



STREET TAILS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FERAL CAT COALITION OF OREGON

July 2004

Issue No. 10

President's Corner

by Brenda Smith, DVM



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It is summer and that means "kitten season," where kitten births are at their highest. For several weeks, I fostered eight underweight

kittens for the Southwest Washington Humane Society. I find myself thinking I should bring home all the kittens that just need more time to grow a little, but I have to balance that urge with my ability to provide them with enough attention and time to make sure they are well cared for.

The FCCO Board is struggling with the same dilemma—wanting to help as many cats as possible without over committing. It is always a struggle to keep expenses down while making sure we provide all the services we feel are important. We have been especially concerned with the economy and rising costs. Something as basic as the increased price of gasoline causes a large cost increase to get the truck to the clinic locations. Your help, be it making a personal donation, helping with fundraising or spreading the word to others, would be very welcomed and beneficial.

We as a Board are asking ourselves if there is some way we should change our program to be the most effective in helping the cats;

asking ourselves what the main priority or focus should be; asking ourselves how we can know or measure the difference we are making. Of course, for every individual cat that has been helped through our program we have made a huge positive impact. But how do we measure what the impact is on the cat population in the areas we serve as a whole? Originally, the founding members focused on providing services to the feral population who were otherwise not receiving veterinary care. By now, we hoped we would see a decrease in the number of cats entering the shelters, but so far that is not the case. We have no way of measuring, however, how many more cats could be entering the shelters were it not for our program. So one of our big Board projects is to set ways to measure the impact the program is making. We hope to eventually see fewer cats in the shelters.

One way we know we are making a difference is that we are on schedule to spay or neuter our 20,000th cat at a clinic this summer! The number of unwanted births and additional cats prevented is almost unimaginable. Look inside this newsletter for more information about the celebration we are planning and find out just how many kittens have been prevented! We thank each and every donor and volunteer who has helped make this incredible milestone possible.

Foundation Support

Recently, FCCO has been the very fortunate recipient of contributions from several different foundations. In April, FCCO received a \$4,000 grant from the Handsel Foundation to purchase new surgical instruments. We had been using most of our instruments for the past 6 to 8 years, and many were wearing out.

Also in April, Whole Foods Market selected FCCO for their Community Support Day where they donate a portion of the day's sales to one nonprofit. In their two years of running this quarterly event, their donation to FCCO was a record at \$2,871! Thank you to everyone who came out and shopped that day!

The Petco Foundation was a major sponsor of the Furball for a second year. In addition, they sent us \$780 for their Spring-a-Pet fundraiser. We are very grateful for their ongoing support and dedication to our spay/neuter mission.

This May we received a \$4,000 donation from the Lindgren Foundation. One of their board of trustees learned about our program, did some follow-up research and was moved to make a donation through the foundation. We are always pleased when new people are introduced to our program and are inspired to make a contribution.

We are thrilled feral cats are now receiving the care and respect they have long deserved.



Story From The Streets

The Colony and Old Tom

A few years ago, we were enjoying a sunny afternoon on our patio when my wife spotted some cats in our greenhouse. Turns out there were 4 starving, half-blind, abandoned kittens! We took them in, made a bed from a large storage tub, and fed them some kitten formula. They thrived, and as soon as they were old enough, we took the tub into the nearest veterinary clinic. The vet saw the tub, and asked what was inside. I said, "4 kittens." He asked, "And why are they here?" and I replied, "Because we don't want 40!" So they were all fixed and got the first of their series of shots, and we took them home. As soon as they were strong enough, we took them back outside, and bought our first (of several, it turns out) hopper-fed pet-food dishes.

Pretty soon, we noticed a lot more than 4 growing kittens partaking of this bounty. The vet got to know me and my "project," and learned of my desire to someday capture "old Tom," the patriarch of this feral clan. The vet had originally kept me to a strict schedule: between 10 am and noon, Tuesdays or Thursdays, to bring them in. He later told me that if I were to ever catch old Tom, to call him at home and he'd come in, any hour or day.

