



Mews & Purrs

A Feral Cat Rescue Publication

Volume VII Issue 2

April 2016

Statistics:

T-N-R: 0
Intake: 0
Adopted: 4
Need homes: 21

Kitty Kupboard

Food Bank:

2,680 pounds of cat food helped kitties in need during the first quarter of 2016

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Thank you for your support
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All content is as
written by its
original author.

Misinformation by Tami Ritchson

"It's call trap-neuter-return, and it doesn't work," says Ted Williams in his diatribe in National Audubon magazine (2009). "It's nearly as hard to trap cats as it is to herd them ... virtual impossibility of trapping and sterilizing enough cats to eliminate reproduction in a colony ... Alien Predators ... on little cat feet"

In 2013 Peter Marra, of Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, released a study of previous studies, wherein he estimated there were 84 million owned cats in the US; about 40 to 70 % were allowed outside and an estimated 50 to 80 % of those were hunters. He also estimated 30 to 80 million feral/free-roaming cats in the US.

In a 2016 PBS Newshour introduction on PBS.org, Richard Coolidge wrote, "... an estimated 80 million feral cats ..." but neglected to provide a reference for this number. In the PBS Newshour report, Adithya Sambamurthy says, "Traditionally, the only way to deal with this overpopulation was to euthanize them. More than a million cats are killed in animal shelters every year."

The director of one government-funded animal control facility in Montana says, "It's cheaper to euthanize feral cats than it is to spay/neuter and return them."

The above statements and studies range from flimsy justification and questionable research to outright dishonesty, yet they are being presented as facts. Most of them are directly related to the declining bird population in our country and, I suspect, a need to blame it on something besides human development and activities.

Way back in 1949, Adlai Stevenson (then governor of Illinois) understood that, while free-roaming cats were causing some problems, killing them was not a viable solution. The last two paragraphs of his famous Cat Bill Veto read as follows:

We are all interested in protecting certain varieties of birds. That cats destroy some birds, I well know, but I believe this legislation would further but little the worthy cause to which its proponents give such unselfish effort. The problem of cat versus bird is as old as time. If we attempt to resolve it by legislation who knows but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm. In my opinion, the State of Illinois and its local governing bodies already have enough to do without trying to control feline delinquency.

For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93.

continued on page 2

Wish list:

- Loving permanent homes!
- Kitty Kupboard Food Bank donations
- Kitty beds and towers
- Stamps and postage
- Kirkland cat food for shelter/rescue kitties
- Feral Boxes

Be green and help Feral Cats

Donate your empty ink cartridges to Feral Cat Rescue for recycling. Funds from cartridge recycling pay for our newsletter.

Volunteer Opportunities

Feral Cat Rescue needs volunteers who can work independently as:

- Digital video editor
- ABS feral cat recovery box builder
- Proactive foster homes
- T-N-R trap setup and transport to spay/neuter
- Fundraiser and food drive organizer

Misinformation *continued*

Over 60 years later we can see that continued attempts to trap/kill/poison are not a cost-effective method of population control. Each year shelter intake and euthanasia go up, which means the previous year's killing did nothing to lower population. Yet opponents of feral and free-roaming cats have failed to suggest an effective alternative.

It is actually the cat-loving community that has developed an effective solution — Trap-Neuter-Return. Where TNR is practiced consistently (and affordable, accessible sterilization is available to all cats), shelter intake and euthanasia have declined. This means feral cat issues have declined.

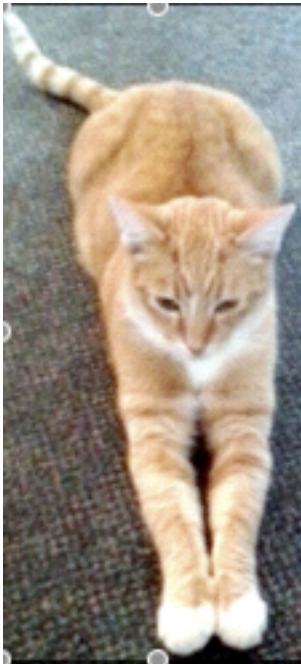
We at Feral Cat Rescue can verify TNR's effectiveness. One colony, originally 22 cats in 2008, is now a colony of six. No new cats have moved into the area. Another colony of 17 cats in 2008 is now just one. In 2007 the largest colony — 75 cats — was immediately reduced by half, because TNR also includes removing, socializing, sterilizing, and adopting out the kittens. Local shelter intake has been reduced to less than a third of its 2006 intake, while the human population has continued to grow.

While we haven't tried herding cats, we do find it's quite possible to trap them and get 100% of a colony sterilized. Sterilized cats still hunt but are not desperately trying to feed their young. They do hold territory so unaltered cats cannot move in and repopulate the area.

