

# cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

## Helping Community Cats – A Paradigm Shift

Cheryl Simpson

Scenario: There is a friendly intact male cat who's been coming around your porch for a while now. He looks in pretty good shape, but he always seems very hungry. You've called the shelter, checked bulletin boards, and listened to local radio "Lost" announcements, but it seems no one is looking for a cat of his description. What do you do?

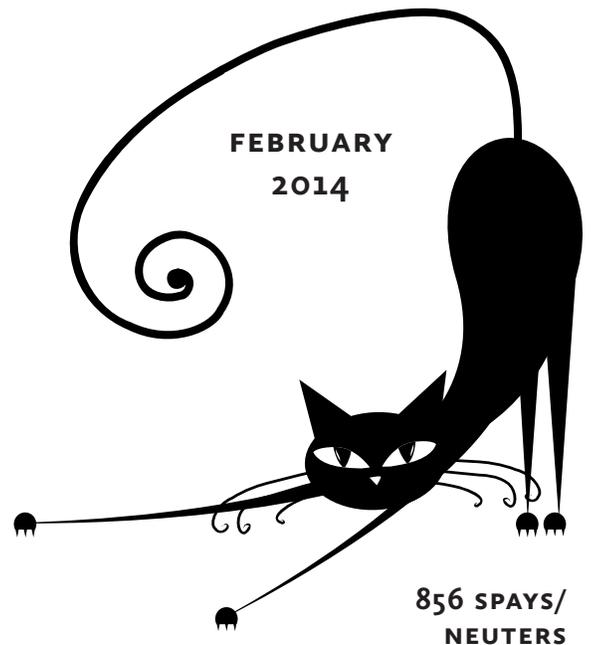
- a) Call the shelter and say you're bringing him in
- b) Ignore him and hope he'll go away
- c) Feed him and assume all will be well

The Answer? None of the above! And so here comes the paradigm shift ... Not so many years ago animal shelters were expected to take in all strays. But that didn't work out so well for the vast majority of cats who were either deemed "unadoptable" by virtue of temperament (ferals and very frightened cats), or become stressed and then ill in the shelter environment. In both cases the outcome was "euthanasia".



As feral cat advocates began pushing for Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) instead of the inhumane and ineffective Trap and Kill, ideas started to change. Humane societies began working toward a much higher live-release rate, making it a policy to only take in cats they believed would have a

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## World Spay Day 2014 – February 25

FFN's mission has always been to end cat homelessness through spaying and neutering to prevent the birth of countless unwanted kittens. Worldwide, millions of companion animals suffer and die because they were born into a world where they were not wanted.

So, please join us in celebrating the 20th anniversary of World Spay Day – the annual campaign of the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International to encourage people to save animal lives by spaying and neutering companion animals and feral cats.

Our own fledgling Animal Welfare Coalition of Perth and Oxford Counties (consisting of FFN, Paws of Perth County, Stratford Perth H.S., Angel Arms Rescue, and Oxford County Animal Rescue) has chosen to celebrate World Spay Day by challenging veterinary clinics in Perth and Oxford counties to offer discounted spay/neuter pricing during the week of February 24th. We are pleased to announce that Perth Veterinary Services and Avon Pet Hospital have accepted our challenge. And Avon Pet Hospital will be offering 10 to 12% off the original price of a spay/neuter for both cats *and* dogs for the entire month of February!

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“live outcome”. This was and is accomplished by delaying the intake of surrenders when the shelter is full – while helping the client consider alternative options – and making use of TNR for feral cats, all while working hard to get those cats already in the shelter adopted.

Now there is another, even more progressive change happening which I learned about while attending the Alley Cat Allies conference in November. And that is something called “Shelter/Neuter/Return” (SNR). SNR is targeting the stray cats that aren’t necessarily owned by anyone but also aren’t feral – rather they are cats living in the community which are in good health and good body condition.

If these cats, rather than entering a shelter, could be spayed/neutered, vaccinated and eartipped (indicating sterilization), and then re-released into their community, they would have a far better chance of survival, either finding their way back home (if lost) OR into a new home. (And stray cats do find new homes – did you know that 34% of cat owners acquired their cats as strays, as opposed to 29% adopted from a shelter?) Statistics also show that with the help of the community, a lost stray cat has a 66% chance of finding its way home – versus only a 7% chance of that outcome if brought into a shelter. How does the community help? By doing some “detective work” regarding possible ownership and by providing shelter, food, and water until a home is found.

