

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



In memorium

In January, we sadly had to say “goodbye” to beautiful Bambi, the Feline Leukemia positive community cat lovingly fostered by Barbara and Warren Beckett. Thanks to the Becketts, Bambi knew he was loved.

There will be more about Bambi and the importance of fostering these special cats in a future newsletter. For now, we just want to honour Bambi’s journey to the Rainbow Bridge. Godspeed beautiful one.

If a homeless cat could talk, it would probably say, ‘Give me shelter, food, companionship and love, and I will be yours for life!’ – Susan Easterly

Don’t let anyone tell you loving a cat is silly. Love, in any form, is a precious commodity. – Barbara L. Diamond



Don't miss the FFN Annual General Meeting

The Feline Friends Network Annual General Meeting will take place on Sunday, 22 February 2015 at 2:00 pm, in the downstairs meeting room of the Optimist Hall located at 72 Water Street, in Stratford. Hope to see you there!

Cat food needed!

As more and more people support Trap/Neuter/Return, FFN is seeing an increase in the number of community cat colonies that we manage – a total of 25 in the Stratford area. And our need for food to feed our cats is growing apace.

Although many caretakers buy food for their colonies themselves, we do try to help by providing as much support as we can. And, as generous as several of our local pet stores have been in this regard, we can't lean on them all the time!

So, we're asking our members to donate food as they feel able. We will accept anything except No-Name, Barn Cat, or low-calorie (which is often labelled “indoor”) food. And if you provide your sales receipt, we will issue a tax receipt for your donation. Why not bring a bag or some cans along to February's AGM?

Marmsy's tale

Pat Burnell

Life was good then turned to hell;
What transpired I couldn't tell
Enough to say I was near death;
Crawled in a cage with my last breath
Beckoned by a bowl of food;
Tried to eat, I thought I could.
But just layed down, prepared to die.
Then I heard an angel cry,
"Garfield, don't give up" she said.
I closed my eyes and dropped my head.
I feared the call was too late come.
I had no hope, no health, no home.
I felt the cage move on apace;
Taken to a warmer place.
Given meds, and food and care.
Dragged up from my dark despair.
Touched with love and gentle word;
Such a sound I'd seldom heard.
Began to heal, to eat, to rest;
This kind angel, she was the best.
She brought me back to life again;
She eased my suff'ring, quelled my pain.
I thought I was to heaven come,
But then was moved. Another home!
Fear grabbed my heart; was this my end?
Where was my Marg? Where was my friend?
I wrapped up tight and hid from view.
I heard a voice and it was new.
She changed my name to Marmsy Cat.
I learned her name and it was Pat.
She brought a friend to make me brave.
The tabby, Leppy, helped to save
Me from despair;
Became my brother; gave me care.
It's taken time, it will take more;
But finally I'm truly sure
That I am safe from further harm.
I'm fed and loved and I am warm.
And so to Karen, Marg, and Pat.
A heartfelt 'Thanks' from Marmsy Cat.
You saved my life when I was done.
You've given me another home.

Fending for themselves

Cheryl Simpson

The mission of the Feline Friend Network has always been to prevent homelessness by ending the cycle of constant unwanted litters through the provision of several spay/neuter initiatives. Our focus has been "turning off the tap," as it were, rather than trying to "clean up the mess." Because of this, venturing into cat rescue territory wasn't on our radar. However, this past year FFN has seen a disturbing trend: we go out to trap ferals only to find more and more friendly cats who have most likely been abandoned or dumped.

In the hopes of alerting our readers to this problem, we've decided to highlight the stories of some of these cats over the coming months. Please enjoy "Marmsy's tale" (at left) and the story of Earl Grey (see page 3) and pass the word along to everyone you can that turning a house cat out to "fend for itself" is not only cruel and morally wrong, it can also be prosecuted as "Abandonment" under the OSPCA Act.



When Marmsy Cat was found, he was undernourished, in need of antibiotics, and missing all his front teeth. According to the vet, he is a senior cat and FFN suspects that he was on his own for approximately two years. With love and care, he has made a full recovery and has found a new fur-ever home.



There is always a reason for everything

JoAnn Goodwin

In early November, Marg Usprech and I were communicating about a grey and white stray cat that had been seen around one of the FFN feeding stations. Having had a couple of beautiful greys years ago and after months of hesitating about bringing another furbaby into my home, I told her that I would be interested in fostering the cat once it was trapped and neutered. I decided that if the cat was a male I'd name him Earl Grey after one of our previous grey cats. Unfortunately, that cat disappeared and (as far as I know) has not been seen since.

Now that I had the "bug," Marg knew she had someone she could turn to for another cat in need ... and soon after she contacted me about the mother of two kittens whom FFN was hopeful would soon be caught and vetted. Was I still interested in fostering a cat? (Marg reads me like a book!)

In the early afternoon of the next day, I received a text and photo from Marg that FFN was bringing back from surgery an old male cat that needed a foster. Subsequent messages informed me that he was thought to be 7 years old with 3 fractured canines ... but he was grey! It was meant to be ... I was going to have my Earl Grey after all!

When I picked him up from his caregivers around noon on the Saturday, he was rather skinny and HE WAS SMELLY! Although I tried, I couldn't keep him contained in one room for long. When he escaped and was surrounded by friendly shih tzus he freaked out. Louie (the former stray church cat) jumped in to rescue his new brother, to make sure he was okay and keep those ugly dogs at bay. Great sibling bonding!