Not only does TNR stabilize the free-roaming cat population, it actually reduces it. Within a 10-year period TNR has done more to lower the number of cats preying on our endangered birds than 70 years of trap/kill. TNR has wide support within the community because it does not kill one animal species in favor of another. 🐾

The World According to Robert R Cat

Kari McNinch, *contributor*



Ah sunshine! Glorious sunshine! I write this from the porch rail while watching my little sisters chase bugs in the greening grass. I was tempted to join in a game of chase the yarn for a few minutes. Although, I must say, it may have been the consequence of my cook having found an enormous bag of catnip while cleaning the pantry! Ho Ho!

It's a busy time of year for my staff. They are intent upon doing their spring chores, repairing and cleaning my manor.

Spring always brings a renewal of spirit for me. I know the summer will bring it's share of pitfalls and foibles with company coming and going. But for now I will enjoy my meditation with eyes closed and a purr in my throat. I wish everyone a peaceful happy spring.

Cordially, Robert



A Note from Tami

Yes it's only been three months since our last issue. Oh those magical moments when the stars align! In this issue we are pleased to share a layperson's story of rescue by Dave Berry:

Winter at 7000 feet. Even as far south as Arizona it can be critical for animals, especially if they've been deprived of their natural food-gathering and defense tools. When Holly and I first started seeing the mostly black cat plying the trails he'd made in the snow, we sensed that he'd lost his home. He was out in such awful weather, possibly abandoned and sheltering under decks of the often empty lake-front houses. He was including Holly's house as he "made his rounds", in his odd pussy-footing way. And meowing.



We posted appeals here and there, with description, and asked around. One tip we got was to call Brian, Holly's former neighbor. He said that his marriage had just ended, and that when his wife left he moved with his two young children and two cats to a new house. He further said that he couldn't handle "that cat; too wild! He also mentioned that it had been declawed. The facts began falling into place as we thought of the cat's odd walk, and especially when Holly recalled the summer day that the one child, a boy of about nine, went crying home from *her* front yard, complaining between sobs that he'd been bitten by "Puck", her

late, great, old mellow "Here, rub my belly while you're at it," kind of striped tabby. It was pretty likely that somebody didn't know how to treat "pets".

Holly had already begun putting food out for the stray at the front of the garage, progressing to the front porch. All of this to the considerable dismay of her remaining cat, "Pandora", who, although ancient and quite small would occasionally mount a snarling attack. They did the classic tumbling over and over, but it was much more sound than fury, and "Boston Blackie", as Holly had by now named him, would still enter the garage through the cat door and enjoy some—usually all—of Pandya's food. He had a powerful will to live and love, and our strong sense that he deserved better was almost overwhelming when he'd perch on the snowy front porch railing at night, watching us through the glass as we enjoyed a fire crackling on the hearth.

Pandora couldn't stand his presence, though, and so, interpreting Brian's statement as a "washing of the hands," we decided to see if we could find this waif a home. I brought my large trap—two feet by two, and three feet long—placing it on the porch where he had been feeding. After a while he would eat just inside the trap's "service" door, and finally we placed food just inside the service door but with it shut, which left him only the "trap" door three feet away. With equal parts hunger, confidence, and ...I hate to say...trust, he entered and fed.

Rather than leave it to chance, I had rigged a string from a garage window to the trap. Bam! We got him! I was there quickly, but he had time to butt the cage ends a couple times in his panic. That may account for the downcast head and tear-flooded eyes. But I'm sure I heard "Sonofabitch, more human treachery!" "Sonofabitch" is likely the most derogatory word that we humans ascribe to the mental vocabulary of the cats, depending, I suppose, on their individual experience with the canine world. "Treachery", though, was what I "heard", and the word lay there in the pit of my stomach, motivating me to "right some wrongs". *continued on page 4*



Did You Know ...

- A litter of kittens is called a *kindle*.
- The nose of a cat is ridged in an individual pattern, just like the fingerprint of a human.
- Egyptians shaved their eyebrows as a sign of mourning when they lost a beloved cat.

Quarterly Quote

"What greater gift than the love a cat."
Charles Dickens

Need a program for your next social or business organization meeting? We have one your members might enjoy.

To submit an article for our newsletter, send inquiries to:
director@feralcatrescuemt.org

A Note *continued*

The first thing then was to see if he had a vet, a name, and records of his surgeries. There seemed to be no blood or broken teeth, and so with constant sweet-talk I proceeded to add water-dish and potty-box, bedding, etc., to his new digs.

