



# 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

## The Problem With “Free Kittens”

So far this spring, kitten season seems to be starting out slowly, allowing us a much needed and welcomed breather. I believe this is a direct result of the concentrated effort throughout the community to spay and neuter (see **Updates**, p. 5). We appreciate all the dedicated work involved from the agencies, rescue groups and volunteers who sacrifice their time to help improve the lives of animals.

Our first litter of four perfectly darling kittens are presently enjoying life in their forever homes. As a feral cat organization, most of our kittens come from feral moms, and socializing their kittens can present a challenge, yet they make wonderful pets. More will be ready for adoption in the weeks ahead.

Spaying one female cat has far reaching consequences. It's like the pebble that skims over water with ripples extending far out. Over time it prevents hundreds, if not thousands, of unwanted kittens from being born to continue the vicious cycle

of birth. That's why those of us who trap find it especially rewarding and exciting to capture a female for spay. In addition, the life of the cat improves almost immediately. It's prevention at its best.

On the other hand, kittens being given away free

on Craigslist, swap meets and yard sales presents a big problem. Most of these poor kittens are removed from their siblings and mom far too early. We find this usually happens when the kittens start eating and food needs to be purchased. Because the kittens are too young for testing, we cannot combine litters and put them at risk. In addition, they are often too young to be removed from their nursing mom. It's heartbreaking for our fosters to have to listen to their lonely, anguished cries for several days and nights.

For reasons I don't understand, many people offering cats on Craigslist do not want to relinquish these kittens to rescue groups even though

it's these groups that will give proper care and screen

*Continued on page 7*



photo by Marci Kladnik

**First of the Year:** Abandoned at a very tender age, Eeyore is Catalyst's first bottle fed kitten this season. Read about his lucky rescue and progress in foster care 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.

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

**Debbie Merry**, our star Santa Maria trapper. She's out there every day, before and after work, feeding, trapping and overseeing sites, taking time away from her family.

We also thank the **dozens of feeders** who faithfully feed colonies **throughout Santa Barbara County**. And we are very appreciative of those who donate food for the colonies we help subsidize. Their donations have helped enormously so far this year. Assisting with food allows us to return the cats to the feeders.

**Marci Kladnik** – for all your various efforts with ferals as well as the amazing knowledge that you impart in your columns. *(from Jim and Carolynn)*

**Belinda Burns**, our relocation coordinator who uses her weekends to relocate feral cats as mousers, thereby saving their lives – It's fun to hear what a good job they are doing for just the price of safe room and board. If you are interested in our cats' services for rodent control, give us a call.

**Catalyst Volunteers** – for all you do to rescue stray cats and for the great addition to our family, our wonderful cat **Roscoe**. He's perfect in every way and still purrs up a storm at any moment. He's bigger now, but still just as adorable. *(from Lynn Brogren)*



Roscoe

*photo by Lynn Brogren*

**Catalyst for Cats** – for the two wonderful cats, **Rusty** and **Spencer**, that I adopted in June of last year. I became aware of Catalyst through **RESQCATS**.

These two wonderful guys make my life

so much better *Rusty*

and bring me so much joy. Thank you for what you do. *(from Marlene Debue)*



*photos by Marlene Debue*



Spencer

**To Catalyst and Randi** – for helping us with the cost of spaying and neutering our wild cats. You are so very much needed in our community and have made a

huge difference. Because of your generosity in supporting this we are able to afford the cost of keeping our six cats well fed and taken care of. We treasure our kitty cats and you too! I hope this donation helps you with future spay/neuter/feed or whatever you need. *(from Renee and Steve O'Neill)*



*Saved from the Santa Maria Swap Meet by Catalyst's indefatigable Monica Gonzalez.*



# Meet Eeyore, our first bottle baby of the season

By Marci Kladnik

What could be cuter than this? Poor little Eeyore was found all alone, crying on a woman's doorstep in Santa Maria on April 20th.

Maybe three-weeks-old and weighing only ten ounces, he was clearly still very much in need of a mother and his littermates. Since they could not be found, we took him in and found a wonderful new foster family for him on Vandenberg AFB.

