

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

Creating a colony

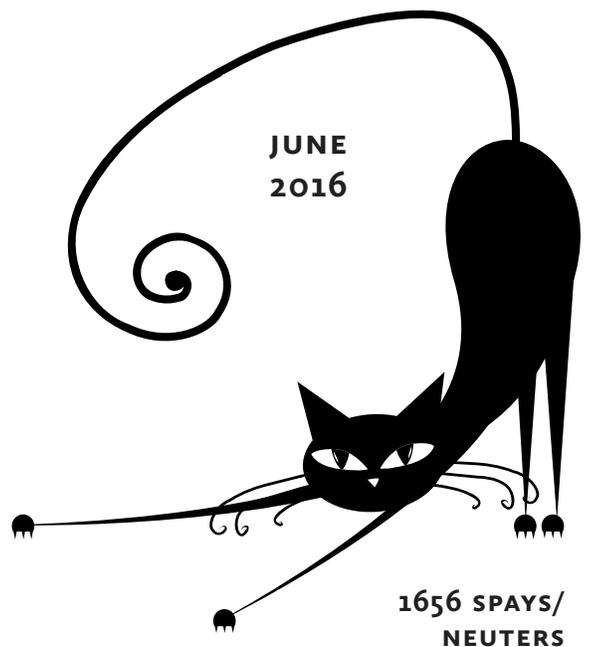
by Karen Van Scheyndel

For us, it all started one winter a few years ago when we noticed mice in the house. Soon after, we discovered pawprints in the snow – catprints! Forgetting about the mouse problem, I started putting food and water down for the cats every day, monitored their visits, provided makeshift shelters ... and so the story began.

In the spring of 2014, four kittens appeared and we contacted FFN for guidance. Through FFN, we TNR'd 8 cats the following September, including Garfield, who was quite sick and needed extra TLC. After a long recovery period, Garfield found a wonderful loving home and is now healthy and happy.



Quick Silver enjoying a snack on the Van Scheyndels' back deck



Our original “crew” included: King Kitt, Lollypop, Petunia, Aloysius, Lady, Spook, Babyface and, of course, Garfield. We believe that Kitt and Lady are the parents of Lollypop, Petunia, and Aloysius. The fourth kitten, Knight, disappeared for over a year, but seems to be back. Although he’s very elusive, we hope to trap him this year along with other newbies Charlie and Maestro.

Most of the cats don’t want to be touched. Lollypop was the first to trust us enough, climbing onto my lap in the winter to warm her feet. She broke her tail spring of 2015 and had to have it partially amputated. She’s mischief at its best, but also my husband’s suck.

Once a scrapper, Kitt is now a calm boy who regularly hangs around, and has been known to come inside to visit us – and our dogs – and then leave. He’s my shadow. Petunia is never far and Aloysius is usually around my feet. The rest sit and watch, always partaking in the feline security team.

Last fall, we trapped another big white boy who we named Bumble. We truly thought we were done trapping until this past winter when Harley, Karr, Quick Silver, and Simba appeared. Simba remains with us, while Harley and Karr

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went on to be adopted. Sadly, Quick Silver became very ill and passed away. Figaro was next to show up and is now enjoying life indoors.

The lessons these cats teach us every day have changed our lives forever. They're not just cats or "mouse hunters" – they're an extension of our family. They love us unconditionally, offer their trust and companionship, and are endlessly entertaining. We couldn't imagine our world without them.



Dinner time for Petunia (grey) and Lollypop (black)



Aloysius (grey) and Kitt (black) chowing down



Feed-All hosts food drive throughout June for FFN

For the entire month of June, Feed-All Pet Centre will be holding a food drive to benefit FFN. Depending on the size of the bag you buy to donate, you will receive a coupon for money off your next purchase as follows:

- 2-4 pound bag of donated food = \$2.00 off your next purchase
- 5-7 pound bag = \$3.00 off
- 8-12 pound bag = \$5.00 off
- 13-16 pound bag = \$10.00 off

Place your donated food in the shopping cart in the middle of the store with the sign "How many shopping carts can we fill?"

In addition, on the weekend of 25-26 June, Feed-All will host a charity BBQ FOR FFN from 11:00 to 2:00 pm on both Saturday and Sunday (weather permitting). On the Saturday, the CJCS PT Cruiser will join the festivities on from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Store hours are Saturday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm and Sunday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.



Fun & frolic at the film fest

by Sharon Morrice

If laughter is a measure of success, it's safe to say that our fourth annual Feline Film Festival on June 3rd was a hit! An appreciative audience of about 120 enjoyed the antics of a lot of entertaining cats caught on film. Fifty-seven short videos starring cats doing everything from surfing to eating from chopsticks delighted the crowd of all ages.

There was never a dull moment. In addition to the film screening, snacks and beverages were enjoyed as people mingled and bid on a wide variety of items at our silent auction tables. Tarot reader, Pat, was kept very busy, and as always, our array of hand-made 'Puddy Products' was a popular feature of the event.

FFN owes many thanks to every volunteer who helped make the evening run smoothly. Also, great appreciation goes to our generous sponsors: Constellation Brands, Stratford Brewing Company, Boomers Gourmet Fries, Global Pet Foods, Video Plus Books & CDs, L&M Catering, At-Your-Service Plumbing, Avon Pet Hospital, and Perth Veterinary Services.

And to the many local businesses and individuals who made donations to our silent auction and 'Best of Stratford' raffle, thank you so much! Through all of your efforts and contributions, this year's event netted approximately \$4,300 that will be used to fund our spay and neuter programs to humanely reduce cat overpopulation in our community.