With my new charge in the back of the pickup, we began making the rounds of the area vets and clinics, two of which were within a mile of Holly's. I would just trot him in, cage and all, plunk it down, explain the situation, and ask if anyone knew him or the man, Brian. We drew a blank, except that some one of these recommended a hospital/rehab/adoption facility, about fifteen miles north. We made about two of these miles when there arose a great yowling in the back, such that I pulled over immediately. It was quite a trauma all around. We were definitely not going any further today, and since the young guy was not such a good traveler, and since his panicky pooping had partially missed the potty-box—and little else—I decided to take him to my place, below the snow-level, for three days where we could socialize, think, and plan



Thankfully it occurred to me to cover the cage for the fifty mile trip, with a blanket. This helped a bunch, though the trip was far from silent. As planned, he had the old Cortez motorhome all to himself, which included both front seats, the bed, and the south-facing windshield area with its padded dash and curtains. When it was time to check on him, he was of course found to be in the cupboard under the sink, drawn up behind the sink-trap. Very silent. In a couple days, though, he was ready for a back-scratch. I had taken a lot of time extricating him from the sink plumbing (it was here I first noticed his incredibly thick coat) as I tried to avoid being bitten, and I'm sure that he appreciated my patience and cajoling. But Boston couldn't stay at my place; no company for him when I was away, plus he'd have no chance outdoors either, having lost his front claws (and toes). And so with the aforementioned socializing well along, we returned to Holly's.

The shell to her new solarium was complete, and so it was decided that Boston could stay in there and have no contact with Pandora. We would feed and scoop for him till he found a new home. It was great fun. He never tired of trying to get out, exploring every possibility. I was putting the ceiling in there, starting at eight feet at each end, and rising to about twelve feet at the middle ("scissor-joists" having been added to the "gable end"). As the work progressed there was an ever longer, deeper cavity for him to hide/explore in. He simply walked up the ladder to the scaffold deck, and from there it was one fluid motion from deck to four-inch window ledge and then up to the latest bit of the tongue and groove. Safe in his own world, twelve feet up.



Now we posted fliers again, this time with pictures. We also were told of a web-based adoption possibility (ELINE?), but heard also that it was used by cat-lovers whose love was maybe gastronomic. By the time we got our blurb agreed with the management, we were already getting e-mails and phone calls, both with the oft-abused "Praise the Lord!", and/or "God bless you and you pet". We let it all expire without responding, mostly clued by the contacts' lack of interest in the "pet's" particulars as they enthused only about its availability. And price. The thing smelled of several different scams; it was nice to be shut of it. Holly and I agreed it was much better returning to the posters, bulletin board, and word-of-mouth.

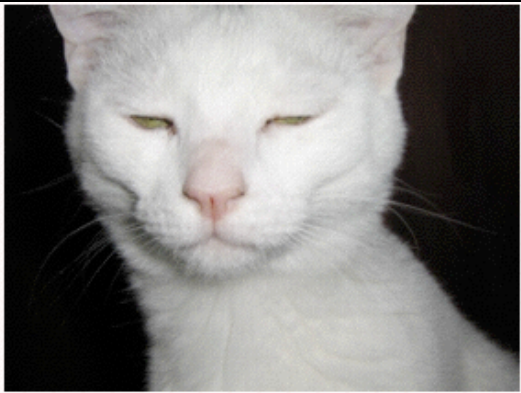
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A Note *continued*

Socializing was going well— Holly was joined by her new guest for a sit-together and back-rub several times a day— although he failed one audition through “timidity with stranger”. Meanwhile, Holly had enquired at her tennis group, resulting in the possibility of a priest adopting, (wasn’t ready just now, maybe later), and Sheri. Sheri said maybe her mother-in-law— who lived with her husband in a nice house/yard, and a quiet, tall pines neighborhood— was a good chance. A few days later Sheri reported that the mother-in-law, Arlene, was very interested, but that the husband preferred a dog. Sheri was sure, though, that an introductory “trial basis” stay of a few days would have Arlene falling in love with Boston, and keeping him.

And that’s exactly the way it worked out. The husband got his dog, and still really likes “Tux”, as he is now known. The dog and cat get along very well, and both are enjoyed by the visiting grandchildren. Dog goes with them when they travel (one trip was for a month), and at those times Holly, sometimes with me along, is Tux’s designated feeder/scooper. Tux does complain a bit on some of our visits; Holly thinks it’s just his pining for his now *complete* happy home. 🐾

Featured Feline



*I know I'm good looking, but
you are interrupting my nap.*

Maya

Maya is four and a half years old. She has been with us since she was eight months old. Her adoptive mom developed respiratory problems, so had to return her to us. Pure white, she makes up for her monochromatic fur with a colorful personality. Funny and vocally expressive, she would love to be queen of her own home. Being all white, Maya needs to be an indoor kitty.

In Appreciation

Thanks to our donors for your generous support during the first quarter of 2016.

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Beverly Frost
Jeannie Bibler
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Kim Buckman
June Jones
Marilynn Taylor
Bob Taylor
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Bill Good
Barbara Giaimo
Howard and Patti Eldredge

In Kind:

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Piggy and Chevy

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About Feral Cat Rescue

Feral Cat Rescue is dedicated to the humane treatment of feral and stray cats. Through TNR, education, spay/neuter, foster and adoption, our goal is to end the needless suffering and killing of unwanted and abandoned felines.

FCR was founded in 2007; we received our 501 (c)3 non-profit status in 2010.

All donations are tax deductible.

Every Cat A Wanted Cat



To contact Feral Cat Rescue:

by mail:
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