



Catalyst for Cats

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

NEWSLETTER

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From the Founder

It's not paradise here, but we do better than most

We live in an oasis in Santa Barbara County compared to most other communities, but with the perpetual influx of cats and kittens at the shelters and rescue groups many find that hard to believe.

Spring through summer is the most difficult time of the year regarding shelter intake. I receive call after call from people desperately seeking help from Orange, Los Angeles and Kern counties, as well as out of state. I hear the shelter in Bakersfield posts a sign on the door saying they no longer take in any cats, and Animal Control in Orange County told a woman to “just stop feeding the cats,” as though that would stop the breeding. I hate these calls as so many of us do. But sadly that is the norm throughout our nation.

In contrast, if I receive a call asking for help within Santa Barbara County, even though we no longer do large-scale spay/neuter, I can usually refer the person to some group for help. That is what I mean when I say we live in an “oasis.”

When I started TNR in Santa Barbara, it didn't take me long to realize the enormity of the feline overpopulation problem. I remember well attending the first “No Kill” Cat Convention in Colorado over 30 years

ago. I approached the director of the convention and asked why she named it “No Kill” since that was so far from reality. She said it was “a goal.” To me that was like an ostrich hiding its head in the sand, or the way shelters kill healthy animals and call it euthanasia. It softens the reality, but doesn't solve the problem.

Covid set back the ability to spay and neuter, and now we see the repercussions of that. Rescue groups, shelters, clinics, and volunteers in Santa Barbara County are doing their best to help alleviate the problem and strive to make

“every cat a wanted cat.” I am happy to report a generation of newcomers are emerging with new ideas and enthusiasm for dealing with this fixable problem of feline overpopulation.

The *Catalyst for Cats* commitment to feed our remaining colonies, including the added numbers due to Covid, continues. The rising price of food presents a serious additional problem. So many people feel the pain as do the animals.

It continually amazes me

how long these felines live once neutered and given food, water, shelter and value for living on their own terms. If you are in a position to share, we hope you will remember our feral friends.

Randi Fairbrother



Photo by Kelly Fairbrother

Loves Attention: Blue showed up as a stray at Kelly Fairbrother's house. We trapped and neutered him, then relocated him to a horse ranch in Orcutt. He likes being master of his domain and does not tolerate other felines interfering with his job of rodent control.

In Appreciation

There are so many to thank for their time, efforts, and dedication:

🐾 **The feeders**, who get out there everyday—rain or shine—for their waiting colonies.

🐾 The “**Community Cats Group**,” newly organized by ASAP leadership to work as a team throughout Santa Barbara County to improve the lives of those many cats who share our community but not our warm homes. Now offering free spay/neuter TNR services to the public two days per week.

🐾 **Amy Smith**, who does more than her share.

🐾 **Elizabeth** and **Vanessa Maniquez**, a mother and daughter team in Santa Maria, who rescued a mom and her litter (*below*) and then convinced Mom to accept responsibility for a couple of orphaned kittens.



Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth and Vanessa Maniquez

Updates:

Our Endowment Fund

With interest earned from our Endowment Fund during the height of the market, our Board decided to help fund the purchase of the new and larger C.A.R.E4 Paws Spay Mobile. The larger mobile spay/neuter clinic will allow them to continue their high level of assistance to the public and expand their services into Kern County (Bakersfield and Fresno), where the demand for assistance is so desperately high.

We also helped fund Grey Foot Cat Rescue in Ojai with their TNR efforts. They do most of their work in the Ventura and Oxnard areas. We regard this as repayment for the many times Joan Geddis and her group helped us in the past.

Tributes & Memorials

In Honor of

Dave Morris in Carpenteria

Randi and **Kia** for the great work they do – by Kevin and Janeen Beller

The great work **Catalyst** does – by Bob Weber
Cats fostered, adopted and helped – by Allison Coleman

In Memory of

All the Kitties – by Ann Mackuse

Lucia – by James Teague

Nan’s Sammy and **Helen’s Shadow**- by Nan Cisney

Wilma – by Kevin and Janeen Beller

Byron Fairbrother: It is with great sadness that I report my son, age 64, died of a heart attack while participating in a sail boat race in San Diego on St. Patrick’s Day. Thank you for the many cards, calls, flowers and donations – Randi Fairbrother and family.

Byron Fairbrother – by Marci Kladnik

Byron Fairbrother – by Louise Holton of Alley Cat Rescue

Byron Fairbrother – by Diane and Mark Poudrier

Byron Fairbrother – in loving memory from the Sinclair family

P-22, the iconic mountain lion of Los Angeles:

Discovered in Griffith Park at about age 2, and named P-22 for his place in a puma study that tracked 22 cats at the time, this true feral was born in the Santa Monica mountains about 20 miles from Mulholland Drive. Eventually he crossed the 405 freeway and headed east into Los Angeles. He set up camp in the Hollywood Hills, claiming Griffith Park, with its seemingly unending buffet of deer and critters, as his personal playground. His tracking collar showed he spent most of his days napping, prowling and hunting at night.