David and Laura Moulder with their four-year-old daughter, Charlotte, have welcomed Eeyore into their home. At last report, he is growing rapidly, uses the litterbox like a big kitty, and gets lots of attention from

a stay-at-home mom and the rest of the family. If the Moulders are able to let him go, this sweet baby will be up for adoption at the beginning of June. Someone is going to get a charmer.



photo by Marci Kladnik

## *Not all our fosters are quite so sweet!*

By Marci Kladnik

On April 26 I took in a beautiful brown tabby feral mom with her six two-week-old kittens. At first momma just seemed very frightened of me, but by the end of the first week, she had become quite aggressive and extremely protective of her babies.

Dealing with feral cats is always a challenge, but they are usually only in our care for a matter of a day or two, not a month or more as is the case when we foster nursing moms and kittens.

For the best start at a healthy life, it's preferable that kittens stay with their mother for eight weeks. This is why we always try to catch the mom so they can be fostered together. Usually the moms prefer to stay as far away from the caregiver as possible, but occasionally we get one that won't let the caregiver near her babies.

This is the type of mother I had taken in. I was even hesitant to refresh food, water or litter, as she always



photo by Marci Kladnik

**Ready to Strike:** An over-protective mom makes fostering kittens a challenge, but then, they have a job to do. See page 6 for the kittens she was protecting.

had her eyes on me, ready to hiss and spit, lunging at me if I got too close. Thankfully it has so far only been warnings, not actual attacks.

Her five kittens, however, are quite adorable!



# Catalyst's First Litter of the Season

*Family in Foster*



*First Adventure*



*Paired up in their new forever homes, Toma and Boris (above) share a snug basket, while their equally lucky brother and the only sister (right) have found comfort, too.*



Debbie Merry is an experienced trapper and understands her Santa Maria turf. She knows who to expect at dinner time, and our founder, Randi Fairbrother says Debbie has an “intuitive sense” of what cats are up to.

One Friday evening in late February, Debbie spotted a newcomer at a usual

feeding site—a very pregnant momma cat. Normally, Debbie wouldn’t trap on a Friday night because vets won’t be open again until Monday morning. But Debbie sensed this mom was very close to giving birth, and she also knew

that it would be nearly impossible to find that cat and her kittens for several weeks after she had her litter. So Debbie trapped, and the mom gave birth to four healthy kittens first thing Monday morning.

Debbie cared for the mother and fostered the young ones, (three boys and a girl) who have all been adopted ( 2 + 2) into their forever homes.

**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!**

# Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

## Spay/Neuter Funding

We are very grateful to **The Ronald and Phyllis M. Bruce Trust for the Protection of Animals** for giving us funds for spay/neuter services. Spaying and neutering has far-reaching results. Not only does it prevent unwanted kittens from being born, but it improves the lives of the cats who are thereby no longer governed by their hormones, urges which make their lives difficult on so many levels.

## Grant For Food and More

We are also grateful for grant monies from **The Wendy P. McCaw Foundation** for food, supplies and our Tiny Tim Fund. This support is especially helpful with our Kitten Adoption Program. Since our kittens come from feral moms they need not only socialization but more often than not additional medical care. We are fortunate, honored and most appreciative to be a recipient.

## Website Update

In response to a request, we have just added a "Subscribe" donation button to our website for those of you who would like to donate monthly to our cause. Sign up, it's trapping season and kittens (which eat a lot of food and use lots of litter during fostering) will be arriving soon! Find us at [www.catalystforcats.org](http://www.catalystforcats.org).

## Pet Lovers License Plates

California motorists have met the pre-order goal of 7,500 license plates for the state to begin issuing animal lovers plates. The Pet Lovers License Plate was created to provide funding for free and low-cost spay/neuter in an effort to cut down on the number of dogs and cats that end up in shelters each year. It is anticipated the plates will be ready to issue by summer or early fall 2013. For more information visit [www.PetloversPlate.com](http://www.PetloversPlate.com).

