

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

Visits with Stratford's community cat colonies – a new series in *cat tales*

by Sharon Morrice with Louise Allen and Cheryl Simpson

When FFN began in 2006–2007, it launched two programs: the first helped people in financial difficulty with the cost of spay or neuter surgery; the second used Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) to humanely stop the breeding of feral cats. Since then, 187 cats have been TNR'd in Stratford alone, and FFN currently has approximately 20 colonies throughout the city.

Most of these colonies now consist of only 1–2 cats, proving that TNR works to bring down the population. This article is the first in a series meant to give readers a feeling for what life is like for these cats. We begin with FFN's very first attempt at TNR'ing five cats who lived outside the former SunRoom Restaurant on George Street.

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Celebrate “Pet Appreciation Month” with Pet Valu & FFN



Stratford's Pet Valu at 581 Huron Street has chosen FFN as the recipient of money raised by the store during April's "Pet Appreciation Month."

We hope you'll visit them at their lovely new location where you can "Buy a Paw to Help a Pet" all month long. Please encourage family and friends to do so too!

In addition, Pet Valu manager Kim and her staff have planned some special events to benefit FFN, namely a Yard and Bake Sale that will take place inside the store on the weekend of April 16 and 17.

FFN has been asked to provide items for the sale and while we have plenty of yard sale rummage, we are in need of baked goods. So, bakers, if you would like to contribute cakes, cookies, squares, bars, breads, or brownies, please contact Paul Simpson at 519.273.8067. Many thanks!

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It was a freezing cold day in February when we first tried our hand at trapping, and we were all terrified! But all five cats were trapped, neutered, and returned to be looked after by Frances, owner of the SunRoom. The cats had a lovely little shelter, and they became a favourite with customers who could dine while watching them eat. As the years passed, attrition took its toll until only Smudge (pictured on page 1) was left. Nine years later, he is still with us.

When the SunRoom was sold, colony feeders had to find a new location for the shelter and feeding station. Thankfully, a nearby business owner allowed us to use her property! Here are stories from two of our colony feeders.

LOUISE | When I started feeding in 2011, two of the original cats – Smudge and Big Daddy – were regular visitors. I was afraid the cats wouldn't adjust to relocation. Fortunately, Smudge and his crew were street-smart and made the transition easily. We do annual "stake-outs" to track the number of cats coming to feed. Smudge is our most consistent visitor; other cats come and go. Several "friendlies"



have become regulars and – if unowned – have been neutered and re-homed. We feed every evening at an elevated station that is easy for the cats to reach but keeps the raccoons out. In the winter, we provide a heated water bowl for fresh water and a sleeping shelter with straw for warmth.

SHARON | Soxy was once a regular at the SunRoom colony downtown. In spring 2014, he mysteriously appeared in my backyard, about four blocks away. I recognized him by his distinctive moustache and left eartip. I put food out for him and he gradually became less fearful until I could get close enough to eventually touch him. Not so feral after all. He spent much of the next winter in my house, but was not at ease and became aggressive. The solution: my husband built an insulated and heated "kitty condo" (pictured at left below) in our backyard. Soxy has the best of both worlds – freedom and a life of luxury. He has also had some misadventures! He was wounded in a fight (he has healed) and once got stranded on a roof for 48 hours (rescued, safe but hungry). Meanwhile, volunteers continue to feed Smudge daily, year-round, back at the colony.

Another upscale success!

The Upscale was a marvellous sale
And much was bagged and sold.
No one left with empty hands
Some had a lot to hold
\$1300+ was made
Many came
And many stayed
So once again it's thanks to all
Who came and left with quite a haul
Stay in touch and you may hear
Of something new ... but that's next year.

Please note that someone left a black jacket at 16 Fern Street on the night of the sale. To arrange for pick up, contact Pat Burnell (pmburnell@hotmail.com). If the jacket is not claimed, it will be donated to Goodwill.



Frozen

by Holly Roulston

Unfortunately, I am not referring to the ever-popular Disney movie, but to a male tabby who was found almost frozen to death this winter.

Nicknamed Buddy by his foster family, this poor kitty was found on a country road near St Mary's on 13 February 2016. A passerby noticed him on her way into town and thought he was dead. Three hours later, on her way home, she pulled over to check. To her surprise, he was still breathing! He was taken indoors and warmed up with towels from the dryer.