In 2016 he was the prime suspect in the death a koala at the L.A. Zoo, whose remains were found on a trail leading away from his enclosure. Zoo officials surmised P-22 leaped the fence and made away with his prey.

As his behavior became erratic with attacks on two Chihuahuas in the last weeks of his life, he was captured. During medical treatment it became clear P-22 suffered from various infirmities. He probably attacked the dogs because he found it too difficult to hunt larger prey in his twilight years. He was euthanized December 17, 2022 at age 12.

Thank you *Catalyst* for helping with Tito's dental surgery

By Marci Kladnik

In February my friend Tyler told me, "I normally would not ask others to help me pay for things in my life, but when it comes to my children or my cat, I have no pride. If there's anything you can do to help me afford his surgery, I would be endlessly grateful. Please help me take care of Tito's poor mouth."

With that plea I leaped into action, launching a PayPal fundraiser. Having been a long-time volunteer and board member of *Catalyst* before I moved to Wisconsin, I reached out to Randi in hopes that *Catalyst* could contribute towards this poor cat's upcoming and costly dental surgery.

Tyler had rescued Tito from a terrible situation. The cat was living in total squalor, in a house in California with four humans, three cats, and eight dogs, with trash and animal feces everywhere. Tito's fur was dusty and oily—both easily fixed—but the worst thing was his absolutely horrific breath.

SB County Community Cats Group meets for first time

By Mary Scott

Ten Santa Barbara County cat welfare leaders, fosters, trappers and community cat stakeholders met in Buellton on March 8, 2023, to discuss how to network and provide even better services for the beloved community cats in our county.

Convened by ASAP Cats' Executive Director Jessica Wiebe, who also led the meeting, it was the first time such a group had met. ASAP Cats, C.A.R.E.4Paws, VIVA, and *Catalyst for Cats* were well represented among others. They discussed TNR (trap/neuter/return) issues and the successes and challenges faced not only by community cats in our area, but also by those of working hard each day to make cats' lives better.

Members of the group came out of the meeting with a better understanding of the road ahead and increased awareness of how we can pool resources to improve community cats' quality of life.

Mary Scott is the Director of the ASAP Working Cats Program and lives on the Santa Barbara Mesa with her two rescue cats. She can be reached at workingcats@asapcats.org.



Tyler and Tito, sans teeth but better breath.

Tito's original owner had cared for his mouth on a regular basis, but was forced to re-home the cat temporarily to a friend when she fell on hard times. Although this friend had promised to continue with the dental care, she did not follow through, and Tito's teeth and her home gradually descended into a sorry state.

Tyler had visited the home and met Tito prior to the fetid conditions. They immediately became friends, and it was a bittersweet parting when my friend left.

Several months later Tyler was making plans to move across the country. He stopped by Tito's home again to spend another night, and was absolutely appalled at what he found. His heart broke for Tito and the other animals living in those horrid conditions.

He contacted Tito's original owner and asked if he might have Tito on a permanent basis. He knew that there would be vet bills to deal with, but all he cared about was rescuing this poor cat. His request was granted, and Tito's carrier was added to the baggage in Tyler's car. Cat and man bonded during the long drive from California to their new home in New Hampshire.

Tito was once again clean and his fur smooth, but Tito's horrible breath and near-constant drooling required urgent dental surgery. Tyler knew the cost would be high, but was not prepared for a nearly \$4,000 estimate. Tito needed to have all of his teeth removed because of the neglect he'd suffered.

Many thanks to *Catalyst* for helping with Tito's vet bills. It has made a world of difference to him and quite frankly, saved his life.

How I came to be a cat caretaker —with no previous experience!

By Kristin Kerenkhoff.

I wasn't allowed to have a pet as a child, or most of my adult life, for that matter, since apartments typically won't allow tenants with pets, but I've always been drawn to helping animals, so when I saw five cats sitting in the middle of a dead-end road not far from my house, I pulled over.

There were no houses nearby, just businesses, and none had collars around their necks. Noticing their tipped ears, I assumed they must be a feral colony. They looked healthy, but ran away when I approached.



When I came back to check on them a few days later, I found them lounging around in a nearby field. They looked well-fed, but it was a hot day and I didn't see any water. I went back home to get a bowl and some bottled Alhambra.

So began my journey as a colony caretaker. It's been two and a half years since I took over feeding and watching over this little colony of what turned out to be nine cats.

