



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 rescue 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.

From the Founder

Still a struggle, but with real accomplishments

Catalyst for Cats began over 25 years ago, the same year as Alley Cat Allies. We learned by trial and error because Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) guidelines had not yet been established. And learn we did.

We began with a small group of “cat lovers,” and everyone worked very hard. We started a movement and we can all be proud of our accomplishments.

It was a struggle then, and the struggle continues today. Slowly we expanded to Carpinteria, then the Santa Ynez Valley and finally we began TNR in the North County.

It is a well known fact that attitudes in the north are very different from much of the rest of the county. This can be seen in the lack of interest in—sometimes resistance to—neutering companion pets. The result is a booming overpopulation problem of both dogs and cats there. There are many opportunities and programs to alleviate this problem, but not enough interest.

First, the Humane Society was built on Black Road in Santa Maria with the support of the Santa Barbara Humane Society. Then in 2005 a new county animal

shelter building opened on Foster Road in Santa Maria to serve the North County. The building included a two table spay/neuter clinic and the Wendy McCaw Animal Adoption Center.

Lastly, a new spacious Santa Maria Humane Society facility opened its doors in October 2013 on Stowell Road, boasting a two table spay/neuter clinic open for surgery five days a week. We could finally get needed

appointments for our TNR program. Gone were the days of having to drive to Burbank to Fix Nation with a van full of cats for surgery. That was very labor intensive.

In addition, several promotions have been developed, all geared towards reducing the number of breeding dogs and cats within the county. These are all ongoing commendable projects, but it is still a work in progress.

It is difficult to stress the importance of low-cost spay/neuter clinics or the significance of TNR. The highest percentage of feline surrenders to shelters are feral cats and kittens. Since they are not

adoptable, most are killed. TNR plays a significant roll



Photo by Denise Sky

A “Keeper”: Recently fostered for Catalyst by Denise Sky in Santa Maria, Becky OJ won her way into permanent status in the household and is described as “a living bundle of joy and surprise—the live version of all the cute kitten videos on YouTube.”

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Passing the torch to the North County

For many years I've mentioned the distressing situation of feline overpopulation in the North County. TNR is often exciting, but can be heart breaking, difficult, and sometimes confrontational—as we have shared in past stories. As an all volunteer organization we are all animal lovers, and it is not just a job to us. The reward is in the doing.

It is emotionally draining, and many of us who have been doing it for years are reaching old age and/or burn out. It has become clear changes are in order and another method is required to get the job done.

The enormous success of our TNR program in Santa Barbara, Carpinteria and Santa Ynez Valley, led me to expect similar results as we expanded into the North County. The realization that we have not succeeded is a big disappointment. We did our best and I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all who helped us.

We started the TNR movement in the county, saving and improving the lives of thousands upon thousands of felines. We prevented untold numbers of unwanted kittens from being born, thus contributing to a better community overall.

Santa Maria now has a big shelter and the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society has built a new state-of-the-art facility. Both have the capacity to recruit

volunteers and generate funding better than we can. I hope they will take up the cause.

Not only has our program included spay/neuter services, but in addition we provided rabies and distemper vaccination, worming, flea treatment and selected testing for FIV/leukemia without charge.

The North County was notified at the beginning of the year of our plans to disband our TNR program by the end of 2015, allowing time to organize programs of their own. We have paved the way and it is time to pass the torch. With a population of over 100,000 people, it is their community and their responsibility. We will continue to offer our expertise.

These last few months of the year and the first months of the new year are the most opportune and satisfying time to TNR because the females are not in heat or pregnant, and kittens have not yet dropped. I hope this time will not be wasted.

Each year we spend thousands of dollars to feed feral cat colonies and to offer veterinary services for caring people otherwise unable to afford it. In our next newsletter we will report the total number of cats TNR'd in 2015, as well as any plans the North County has come up with regarding their own TNR program.

—Randi Frarbrother

Expressions of Gratitude

We would once again like to thank our entire team of fosters, trappers, and feeders. We are particularly indebted to both a most faithful donor, **Barbara Hilaire**, whose support is generous and indispensable, and an extraordinary volunteer, **Debbie Merry**, who for the most part, is the only active trapper in Santa Maria. In addition to working full-time Debbie fosters and feeds multiple feral cat colonies. Her efforts have prevented hundreds upon hundreds of street kittens from being born.

We occasionally receive thank you notes from people we've assisted or placed kittens with:

Dear **Belinda, Kia** and **Randi**,

Thank you so much for helping me and sticking with me to catch Leuca. I'm looking forward to bringing her back so she can resume her life here. So glad she will have no more kittens. You are all wonderful. I'll

be retiring soon. I'm so happy to have had your care and expertise to deal with her before retiring. She will be fed and cared for. I have enclosed a donation to support your efforts.

