

# cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



## Trap/Neuter/Return – is it working?

As all of you know, Trap/Neuter/Return – or “TNR” – is a cornerstone initiative of FFN’s mission to humanely bring the Perth County cat population down and eventually end homelessness. Cats living in colonies are identified, humanely trapped, neutered, vaccinated, and eartipped for identification, and then returned to their home territory where they are provided with shelter, food, and water by volunteer caregivers. Wherever possible, friendly cats and kittens are put up for adoption. In this way, nuisance behaviours such as spraying, vocalizing, and fighting stop. And, since TNR minimizes the number of new kittens being born, the feral cat population decreases through attrition over time.

Since we started the program in 2007, FFN has TNR’d 365 cats. Doing so, of course, was illegal in Stratford (as it is in most municipalities) because the accepted treatment for feral cats – seen as “nuisance animals” – was to have Animal Control trap and kill them. However, not only is “Trap and Kill” inhumane,

*/continued on page 2*



## THANK YOU!

To Barry Usprech, who decided to forgo a retirement party in lieu of a donation to Feline Friends Network ... Thank you so much, Barry and State Farm Insurance!

To Adam and all of our wonderful friends at Global Pet Foods, for continuing to support us in so many ways, the latest being their “Show Us Your Heart” campaign in February, which – along with their matching donation – raised over \$2,000 for FFN!

## Message from the FFN Board – Happy 2014!

We would like to thank all of our invaluable volunteers/members who are feeding colony cats and to remind you to keep your cat food receipts in 2014 to receive a donation tax receipt for the value of the food purchased. Receipts can be submitted to Cheryl Simpson either semi-annually or annually (no later than the 2nd week in January 2015). If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl by email at [simpson.cheryl@wightman.ca](mailto:simpson.cheryl@wightman.ca).

*/continued from page 1*

it does nothing to solve the problem of cat overpopulation it supposedly addresses. In 2010, FFN went to the City of Stratford to make the case for the acceptance of TNR as policy. In October 2011, City Council endorsed TNR in principle, stating that the existing bylaws would be changed to protect the colony cats when the Animal Control contract came up for renewal in January 2013. We're still waiting for those bylaw changes – hopefully to take effect within a few months – but we haven't been idle in the meanwhile.

In 2010, FFN started to keep accurate records of Stratford-managed colony numbers. Of the approximately 365 cats we've TNR'd in Perth County since 2007, 125 have been in the city of Stratford (numbers for 2007–09 are estimated). Of those, only 50 remain.

So, if anyone asks, you can tell them that TNR does work! And don't let anyone tell you feral cats are sad and mangy creatures. Show them the photo on page 1 of this newsletter, or direct them to the framed pictures on the walls of Boomers' Gourmet Fries in downtown Stratford. These are some of the healthiest and most beautiful cats you'll ever see. So healthy that, at the time of writing, each and every one of them has made it through this incredibly difficult winter. (A word of "thanks" here for the unwavering dedication of their caretakers who have braved the weather daily, with shovels in hand, to clear shelters and feeding stations.)

As we go forward with TNR in 2014, FFN is planning to target specific areas where the problem of cat overpopulation seems most severe, both in the city of Stratford and in the surrounding countryside. We have several areas in mind, but if you know of an area that is in particular need, please call the FFN phone line at 519-301-5735 or email us at [info@felinefriends.ca](mailto:info@felinefriends.ca).

And, when you see in the local paper that Trap/Neuter/Return has finally been legalized – CHEER!!!



## Upscale Yard Sale this week!

Don't miss FFN's third annual Upscale Yard Sale this Thursday, 6 March, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at 16 Fern Street.

Check out the books, jewellery (Sabrina the Glamour-Puss didn't get it all!), the gourmet 'bake' sale, and the small but selective silent auction.

Bid on a cat-cookie bouquet and an amazing donation of a gourmet cooking class and dinner for 8–10 people at Rundles restaurant donated by Chef Baxter and the Stratford Chefs School.

Grab a libation and something to nibble and browse to your heart's content. You may be as lucky as Sabrina was.

And of course ... ALL money raised will be used by FFN to help the cats.

DON'T MISS A SINGLE  
ISSUE OF CAT TALES.  
RENEW YOUR FFN  
MEMBERSHIP TODAY!