I'm new at this, but I am totally committed to making sure they have what

they need to survive. Every morning I arrive at their feeding station to fill up their food bowls, refresh their water, and check in with them to make sure they are still healthy.

To keep them warm during the winter months, I've put together six feral shelters from Amazon and filled them with straw. The cats seem to appreciate having a dry place to hunker down in to wait out the rain.

I'm also glad to have met other like-minded people such as [Catalyst collaborator] Amy Smith, who is helping me TNR some kittens who recently showed up at my feeding station.

Keeping track of a feral colony can be stressful and even heartbreaking at times, too, but I feel good knowing I'm making a difference in these cats' lives.



Photos by Kristen Kerenkhoff

Notes from Debbie

Feral cat care looks much the same wherever you find it, east or west

"It took me almost a year to get all the cats in the trailer park spayed, neutered and vaccinated. Surprisingly, out of all the female cats there were only two litters born since I moved in February of 2022. I fostered both litters until they were old enough to go to the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Most of the cats are friendly and starved for attention and a home to call their own. It makes me sad. There are a few other people who will feed the cats in or around their spaces. Most of the people are animal friendly and the ones who are not pretty much leave them alone."



Former Catalyst volunteer Debbie Merry reports from Florida.

To CBD or Not to CBD? That is the Question

Pets may benefit from medicinal cannabis, but it's not regulated and care is advised.

By Amy Marie Orozco

Cannabis as medicine may be making as big an inroad into veterinary science as it is human medical science. Touted as a cure-all wonder drug, CBD for pets requires as much thought, care, and discernment as does cannabis for people. Maybe more, since pets are 100 percent reliant on their humans for care.

Research has indicated that cannabidiol has the following properties: anti-inflammatory, anxiolytic, antipsychotic, antiemetic, and anti-seizure. A cannabis-friendly veterinarian can guide you with diagnosis and dosing.

But like most things, there are pros and cons. Yes, research and studies on CBD use with pets have shown very positive results. On the other hand, the research is very new. Long-term effects can't be known at this point, and there's still a lot of work to be done on dosing amounts and timing.

A Google search will yield an overwhelming amount of data illustrating that veterinarians agree that cannabis can be beneficial for companion animals, yet CBD pet products are not regulated. The medicine may be tainted with pesticides or come from poisonous soil. (The best place to buy CBD for your pet is at a licensed cannabis dispensary.) Also note that though pet

owners claim success with CBD, they could be missing or misinterpreting important signs in animals that could be hurting pets. By the way, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not approve any cannabis for any use in any animals.

Pure versus impure CBD products aren't the only concerns. Pets, particularly dogs, have been known to find and ingest edibles as well as cannabis flowers and leaves. They aren't immune from second-hand smoke, either. Though rare, typical signs of marijuana toxicity in pets include vomiting, a high or low heart rate, lethargy, dilated pupils, and wobbly walking, among other behaviors. If you are concerned about your pet and poison, call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435. Their website, *aspc.org* has a load of very useful information, too.

Keep pets and cannabis separated. Store cannabis goods in a locked drawer or in an upper cabinet well out of reach. If smoking, do so in a different area than where your pet is.

Is CBD right for your pet? The answer to that begins with your research and consulting your veterinarian. It could be the perfect addition to your pet's lifestyle.

(This article originally appeared in *Cannabis by the Sea Magazine*, Winter 2020.)

State funds spay/neuter projects to reduce pet overpopulation

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has awarded \$580,456 for 23 projects to help stop pet overpopulation through spay and neuter services provided by municipalities and non-profit organization in California. Nine projects have received \$398,456 from the Pet Lovers License Plate Grant Program and 15 projects have received \$184,000 from the Prevention of Animal Homelessness and Cruelty Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund.

Funded projects will support spay and neuter activities throughout California, including low-cost spays and neuters for residents in high poverty areas and underserved communities—projects that target frequently-sheltered dog breeds like pit bulls and Chihuahuas, and projects that reduce feral cat colonies in low-income communities through trap, neuter and release programs.

The Pet Lover's License Plate Grant Program is funded with proceeds generated through the sale of specialized license plates through the California Department of Motor Vehicles and wouldn't be possible without the hard work and dedication of the California Spay and Neuter License Plate Fund, Inc.

You can help support the Pet Lovers License Plate Program by purchasing a special interest license plate at your local DMV office or online.

The Prevention of Animal Homeless and Cruelty Voluntary Tax contribution is supported by California taxpayers' contributions. Taxpayers can designate on their tax return a specific amount in excess of their tax liability to be transferred to the Fund to provide additional financial resources for the program.

Projects' abstracts and a list of awards are available online at <https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/SpayNeuter/>



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