



Catalyst for Cats

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

NEWSLETTER

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From the Founder

Winter's disasters reveal a community that cares

Our most heartfelt appreciation for the heroic efforts of our first responders during the December fires in our community. My son took me on a tour of several of the burned-out areas. It gave me a sense of the enormity of their task and the dangers and risks they faced. There is no doubt they put their lives in danger. Homes were saved despite the fire coming right up to patios in some cases.

How did our cats do? One group of three cats of a long-standing colony on the Santa Barbara/Ventura, County line survived the fire initially but suffered smoke inhalation and did not survive. They had been well-cared for and enjoyed a life of freedom and comfort for many years,

and we are very sorry for the loss. They were excellent mousers and will be remembered fondly. They have been replaced with another group from the "relocation pool."

Most of our feral cat colonies are in the North County and even though some were in danger from the smoky skies and falling ash, they seemed to have survived with minimal effects such as eye irritation.

A month later,

January 9, the devastating floods came to wreak such havoc and tragic loss of life. Again the community came together—dispatchers, police, law enforcement, businesses, animal groups, family and citizens. Many are still struggling and moving on as best they can.

Even though we have curtailed our TNR and foster/adoption services, our feeding of hundreds of cats daily continues as well as the Tiny Tim Fund for medical care. As our colonies age additional medical care is required.

June is the month we take our census, which will be reported in the next newsletter. We continue to need your support. It has taken decades of dedicated effort

in the struggle for other groups to join us regarding the feline overpopulation problem. I'm happy to say visible progress is being made toward the goal of making every cat a wanted cat.

Our best wishes to everyone for recovery after the tragic events and hopes for fewer demands during the impending "kitten season."

Randi Fairbrother



Feline Disaster Victims: This is one of the three cats mentioned above who perished from smoke inhalation resulting from the Thomas fire. They formed a long-standing colony of well over 10 years. They lived a long and useful life as mousers, taking pleasure in hunting, chasing, and napping in the sun, yet were cared for with food, water and affection. Their owners, Josh and Dana Haggerty, describe them as really great cats, but report the new ones we've provided are working out well and seem happy in their new home.

In Appreciation

🐾 **Christine Fedeli** – for accounting assistance. And, it should be noted, Christine adopted our first congenital glaucoma kitten. She named her Bugs, and she is doing well at age 17 years and enjoying life.

🐾 **Those who fostered and opened their homes to pets during our winter of natural disasters** – Ours is a special community. So many animal groups are to be commended for their care and concern for the animals during the emergency situations caused by fire and flood. It only took a call to Animal Services and they arranged for personnel to go out in the field to water and feed stranded animals such as chickens, horses, cats, bunnies, etc. What a blessing for the animals and those concerned for their safety. We know one of our ferals from Montecito benefited from these efforts.

🐾 All three of the **County Shelters (Lompoc, Santa Barbara and Santa Maria)** – for their heroic work under such difficult circumstances.

🐾 **ASAP** (Animal Shelter Assistance Program) – Despite having already accepted more than 40 felines from Houston, TX when Hurricane Harvey hit, they were then faced with taking in many more local cats. Even the lobby was overflowing with cages, one piled upon another. No one was turned away.

🐾 **Santa Barbara Humane Society, RESQCATS, BUNS** (rabbits), **Equine Assistance and Evacuation Team, SB Wildlife Care Network, Shadows Fund, Animal Rescue/Wildlife Team**, as well as others not mentioned – these various dedicated rescue groups all performed vital humane services at a time of need.

🐾 **Marci Kladnik** for her excellent nursing care of Bootsy. Without it a seriously injured *Catalyst* cat would not have survived (*see “Bootsy’s Odyssey” on page 4*).

🐾 **Mauren Lynch** and **Pet House** in Goleta – for several food donations

🐾 **Debbie Merry** – Our extraordinary volunteer for *Catalyst* relocated to Florida about a year ago. There she continues to promote the importance of spay/neuter. Thus far, she has rescued and TNR’d several cats, cleaned up an area of breeding felines in a mobile home park, and is preparing to move on to the next. Presently she is fostering a mom with an adorable litter of four. It has been a loss for us, but a gain for them. Thank you Debbie for your continued dedication to the welfare of felines.