It’s “early days” yet for SNR, but American communities that have implemented this program are seeing great success in bringing euthanasia numbers down. Can we replicate their success here? You betcha’!

So ... what to do about that friendly healthy male cat on your porch? First, consider the paradigm shift and recognize that taking him to the shelter is not always the best option. Then call FFN to talk over the best way to help him ... As a caring community, we can figure it out!



## Grand opening for EVAH

The East Village Animal Hospital in London – dedicated to caring for pets of non-profit animal rescue organizations and low-income individuals – held their grand opening on January 26th and FFN was there. Pictured above is the staff of the clinic, including founder Dr Martha Harding, at the far right, and her partner and s/n vet Dr. Tracey Satchell, far left. FFN is pleased to have donated an anaesthetic machine to the new clinic. Two thumbs up!

EVAH is now ready to serve the public. To learn more, visit their website at [www.evah.ca](http://www.evah.ca) or call them at 519-455-3824

## Good News!

We are thrilled to announce that our local Global Pet Foods store has chosen FFN as the recipient of this year’s “Show Us Your Heart” campaign. For each donation given by a customer, Global Pet Food and Hill’s Science Diet will each donate another dollar, AND the whole amount will be matched by our local Global store (684 Ontario Street). THANK YOU SO MUCH, ADAM! The campaign runs until February 15th, so please go in and show your support.

*There is, incidently, no way of talking about cats that enables one to come off as a sane person.*

– Dan Greenberg



## Feline Film Festival

We're planning Stratford's second annual Feline Film Festival! Please save the date to enjoy a selection of the finest short cat videos – the cute, the funny, the poignant, and the amazing – in a one-time-only public showing! Vote on your favourite film felines and enjoy a relaxed evening with hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, non-alcoholic beverages, silent auction, pet-related items, and tarot readings.

To submit links to your favourite cat videos email them to [films@felinefriends.ca](mailto:films@felinefriends.ca)! Films that you have created yourself are especially welcome. The best of the bunch will be selected to be part of the Festival. Films must be no longer than 3 minutes in length.

The film festival will take place on Friday, 13 June at Knox Presbyterian Church (142 Ontario Street). Tickets will be available at the door only; admission is \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for children accompanied by an adult.



## Paws Adoptathon

Paws of Perth County is holding another adoptathon on Saturday, 22 February 2014, from 10 am to 4 pm at Global Pet Foods (684 Ontario Street, Stratford). The adoption fee is \$50 and includes spay/neuter, vaccinations, de-worming and de-fleaing. Please spread the word and help find these wonderful cats and kittens new homes!

For more information, phone 519.949.1695, email Paws at [pawsofperthcounty@gmail.com](mailto:pawsofperthcounty@gmail.com), or visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/Stratfordareanimalsinneedofanewhome/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/Stratfordareanimalsinneedofanewhome/).

## Upscale Yardsale

FFN's third annual Upscale Yardsale will take place on Thursday, 6 March 2014 at the home of Pat Burnell, 16 Fern Street, Stratford. The sale features jewellery, books (in excellent condition) and – new this year – a gourmet corner that will include, as a part of the small silent auction, a gourmet cooking class and dinner for 8–10 people at Rundles restaurant donated by Chef Baxter and the Stratford Chef School. The class can be booked in late October/early November for either lunch or dinner. All needed materials will be supplied.

So ... put aside that jewellery you no longer wear, box up those books you have read (no text books please), pack up those 'gourmet' kitchen items that don't suit your culinary skills, and drop them at 16 Fern Street any time between now and 28 February.

If you are willing to donate a speciality gourmet item for our bake sale, please let Pat Burnell know. Any questions? Email Pat at [pmburnell@hotmail.com](mailto:pmburnell@hotmail.com).

See you on the 6th and feel free to bring a friend or two. Nibbles and beverages will be provided gratis to keep up your stamina as you shop 'til you drop.

*If a cat does something, we call it instinct; if we do the same thing, for the same reason, we call it intelligence.*  
– Will Cuppy



# furry farewells

## GINGER

Tamara and Darren's cherished cat Ginger, famed for his unique blend of feistiness and sweetness of heart, passed away on New Year's Day just two and a half months shy of his 19th birthday. Tamara and Darren had cared for Ginger since he was 8 weeks old. In honour of his memory, they donated over three cases of GINGER'S canned cat food to FFN, including a case of Recovery formula. Rest in peace, Ginger. Your memory lives on, nourishing other cats in need.



