



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 over-population problem and to prevent cruelty to animals by preventing the birth of unwanted and uncared for cat and kittens.

From the Founder

A simple solution, so hard to achieve

The answer to pet over-population is easily accessible and affordable low-fee spay/neuter programs.

That's it in a sentence. It's easy to figure out, yet difficult to achieve. It's the same for any community, but until low-fee, easily accessible spay/neuter programs are a reality, the sad problem of unwanted, continually breeding cats producing more unwanted, breeding cats will continue.

Kitten season will all too soon be upon us. Our litters come from feral moms or at the least from litters born without exposure to humans. They live outdoors, in wood piles, under buildings, houses, bushes, structures and in barns. We find them in all sorts of places.

Last year we actually found a litter of wild kittens under someone's bed. It is of paramount importance to capture and spay the mother of these litters, because unless spayed she will continue to bear kittens. In order for the kittens to be adopted they need socialization, and this is where the need for fosters comes in.

In this newsletter we tell the story by Monica Gonzales of a box of cats "Abandoned on Highway 166." She and her mother Lavi were enormously instrumental in rescuing many litters of cats and kittens—all of them unwanted—from Santa Maria last year.

Continuing our series about how amazingly well some feral cats can become homebodies, we also tell the story of a cat rescued and adopted last year by

Landa and Nick Parisi. In addition, there's a touching story of Mr. Blue, a cat who shows his affection in his own way and on his own terms

Your past support has made it possible for us to make a huge difference in improving the lives of countless numbers of cats. And a major result of that support is fewer of those cats.

We have made great strides in the South County and the Valley, but there is still much to do as we move into the North County. We are most appreciative to all of you and hope for your continued support as we strive towards our goal of "every cat a wanted cat."

Randi Fairbrother



Right Side of the Tracks: The five kittens rescued on Railroad Ave. in Santa Maria have all found homes thanks to Catalyst volunteer trappers, fosters, and ASAP adoption efforts.

In Appreciation

We are very grateful to those who participate in our goal of preventing feline over-population 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, friendly cats.

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

Jill Hedenstad – for taking on the very challenging job of getting a family of cats spayed and neutered with almost no cooperation from the care-givers.

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

Jim Higman – for help with repair of traps.

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

Gordan Ruhmann – age 12, for assistance with trapping a family of felines in his yard—nine in all,

including the mom.

To those who routinely assist us in getting the newsletter out:

Charles Clouse – typesetting

Corinne Gallagher – mailing list

Gerry Place – sending out the bulk mail

Sue and Hal Stevenson – labeling newsletters

Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society – for their cooperation in scheduling spay/neuter appointments.

Welcome to some of our new feeders. They are very important to our program.

Yvonne Downs

Trudy Fernandez

Diane Seltzer

Suzanne Canas

We are most happy to welcome a couple of new trappers in the Santa Barbara area for their help.

Beth Rushing

Angela Walters

How a ‘Sweet Boy’ came to be our beloved Sisko

First, I noticed his green eyes. Next, his beautiful grey marbled tabby swirls. Then, I saw his little blue name tag—“Sweet Boy.”

Darn, he did seem very sweet, but I was looking for a girl kitty. After losing our seventeen-year-old female calico Jumbo, we’d recently adopted a five-month-old ASAP boy kitty Pip, and thought it best to have one of each. Deciding not to risk even taking him out to say “Hi,” I sadly said goodbye to Sweet Boy.

Returning to ASAP the following week with my two boys Louis and Vincent, we were determined to find a female friend for Pip. But there he was again—Sweet Boy, still hanging out, still sweet and beautiful. My boys thought it must be an omen and were very convincing that we should take him out to see what he was like.

Of course he was a perfect little purr bucket, a very sweet boy indeed. Knowing I wouldn’t be given a third chance, we took him home that day. Sisko and Pip became fast friends. The two cats are very social and have their daily routines with much togetherness.

Sisko is very gentle, loves to be held, and probably because of his rough start has remained a small kitty



Male Bonding: Newcomer Sisko, front, finds a great pal in Pip, even though Pip was expecting a sister.

(at eight months he’s just 6 lbs.). Of course I think his pint size just makes him extra special.

We want to thank all of the wonderful *Catalyst for Cats* volunteers; without your hard work and diligence we wouldn’t have our little Sisko kitty. Thank you especially to Randi, who was able to give me Sisko’s history. What a special kitty he is! Pip thanks all of you too, and Sisko sends his love and lots of purrs!

Tracy Johansson

Love, the Second Time Around

The loss of a life partner isn't the end of romance for Jersey Boy

By Landa Parisi

She came out of nowhere. You would think on ten acres of land there wouldn't be any stray cats running around the neighborhood. We named her Chalky, and with her came three little ones.