Tributes & Memorials

In Honor of:

My beloved Charley – by Charlene Maltzman
Chloe, our 8-lb. girl we have the privilege to live with thanks to *Catalyst*. She has her own routine, and though she doesn’t often cuddle, she entertains us on the other side of the glass door—a part of the family each night—and enriches us every day of our lives. – by Sharon and Richard Kline

Lois Waldref on her 90th birthday – by Randi Fairbrother

Randi, my very special friend from childhood – by Ethel Barclay

Randi and her years of devotion – by Pamela Van de Veer (Chuck too)

Rufus – by Barbara Calado

Victoria Blunt – by Michelle Garbarino

In Memory of:

Bashful Cat – by Lynn Dow

Buster and **Romeo**, in my heart everyday – two very special *Catalyst* cats – by Allison Coleman

Itty Kitty – by Wilma Titus

Grace Tapia – by Irene Kasper

Lacey and the **Corgi** who loved **Xena**, her cat – by Peggy Greer

Max and **Lilly** – by Barbara Calado

Raven – Victoria’s special feral feline – by Michelle Garbarino

Sammy Homer Dickens – by Nan Cisney

Scooter, Blondie, Mommy, Daddy, Cookie – by Jill Kent – When Mom delivered a litter in her backyard, Jill kept the whole family together, even Dad.

Sister Sister, who lived for 21 years – by Barbara Evans

Sol and **Enana** – by Carol Moir

Zoe, who was sweet despite being a feral. We were able to pet and love her, which gave us comfort that she experienced that before she passed – by Amy Smith, Elizabeth and *Catalyst*

Amanda Lumsden, DVM (March 12, 1971 – February 9, 2018) It is with great sadness we learned of Amanda’s passing. She was as kind as she was beautiful. She made “out in the field” house calls for our ferals in need without hesitation.

Pat Massette, Cat care pioneer – by Nick Priester (*For an extended memorial, see page 6.*)

Stitch loses an eye, but gains a loving home

By Marci Kladnik

As it usually happens, the request for emergency help began with an early morning phone call...

A friendly cat with a severely injured eye had wandered onto a Tepesque farm. Since the farm was in the middle of nowhere and the cat was tame, we can only assume that this poor guy was dumped to fend for himself. Besides the blinded eye, he sported several healing scratches from having tangled with another animal. At least he was neutered.



Thanks to Catalyst's Tiny Tim Fund Stitch is headed for better things.

I prepared a cage for him in my garage and made

arrangements with Dr. Brenda Forsythe to examine the cat the following day under the *Catalyst's* Tiny Tim Fund. As expected, she performed surgery to remove the punctured eye, but pronounced him fit otherwise.

I had the pleasure of fostering Stitch during the first week of his recovery while the young woman who had brought him to me finished her work on the farm. Heather planned on taking the cat home with her to Humboldt, which was thrilling news for us. This kitty deserved a loving home!

Stitch was very mellow. He loved everyone who came to pet him, purring up a storm during his confinement and seemingly not even bothered by the fact that he was caged! He had no trouble with dogs or other cats, so we had high hopes that he would be accepted by Heather's resident cat when they met. The outcome was even better yet, as Stitch and Heather's boyfriend's cat became best buddies. Heather reports of the three, "They're seriously becoming one little happy family, it makes me melt."

Oh how we love happy endings!

Managing a feral cat colony?—here's how it rolls

By Diane and Mark Poudrier

Recently I was asked how I keep track of the more or less thirty mostly feral cats at our home-based colony. I'll start with a little background: Our home in Guadalupe is situated on a two-and-a-half parcel lot and is completely enclosed by a six-to-seven-foot high wall and gate.