—Liz Gasper

Dear **Catalyst**,

My wife and I adopted two wonderful Calico kittens from Debbie Walker in Santa Maria through your organization. They are absolutely great and have grown into nice adults.

Much appreciated,

Mark and Andrea Derrick

And finally, we greatly appreciate **everyone's donations** throughout the year. We will be sending out yearly donation receipts beginning early 2016. Call 685-1563 with any questions.

Our Founder, Their Angel:

A Personal Appreciation from a Tireless Trapper

Twenty-five years, that's a long time! Thousands of cats and kittens later, my dear friend and mentor is going to finally retire and get some much needed rest and relaxation.

I had the privilege of meeting Randi Fairbrother in February of 2008 when I called upon *Catalyst for Cats*' services to help me TNR a mom and three kittens. That led me to a new purpose in life. Along with those four, I was also adopted by two or three more cats that had figured out that there was a new food source in the neighborhood and decided to call this home.

After following Randi's instructions for a week, I called her and let her know everything was a "go." We trapped all the cats in about 15 minutes and, wow, I was

sold on this idea of TNR. I have been a *Catalyst for Cats* volunteer ever since. Randi has taught me the ropes both of dealing with the cats and the people we run across in this line of service.

I have so much respect and admiration for this lady who has literally given her life, heart and soul to the

health, welfare and happiness of all cats. Strays, ferals and tame cats that otherwise would have gone hungry or been tortured by the endless breeding and birth-ing of kittens would never have known that there are humans that do care. Randi has proven time and time again she is one of those people for sure.

It hasn't always been fun and it's definitely not easy. Her only rewards are in knowing that she has saved so many feline lives, making them content and bearable at the very least.

Randi is truly an angel put on this earth. I am looking forward to our future lunch and dinner dates and continuing the friendship that has grown through these past years. She truly deserves to relax in peace, knowing the organizations that are for animals in Santa Barbara County will continue to better the lives of the feral cat population, and that all her hard work and dedication will not fall by the wayside. Good luck and happy days, Randi!!

It will take some time to get used to your not being at the helm, but you will always be just a phone call away for advice, and to share your expertise on the matter. I'll try not to call and bug you too often when I'm on one of my rants. LOL!

Many thanks and appreciation for all you have done.

Love,

Debbie Merry



The Magnificent Seven

Trapping and rescuing kittens from untenable, sometimes remote situations has always been a major role for *Catalyst for Cats*. The seven kittens in the foreground (look under the table!) were saved a few months ago from a continually breeding colony in New Cuyama--over an hour removed even from Santa Maria--and are now being fostered by Karrie Tish. They are ready for adoption. Tish's own adult cats Leo and Titan overlook the brood. The kittens from left: Stella, White Boy, Dolly, Anabelle, Beau, Lilac, and Mirigold. Names, of course, are negotiable upon adoption.



Missing You, Tommy!

Feisty and self-sufficient, this one-time feral found his happy hunting ground.

By Marci Kladnik

Five years ago Tommy was one of our Santa Maria ferals-gone-semi-tame. Unable to find a suitable relocation site or home for him, the big beautiful Siamese with gorgeous blue eyes was stuck in a cage and going stir crazy. The kind-hearted Monica and Lavi Gonzales finally opened the door and let him out to roam their yard.

All was good until he began claiming parts of the front yard, chasing off some of the resident cats which had been there long before he had. Due to this, I decided to relocate him to my backyard as a gopher hunter. All four of my cats were indoors-only, so the gophers were digging away with no control.

Since the first step in relocation is caging, I had to incarcerate Tommy again. Granted, the cage was large and I had it against a window so my cats and I could interact with him safely as he became acclimatized, but he was still in lock-up.

He was an unpredictable cat, hissing and slashing one moment and leaning in for head scratches the

next. I didn't trust him and we both waited anxiously for the time I could set him free.

When that day came, Tommy did a very odd thing. Finally realizing the cage door was open, he jumped out, walked around the patio a bit then jumped back into the cage and up to his bed box where he stayed! Since it was late afternoon, I closed the door and decided to try it again the next day.

This time Tommy didn't hesitate. As soon as the door was opened, he jumped out, climbed a tree and disappeared over the fence into the neighbor's yard. I hoped he would come back to my yard, but now he was free to go where he wanted.

I let the neighbor know Tommy was in her backyard, and she was happy to have a gopher hunter, until she discovered his unpredictable behavior. She stopped feeding him at that point, and he wandered around the corner and "knocked" on someone else's door.