I caught the first kitten at about eight weeks, which was perfect. She was hissy and spitty, but now she is my most affectionate cat. She insists on sitting on me every evening and sleeping with me every night. The other two kittens were caught a little too late to socialize, but they are loved and live in my cathouse.

After a few years of living outside alone, Chalky, who was a feral cat, found a boyfriend—or I should say he found us. He just started appearing in the backyard eating Chalky's food and decided he would stay. He too was trapped and neutered. We called him

Jersey because he reminded us of those black and white cows; I'm not sure if that is the name for that type of cow, but we named him Jersey anyway. So Jersey Boy and Chalky got to know each other and after a long time started sleeping with each other to ward off the evil cold nights in their makeshift house. Their love went on for years.

Then a year ago December Chalky disappeared and we couldn't find her for a week or two. One day we told Jersey to go out there and look for her, and believe it or not, that night we saw him coming up the steps with Chalky behind him, looking skinny and sickly. We rushed her to the doctor, but they said it was kidney failure. She was in her last days, so we humanely put her to sleep.

That winter Jersey slept outside in their makeshift house all alone and lonely.

Then came spring and Belinda Burns and I were

working on a *Catalyst* job in Santa Ynez. Apparently the neighbor of this farm house was tired of all the cats next door and started trapping them and taking them to Animal Services. (We've heard that one before.) Anyway, Belinda was trapping as fast as she could and relocating them. There was one female cat that gave birth to six kittens, so we took them all to Jeffyne at ResQcats. All of the kittens were socialized and adopted, but I had decided to take the mom as a friend for Jersey Boy.

As I drove home from picking her up at the vet in Santa Barbara, I came up with the name Miranda.

Miranda came home with me to Solvang and had to live in a cage in the patio for two weeks to get acclimated to her surroundings. She was not as feral as I had originally thought. I could pet her—with my big

leather gloves on, of course.

We got to know each other, and she got to know Jersey. Jersey would go up to the cage sniff and run away. We think he was playing hard to get. He is a very large, good looking cat and he knows it. We don't call him Stud Muffin for nothing.

The first day we let her out we didn't see her all day, and we were worried we hadn't kept her in there

long enough, but she came back. She and Jersey got to know each other rather quickly because she wouldn't leave him alone. Now they are inseparable and live in the patio. They play together, hunt together, sleep together and definitely love each other. Every night they curl up together in their makeshift house and keep each other warm.

Now Jersey doesn't have to be lonely anymore because he is loved by Miranda.



Love Conquers All: After losing his best girl Chalky, Jersey Boy, left, finds contentment with the recently rescued Miranda.

Untamed, But Not Wild: The Story of Mr. Blue

Distant and wary, a feral cat displays remarkable devotion to a friendly routine

By Hillary Bates

A lot of people walk along the sidewalk during the late afternoons and early evenings in my neighborhood. Sometimes it's children walking home from school, sometimes earth conscious folk who walk to and from the light rail to commute, sometimes couples walking a dog, or families, or kids riding bikes....all sorts of people of all ages and ethnicities pass by my door.

Over the years I've begun to recognize some of them on their daily routines. One passer-by in particular caught my attention (and the attention of my housemates as well). In the early part of the evening, several times per week, an elderly man slowly walks along the sidewalk across the street from my house. He is quite hunched over and relies on a cane to provide stability as he strolls down the street.

His pace is slow, yet he continues to progress. He stops when he makes it to the corner and sits on the short brick wall for a few moments to rest before heading back home.

As I became familiar with seeing this gentleman pass by, I noticed he did not travel alone. At first, I thought it a coincidence that whenever this man was out there was a large, deep gray cat who happened to be taking an evening walk as well. The cat was never by the man's side, rather always about a hundred yards behind—maybe a distance of a house or two.

My housemates and I began to wonder if there was some correlation between these two strollers, though it surely couldn't be that this cat was walking with the man; cats just don't subdue themselves to the rule of humans very often!

Nevertheless, as time passed by, the suspicion was confirmed—I was convinced the cat was indeed walk-

ing with the man!

It is amazing to watch. As slowly as this man walked, the cat never passed him. The cat would pause now and then to sniff some grass or stare down another cat, but always was sure to follow along, always on the sidewalk, safely away from the road.

Finally, after two years, when I was home one rare evening to witness this precious event, I venture across the street to talk to the man while he sat resting on the bricks. I had to know more about this amazing cat.

As I approached, the man looked concerned, and the cat began to cower a bit and wandered off to watch from underneath some shrubs.