# How Puss-Cat became Loretta and found a home

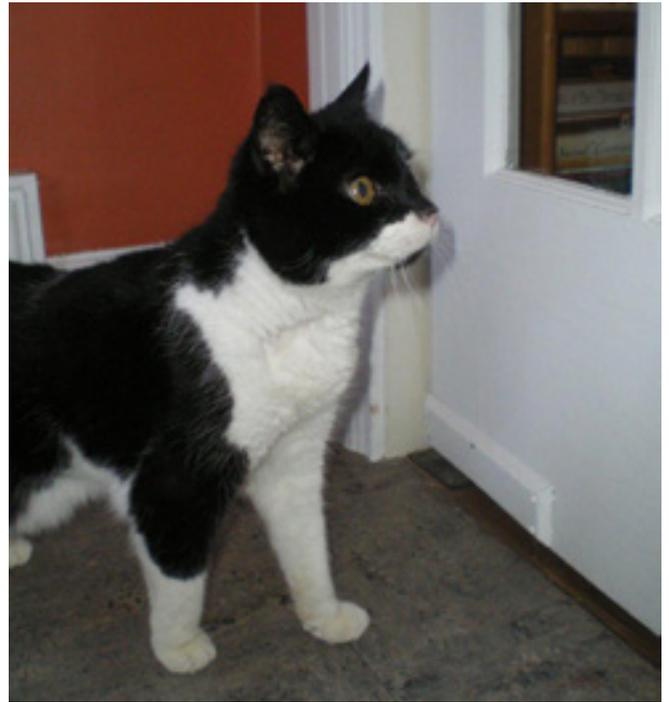
By Cheryl Simpson

When Bill and June Smith moved to Stratford eight years ago they noticed a young neighbourhood cat hiding under a car. Being cat lovers, the Smiths tried taking “Puss-Cat” in, but their resident cat would not accept him. Bill and June and their neighbours fed Puss-Cat and he became an outside “community cat” – and not the only one. There were other strays in the area and several litters of kittens later, the Smiths contacted FFN to help with their current little colony of four. Mum and Dad feral cats were TNR’d and their kittens found loving homes. At the time Puss-Cat was not in evidence.

Fast forward to December 2013 when another young stray had joined the Smiths’ colony and FFN was called in again. This time, Puss-Cat was right there, sitting on the Smiths’ front porch, looking cold and forlorn. When approached, he didn’t run away, but actually came over for a pat. His fur was matted and dirty, his one eye was terribly rheumy, and he had big scabs on the back of his head from desperately scratching at ear mites. It was clear that Puss-Cat should no longer live on the streets and, since he appeared relatively social, FFN took him in.

Puss-Cat loved the sudden warmth of his temporary foster home in my bathroom and seemed to relish my daily brushing sessions to remove the knots and scabs. A dose of Revolution started to work to kill the earmites, the violent scratching stopped, and Puss-Cat allowed me to clean his ears and weepy eye. But he seemed somewhat lethargic and I suspected that he was hearing-impaired.

Two days later, we travelled to Perth Veterinary Clinic where a blood test revealed a low-level infection and the vet determined that Puss-Cat’s earmite infestation was extremely bad. Most surprising, however, was that “he” was a “she”! A belly shave revealed a spay scar,



which explained why there had been no kittens in the eight years the Smiths had known Puss-Cat.

What had happened that this obviously once-loved cat ended up living on the streets so long ago? We’ll never know of course, but her life going forward is all good news. Shortly after her vet visit, FFN found a wonderful foster home for Puss-Cat with FFN member Valerie Muller, who had recently lost her beloved cat, Marla, to cancer.

For the next two weeks, Puss-Cat – now named “Loretta” after country singer Loretta Lynn – hid under Valerie’s bed. Then, suddenly, the ice was broken, and Loretta and Valerie bonded! Now Loretta – or “Deaf Loretta” as Valerie fondly calls her because her hearing loss seems permanent – loves nothing more than to snuggle on top of the bed with her new guardian. Even better, Valerie isn’t fostering anymore – she’s adopting ! After eight long and difficult years, Loretta has finally found a home.

*As anyone who has ever been around a cat for any length of time well knows, cats have enormous patience with the limitations of the human kind.*

– Cleveland Amory



## First World Spay Day challenge a great success

FFN is excited to report that the Animal Welfare Coalition challenge to veterinary clinics in our area asking them to discount spay/neuter surgeries in and around World Spay Day yielded amazing results. Perth Veterinary Clinic saw their surgery numbers over 2 weeks increase approximately 100%, booking 22 spay/neuter surgeries in that time period. Avon Pet Hospital did 27 such surgeries in the month of February, up from 12 from the month before, and are extending the discount to March 15th.

What a great way to celebrate World Spay Day and stop hundreds of unwanted kittens and puppies being born this spring! Kudos to the two clinics for their participation. FFN is already looking forward to World Spay Day 2015!

## Volunteers needed

FFN urgently needs volunteers to staff the FFN cell phone and to poster for events. For more info on the cell phone, email Carole Huband (hubandca@rogers.com). For poster, contact Valerie Pinder (valerie.pinder@gmail.com).

## Send your submissions

Don't forget to email links to your favourite short cat videos to [films@felinefriends.ca](mailto:films@felinefriends.ca). The 2nd annual Feline Film Fest will take place on Friday, 13 June at Knox Presbyterian Church (142 Ontario St). **SAVE THE DATE!**



## Virtually new!

If you visit FFN online, you will notice that we have recently launched a new website! Having outgrown our original site, it was time to rethink and reorganize. Our goal was to add more information while making everything easier to find. Whether you're interested in our spay/neuter programs, news, events, volunteering, donating, or reference on many topics concerning cats and kittens, we hope you'll find it here.

And **NEW** – we now have a page for cats that have been lost or found in our area. We'll post the cats' photos, descriptions and owner/guardian contact information, and share it with our social media community, to help reunite pets and their families. We also offer a guide to help find your cat, should he/she go missing.

The new website was donated by FFN's vice president, who also happens to be a graphic designer and web developer. Please check it out at [www.felinefriends.ca](http://www.felinefriends.ca), and let us know if you have any comments or suggestions to help us grow this as a resource for all things cat!

*All cats are possessed of a proud spirit,  
and the surest way to forfeit the esteem of  
a cat is to treat him as an inferior being.*

– Michael Joseph

NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
garet markvoort