One morning, I noticed Tom slinking out of the pet carrier – turns out he had commandeered it for his bed! That evening, I stopped at the store for some smelly canned cat food. I placed the can inside the carrier and waited. Sure enough, along came Tom. I sat there seemingly oblivious to his approach, and as soon as he was almost entirely inside the carrier, I nudged the door shut. I expected a horrendous howl and a fitful attempt to escape, but he just emitted a single quiet meow every now and then as we made our way to the clinic.

The next day, the vet told me he had not only "fixed" old Tom and given him his shots, but had also extracted some rotted teeth and taken care of various and sundry other infections "on the house"! Upon release, Tom was just as shy (but no more so than before), and I'm happy to say that he lived out the remainder of his days and years well-fed, as healthy as age and infirmity allowed, and as happy as his newfound celibacy allowed. He finally passed last summer, and I actually got to touch him just prior...

By now, we've befriended and cared for about a dozen feral cats, and in the past 4 or 5 seasons, we've had no more additions. Some of them run to greet me when I come home and/or twirl about my ankles like a housecat whenever I go outside. All will let me pet them; some will tolerate being picked up and cuddled - if ever so briefly.

My original goal was to get them each fixed and vaccinated, and then try to adopt them out. But I learned from our local shelter that ferals are not considered adoptable. So we've decided to let them live out their lives in our backyard, knowing they are healthy and well-fed, and with lots of playmates.

P.S. Did I tell you I've never liked cats?

James Van Doren

Calling All Volunteers!

by Caitlin Bennett, CVT

Many of you may know me from volunteering at the clinics. I have been working as a CVT for FCCO for almost 5 years, and now am also working as the Volunteer Manager. We are always looking for interested people to help at our spay/neuter clinics, and outside of our clinics as

well. Our organization can offer a wide range of volunteer opportunities that can be very gratifying and enjoyable. Maybe you volunteered with us a while ago and want to know how to get involved again. Maybe you have a skill that you would like to share with FCCO, but are not sure how. I can help you fit your skills and expertise into our program.

We are seeking veterinary professionals for our clinics including:

- Veterinarians
- Certified Veterinary Technicians
- Veterinary Assistants

In addition, we need help from individuals to assist with non-technical clinic duties as well as non-clinic activities including:

- Reception, transport, cage cleaning and recovery at clinics
- Clinic coordination
- Volunteer coordination
- Phone volunteers
- Fundraising volunteers
- Education and outreach volunteers



Keep us in mind when talking with other cat lovers or veterinary professionals. If you are not able to volunteer, maybe you know someone else who would be interested. If you would like more information, or are interested in volunteering, please contact me, Caitlin Bennett, at 360-837-3817 or caitlinbennett@yahoo.com. FCCO is a volunteer-based organization and we encourage you to share your talents with us. I look forward to hearing from you!



FURBALL *Sequins & Tails*

The Sixth Annual **Furball Sequins & Tails**, held on Saturday, May 8, at the World Forestry Center-Miller Hall, was attended by more than 270 supporters, most in black tie. This record-setting crowd enjoyed the smooth sounds of Matthew Kern on the piano, splendid food from Elephants Delicatessen and a variety of wonderful beverages from Sokol Blosser wines to Tazo Teas.

Ron Pedersen, our emcee, did a wonderful job of keeping the evening flowing—as smoothly as a feral cat clinic! Auctioneer Chris Sheik made sure our fabulous auction items sold for the highest amount possible. And, our Honorary Chair, Elaine Tanzer, owner of Elephants Delicatessen, drew the winning raffle tickets for the much anticipated prize drawings.



The raffle for the Samsung plasma TV brought a very unexpected moment to the evening. When the winner, Dr. Sierra Schneider, came to the stage to claim the grand prize, she told the crowd that while the television was quite fabulous, she would prefer to sell it and donate the proceeds back to FCCO! This was an incredibly thoughtful and generous surprise and we thank Sierra.