I asked the man, "Is this your cat I see walking with you in the evening?"

He replied, "Well, not really. He's a stray, but I feed him, and he likes to take walks with me."

The man then explained that the cat, which I now noticed was quite timid around people and had a tattered ear, was wild and would not let any human approach it. I asked if he named the cat, which he had. Because of his deep gray, almost blue colored coat, he named him Mr. Blue. We exchanged some other small talk and then I left them to continue on their evening routine.

It amazes me that this animal, so untrusting of people, shares a certain sense of connection, closeness, and friendship with this man. Although there are no strokes, no cuddling, and no lap-sitting between them, the man and Mr. Blue have a powerful bond of trust and companionship between them.

It is quite the highlight of my day to watch them peacefully stroll through the low light of the evening, each at his own pace, yet moving together.

Judith Bates, from Santa Ynez sent this story on to us. It is written by her daughter, who lives in the Sacramento area.

Abandoned Along Highway 166

An unexpected discovery leads to difficult, but rewarding experiences in kitten fostering

By Monica Gonzales

Several months ago as my brother and I drove west on Highway 166 towards Guadalupe, I noticed a cat sitting at the side of the road. Since there are no homes in this area, only acre after acre of agricultural crops growing on both sides of the highway, we stopped, picked her up and put her in the car.

Then I noticed a box near by and heard meows coming from it. When I opened the box I found two more adult cats and 6 kittens. They were the most adorable and cutest kittens, all of them friendly. It was obvious four were younger, probably from one litter and two a little older, from another litter.

We put all nine of them in the car and drove home as quickly as possible. Since we had fostered cats, moms and kittens for *Catalyst for Cats* earlier in the year, we had several cages remaining, and we set the felines up in those cages. The cats and kittens were all beautiful and friendly. The kittens were oranges, a calico, a champagne, and a couple of them were Manx. The adults were equally lovely. A short-haired orange Manx looked like she might be nursing. Another one was a Manx tabby with the softest fur, and the last adult was a very lovable tabby.

The hardest part of our job was trying to get them to nurse from the one cat who looked to be the mother. We soon realized the four youngest ones would have to be bottle fed because she refused to let them nurse. My mom and I started bottle feeding.

As anyone knows, who has bottle fed kittens it is a big commitment. As the days went by we noticed something wasn't right and they looked sick. We made several visits to the vet, but they couldn't pin point what was wrong with them. We tried changing their diet, and they appeared to improve, but then one of them really started to go down hill.

I rushed him to the vet again. The vet said the kitten was dehydrated, not doing well, and that we might lose him. She told me I would have to inject him with fluids to try and help him get through this. That was a task I didn't think I could do because I had no experience at all with injecting fluids. With some help from the vet I learned how to do it. I gave fluids for several days but the kitten passed away.

It was awful. A few days later, after doing the same injecting of fluids to the remaining three and bottle feeding them the most horrific thing happened. The kittens went from bad to worse. They no longer could stand up and didn't seem to have any will to live.

I did all I could to save them. I stayed up at night watching over them because I couldn't bear to lose another one after what I had gone through with the first one. But things did get worse. The following day I found another kitten had died and the others followed. I have helped foster kittens and cared for many cats and never had I gone through something like this. Losing those darling kittens was one of the worst experiences of my life.

What if we had not found them? Who knows what would have happened to them. We cannot understand how anyone could do such a callous deed. There is very little chance, if any, that any of them would have survived. Despite the sadness and pain it is all worthwhile because the outcome of the three remaining cats and two older kittens that we rescued that day off the side of the highway is a success story and something to be happy about. They were all spayed and neutered and adopted into caring, loving homes, and the two surviving kittens were adopted together to a family, who adores them

This story is very hard to tell because I remember how extremely attached I had gotten to those kittens and my love for them. Fostering kittens can be very difficult, but it can be very rewarding as well and I love doing it. There is nothing better in the world than knowing that the work we do makes a difference. I encourage all of you to help stop cat over-population. We can all do our part. We are in need of more people to help us foster, trap and care for these wonderful and defenseless animals who didn't ask to be brought into this world. They need our help, if we don't help them, who will?

Editors note: Often times kittens die for no reason anyone can figure out. It is called "fading kitten syndrome." In this case we will never know where the kittens came from, but chances are the mother was not given proper food while pregnant or nursing. Also, she may not have been the mother of the younger litter.