## Puppy Mill Pets in L.A.

Los Angeles, the second largest city in the nation, has passed a landmark ordinance which prohibits puppy/cat mill animals from being sold at local pet shops. Now, shelter and rescue animals will have a better chance of finding their forever home by getting out of the shelters and into these store fronts.

The new law will also encourage those shopping for a pet to do their due diligence in finding a reputable breeder instead of the impulse buying of a puppy or

kitten shipped from a mill thousands of miles away in the Midwest or South.

Other cities in California that have passed similar laws are Laguna Beach, Irvine, West Hollywood, Glendale, South Lake Tahoe and most recently Burbank.

## Catnips 2013

During the month of February the Responsible Pet Ownership Alliance sponsored a low cost (\$20) spay/neuter program for privately owned cats within Santa Barbara County with the following results:

|                            | Spays      | Neuters    | Total      |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Santa Ynez Humane Society  | 27         | 29         | 56         |
| Santa Maria Humane Society | 65         | 57         | 122        |
| Santa Maria Animal Shelter | 39         | 33         | 72         |
| C.A.R.E.4Paws              | 6          | 2          | 8          |
| <b>Total:</b>              | <b>137</b> | <b>121</b> | <b>258</b> |

In addition, during the month of January *Catalyst for Cats* spayed/neutered 66 feral cats (four from Santa Ynez Valley and the remainder from Santa Maria) plus 22 more in February without charge.

This brings the grand total to **346 fewer breeding cats countywide**. We thank all who contributed to this effort and know that it results in fewer kittens as well as fewer surrenders to the agencies and rescue groups.

## Lucky Cat

While checking out an address near her home for breeding cats, *Catalyst* volunteer trapper/feeder **Debbie Merry** thought she saw Brave Heart, a long-haired orange cat she feeds every evening. The cat was about two blocks from his feeding site and appeared to have a large wound above his left eye. Sure enough, that evening she discovered a wounded Brave Heart at the feeding station. She was able to drop him into a trap and the next day brought him to the Orcutt Vet for treatment. The abscess was cleaned, he was given a long-acting antibiotic, and the wound has now healed.

A few days later a neighbor mentioned she had intervened when she saw a pit bull dog attacking the cat.

It's common practice to release dogs after dark in several cities throughout Santa Barbara County, even though this is against the law. Unfortunately, many cats and kittens are injured and killed by these loose running dogs. Loose dogs should be reported to Santa Barbara County Animal Control.



# Cats & Birds

*Biased reporting of skewed data adds up to misleading view of cats as villains in nature*

By Marci Kladnik

Once again the airwaves and newspapers have been buzzing about cats being incredible predators, reportedly responsible for killing billions of birds and other small prey. The aim of these biased reports is to create a public outcry for the extermination of all feral cats—an absurd, cruel and unfounded goal.

Alley Cat Allies and the CATalyst Council have issued their own rebuttal statements defending the successful Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs in place around the world. And as I reported five months back when the “bird people” published another inflammatory article, our own countywide TNR-ing has made a great difference in the 23 years *Catalyst for Cats* has been in existence.

Alley Cat Allies notes that, “The authors arrived at their chosen conclusion by cherry-picking data in the most egregious fashion. Worse still, they cite a discredited researcher, a colleague who was convicted and then fired for trying to poison cats.” That same researcher worked for one of this new study’s authors.

The CATalyst Council’s executive director, Jane Brunt, DVM, “...expressed concerns that the study and corresponding articles may hamper the ability of shelters to place cats in adoptive homes.”

“We regret the fact that the articles written about the study have maligned cats as a whole, when in fact, the vast majority of the estimated destruction to wildlife was reportedly by feral or stray cats,” she said. “This works to discourage prospective cat owners from adopting one of the hundreds of thousands of healthy, enjoyable cats that are held in shelters across this nation,” states Dr. Brunt.

A very disturbing fact for me is that this skewed study was funded by the Smithsonian, an institution I always trusted to be all about knowledge and truth.

