



Catalyst for Cats

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

NEWSLETTER

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From the Founder

We're all getting older, but the cats are still hungry!

I hope the worst is behind us regarding Covid and that healing has begun. My heart goes out to those who suffered so many difficulties and the loss of loved ones.

As spring approaches our community is beginning to come together again, working to improve the lives of animals after a severe setback due to veterinary clinics closing their doors or limiting services.

As for *Catalyst*, after several decades of financial strain, burnout, and expected aging of both our volunteers and cats, we have regrettably discontinued our successful Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) efforts as well as managing the neutering of hundreds of cats annually. We've also ended our fostering and adoption programs. However, we continue our commitment to provide food and medical care for the many remaining colonies that our volunteers oversee. We also provide

medical care from our Tiny Tim Fund for those in need.

Presently we sustain over 35 colonies in the County, ranging from two to sixteen members each. We are fortunate that when able, some people take over full financial responsibility for "their" colonies.

As planned, as time goes by the numbers in these colonies diminish through attrition. Even though most of these cats have been to the vet only once in their lives—when neutered—they often live into their late teens and beyond.

For all our stable groups of felines and their many individual success stories, we sincerely thank our donors. It warmed my heart to receive your notes and good wishes during the holiday season. We are blessed by your support and kindness. May the remaining year be good to you.

Randi Fairbrother

Lovable 'foster fail' Dodger hits a home run despite a missing limb

By Amy Smith

He came to us in June of 2020 to foster with his four other litter mates from VIVA in Lompoc. He had a problem with his back left foot that never developed properly. We named him Dodger.

He was our first tripod baby, weighing in at only 9 ounces—smaller than all the other kittens.

Near the end of fostering, though, we decided to



keep him. What a joy! Our other foster fail, Tig, took a liking to him. She loved playing tag under the bathroom door with him when he was small. Tig is a year older and she learned to love him, showing him the ropes of his new home.

Dodger has adapted quickly to his missing back foot and is as quick as any kitten. He loves fetching and doing anything that makes him work for his food. He grooms me on occasion as we watch TV. It's happy ever after for this little guy.



Photos by Amy Smith

In Appreciation

There are many ways to show kindness to animals, and we are most grateful to both large organizations and individuals who are making things better.

🐾 **The Santa Barbara Humane Society** and **Santa Maria Valley Humane Society**, now merged into one entity, have both reinstated their TNR spay/neuter programs. On Tuesdays through Saturdays in Santa Barbara and generally three days per week in Santa Maria they accept feral cats in traps for spay/neuter surgery at no cost, which includes an ear tip, rabies vaccination and flea treatment.

Cats need to be at the clinic at 7:30 a.m., with pick-up at 2:30 p.m. For those planning to trap it's best to give them a heads up, but no reservations are needed.

This is by far the most efficient way to deal with feline overpopulation, and we could hardly ask for better service than that.

🐾 **Melissa Muñoz**, who started feeding and rescuing felines many years ago while still in high school, has been feeding a colony of cats at a large apartment complex for many years. Only a few remain now, and earlier this year she relocated this FIV positive Siamese male and adopted him



into her home. No more cold nights for this guy as he sleeps with her. Despite his temporary stay in a relocation cage, he sends Melissa his deep appreciation.

🐾 **Amy Smith** – with her organizational skills she wears many hats and excels in whatever she sets out to do. She distributes monthly food allotments, fosters, traps, and generally troubleshoots.

🐾 **Kia Becket** – for successfully rescuing a litter of kittens in the Santa Ynez Valley and TNR-ing the neighborhood mom after this, her second litter. She also managed to TNR an older male and, along with **Belinda Burns**, is presently working on a couple of feral moms with litters in the Buellton area.

🐾 And thanks to the **many dozens of feeders** who lovingly care for their colonies each day.

Tributes & Memorials

In Honor of:

Belinda, Randi and **14 ferals cats** from a large local ranch – by Mary Heyden.

Gamma, Daisy and **Daphne** – by Charlene Maltzman
Maja, Macho, Sol, and **Falana** – by Carol Muir

In Memory of:

Button, who was as cute as one by Kay Harrison

Mr. Bjorn, a 24-year-old cat by Karen Fick

Charley and **JJ** by Charlene Maltzman

Carol Donovan, a Santa Barbara supporter and feeder from the very beginning by *Catalyst for Cats*

Marble, Van Gogh, Rocky, Romero and **Buster**, forever in my memory by Allison Coleman

Jack Moir by Carol Moir

Jerry, He passed with his daughter Amber and long-time partner Cathy by his side. A carpenter by trade, one of his last acts was to build feeding stations for Cathy's feral group. Bittersweet, he left this world in his time and his way. Loved and desperately missed by Cathy Ferrell.

Sally Homer by Nan Cisney

Sami, On April 1, 2021 I lost the love of my life, He was a gentleman and the sweetest, most caring, kindest man I have ever met. I will keep him in my heart forever. by Landa Parisi

Sweet Pea by Lynne and Buddy Borderre

T.J. by Martin Thruston

Trouble and **Precious, B,T,T** by Richard Wilson

Letters

Still Connected by Cat Memories

In our previous issue we told the story of a long-standing colony in the UCSB/Isla Vista area lovingly cared for by Carl Anderson. He sent us the following letter from Florida, where he has relocated after the last of his colony passed:

Dear Randi,

I hope you are well. Florida and retirement are wonderful. I enjoy the fishing, weather and the friendly people. Thank you for your help with my five cats. I miss them very much.

I hope and pray I am united, or at least reunited for a short time, in the afterlife. I loved them so much.

Anyway, they are always in my thoughts.

Always,

Carl

Signals from the past still communicate basic truths

Beginning in the 1880s up through World War II, men on the road without a permanent residence—known then as “hobos”—made a practice of placing graphic markings on buildings, fence posts, sidewalks, bridge abutments, railroad trestles and side equipment to aid others of their kind in finding help or steering them clear of trouble.

These signs and symbols, usually made with chalk or coal, let others of their brotherhood know what to expect in the vicinity.

This system of markings in code, through which they communicated useful information and warnings to their fellow knights of the road became the stuff of an early 20th Century romantic depiction of a wealthy nation’s itinerant and dispossessed.

There were dozens of signs, meaning things such as “dishonest man,” “can sleep in barn,” “easy mark,” “wealthy,” “food for work,” “bread,” “good for a handout,” etc.



This one means “kind-hearted lady.” Someone gave it to me years ago and I finally placed it next to my front door. —*Randi Fairbrother*

He’s sexy and he knows it!



Photo by Amy Smith

I called him Green Eyes when he presented himself last month at one of our feeding stations as an intact tame cat. He is about a year old with quite a sweet personality. After a visit to PETS Hospital: ER/Urgent Care in Orcutt for treatment for an injured paw and, of course, neutering, he is now ready for adoption from the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society (adoptions@smvhs.org).

—*Cara Houghton*

30 Years of Improving Cats’ Lives

Thirty years ago this spring I TNR’d my first cat colony in Santa Barbara. And what a thrill it was. Berka Smock showed me the ropes. How did that happen? Over the years, many others joined in the quest to improve the lives of felines (as well as other animals) and by working together the result has been beyond my dreams. —*Randi T. Fairbrother*

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world—indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead



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