

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

Cats in the country

by Cheryl Simpson

Last week, a horrified friend repeated a story she had heard about someone tossing a cat out a car window onto a country road and then driving away. Sadly, it was not the first time I had heard a similar story.

Heartless and cruel, right?

You bet.

Perhaps less heartless, but equally cruel are the people who feel that it's acceptable to off-load cats they no longer want at the bottom of farm laneways because, after all, "cats are independent and can look after themselves, right?"

Wrong ... and here are a few reasons why:

- farmers are unprepared and usually unwilling to take on more cats and kittens – especially since these cats are almost always unspayed or unneutered
- Resident barn cats will not welcome the newcomers, very often running them off
- housecats are completely unprepared and unable to survive in a "fend-for-yourself" barn situation

The result?

The abandoned cat will likely not survive – either starving to death, freezing to death or becoming prey to a wild animal.

This problem of abandonment – combined with that of large numbers of unaltered barn cats continuously reproducing – is a huge one. FFN is attempting to address the barn cat overpopulation by helping barn owners to spay or neuter ALL their resident cats.

For example, TNR co-ordinator Marg Usprech has been working all year to help Ed and Janice, who rent two Stratford-area barns for their rescue family of goats and horses. Rounding up and/or trapping these barn cats is no easy task, but at the

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FIONA FINDS A HOME

One day not long ago, two children walked down the country lane toward FFN clients Ed and Janice's barn with a grey tabby in their arms, put her down, and walked away. When Marg Usprech came by not long after to discuss future barn cat trapping, this lovely girl sat on her shoulders as she toured the barn.

Janice was convinced that this obvious house pet would not survive in the barn and Marg agreed that FFN would take her in for adoption, naming her "Fiona." Marg recalls, "Fiona was one of the most laid-back cats I've ever met. I could have dressed her up in doll clothing and she wouldn't have cared a bit!"

Although, Marg was in love, there was no more room in her own feline household. As soon as Fiona was spayed and vaccinated, with luck and perseverance, a perfect new home was found. A happy ending this time. But, the bottom line remains ... Fiona was and is a wonderful pet, WHY did someone abandon her?

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end of the day at least 30 cats and kittens have been spayed or neutered. It's a great feeling to know that, thanks to this collaboration, no more unwanted kittens will be born ...

And yet ... because Ed and Janice care about cats, they continue to fall victim to cat owners who dump cats and kittens. Recently, in the space of a single month, they received five more drop-offs. All of these cats once had a home and were desperate to get inside a house again – only there isn't a house at the farm to take them.

The story of one of those cats, Fiona, is featured in the sidebar at left. Just last week, FFN was desperately seeking a foster home for a mother and baby who had been dropped off. Both were ill with upper respiratory infections. Thanks to Paws of Perth County, they are now in foster care.

There is much more to be done to solve this problem and we need your help to do it. How?

1. Make it know far and wide that abandoning a cat – in the country or elsewhere – is not only incredibly cruel, but a punishable offence. It is also avoidable with the help of FFN behavioural advice and free spay/neuter for qualifying owners.
2. Join our spay/neuter team. Without more volunteers in this area to work with clients and drive cats to spay/neuter appointments, FFN can no longer address situations outside of the cities of Stratford and St. Marys.

We need your help to break this cycle. Call 519-301-5735 and let us know if you're interested in volunteering ... PLEASE!

*Cats are a tonic, they are a laugh,
they are a cuddle, they are at least
pretty just about all of the time and
beautiful some of the time.*

– Roger Caras



6th annual FFN wine raffle

There are only a few days left to buy/sell tickets for the FFN wine raffle on October 16. There are still tickets available for anyone who can sell a few more or hasn't yet purchased. You can't win if you don't have a ticket!

If you have sold tickets or unsold tickets that you don't think you can sell, please contact Holly Roulston (holly@felinefriends.ca) or Paul (simpson.paul@wightman.ca) before Friday, October 9 to arrange for their return.

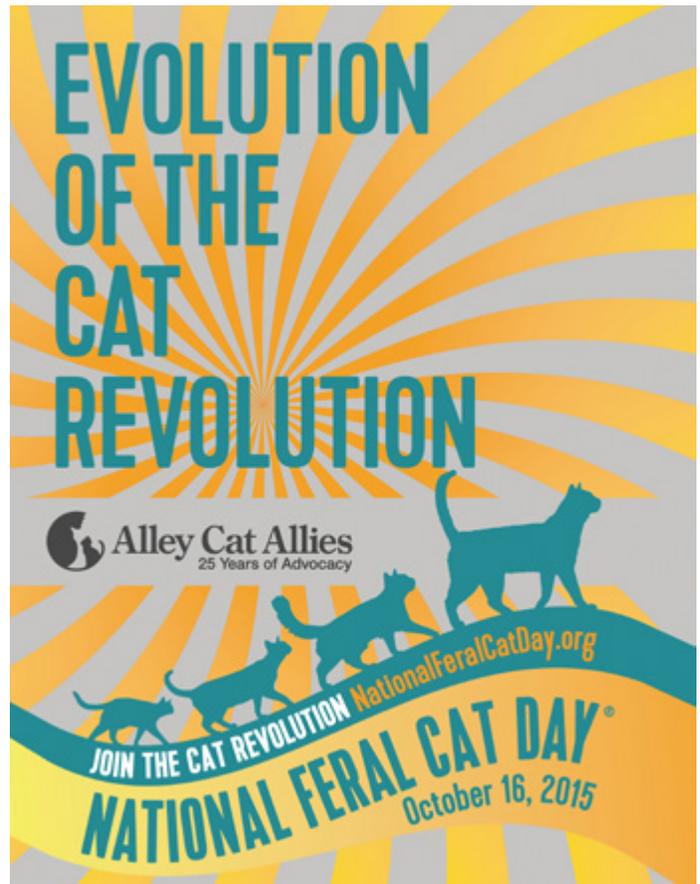
Paws of Perth County Adoptathon

Saturday, October 31 | 10 am to 3 pm
Global Pet Foods (684 Ontario Street)

For further info, contact Paws of Perth County
519.949.1695 | 519.272.0848 |
pawsofperthcounty@gmail.com

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

To Stratford's Global Pet Foods, their customers, and Nature's Variety who, in April and May offered their "pound for pound" challenge. For every pound of Nature's Variety "Instinct" dry food purchased, the company promised to donate a pound to Feline Friends Network. Amazingly, 1,530 pounds were donated – a \$10,000 value! The food – shown below with Paul and Global manager Adam – has been distributed to area feral colony feeders and to local rescue Paws of Perth County. We're all smiling – and so are the cats!



Inter-National Feral Cat Day

In 2001, Alley Cat Allies (www.alleycat.org) launched National Feral Cat Day in the United States on October 16th to raise awareness about community (feral) cats and promote Trap/Neuter/Return. The day is now celebrated by many groups both in and outside of the U.S. with events of all kinds – including the drawing of the winner of the FFN wine raffle.

This year, FFN is also holding an informational "tabling event" at the Festival Marketplace Mall on Saturday, October 17th from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. We'd love to see you there!

(Note: It is rumoured that FFN's mascot, Will Feral, will be making an appearance around 2:00 pm!)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