## MONTY

In memory of sweet Monty, who in the end was called home, and crossed the Rainbow Bridge too soon for those who loved him.



**FFN's Annual General Meeting** takes place on Sunday, 23 February 2014, at 2:00 pm at the Optimist Hall (downstairs), 72 Water Street, Stratford. It's the purr-fect opportunity to renew your FFN membership, which expires on 28 February 2014.

## The story of Beauty

Margery Leggott

Found in a cardboard box with her kittens, the little black cat was "rescued" and sent to the local shelter, where she was declared feral and unapproachable. She was scheduled to be euthanized as soon as her kittens were able to eat solid food, but Cheryl Simpson got the shelter's agreement to a rescue and took "Beauty" – as she was then called – into her own home until she could be spayed.

The day she was spayed, Beauty was delivered to me to be fostered and given time to recuperate. Three of us carefully placed her in a cage in my dining room but, in our eagerness to care for her, we actually neglected to lock one of the cage doors, a fact hidden by the sheet covering the cage.

During the night, Beauty discovered the unlatched door and made her way out – all the way out! I sleep with my bedroom door open and my own cats have loosened the corner of the screen on the window to allow them to go in and out as they choose. Beauty found it and was gone.

After many tears and recriminations, we set up a trap on my deck just outside the door. Late the second night after her disappearance, it was cold and raining and I was lying in bed, unable to sleep, imagining how miserable Beauty must be. Suddenly, I heard a SNAP! Sure enough, she was in the trap. I brought the cage inside, carefully closed the (barn) door, and attempted to transfer her to the bigger cage in my dining room. With a whiz, she was out and gone again – completely traumatized. This time she was found under my bed. I was so tired at this point I just turned off the lights and went to sleep.

The next morning, I set up food, water, and a litterbox just at the edge of the bed and it was soon clear she was glad to make use them. It was over a week before she emerged from under the bed during the day and she quickly scrambled back again whenever I walked into the room.

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By the end of two weeks, however, she had made a little hammock by loosening one edge of fabric on the bottom of a small sofa in my bedroom and crawling in to sleep. This remains her bed of choice.

Over Christmas, my family visited and the house was busy with people coming and going. We simply ignored Beauty, except to provide food and water and keep the litterbox clean. Each night, to the dismay of my overnight guests, she came out to play. She quickly made the acquaintance of Trixie (a previously rescued tabby) and Mudpie, long-term resident. The sounds of them running and jumping around the house at night provided me with considerable amusement and satisfaction, but my guests had to take naps during the afternoon. Several times over the holidays, she was spotted in the kitchen having a drink at the communal water bowl. She and Daisy, my Border Collie cross were seen checking each other out and eventually nuzzling each other.

By this point, it was clear that she was making her home with us. She was a tabby but so dark that she appeared black. I thought she looked like a tabby cat gone down a chimney and covered with soot so I named her "Sooty".

It was well into January when I finally reached down and picked Sooty up. To my surprise, she was happy enough with it for a few minutes before wriggling to be free; this became a ritual several times each day. She quickly caught on to the twice-daily wet-food schedule and also found the source of dry food always available in the hall closet where it is safe from the dog. As she gained weight and a nocturnal familiarity with the whole house, I was able to gradually move her litterbox downstairs (a big relief from it being a few feet from my head every night). She discovered the delights of lolling across my bed in the morning sunshine, but it was only recently that she stopped quickly jumping down if I walked in the room.



Sausage, aka Sooty, aka Beauty, with two of her many new toys and one of the towels that she delights in stealing from Margery Leggott's kitchen and bathroom.

Sooty's initial method of visiting the living room (where we all spend the evenings) was by hiding under the chairs and whipping her paws out at any feet that came within range. She has now discovered the warmth of the carpet in front of the fireplace. She has toys (mice, snakes, balls, and pom-poms) and plays incessantly. She steals towels from the racks in the kitchen and bathroom – they are found all over the house. She swipes at the dog's legs causing her to practically dance, and pounces from around corners at anyone who walks by.

But best of all, each evening, she now cuddles with me on the sofa and is the best smooch ever. She has very short hair and has grown to the shape of a long, fat, sweet sausage. And so, she has become known as, and seems to respond to being called, "Sausage".

*A kitten is the most irresistible comedian in the world. Its wide-open eyes gleam with wonder and mirth. It darts madly at nothing at all, and then, as though suddenly checked in the pursuit, prances sideways on its hind legs with ridiculous agility and zeal.*

– Agnes Repplier

NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
garet markvoort