How did we accumulate so many cats when we never had pets? When we visited the property prior to purchase, a light-colored long-hair domestic cat usually greeted us. We named him Fluffy, and after we took possession of the property, Fluffy (who looked cared for) would visit us and bring friends into our yard that did not look so cared for. We didn't know until much later that the owners of the abutting property had a couple of dogs and many cats. When the wife passed, about four months prior to our arrival, the widower stopped feeding them except for the dogs and two of the cats.

As the cats became thinner and thinner, we put food out and contacted Randi with *Catalyst for Cats* for guidance. We commenced to TNR any cats that

showed up on our property. Not one had been neutered. And they kept coming, especially in the rainy season. We think the seasonal agricultural workers left them behind when returning south, crossing the border for the holidays or, as the recession deepened, relocating back to familiar settings. These were probably their kittens that were now grown.

The new cats and kittens that made their way over our wall were starving and frequently sick. We fed and eventually TNR'd all of them. Over the years we have TNR'd 130 to 140 cats in our yard alone and another 60 to 70 scattered throughout Guadalupe.

Each cat TNR'd is released the following morning after spending the night in a covered trap. They are then placed on our back patio, where the colony members check out the new arrival(s). I then feed the colony and partially uncover the trap, allowing the newcomers to observe the colony calmly feeding and socializing.

After a few minutes, I open the trap and it is decision time. Almost always the cat(s) bolt to the end of

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Bootsy's Odyssey

The tale of a near fatal encounter with a bobcat, two major surgeries, and a miraculous recovery

Story and Photos by Marci Kladnik

About eight years ago a kitty mom wandered onto the Nojoqui Farm with three teenage kittens. One of them was Bootsy. The whole family was people-friendly so the workers and staff welcomed them as mousers and began to feed them regularly.

Unfortunately, none had been "fixed" when they showed up so *Catalyst for Cats* was contacted for help with that and vaccinations. Afterwards the cats were returned to the farm because it was a safe place with shelter and where they would be fed. It was safe until just recently when a pair of bobcats came onto the property.

During February 2018 some of the working cats began not showing up for meals. The first weekend in March, it was Bootsy that didn't show up for dinner or for breakfast the next day. That evening she was found hiding in a truck nursing severe wounds.

Belinda Burns, *Catalyst* V.P., brought

her to a holding cage and called the vet in the morning. When she was told there were no openings until Friday, Belinda called me for help. Luckily I was able to get an appointment with Dr. Brenda Forsyth at the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital for the following day.

Tuesday morning I picked Bootsy up and drove her to the appointment. As I drove I noticed a foul odor coming from her carrier. The smell was coming from her mouth and throat which were filled with necrotic tissue, the result of several puncture wounds and shredding which had happened during her attack. There were also puncture wounds on the top of her head and cheek that were hidden by her black fur. Obviously a bobcat had caught Bootsy by the head! There

was yet another gash on her white belly. One can only imagine the struggle that occurred and the fact that Bootsy got away is nothing short of miraculous.

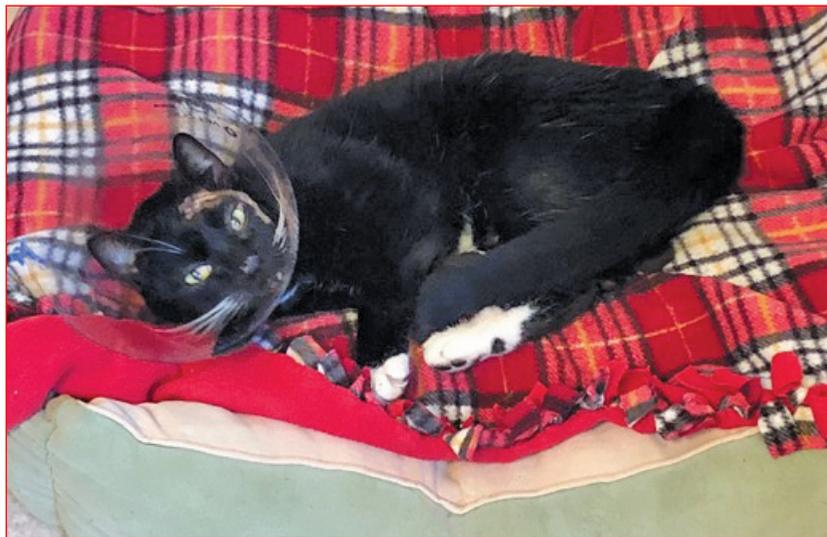
But now she was fighting for her life again. Dr. Brenda did some major and fancy surgery, but was not very hopeful that the stitches inside the cat's mouth would hold. The dead tissue had gone all the way to the jawbone, and there was so little viable tissue left to suture to that the vet was forced to stitch to Bootsy's lower lip. I could tell by the sound of Dr. Brenda's voice when she called me that she wasn't