Was Buddy tossed out to sit lost on the roadside? Was he a barn kitty? No one in the area would claim him as such. If he was a barn kitty, why was he found frozen on the side of the road? Had he been hit by a car? While the vet detected bruising on one side of his face, Buddy didn't have any gashes, missing teeth, or open wounds to confirm that possibility.

Buddy can't tell us his story so we'll never know what really happened. What we do know is that he is now neutered and vaccinated and has a clean bill of health. And, more importantly, Buddy has found a loving forever home and a new BFF to nap with – Taz, the bull mastiff.



Get silly with us!

FELINE FILM FESTIVAL | FRIDAY, 3 JUNE 2016
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | 7 PM



You need to put a big red circle around Friday, 3 June in your calendar RIGHT NOW. No, don't wait! If you wait, you might forget, and if you forget, you might miss the fun and frivolity that will be FFN's 4th annual Feline Film Festival!

There will be an hour-long screening of the finest short cat videos. There will also be nibbles, wine, beer, a fab silent auction, Pat's Puddy Products, and Tarot card readings. It's a hoot, and we want you there. All for the low cost of \$15/adult or \$7.50/child (one free beverage included in the price of admission). All the proceeds help to fund FFN programs to humanely reduce cat overpopulation and homelessness in Stratford and Perth County.

And there is still time to submit the cat videos that you love. Please keep them coming! You can post videos to our [Facebook events page](#) or, if you're not on Facebook, you can submit videos by emailing links to films@felinefriends.ca.

A kitten is so flexible that she is almost double; the hind parts are equivalent to another kitten with which the forepart plays. She does not discover that her tail belongs to her until you tread on it.

– Henry David Thoreau

If your cat falls out of a tree, go indoors to laugh. – Patricia Hitchcock



Update on petition to end the sale of pets in pet stores

FFN's online petition to stop the sale of pets in Stratford's pet stores has received a LOT of support – over 1,050 signatures to date and counting! We're thrilled and so grateful that people are getting behind this. If you haven't signed yet but would like to, please [click here](#) to go to our change.org page. If you prefer the traditional method, we also have a hard-copy (paper) petition at Boomers Gourmet Fries at 26 Erie Street in Stratford, so please stop in, talk to Sue (FFN board member and Boomers owner), and add your signature.

FFN has also learned that a report on Stratford's animal bylaw will be presented at the next Infrastructure, Transportation, and Safety sub-committee meeting Wednesday, 27 April at 4:30pm in the council chambers. Prepared by city staff, this report presumably will address the question of pet sales in pet stores. The report will be available online on Friday, 22 April. Look for a document link beside the meeting listing on the City of Stratford Council calendar ([click here](#) to go to the Council Calendar page). If you're available on that date, please come out to show that you support FFN's efforts to allow only adoptable spayed and neutered cats and dogs from reputable shelters and rescues in Stratford's pet stores. And remember when it comes to pets – **don't shop, adopt!**

KUDOS AND COUNTLESS THANKS TO

- Global Pet Foods and Pet Valu Stratford for their very generous donations of cat food for our ferals and foster cats – food that always seems to come when we need it most!
- Global Pet Foods for working hard with their customers to raise approximately \$800 for Feline Friends in their February "Show Us Your Heart" Campaign.



Feline Friends needs YOU!

We are always looking for more volunteers! As awareness of FFN's spay/neuter programs has grown, so has the demand, and at times it's been difficult for our volunteers to keep up. So, we're reaching out via video to try to get more people involved.

Over the past months, FFN has been fortunate enough to be able to work with a number of local professionals, who have donated their time and talents to this project. Claire Lautier is an FFN member and an actor with the Stratford Festival – the ideal candidate to develop our message and "host" the video. Behind the camera was video producer Allan Joles, with all of the necessary experience and equipment to shoot and edit our film. Thanks to these two generous people, FFN is proud to share the video with you.

Consume the entire video in one 6-minute bite at <https://youtu.be/YprXw-TOwhI>, or take smaller nibbles at <http://felinefriends.ca/volunteers.html> on the FFN web site. The shorter segments answer the question "Why Volunteer?" and explain everything you need to know about volunteering for our Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Low Income Support programs.

If you're at all interested in becoming more actively involved with FFN, we hope you'll take a few minutes to explore our videos. Whether you have a lot of time or just a little, you'll find that helping FFN to help the cats in our community is very rewarding.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

