

# cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



## Difficult times

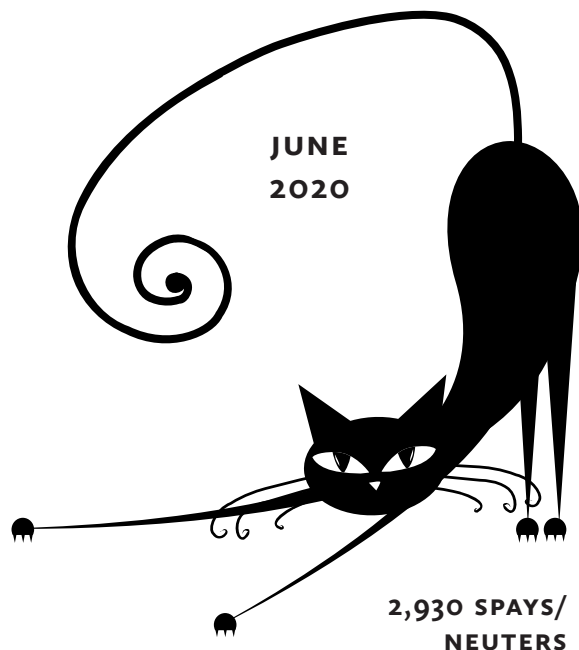
This time of year is always busy and heart-breaking, but with spay/neuter surgeries postponed by the pandemic restrictions on veterinary clinics, we expect to see a huge increase in the number of kittens being born.

As of 16 May, FFN has taken in 28 kittens. All 28 kittens were homeless and two of the litters were orphaned after the mother cats were killed on the road. Fortunately, we were able to bring in the mom cats for the other litters. Some of the little ones were in dire straits with infected eyes, bad upper respiratory infections, diarrhea, etc. – for some, it was touch-and-go.

Motherless kittens need special kitten milk – KMR (which is very expensive) – and extra care. It's challenging, but thanks to the excellent kitten fosters we have in our volunteer base, all of the kittens are doing well.

FFN has 37 cats waiting for spay/neuter surgery. Although vet clinics are now able to ease restrictions, many are back-logged, short-staff, and having difficulty getting personal protective equipment. There is going to be a wait for some time.

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## Pawing intake of cats and kittens

Effective immediately, we are no longer able to take in cats or kittens. Our two TNR/Foster/Adoption Coordinators are currently managing forty-six felines in our programs, most waiting for spays or neuters. Due to the high numbers, the postponement of spay/neuter surgeries, and the health issues that many of the cats and kittens currently in our care have, we regret that it's necessary to put intakes on hold.

If you or someone you know finds a homeless cat or kitten in need, please do all you can to help it. The cats are going to need the help of all of the caring members of our community. Also, see the list of cat rescues on our website at [www.felinefriends.ca/cat-rescues](http://www.felinefriends.ca/cat-rescues).



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Our volunteers are still working hard during these difficult times. We have had foster homes doing FaceTime chats with potential adopters, lots of e-mails, messages, and phone conversations. All of the kittens, except the very tiny ones, have been adopted and most have gone to their foster-to-adopt homes. Because FFN does not adopt out un-altered animals, cats or kittens adopted at this time are going as foster-to-adopt, meaning that only once they are altered and vaccinated will the adoption be official.

We have had calls for injured cats within Stratford and, fortunately, with the help of the community, we were able to secure them and get them medical attention. FFN is getting more and more calls within the City of Stratford and it sometimes feels like we are providing animal control, which is not our mandate.

Our Low-Income Spay/Neuter Assistance Program has also been affected. The House of Blessing and Salvation Army in Perth County,

We love seeing photo updates of our cats and kittens! Here is Sophie (happy tears) with newly-adopted Seven.

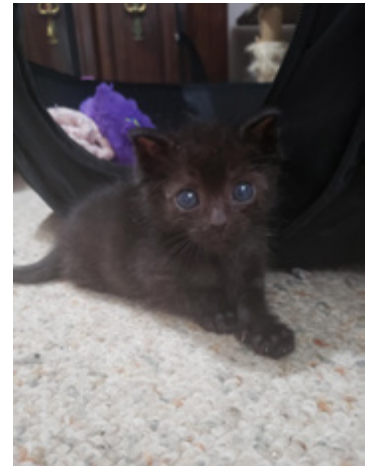


who conduct income assessments for us, have been unable to have face-to-face meetings. This means that, unless a person is already a client of those organizations, people are unable to get vouchers for the free spay/neuter of cats in their household. And, as appointments for spay/neuter surgeries remain difficult to get, those who have qualified for vouchers must wait. The unwanted behaviours of un-neutered males (spraying, roaming, aggression) and un-spayed females (heat cycles) will be stressful for pet owners and we fear may cause some people to surrender or abandon pets.

