

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



A TNR Champion

Concerned about the welfare of the growing population of feral cats in her Nithburg neighbourhood, Denise Hodasy decided she needed to be proactive and do something before more kittens were born this spring. In early February, she contacted FFN, borrowed four traps and one recovery crate, and set about single-handedly trapping ten cats, the last and most difficult being the very wild Mom-cat who was responsible for many of the area's kittens.

"In the beginning it seemed like such a daunting and possibly hopeless situation," Denise admitted, "But with the incredible help, encouragement, and support of Feline Friends Network I soon learned that it really wasn't difficult to trap the cats initially, and care for them during the short period of time following their surgeries."

The Perth Veterinary Clinic handled the spays and neuters and Denise found the staff supportive and accommodating.



TNR champion Denise Hodasy and friend

"I can't say enough about the wonderful caring people there!," she said, adding "It is a very good feeling to see how healthy the cats are now, and to know that these cats are no longer going to add to the population of feral cats in our area!"

Her experiences have made Denise an advocate of TNR.

"I would encourage anyone to make a difference and to help the feral cats and to [use TNR] to help slow their population growth. With the wonderful support of Feline Friends it really is easier than you think."

Denise thanked FFN, particularly FFN president Cheryl Simpson, saying "I couldn't have done it without you!"

Cheryl was eager to return the compliment. "Denise is a true TNR champion," she said, adding "Denise, FFN salutes you!"

Old hand towels, bath towels, and flannel sheets taking up space in your linen closet? Help the ferals by donating them to FFN!

**Contact Cheryl at
simpson.cheryl@wightman.ca**

Call for Entries Extended!

Good news for those who have been procrastinating: we still need your help!

There is still time to send us links to your favourite cat videos. They must be under 3 minutes long and on public video sharing sites like YouTube. Or, send us the funny videos you've made of your own cat.

To nominate a video, email the link to films@felinefriends.ca.

To send us a video you have created, send an email to videocat@felinefriends.ca and we will send you upload options.

Please spread the word! Make the first Feline Film Festival into a fabulously furry success by sharing this Call for Entries with all your contacts! New deadline is **17 May 2013**.

2013 FFN Board of Directors

The FFN board of directors has welcomed three new members in 2012–2013: Jamie Lamond, Sharon Morrice, and Kate Shapero. The board is:

Cheryl Simpson, president

Sharon Morrice, vice-president

Jamie Lamond, treasurer

Kate Shapero, secretary

Doug Fyfe, board chair, membership secretary, admin systems' support

Holly Roulston, fundraising committee co-chair

Val Pinder, education-outreach committee chair

Pat Burnell, member-at-large, special projects

Lisa Keeler, member-at-large

FFN would like to give a huge THANK YOU to former vice-president Carole Huband, former secretary Carol Rankmore, and former treasurer Holly Roulston for their dedicated service.



Feline Film Festival

FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2013

STRATFORD CITY HALL

6:30–10:30 PM (FILM SCREENING 7:30–8:30 PM)

ADMISSION: Adults \$15, children under 13 accompanied by an adult, \$7.50. Admission includes hors d'oeuvres and one glass of wine, beer, or non-alcoholic beverage. Additional beverages will be available for sale.

It's movie night! We're showing a selection of the finest short feline films in a one-time-only public showing. Inspired by overwhelmingly popular events in Halifax and Minneapolis, Feline Friends Network welcomes fans of cat videos – the cute, the funny, and the amazing – to attend this event. Vote on your favourite film felines and enjoy a relaxed evening.

In addition to the approximately one-hour film screening, there will be hors d'oeuvres, wine (donated by Wine Rack Manager, Dawn Bell) and Stratford Brewing Co. beer, plus non-alcoholic options. There will also be a silent auction, pet-related items for sale, and a chance to have your cards read by our own talented Tarot reader.

Come eat, drink, and laugh with us at Stratford's first Feline Film Festival! For more information, call Sharon at 519-271-3401 or email videocat@felinefriends.ca.



Sean Kelly shares No-Kill expertise with Stratford

Just days after a motorcycle accident that broke his kneecap in three places and crushed his ankle, Sean Kelly joined FFN via Skype to share his experience implementing No-Kill with members of the Stratford community. No-Kill is just that important to the former president of the Nova Scotia SPCA, which under his leadership became one of the leading examples of a No-Kill shelter in Canada.

Before introducing Sean, FFN president Cheryl Simpson thanked the director, manager, staff, and Community Council of the Stratford-Perth Humane Society for recognizing that there is a better way and agreeing to make the SPHS a pilot project for a No-Kill approach to animal welfare.

After apologizing for not being able to be in Stratford in person, Sean told the audience, “No-Kill isn’t a fad and it’s not a revolution. It’s the next logical step in the evolution of how we treat our companion animals.”

Sean outlined some concrete steps that shelters can consider taking on the road to achieving No-Kill. His suggestions included:

Commit to achieving No-Kill and stop killing immediately. Define the line the shelter will not cross for euthanasia. Give shelter managers the freedom to evaluate each animal individually.

Avoid overcrowding. For the NSSPCA this meant temporarily limiting intake and also developing other ways to move animals out of the shelter such as transfers and off-site adoptions.

Start a new media campaign to engage the community. Avoid negative marketing unless it is for a specific purpose. Stay away from pictures of horribly abused animals. Increase the shelter’s market share of adoptions by encouraging people to see the shelter as a great place to get a pet.

Welcome the community. Every person who comes through the door is a potential adopter, volunteer, donor, or ambassador and needs to have a positive experience of the shelter. Shelter employees should be “adoption specialists.”

Reach out to other organizations and share resources. Rescue groups can provide emergency foster space and form part of an adoption network. Shelters can partner with pet stores, volunteer organizations (Sean cited the Girl Guides Pawprints program), and government.

Develop a pet retention program. Helping people to keep their pets improves adoption success.

Use TNR to control feral cat populations.

Establish comprehensive health protocols. With a No-Kill policy, animals may spend longer in the shelter. Educating and training staff and having clear standards helps keep them healthy.

Streamline the adoption process. Sean suggested that shelters should ask themselves whether they are scaring off potential adopters with an invasive questionnaire.

Treat fosters with care. They are not a “necessary evil” but an incredible resource. And foster failures can be a prime source of adoptions.

Start a palliative care foster program. The NSSPCA’s is so successful that these animals spend no more than three weeks in the shelter.

Be open to trying again. Don’t dismiss an idea because it was tried 10 or 15 years ago and didn’t work then. Times change, people change.

Think outside the box. On their own initiative, a mother and daughter in Cape Breton took an animal from the shelter to the mall every Saturday. Over the course of a year, they adopted out an average of 2–3 animals a week.

Constantly re-evaluate. Look at what’s working and what isn’t and refine your strategies.

Sean encouraged Stratford organizations to make use of the extensive No-Kill resources on the Internet and to reach out to No-Kill organizations that can offer advice and guidance.

“You guys can do it,” he said. “I know you can.”

PROGRESS! The Stratford-Perth Humane Society Community Council held a meeting on 14 April with the SPHS manager, cat and dog volunteers, representatives of several area animal welfare groups (including Paw of Perth County Rescue and FFN), and an interested veterinarian to discuss how each could help by taking on some portion of the No-Kill Equation. While no plan has yet been put on paper, all the groups agreed to work together to get our community to the 90% live release goal. It is hoped that another meeting will be held in the near future.

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