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:

Victoria Blunt – by Michelle Garbarino
Catalyst for Cats – for helping catch Ray and giving her a real, safe home – by Victoria Blunt
Charlena – the best mail carrier in the world and a true kitty lover! – by Charlene Maltzman
My Mom, who opened our lives to animals – by Barbara Evans
Gerry Place – by Stuart Sato
Tom Snow – by Richard V. Salotti
Nellie Wyse, and **Nick** and **Sharon Priestor** – by Patricia Massette

In Remembrance of:

Dick Barclay – a WWII and Korean Bronze Star Veteran – by Randi Fairbrother
Bella* – by Evelyn and Walt Chezum
Bella*, the Official Greeter at the Telson Compound – by Randi Fairbrother.
Billy the Kid – by Dan and Nancy George
My beloved **Bootie** – by Elly Wyatt
Carrie and Joaquin – by Marlene Maes Mills
Friend – by Lessie Sinclair Nixon
George – my beloved furry baby (I loved him so much) – by Mary Roscoe
The Stevenson's Kats, past and present - by Susan and Hal Stevenson
Morgan Kolyn and Poochie – by Robert McDuff and Marsha Harris
Midgett (Sweetie Pie) – by Mitchell, for 17 years of

purrs

Noelle (my beloved cat) – by Eileen Carroll
Orange Baby–Bjorn–Cosmo–Bubba – by Maureen Lynch
Pirkel Jones – a shy kitty by Terry Fountain
Mr. President, a gentle cat who knew how to share and who only gave joy – by Barbara Hilaire
Rodney, our dear Maine Coon Cat – by Barbara Peterson
Sam, the magnificent cat – by Dr. Zia Isola
Snowy by Kathi D. Backus
Sparky and Rambo – by Dan and Maria Carmean
Sugar – by Rene Menom, Jr.
Sweet Pea and Quantro – by Bernard and Lynne Borderre
Tawney – a good surrogate mom for Sugar Bear and Honey
Zelda and Needlepoint – by Nell Abercrombie
Birgit Kristina Nyman Romasanta – by Dr. and Mrs. Robert Bowen, Ms. Ida N. Burnam, Perri V. Harcourt, Gurli Harmann, Islay Investments employees, Don and Rose Louie, T. Marquette, Dick, & Sandra Moss, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Novak, Ogilvy Hill Insurance, Mark and Barbara (Kassity) Rubino, Greater Santa Barbara Lodging Association, R .J. Spann

***Update:** On Feb. 28—three and a half months after she disappeared and 16 miles from home—Bella was found when a team of ResQcats volunteers converged in an area in Goleta where Bella had been sighted. While passing out flyers, they saw her. She darted into a thick bougainvillea patch, where they set a trap baited with tuna. By the time they posted more flyers and set a second trap and returned to check on the first trap, there she was, safely captured. Ravenously hungry, she is recuperating in her enclosure where she will stay for several days. We are all very happy to have the Official Greeter back..



Catalyst Cuties

Ranger naps with a compliant Maverick (left), while Sheba (right) basks in a little human affection. All of these beautiful cats were at one time counted as “stray,” “abandoned,” or simply “unwanted.” Catalyst works to make every cat a wanted cat.



Updates: *Catalyst Action & Related Issues*

Santa Maria – Volunteers Needed

The new shelter in Santa Maira continues to be in need of volunteers, especially now that kitten season will be soon upon us. The shelter is a big improvement for the community, and it is now up to the people of the community to become participants in helping the many animals who are brought in. 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.

Volunteer Opportunities

Catalyst also needs trappers, fosters and transporters, even places to hold cats for pre and post op surgery. Call 685-1563 if you can help in any capacity.

Training Workshop

Catalyst held a workshop at the new Santa Maria shelter for potential volunteer trappers, fosters, and transporters in February.



Stacy Crump, volunteer coordinator for the Santa Maria shelter, explains fostering for potential volunteers. Landa Parisi, right, and Randi Fairbrother assisted with trapping procedures.

Humane Mouse Traps

We were given several humane mouse traps. They are available for loaning out if anyone is in need of them. Call Randi at 685-1563.

Winter Lining

For a warm bed for outdoor cats, line the bed with straw. Blankets and towels hold the moisture; therefore, it is not as warm as straw. Place the bed out of the wind and rain.

Note to Supporters

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

Grants

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

Also, the **Wendy P. McCaw Foundation** has generously granted us money for food and supplies for ferals and 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.

Board Members

We are sorry to lose Joanne O’Roark as a board member. As a charter member she has served us faithfully for many years, and we extend our appreciation to her for many years of service.

We welcome Amy Orozco to the Board. She works for the Coastal View, and she will help with publicity.

Membership Renewals

Please note the date on your address label. It should indicate the date of your last donation. *Catalyst for Cats* very much appreciates your yearly membership renewal—and the cats do also!

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 areas.
- Feeders for Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Santa Ynez
- 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. 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

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.

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



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