How you can help:

- Become an FFN member or renew your membership (this is an actual paid membership) for \$15 annually at <https://www.felinefriends.ca/membership>
- Donate any amount you can and/or donate wish-list items. We are always in need of clumping unscented litter, cat/kitten food, cleaning supplies such as dish soap, laundry soap, paper towels, etc. : <https://www.felinefriends.ca/donate>
- Donate cat care items. We go through boxes of Forti Flora, so if you have any you're not using, it would be appreciated. It can only be purchased at vet clinics or on-line and is expensive. It has been a huge help with our cats, many of whom have not been eating properly for a long time. Feliway is a spray or plug in (available at vet clinics) that can help our frightened foster cats.
- Become a member of *100 Feline Friends Who Care*, donate your empties to our bottle drive, and/or purchase Puddy Products (details on all three of these ways to help follow in the article "Fundraising during a Pandemic" on page 4)
- To our colony feeders – please pick up food at the designated area. If you are purchasing food for reimbursement, please inform your colony leader what kind of food it is, and we will try to secure discounted or donated food for you.
- Volunteer – foster cats/kittens, organize a mini-fundraiser, or lend your time or talent in some way.





## Miracle kittens

By Britt Bourgeois

I've never wanted to foster kittens more than I did this year. Being stuck indoors seemed like the perfect time to help orphaned kittens.

When I got the call that there were three kittens who needed a foster, I was so excited – I didn't know the next few weeks were going to be such a roller coaster!

When the kittens arrived, they were in a box – three tiny black fluffballs. Only a little over one week old, all three were sneezing a lot and were so congested they could barely breathe. Their noses and eyes were completely gunked shut. I honestly didn't think they would all make it.

After discovering that all three were boys, I named them Rocky, Bullwinkle and Boris. Feeding time was a struggle. Rocky absolutely refused to eat and although he was so tiny, he really put up a fight. They had to be fed every two hours and it often took me close to an hour because Rocky could only be coaxed to eat a few drops at a time.

They started eating a lot better after the vet prescribed some antibiotics. But then Bullwinkle decided he didn't want to eat at all! Back to the vet where they were given a different antibiotic for upper respiratory infections and another antibiotic for eye infections.

Bullwinkle started to eat again and their eyes began to clear up. Their eye infections had been so

(left) Rocky before; (middle) from left to right, Boris, Bullwinkle, and Rocky; (right) Rocky's eyes are now much better.

bad that there was a possibility that Rocky could be blind. But the vet determined that he had ulcers on his eyes and that, with luck, the eye drops would clear them up completely. During the two weeks the kittens also would not poop. The poor little guys had to have two enemas.

Rocky, Bullwinkle, and Boris are finally all doing great. Their eye infections are gone, their upper respiratory infections are almost gone, and Rocky's eyes are improving! They eat like crazy, have quite big personalities, and love to play.

After worrying that they wouldn't all make it, I am so thrilled that they are all doing so well. I've never fostered kittens that were this sick before but I'd absolutely do it again. While it was definitely a lot of work – and I didn't get much sleep! – it was so rewarding to be able to help them and to watch them overcome each obstacle. I loved it and can't wait to help more kittens. And I hope these boys find the best "forever" homes!

*I am indebted to the species of the cat for a particular kind of honorable deceit, for a great control over myself, for characteristic aversion to brutal sounds, and for the need to keep silent for long periods of time.*

– Colette





## Fundraising during a Pandemic

FFN is sad to announce that our **Wine Raffle**, which has been our largest fundraiser year after year, has been postponed. We don't feel that we can ask local businesses – who may be suffering significantly due to the pandemic crisis – to donate prizes, as they have so generously done in the past.

In addition, Wine Raffle ticket sales are person-to-person – mainly volunteers selling to friends, family, and co-workers. It's just not safe to do that now or in the foreseeable future, and it's not something we can imagine online ticket sales replacing. For those who are able, we ask you to please consider donating the amount you would have spent on Wine Raffle tickets. You won't get a prize, but you will get a tax receipt for any donation of \$10 or more.

**Puddy Products** are still available! Pat is still creating, and the lovely cat toys, children's toys, hats, headwear, children's sweaters, etc. are multiplying. Porch delivery is available in Stratford. For information or to order, please contact Puddy Product maker, Patricia Burnell at 519.271.0657.

FFN will be going ahead with our **100 Feline Friends Who Care** fundraiser. Having had an extraordinary response to this campaign in 2019, we hope that it will continue to provide support for our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs. The goal is to find 100 *very special* friends, committed to the welfare of cats and kittens in our community, who are willing to donate \$100 annually. We were thrilled to reach this goal last year – \$10,000 was raised!

Understandably, many people are in much more difficult financial circumstances this year, so we are hoping that those who are able will recommit to the initiative this year, and that new friends will make up the difference by joining in place of those for whom it's not possible in 2020. For more information and to join, please visit



<https://www.felinefriends.ca/100-feline-friends-who-care> and contact us at [info@felinefriends.ca](mailto:info@felinefriends.ca) with any questions.