sure if Bootsy would survive. None of us were optimistic, but we had to try. I brought her home with a bag full of meds and set her up in my upstairs bathroom, prepared to care for her for as long as needed.

Bootsy was always in her crate when I went in to check on her, but she was quick to purr in response to my gentle stroking. She was an

easy patient, never fighting as I syringed meds and nutrients into her sore mouth or stuck large gauge subcu needles under her skin to administer fluids to ward off dehydration. All seemed good and she appeared happy, making biscuits on her soft bedding whenever I was in the room. Each day she seemed a bit stronger and I began to have hope.

Several days after surgery, abscesses on her head developed at the sites of the scabbed-over punctures, and I took her back to Dr. Brenda. Once again Bootsy underwent surgery and came home with a very bad haircut, a partially shaved head and two new lines of stitches. There was an additional new cut between



***Mighty Mouser:** After about eight years of mousing on a North County farm, Bootsy had a run-in with a bobcat that left her at death's door. Emergency surgery at Orcutt Veterinary Hospital gave her a fighting chance at survival.*

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Bootsy, Orcutt's Dr. Brenda (and the author) beat difficult odds



A Most Patient Patient: *Bootsy's initial treatment focused on wounds to her mouth and throat, but punctures on the top of her head and cheek required a second surgery. After three weeks of intensive nursing care by Marci Kladnik, the stitches came out and success was declared by Dr. Brenda Forsyth.*

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the two lines of stitches made in order to relieve the tension on the skin and allow her left eye to close.

The good news was that Dr. Brenda had found healing inside the mouth despite the fact that a couple of stitches had torn loose. I could tell she seemed more

Everyone at Orcutt Veterinary Hospital was in awe that this was the same cat I had brought in at death's door three weeks prior.

hopeful that Bootsy might survive, but she wasn't out of the woods yet.

On March 27, she had been in my care for 22 days and was finally getting her stitches out! Everyone at Orcutt Veterinary Hospital was in awe that this was the same cat I had brought in at death's door three weeks prior. As we left, I thanked Dr. Brenda for saving Bootsy and not just suggesting she be put down. Dr. Brenda commented, "This made my day!" Well, it had made mine as well.

Bootsy was now released to eat wet food, not just the cat food "soup" and baby food I had been giving her. She showed her approval by licking her plate clean at every meal so I fed her several times a day

as she'd been on a rather restricted diet for so long and I'm sure was hungry. She still had to wear a rigid E-collar for another week or so, but she took that in stride as she had with the rest of her care.

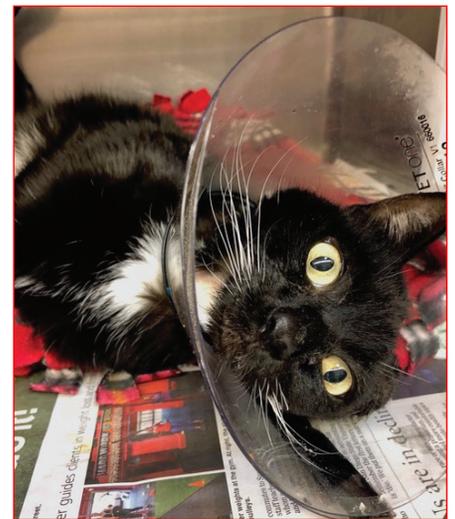
Now she actually showed some interest in exploring rather than just lounging in her big comfy bed all day, so I removed the baby gates in the bathroom doorway and gave her access to my office while I worked at the computer. I wished I could keep her, but at least she would not be returning to the farm!