THANKS GO TO

Our wonderful members who responded to last month's request for cat carriers ... We can now throw out some pretty decrepit ones!

Pet Valu, Stratford, who raised \$3,047 in cash, food, and litter for FFN during their April Pet Appreciation month

Global Pet Foods and Feed-All Pet Centre for "being there" when our food supplies are low.



And, in case you were unable to attend – or maybe you just want to watch them again! – the winning videos as voted by our audience are:

1. *Unlimited Patience*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eir5MX8JX_I
2. TIE FOR 2ND PLACE!
Pool Table Kittens
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2ahVtyRGZw>
and...
Cats vs Cucumbers
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HGoKN1kjko>
3. *33-hour rescue*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrCoJukaBIM>

Hope to see you all again next year!

STILL NEEDED

To help more cats and give some of our overworked volunteers an occasional rest, we are still in need of more foster homes, as well as occasional drivers for morning and/or afternoon trips to London or Kitchener vet clinics.

If you are able to help or would like more information, please call the FFN phone at 519.301.5735.



Mister Moustache

by Star Bryan

When we first got the call that there was another FeLV cat in need of a home, we had no idea how he would change our lives and our hearts. Mister Moustache, or Mister M as we called him, came to us timid, and shy. He had spent time with the local feral colony but was rescued once it became obvious that he wasn't a feral. He was sick and weak and no longer trusted humans.

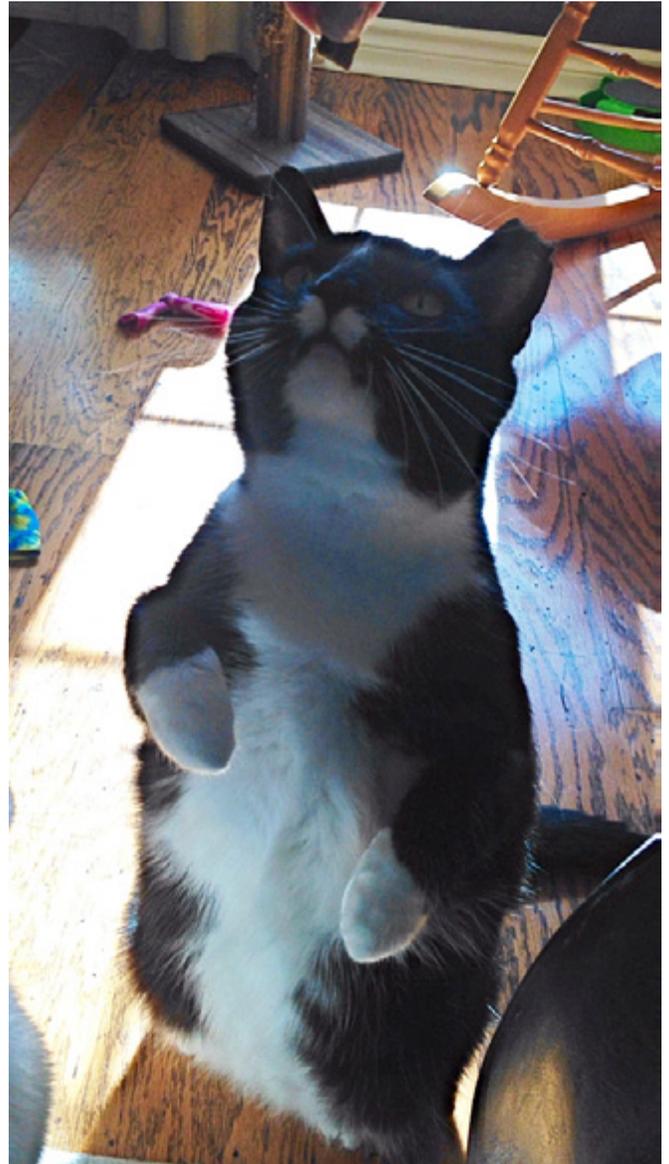
Within days of arriving at our home, Mister M began sneaking out from his hiding spot to cuddle with our daughter Caity, jumping and hiding as soon as anyone moved. Within the first two months he began cuddling with our older FeLV cats and, before long, you would never have known he had ever been anything but the lap cat and snuggler he had become.

All of our cats have FeLV, or Feline Leukemia, a retrovirus that weakens the immune system of cats. FeLV can only be diagnosed with a positive blood test. Cats with FeLV can have shorter lives, but some live a full life. Our cat Flip passed after 19 years of living with FeLV. Other cats, like Mister who was only 5-6, don't get as long. But we know that his last 3-4 years were full of love, happiness, and comfort.

Many vets still recommend euthanizing FeLV positive cats when diagnosed. We do NOT agree with this practice. FeLV cats can have happy, healthy, and loving lives – for however long that may be. I have the profound joy of being surrounded by FeLV cats and, if you didn't know they have it, you wouldn't be able to tell.

Mister is so very missed in our home. He was more than a pet, he was part of our family, and that makes every day that we were blessed with his presence special and cherished.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort



FFN AT CANADA DAY

Please join FFN for Canada Day Friday July 1st from 12:00 to 4:00 pm in Market Square behind City Hall. It's sure to be a fun day for the whole family with our "Guess the Number of Cat Toys" game. We will also be selling tickets for the Best of Stratford raffle and the draw will be held at 3:30pm.

Cat toys can be donated up to the last week of June and can be dropped off at 35 Church St (across from the back parking lot of the Stratford Public library). Looking forward to seeing everyone out there!

