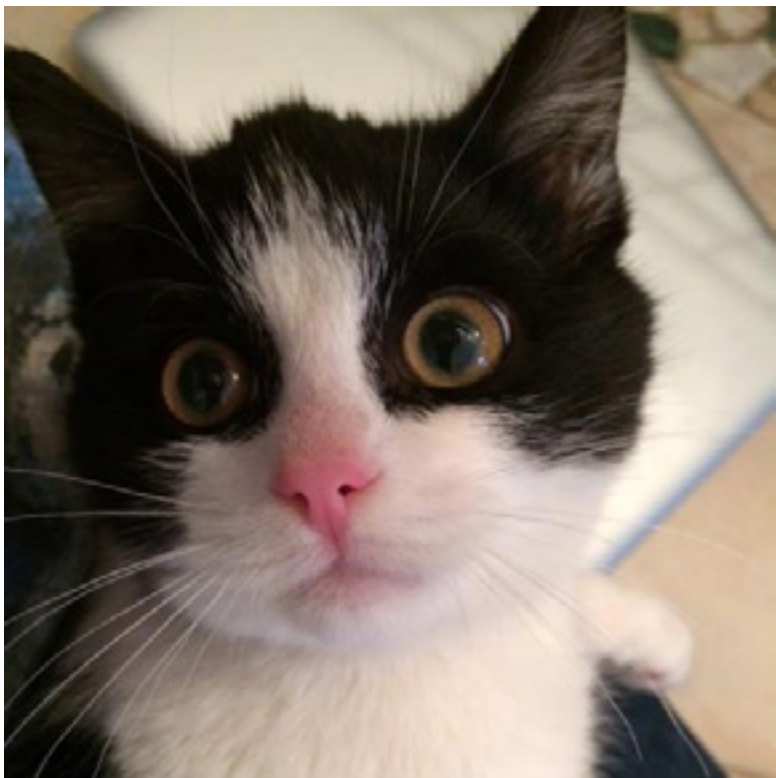


cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



Friendly? Feral? ... or Frightened?

by Cheryl Simpson

“Cheryl, I don’t think this kitten is feral.” So began the conversation recently with Trap/Neuter/Return Co-ordinator Marg, who, along with FFN members Shirley and Tillie had been working to trap what they thought was a family of ferals – one mother and two three-month-old kittens – reported living under a porch in a Stratford neighbourhood.

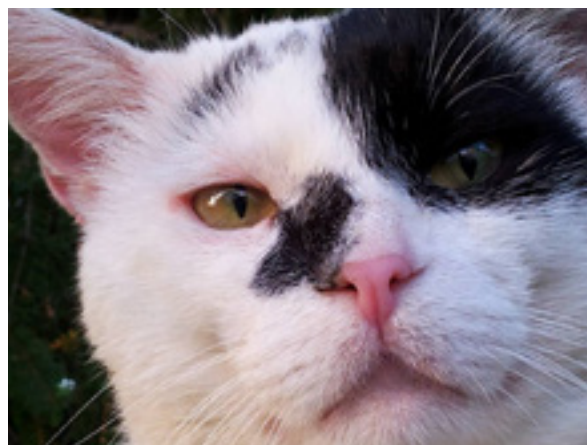
The kitten was to be neutered the next day, and his mother and sibling were still to be trapped; a winter shelter had been put in place, and we were all set to return all three to become “community cats” after their surgeries.

But, as Marg discovered, what we had were not ferals, but a terrified cat and her kittens who had clearly been abandoned.

Once trapped, all three proved to be totally lovable cats who needed a home – indoors. Amazingly, within a week a wonderful home was found for each.

In addition, “daddy cat” – ‘Waldo’ – who has been living on that street for years, was trapped and neutered and is being fostered by Jane to see what his living preference is – indoors or out? (Currently, it looks like the former, but if not, “Pirate” Waldo has been eartipped and can live as a community cat if he wishes.)

This story, which thankfully has a happy ending, brings up a perplexing puzzle – how do any of us tell if that cat we are feeding on our porch is friendly and owned, feral or just frightened? And, does or doesn’t he/she need our assistance?



continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Here are some clues to help make an educated guess:

- If the cat is friendly but wears no collar, and suddenly appeared on your porch desperate for food, then it may well be a lost or abandoned cat. The first thing to do is to check with the Humane Society (in Perth County 519-273-6600) and the local Facebook Page, “Lost and Found Pets of Stratford Ontario” (www.facebook.com/lostpetstratfordperthcanada) to see if anyone is missing such a cat. You can also get your vet, the Humane Society, or FFN to scan for a micro-chip. If this doesn't provide any answers, put a breakaway collar on the cat with a note wrapped around it that says something like “Am worried about this cat. If he has a home can you please call me at (your phone number).”
- If the very hungry cat visiting you looks thin and in bad shape but runs away when you approach, it might be a very frightened lost or abandoned cat who has been on the street for a while and is not capable of fending for itself. Continue to feed and provide water and ask Feline Friends or the Humane Society what your next step should be.