Four days after being declared out-of-the-woods, I got the wonderful news that ASAP would accept her for their adoption floor. It was a difficult drive down to Santa Barbara for us both because Bootsy and I had bonded over the last three weeks. As we passed by Nojoqui Farm I cracked the windows so she could get a last whiff of "home." She actually stood up in her crate as we drove by. She knew where she was!

Bootsy is permanently retired as a mouser and deserves to be pampered for the rest of her days as an indoor-only kitty. I'm afraid I may have spoiled her by offering baby food, but I thought she deserved treats after what she'd gone through.

We are very grateful for Dr. Brenda's outstanding surgical skills and for ASAP, who took Bootsy in for their adoption floor after she was released from care. She was adopted the first weekend in May, and I am overjoyed by the news!

As an amusing footnote, the whole time I had Bootsy I thought she was a HE. I had been told the cat was a neutered male so never bothered to look! ASAP did, and I had to edit "his" story.



Recovery & Retirement: *With recuperation nearly complete the good news came through that ASAP would accept Bootsy for showing to potential adopters in Santa Barbara.*

Colony management explained

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the yard up and over the wall. After about three days about half of them return, and within another three days most of the others also return and become members of the colony.

I place the new members in one of three groups—A, B, or C. Group A consists of the cats that stay on our property primarily and show up consistently for both morning and evening feedings.

Group B cats spend more, or even most, of their time on the other side of the wall. These cats always show up for the evening feeding and tolerate my presence as long as I do not approach them.

Group C cats may or may not show up for the evening feeding, if at all. They are very wary when eating. There is movement both within and between the groups. And there are exceptions in each group.

All the cats in groups A and B, and some in group C have been given names, but none are house cats.

The colony has been stable with about 30 members for 7–8 years. Of course, some come and go, and what happens on the other side of the walls is generally not known. But not always.

Ferals are wary, but recognize a safe zone with food and shelter. However, the lost, abandoned or abused house cats often do not have the survival skills and may not recognize a dangerous critter. We assume that was what happened to Shadow, one of our favorite cats, who was mauled by a pit-bull in the area, and most certainly to other colony members. Randi reminded us that dealing with ferals is not for the faint hearted, and we have to accept that we do the very best we can. Still, it is strange we have never found a deceased cat on our property (knock wood). After the initial influx of cats to the colony 7–9 years ago, we have maintained an annual turnover of only 3–4 cats. We know our efforts are effective as we have not had a new kitten show up in five years, though about two weeks ago a juvenile showed up and will be TNR'd shortly.

Each colony member has his/her own story and personality. Even the identical twin male tabbies with white bibs and socks act the same except with me. Friek is very friendly and patiently waits for my attention, while Frak just keeps his distance.

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Memorial

Pat Masette: A True Cat Person

By Nick Priester

Sharon (my wife) and I first came to know Pat Masette when she volunteered to help with the cats I fed at the Holiday Inn in 1977. The *Santa Barbara News Press* at the time covered this activity in an article, “No Room at the Inn,” because of pressure from neighbors regarding the many stray cats.

Pat, Adeline Bunke (head housekeeper at the Inn) and Emil DeLoreto all helped financially to neuter the cats. All have now passed.

We adopted some of these homeless felines to others and kept the rest ourselves. Pat continued to feed Hope, the last remaining cat at the Inn until we succeeded in capturing him and reunited him with the rest of his family into our home.

Pat was a true “cat person,” always willing to put herself out to help any feline. And, not surprisingly, she also stepped up in protecting similarly situated cats at the Co-Op where she lived.