This turned out to be the right home for him, with regular food and water and a man who encouraged him to stay. I watched him hunt in the empty lot behind my house and he actually did come to my yard now and again.

A couple of years later I trapped a roaming tom on my driveway, and TNR'd him. After release he, too, wandered around the corner and became buddies with Tommy. Occasionally both the cats would come to my front door for a meal and fresh catnip. I was able to treat them with flea meds at these times and keep tabs on their general health.

This last September, Tommy went missing. I got a call from a neighbor in my cul-du-sac asking me to come look at a cat that had hunkered down in her garage. Tommy greeted me with the usual hiss followed by a friendly head-butt. When I hauled him out of his hiding place, I could tell he was in very bad condition with serious injuries from a run in with a vehicle.

I put him in a carrier and called Randi. I told her Tommy needed to be put down immediately.

Thank you, Buellton Veterinary Clinic for taking this on at the end of the day. His passing was gentle and I sent him off with loving pets.

I miss him every time I look at the spot where he waited for me to toss some catnip.



Photo by Marci Kladnik

Tommy waits patiently for his "nip" shortly before the accident.

Updates: Catalyst Action & Related Issues

Beat the Heat

Santa Barbara County Animal Services provided free spay/neuters for companion cats during the month of September this year, which yielded 116 spays and 108 neuters countywide.

Spay/Neuter, Foster, Adoption

Catalyst's own spay/neuter numbers totaled 304 cats (both male and female) through September. In addition, about 100 kittens were captured and surrendered to various adoption agencies. We greatly appreciate the main participants who took over our Foster/Adoption so graciously: Animal Shelter Adoption Program (ASAP), RESQCATS, the Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez Valley Humane Societies.

Tributes & Memorials

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

In Honor of:

Cabeb and **Emma** – by Marlene Maes Mills

My former feral cat, **Chloe**, who is just great – by Sharon Tate

Florence Dunn – by Gerald Dunn

Foxie, a dog who loved cats – by Victoria Blunt

My past family members – by John and Melinda Coggi

Randi and her tireless commitment. Bravo! – by Chuck and Pamela Van De Veer

Randi – by Eleanor Wyatt

Randi – by Wilma Titus

Beth Rushing, for her help with trapping – by Susan Hamilton

Sparkle, who thinks she is a dog, captured Halloween 2013 – by Kayann Zadrozny

In Memory of

Norma Caloudes, my mother – by Sandra D. Pray

Itty – by Wilma Titus

Jessee, a golden breeder dog, spayed at age 10, finally given the love and home she deserved – by Joanne and Jim O'Roark

Macho, Bobo and **Enuna** – by Carol Moir

Maggie, the "kitten whisperer" – by Marci Kladnik

Beth Girardat Smoot – by the Elsa Jaquint Family

TNR New York Style

Tens of thousands of feral and stray cats roam the streets of New York. How to deal with this dilemma is the subject of a great 11-minute video posted last month online by New Yorker magazine. View it by going to this website: <http://tinyurl.com/o2zm6gy>. Once there, scroll to the bottom of the page.

Founder's Letter continued:

Accomplishment and struggle

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in reducing the number of these cats ending up at the shelter.

The simple math of feline reproduction tells us that one female spay can prevent 144 kittens from being born over a two-year period. When one considers an unspayed female will breed her entire life, the importance of spaying takes on enormous significance.

As we approach the season of Peace on Earth, much of the world is in utter chaos. For those of you fortunate enough to have a bit extra I hope you will remember to "pass it forward" and help our feral feline friends. It takes so little to make a meaningful difference, and these are truly gifts that "keeps on giving."

I extend my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays with health and happiness for the New Year. And remember to count your blessings.

Randi Fairbrother

Wish List

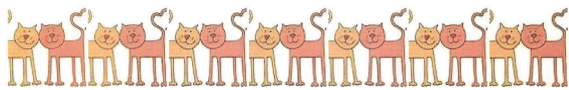
Catalyst needs the following in order to carry on its charitable and educational goals. If you can help, please call 685-1563:

- We are in need of volunteers in the Carpenteria area.
- **Feeders and Food:** We assist caregivers from Santa Barbara to Santa Ynez Valley and North County with cat food, spending thousands of dollars each year. Meat flavors are preferred, but any food donation is welcome.
- **Transporters** for Santa Maria to deliver cats to the clinics in the morning and/or afternoon post-op pick up.
- **Assistant trapper** in Santa Maria



Catalyst for Cats, Inc.
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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!

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.

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.