Now, almost two months later, Earl Grey and the rest of the crew get along beautifully. He talks up a storm, is an attention hog, and loves belly rubs and cuddles. He devours his food like



Earl Grey enjoying a cuddle with JoAnn

he is starving, but after what I can only imagine he has been through I can't fault him.

He's mine, he's safe and warm and loved! He may not be the most handsome cat in the world but he is quite my "cup of tea."

Oh, and BTW, although he is an almost totally grey cat, his tail is the colour of clear tea!

Another cat? Perhaps. For love there is also a season; its seeds must be resown. But a family cat is not replaceable like a worn-out coat or a set of tires. Each new kitten becomes its own cat, and none is repeated. I am four cats old, measuring out my life in friends that have succeeded but not replaced one another.

– Irving Townsend

He has become a much better cat than I have a person. With his gentle urgings, he made me realize that life doesn't end just because one has a few obstacles to overcome. – Mary F. Graf



2015 Wine Raffle

This year for our biggest fundraiser, the 6th Annual FFN Wine Raffle, we are appealing to YOU, our members, to donate your favourite bottle(s) of red or white store-bought wine.

If you bring your donation of wine to FFN's Annual General Meeting on Sunday, 22 February at 2:00 pm at the Optimist Hall, your name will be entered into a draw – one entry for every bottle of wine donated – to win this gift basket (pictured below) of delicious chocolate.

Wine donations can also be picked up upon request by Holly Roulston or Paul Simpson or dropped off (arranging in advance) to Paul Simpson at 47 Britannia Street, Stratford. All wine donations must be collected by May 2015. If you have any questions, contact Holly at 519-284-2649 or holly.roulston@f55f.com. To arrange for pick-up or drop-off, contact Paul at 519-273-8067 or simpson.paul@wightman.ca.

With your help, we can make FFN's 2015 Wine Raffle our best yet!



Upscale Yardsale

As previously mentioned, this year's Upscale Yardsale will happen on March 12th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at 16 Fern Street. If you have any donations – books in excellent condition, jewellery etc. – please drop them at 16 Fern Street any time after February 15th.

If you are donating gourmet foods for the gourmet “bakesale,” please let Pat Burnell know ahead of time at pmburnell@hotmail.com.

And if you wish to avoid disappointment by ordering ahead, the following gourmet goods are available:

- shrimp bisque
- lasagna (traditional and vegetarian)
- quiche (seafood, meat, or vegetable)
- quick-bread (oatmeal raisin or multigrain)
- yeast bread (crusty white or whole wheat)
- foccacia (fresh rosemary, sundried tomato and black olive, Parmesan and old cheddar)
- soup (mushroom, broth, red wine, vegetable; vegetarian-vegan non-gluten)
- sweet potato shepherd's pie
- and, of course, Paul's famous Grand Marnier Truffles!

Wine, beverages, and nibbles are on hand to support your browsing. Come by and buy!

It's that time of year again ...

Time to renew your FFN membership! To renew online using your credit card or Paypal account visit: <http://www.felinefriends.ca/membership.html> or mail a cheque for \$15 to: Feline Friends Network, c/o Cheryl Simpson, 47 Britannia Street, Stratford, ON N5A 5Y8. Or you can renew at the AGM on 22 February.

Membership benefits include subscription to our *cat tales* newsletter and a 10% discount at Feed-All Pet Centre, Global Pet Foods, and Pet Valu in Stratford, McPhail's Pet & Animal Needs in St Mary's, and B&B Pet Supplies in Mitchell.



Show us your heart

Global Pet Food of Stratford has once again chosen FFN as the recipient of their "Show Us Your Heart" campaign. From now until 15 February, Global will give FFN \$1 for each donation ... so, give early, and give often!!!

We have a winner!

Heather Cramman from Stratford held the winning ticket for the James Lumbers Print Raffle drawn on 15 December. Thanks to everyone who purchased a ticket, FFN raised \$436 to help more cats in 2015. Big thank yous to Global Pet Food, Feed-All Pet Centre, the Avon Vet Clinic, and Elspeth Macdonald (SPHS Unique Pet Boutique at Festival Mall) who showcased the print and sold tickets for us. We couldn't have done it without you!



A kitten is the delight of the household; all day long a comedy is played out by an incomparable actor.
– Champfleury



We want more ... cat videos!

There have been some early submissions trickling in for our upcoming Feline Film Festival, but we need a LOT more! Come on cat-lovers, we know you're watching, and loving, all of those funny, weird and wonderful kitty antics on the interweb. We also know that if you've got a cat, they probably get up to some kooky shenanigans, so why not capture them on video and share them with us? Whether international or home-made, we'll pick the best and put them all together for our annual Film Fest.

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. Although Youtube is the best source for videos, because they are easy to download and use in our festival, please send us your favourites no matter where you find them!

And mark your calendar now to attend the event on Friday, 5 June 2015 at Knox Church in Stratford. Along with a screening of some of the finest short cat videos, there will be hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer, alcohol-free beverages, a silent auction, unique pet-related items for sale, and tarot readings! It's a fun, relaxed evening with all proceeds going to support FFN's programs – and what could be better than that?

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

