my ear. Randi put us into the moving thing again, and later we smelled home again.

It was wonderful being reunited, but the babies were missing. A week later, all but four were returned because they could not be "socialized," whatever that means. I'm very glad for it, in any case, and our kittens were happy to be home. They rubbed against us and even tried to nurse, though they were too big for that.

Happily, we never saw another "box" at Peter's and food is plentiful. Peter has started to pet us while we eat and even tries to pick some of us up to pet in his lap. We are beginning to trust again.



"I've always relied on the kindness of strangers": Yum Yum is starting to see the benefits of human care.

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.

Catalyst women in the media

Catalyst for Cats founder Randi Fairbrother is profiled in the spring issue of *Coastal Woman* magazine. Written by *Catalyst* volunteer Amy Orozco, the story traces Randi's early love for cats to the formation of *Catalyst for Cats* in 1991 and beyond.

Also, new board member Marci Kladnik is featured in the Women on The Move section of the magazine.

Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

Volunteers needed

The shelter in Santa Maria continues to be in need of volunteers. Stop by the shelter for a visit. For volunteer opportunities call Stacy at 934-6981, or for general information call the Santa Maria Shelter (934-6119). The opportunities to help are many and varied

Grants

We are very grateful to the trustees of the **Ronald and Phyllis M. Bruce Trust for the Protection of Animals** for spay/neuter costs. We appreciate their support of our work to help ferals.

The **Wendy P. McCaw Foundation** has generously granted us money for food and supplies and also to the Tiny Tim Fund for medical care. We are most appreciative for the kindness and understanding of our needs in addition to spay and neuter.

Note to Supporters

Catalyst for Cats wants its donors to know that we do not share our mailing list with anyone or any group.

Santa Barbara County Spay Days

On January 13 and March 2, 2008, County Animal Services hosted a Spay-A-Thon at its Santa Maria clinic. The goal was to make deep inroads into the north county feral cat population, by altering as many cats as could be trapped and brought in.

Although we've had similar days in the past, the revival of semi-regular Spay Days came with help from Dr. Lowell Novy and Diane Bentz of the Valley Veterinary Clinic in Simi Valley, who has been working with other communities to increase non-profit spay/neuter activities similar to their own ongoing program.

The January event involved some 30 volunteers, all providing support for surgeries performed without charge by Drs. Novy, Ron Faoro of St. Francis Pet Clinic in Santa Barbara, Brenda Forsythe of the newly opened Orcutt Veterinary Hospital, and their experienced technicians.

Organized and overseen by Animal Services Outreach Director Stacy Crump, with Tuesday Cool, RVT, the event was a huge success: 74 cats were spayed and neutered, with time left over for a visit to a local winery afterwards! Thanks to Addamo Vineyards for their hospitality and support.

March's Spay Day was a bit smaller, with only two

vets—Dr. Faoro again, (and several of his technicians) from St. Francis Pet Clinic of Santa Barbara and Dr. Scott Smith of the Animal Medical Clinic in Carpinteria. With the two vets, helped along by the hard work of 20 plus volunteers, they powered through 53 cats in five hours. A great many of the females were pregnant, meaning that those spays will have prevented thousands more feral cats from propagating over generations!

A third Spay Day is in the works for June 8, in time to alter some of the kittens that will all too soon be arriving and to spay the mother cats before their second litter of the year. The goal is to have these events on an ongoing basis, hoping to stem the tide of the endless number of feral cats

Spay/Neuter Ordinance Update

The county is moving forward with consideration of a pet overpopulation ordinance that would require most dogs and cats to be fixed. (Several common-sense exemptions are included: for registered purebreds, sick animals, working animals, etc.) The Board of Supervisors will vote April 22 in Santa Maria on whether to consider the issue, and if approved, will hear public comment on May 6, at the Santa Barbara hearing room. For further information, call Lee Heller at 695-8101.

Catalyst, along with other county animal rescue groups, has had extensive input into the draft ordinance, to be sure that it reflects our concerns. The current draft endorses trap–neuter–return as the most humane way to deal with feral cats, and also supports our work by first, requiring people who care for ferals but refuse to spay/neuter them to do so, and secondly, by exempting those who work with groups like *Catalyst*, so that colony managers will not be punished while making an effort to control their populations.

The ordinance would also require anyone breeding a cat to get a permit and follow certain minimum standards of care (for example, having kittens seen by a vet before they are transferred to a new owner). Most important, it provides subsidies for low-income pet owners, to make compliance easy and to prevent people from turning their pets into shelters because they can't afford the surgery. We expect that future

Continued on page 7

Updates Continued

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Spay Days will include pets of low-income owners, as one way to meet this need.

Catalyst strongly endorses a pet overpopulation law as a necessary next step in reducing the number of dogs and cats that are filling our shelters and foster homes. With its many exemptions, the proposed law strikes a fair balance.

To express your support, contact the County Supervisors, Salud Carbajal, Janet Wolf, Brooks Firestone, Joni Grey and Joe Centeno. You can mail all of them c/o Santa Barbara County, 105, E. Anapamu St. Santa Barbara CA 93101, or email them at scarbajal@sbcbos1.org, jwolf@sbcbos2.org, bfirestone@co.santabarbara.ca.us, jgray@co.santabarbara.ca.us, jcenteno@co.santa-barbara.ca.us.

—Lee Heller

Monthly meetings for interested “Cat People”

We are in the process of setting up a monthly Happy Hour meeting in Santa Maria for anyone who might be interested in discussing ideas on how to help deal with the cat overpopulation problem. Potential volunteers are welcome, and we invite all interested persons. We are thinking of the first Thursday of the month. Place to be determined. If you are interested call Chuck der Veer at 937-2301.

Wish List

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

- Fosters for socializing kittens
- Trappers and transporters for Santa Ynez, Lompoc, and Santa Maria
- Feeders for Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley areas
- Safe relocation sites for mousers. They will earn their keep. We often try and socialize our older kittens because we prefer they have loving homes. Also, some of them need to have medical care because of upper respiratory or other problems. After a lot of time, love, sweat, and tears we sometimes realize they must go to a relocation site more suitable to their temperament, such as a barn situation. With time they still have the potential to warm up to the feeders.

Cat Haiku



The food in my bowl
Is old, and more to the point
Contains no tuna.



So you want to play.
Will I claw at dancing string?
Your ankle's closer.



There's no dignity
In being sick - which is why
I don't tell you where.



Seeking solitude
I am locked in the closet.
For once I need you.



Tiny can, dumped in
Plastic bowl. Presentation,
One star; service: none.



Am I in your way?
You seem to have it backwards:
This pillow's taken.



Your mouth is moving;
Up and down, emitting noise.
I've lost interest.



The dog wags his tail,
Seeking approval. See mine?
Different message.



My brain: walnut-sized.
Yours: largest among primates.
Yet, who leaves for work?



Most problems can be
Ignored. The more difficult
Ones can be slept through.



My affection is conditional.
Don't stand up,
It's your lap I love.



Cats can't steal the breath
Of children. But if my tail's
Pulled again, I'll learn.



I don't mind being
Teased, any more than you mind
A skin graft or two.



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



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