- If the cat is definitely not friendly, but looks in good shape and has been seen around the neighbourhood for a while, then it may be a feral or street cat. Look for an “eartip” (3/8” off the top of left ear) which would identify it as a neutered and vaccinated “community cat”. No eartip? Contact Feline Friends and/or the Humane Society to determine what needs to be done.

Two further tips:

- A true feral cat will never “speak” to you. If a frightened or seemingly unfriendly cat meows at you, you can be pretty sure he or she had a home at one time.
- Never try to catch an unfriendly cat or kitten with your hands. They are much faster than you, and if you do manage to catch one, can do you a good deal of damage, resulting almost certainly in a visit to the emergency department. Trapping is the only safe and sure way to catch such animals. Please contact FFN.

THE BOTTOM LINE?

Identifying how and when to help a neighbourhood cat can be challenging. But, with a little detective work and community involvement we can work it out together!



Heart-breaking ...

It breaks our hearts to announce that Ginger Man Boots suddenly passed away in the arms of his caregiver. He was a very special boy who knew love and compassion as he neared the end of his life.

Boots was out in the elements for far too long, which we believe contributed to his illness. The onset of his symptoms was quick and he was diagnosed with pneumonia.

It's so important for people to know that friendly cats do not do well on their own. They are usually unaltered and have been abandoned, and many of them will die of exposure, starvation, or other illnesses that could have been prevented if they were safe in loving homes.



Heart-warming ...

FFN's second annual GivingTuesday was a heart-warming day, raising over \$2,500 thanks to a record number of donors and our matching partner, CRP Plastic Products, who committed to match the first \$500 donated. In addition, TLC Whole Life Pet Food in New Hamburg donated 4 large bags of cat food, which will go a long way to helping keep our community cats well fed over the winter months. THANK YOU to everyone who donated.

2015 Upscale Yardsale

Got a new calendar? Be sure to put a big circle around Thursday, 12 March 2015, and plan on attending the annual FFN Upscale Yardsale at 16 Fern Street.

There will be books, jewellery, and gourmet food stuffs for purchase with all the funds raised going to help the cats. Grab a glass of wine and a nibble and head downstairs to peruse the wares. Doors open at 6:00 pm.

If you have donations please drop them off at 16 Fern Street any time after 16 February. And if you'd like to place a gourmet food order (truffles anyone?) email pmburnell@hotmail.com before the first of March.

Come by and buy!

Reimbursements for feeding FFN's community cats

If you would like to receive a reimbursement for the cost of food you provided for your colony in 2014, please submit an itemized sheet, with receipts attached, to Cheryl Simpson at 47 Britannia St, Stratford no later than 15 January 2015 for any feral food costs in the 2014 year. If you are interested in receiving a donation receipt, you can also donate your reimbursed expenses back to Feline Friends.

If the pull of the outside world is strong, there is also a pull towards the human. The cat may disappear on its own errands, but sooner or later, it returns once again for a little while, to greet us with its own type of love. Independent as they are, cats find more than pleasure in our company.

– Lloyd Alexander



3rd annual Feline Film Festival set for 5 June 2015

Our 3rd annual Feline Film Festival is set for Friday, 5 June 2015. That may seem like ages from now, but it's not too early to start submitting your favourite cat videos, or to begin creating your own! Keep your eyes peeled for those exceptional, entertaining, and extraordinary videos and be sure to share them with us. The best will be chosen for a one-hour screening that you won't want to miss!

To submit your favourite videos, please post them to our **Facebook events page**. If you're not on Facebook, you can submit videos by emailing links to films@felinefriends.ca. Please note that Youtube is the best source for videos, because they are easy to download and use in our festival.

So, please nominate, and help us make this event the cat's meow!



Merry merry!

FFN would like to wish all our members a very merry holiday season and all the best in 2015. We'd also like to extend a very heartfelt "THANK YOU!!" to all our volunteers and supporters, without whom there wouldn't be a Feline Friends Network ... Here's to helping more cats in 2015!



A NOTE ABOUT MICRO-CHIPPING

There's nothing much sadder than seeing those "Lost Cat" posters around town ... And yet humane societies and rescues are full of friendly cats who never find their former home. Dogs in shelters in most areas are reclaimed at a rate in the 80-90 percentile. But, in general, less than 10 per cent of shelter cats will be reunited with their families.

If you love your cat and want to improve these odds, get him or her micro-chipped. Cats adopted from a rescue or shelter will often already be micro-chipped. If not, it is an easy thing to have done by your veterinarian. And humane societies often hold "micro-chipping clinics" with reduced rates as fundraisers. Depending on where you go, the approximate cost of micro-chipping can be anywhere from \$30 to \$65 dollars.

There is one important caveat. The micro-chip is only as good as the information it contains. If you move, or rehome your cat, please remember to contact the micro-chip company with the new information!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The Feline Friends Network Annual General Meeting – Sunday, 22 February 2015 at 2:00 pm, Optimist Hall, (downstairs), 72 Water Street, Stratford

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