She was a faithful friend of felines everywhere and supported the Cat Society in Indiana, where she was from originally, as well as our local Humane Society, ASAP, and the ongoing efforts of Randi Fairbrother’s creation *Catalyst for Cats*. She never hesitated to take in a stray and loved pampering them.

When Sharon had a fall and spent eight weeks in recovery at a convalescent hospital, she and Pat became true friends. Pat called Sharon every evening and on occasion joined me when I visited her.

Her last cat, Molly, was the love of her life. It seemed that after Molly disappeared and her older sister died, Pat slowed down. We are sorry to lose such a good feline benefactor as well as a personal friend.

Editor’s note – *Trapping and “fixing” stray felines was almost unheard of in 1977. Those involved in this venture were way ahead of their time. This was done almost 15 years prior to the establishment of Catalyst for Cats.*

When Pat gathered enough gruel for ferals, I’d pick it up for delivery to Santa Maria colonies as a treat for them. Whenever I stopped by she always greeted me with an offer to sit down, relax and enjoy a cup of fresh coffee.

— Randi Fairbrother

Calicos and Torties—Can you spot the difference?

By Amy Orozco

Because of their colorful coats with striking patterns, calicos and tortoiseshell cats are standouts among domestic cats, but do you know the difference between the two? Many people don't. The difference is in the colors of their coats.

A calico cat has a three-color combination of white, black, and orange (technically red). Calicos are often referred to as tri-colors. A tortoiseshell cat, or "tortie," sports a two-color coat and doesn't have white fur. Torties often have brindle or mottled coats. As color is in the eye of the beholder, some may describe the coats of a calico or a tortie as blue, cream, cinnamon, brown, ginger, and so on.

Remember, the terms calico and tortoiseshell/tortie refer to the pattern and color(s) of a cat's coat. They have absolutely nothing to do with a cat's breed. Any domestic longhair or shorthair cat can be a calico or tortie, including purebred ones.

For the most part, calicos and torties are female. There are

two X chromosomes: XO for orange and XB for black. Only one is passed to the next generation. In the very unusual case of a male calico or tortie birth, the father probably had a rare extra X chromosome.

And what about that famous calico or tortie catitude? A 2015 study from the veterinary school at UC Davis

indicates that cats with calico and tortie coat characteristics do have a more challenging personality than their counterparts. Believed to be the first to look at the correlation between coat characteristics and behavior, the study is based on answers from 1,200 cat owners rather than observations of the scientists conducting the experiment.

Calicos and torties have long had the reputation of being unpredictable, unfriendly, feisty, and prone to biting, scratching, and hissing.

Catalyst for Cats doesn't necessarily subscribe to the challenging personality theory of calicos and torties. It does, however, contend that a neutered cat is a contented cat. And that goes for all cats, calicos, torties, and otherwise.



Compare & Contrast: Ava (top), a Catalyst for Cats rescue from Santa Maria, has the classic characteristics of a tortoiseshell cat. Nella (below), with her abundance of white fur, sports the markings of a calico. She also had the mythical personality of a tri-color cat.



Feral colony management

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The cat most difficult to understand is Tigger. Tigger is a smallish, light-striped ginger with a big personality. We suspect he was an abused house cat that was eventually abandoned. The first two times that he showed up, six months apart, he was skeletal and had been TNR'd through County Animal Services. He did not stick around. The third time he showed up he was still skeletal and this time exhibited a huge abscess on his cheek nearly the size of his head. We took him to

the Orcutt Veterinary Hospital, afraid he might be beyond help. Thankfully, the vet assured us Tigger would be OK and then asked, since he was a *Catalyst* cat, did we want him neutered? Yes, much to our and Randi's surprise this was an issue! Tigger had somehow fallen through the cracks, and the surgery had never been done, which explained why he had disappeared and returned with an abscess. After being neutered, Tigger disappeared for only one day and has since been a full-time member of group A colony.

Alas, with a TNR'd colony stability is the norm.



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!!