The winner of the \$300 gift certificate to Nordstrom was Jodi Krohn. Our volunteer, Sandra Rawlings, sold the winning ticket to her co-worker at Premier Press. Making this all the more special was that Premier Press had very generously donated the printing of our invitations this year!

From our fabulous sponsors to our guests, and from our donors to our volunteers, each person is involved makes a difference and we thank you! When people work together amazing things happen, and the **Furball** is a wonderful example of how our feral friends benefit when we come together.



20,000 CATS!!!!



In August, FCCO will neuter or spay our 20,000th cat! This is a huge accomplishment for our program and a great milestone for feral cats. In just nine short years, this mostly volunteer organization has reached more feral cats in more cities than any other feral cat program in our country! We can all be proud of this.

Can you imagine what 20,000 cats looks like? It sure is hard to comprehend. A few correlations might help. If the average length of a cat is 30 inches, and they were all lined up nose to tail, they would cover 9.5 miles! That is roughly the distance from Portland to Lake Oswego or the equivalent of crossing the Hawthorne Bridge in Portland 36 times!

Perhaps the most impressive part about spaying/neutering 20,000 cats is the number of kittens prevented. If one cat and all of her offspring had just one litter of four, in nine years there would be 349,525 additional cats! Multiplying that by 20,000, you get an incomprehensible number. Try it.

In 1995, FCCO's first year of operation, we spayed/neutered 259 cats. Had the cats not received our care, those cats and all of their offspring could total millions today. The impact from helping those original cats is obviously exponential over time. The 3,000 cats we are now altering each year will have an even greater impact in 10 years. Every cat helps reduce the cat overpopulation problem—spaying and neutering works...but you already knew that!

We will be celebrating this incredible landmark cat in August with an open house at Noah's Arf in NW Portland. If we have your email address, we will contact you with all the details, or you can check out our web page at www.feralcats.com.

who@where.com

Do we have your current email address? FCCO is forming an e-group and we want to include you.

Want to hear some great cat stories? Want to stay up-to-date on issues facing our feral (and maybe some domestic) friends? Want to know what FCCO is doing between newsletters and be the first invited to our events and activities? Then joining our new e-group is just the thing for you! It is easy—all we need is your current email address and we take care of the rest.

You can send us an email at feralcats_oregon@yahoo.com or drop us a line and include your name—please be sure to print clearly. And of course, for your privacy, we will not sell, trade or lend your information.

Wish List Generosity!


Many items from our last Wish List were filled by our wonderful donors. We thank Nedra Brill for donating office paper, Mary Mayther-Slac for ink cartridges good for free office paper, Dresden Gregory-Skees and Xerox for a Phaser 3450 laser printer, and Tomahawk traps for a live trap.

Wish List

- Laundry detergent • Stamps
 - Paper towels • "D" batteries •
 - Plastic sheeting • Copy card •
 - Large garbage bags • Duct tape •
 - Home Depot gift cards •
 - Feral cat photos and stories
- To donate items from the wish list, please call 503-797-2606.

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Clinic Schedule

Clinic dates are subject to change. For a list of the clinics through the end of the year, you can find a copy of our schedule on our web page, www.feralcats.com.

7/18/04	Portland	503-797-2606
7/25/04	Corvallis	541-753-8943
8/1/04	Eugene	541-607-4282
8/15/04	Portland	503-797-2606
8/22/04	Salem	503-588-2364
8/29/04	St. Helens	503-397-3333
9/12/04	Bend	541-382-4328
9/19/04	Portland	503-797-2606
9/26/04	Coquille	541-396-4439
10/3/04	Eugene	541-607-4282
10/17/04	Portland	503-797-2606
10/24/04	Fall Feral Fix	503-797-2606

General Message Line

503-797-2606

www.feralcats.com

Coalition Contacts

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