Of course cats are predators; so are dogs, birds, lizards and every other living meat-eater on our planet including humans. They are animals, and they are ruled by instinct. This is the very reason local ranchers call us for feral mousers, for without cats in the barn,

rats and mice would overrun the place. We need hunting felines in our midst, but not free-breeding ones.

This is mating season. An intact female in heat will drive you crazy trying to get outside to breed, and even if inside her scent will draw toms to your front door. Nightly brawls between the males vying for her are punctuated by the pungent odor of urine sprayed around your house. Your intact male may suddenly go missing for several days, only to return with wounds requiring an expensive trip to the veterinarian. Not good for the cat; not good for your wallet.

Even spayed females in your yard will bring in hopeful toms. I know, as it’s happening right now at my house even though the fixed kitty hanging out on the porch is not mine. Please keep your cats inside, especially at night so they do not become a nuisance to the neighbors.

As long as the public climbs on board with fixing their pets that are allowed outside, and also picks up the phone to call *Catalyst for Cats* when stray and feral cats appear in their yards, our job will be that much easier. Please don’t wait until kittens appear; it is safe to spay a pregnant cat. Better that than letting her have an unwanted litter.

***We need hunting felines in our midst, but not free-breeding ones.***

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**Protected, But Not So Angry. (Story page 3)**



photo by Marci Kladnik

## 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:

**Caesar Cat's** Birthday. Thank you for the great bulletin and all the amazing work with your volunteers and associates – by Gloria Shepard, Bookat, and Kitty Boy  
**Buttons-Cali** – by Beverly Barnhart  
**Catalyst for Cats**, for helping with my four ferals – by Bonnie Allwyn Brown  
**Cinnabak** – by Ernest Pratt  
**Marci Kladnik** for her amazing work on behalf of feral cats – Doris Banchik  
**Pepe Le Pew** – by Lorraine McBride  
**Rufus, Lily and Max** – by Barbara Calado

### In Memory of

**Floyd**, an ASAP kitty – by Susan Eselgroth  
**Freddie**, dear cat – by Barbara McCurry  
**Goodie**, a happy sweet cat and so missed – by Kay Harrison  
**Jim Higman**, a noble, kind and gentle man. As a master metal worker he helped repair and build equipment for us from the very beginning. He died at age 98. You are missed by many – by Randi T. Fairbrother.

## Craigslist kitties

*From page 1*

people for adoptions. If you see “free kittens” being offered in this way, take them and contact one of the rescue groups. And please encourage the people to spay the mom. They can call the Humane Societies or the Shelters for low fee spay/neuter services. There is help out there and with a little effort it can be found. Free is rarely free.

Since we do not receive any public funding we must depend on private individuals and limited grants to continue our work. I well understand the difficulties many people face in this slow economy, but for those of you fortunate enough to be in a position to give, know that with our all-volunteer organization your dollar goes directly towards feline welfare and our struggle against feline overpopulation.

My best wishes for a safe and good summer.

*Randi Fairbrother*

**Karen**, my sister who loved cats - by Barbara Evans Simpson

**George “Pop” Kladnik**, I loved him too – by Norma Sundquist

My sweet **Ming**, and for all you do for cats – by Sharon Kantanen

**Miss Pissie**, a feral who guarded a flock of sheep – by Jonanne and Jim O’Roark

**Nancy O’Connor**, my sister – by Margaret Jones  
**Nutmeg and Princess** – by Rita Fleming

**Sam** – a handsome Siamese who greeted all and enjoyed a pampered life – by Randi Fairbrother

**Sam** – by Barbara Calado

**Sam and Snow** – by the Salotti Family

**John Tapia for Gra-cee**, – by Irene Kasper



## Wish List

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

- Santa Maria is in dire need of trappers, transporters and feeders. Feeders are especially needed near the Donovan exit in SM.
- 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.
- Our bilingual flyers informing the public of our services are ready for distribution. It's important to get the word out. Let us know if you are willing to do this and we can discuss areas to be targeted.
- More people who understand the importance of spay/neuter.
- Someone who can do metal repair on damaged traps and other equipment.



*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)

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.