We have had success with our **on-line auctions** and appreciate the wonderful donations and support we receive for them. The auctions are extremely labour-intensive with photographing, listing, contacting, sorting, and arranging-pick ups. FFN has a small number of dedicated volunteers who run the auction along with trapping, arranging vet care, driving cats to vet appointments, promoting our foster cats, and arranging adoptions. We have an excellent team of foster volunteers and cat socializers, as well as those behind the scenes who do a tremendous amount of work to keep FFN operating.

Finally, a reminder to please donate your empties! With the beer store now accepting empties again, FFN's ongoing **bottle drive** has resumed! Beer, wine, and liquor bottles may be dropped off any time at 179 Hibernia Street, Stratford. Outdoor bins have been provided for your use. Thank you to Heather and her hubby for storing and returning bottles for us!

*me: It's almost 30 degrees out.*

*my 15-lb-cat: I MUST sit on your lap.*



# The story of Elvis and Ralph

by Kim Hutcheson

Both Gizmo (aka Elvis, at right) and Louie (aka Ralph, at left) had a rough start in life before Feline Friends Network became involved. When we adopted Gizmo, he had just healed from a bite mark on his face. We have since noticed multiple scars on his ears and a small chunk missing from one ear. I can only imagine that life on the streets was hard on him although you would never know that from his fun-loving, cuddly personality.

Louie came to us last fall as a stray cat looking for food on our back porch. At the beginning we only saw him sporadically and he was extremely fearful of humans. Over the winter months, he showed up more frequently. As the weather turned colder, I turned to FFN for guidance.

After some time we were able to trap him, planning to have him neutered and released. But after the vet determined that he was quite young – only about eight months of age – we made the decision to keep him indoors with the hope that he would become adoptable.

Having never fostered an outdoor cat before, it was a new experience for me. As the weeks went by, it started to look like he would never warm up to me. Then, one day, I accidentally left the door to his room open and Gizmo walked in.



Louie immediately ran to Gizmo and began rubbing against him. Within days they were the best of friends and Louie quickly started coming out of his shell and soon allowed us to pet him. Seeing the bond between these two cats, we decided to keep Louie as a new member of our family. Without the assistance of FFN, Louie would have continued to face a cold, hard life outdoors rather than the life he now enjoys with us. Thank you FFN for getting these two cats off the streets and into a warm, safe home.

## Online auction raises \$2,278 during COVID-19

We were a little nervous about going ahead with our Spring Online Auction fundraiser ... a lot of work goes into putting the auction together ... would it be a success or a flop? But we decided to give it a go!!

FFN would like to thank everyone who donated, bid, or won, paid for, and picked up their items from our Spring Online Auction fundraiser. A special shout-out to the generous winning bidders who added a little bit extra to their payments!

All in all, the spring online auction raised \$2,278, which helps FFN fund our Spay/Neuter programs!!

We are already hard at work putting together items for our next online auction. If you have any gently used items, collectibles, or are a business owner and would like to donate a gift certificate or other item, please send us an email at [info@felinefriends.ca](mailto:info@felinefriends.ca) with a description and/or photo of your item or message us through Facebook messenger.



## MORE FELINE FOSTERS!

If there is such a thing as a positive coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, it might be the uptick in people offering to foster cats and kitties for FFN. Whether it's because life's pace has slowed for some of us, giving people more time to volunteer or a craving for feline companionship and cuddles in an era of social distancing, we are thrilled! Welcome to our three newest fosters, Steve, Natasha, and Penny!

Each and every one of our fosters has helped FFN save lives and without our foster families we would not be able to adopt out the 100 plus cats/kittens that we do each year! Our heartfelt thanks to all of you.

Natasha M., who – we were happy to learn – decided to adopt her foster cat, Rosco, a stray in Stratford. Lucky boy!



## IN MEMORY OF ...

Our deepest sympathy and heartfelt thanks for the donations FFN has received in memory of loved ones. In 2020, donations have been made in the memory of Shelley Albrecht, Robert Gardner, Inga Thomas, Gunter Weinheimer, and June White. We are greatly honoured that you have chosen to remember these friends and family members by helping FFN carry on our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU – AND US!!

FFN would like to extend our sincere appreciation to a number of people who created birthday fundraisers on Facebook in 2020, asking friends and family to donate to FFN in honour of the special boy/girl rather than buying gifts. Who wants presents when they can have that warm fuzzy feeling that comes from helping kitties?

Thank you and belated birthday wishes to Rachel, Victoria, Jesse, Graham, Silke, Pam, Matthew, Brynn, Nancy, and The Busy Momma! We appreciate your acts of selflessness and the generosity of all who have donated to support our programs!

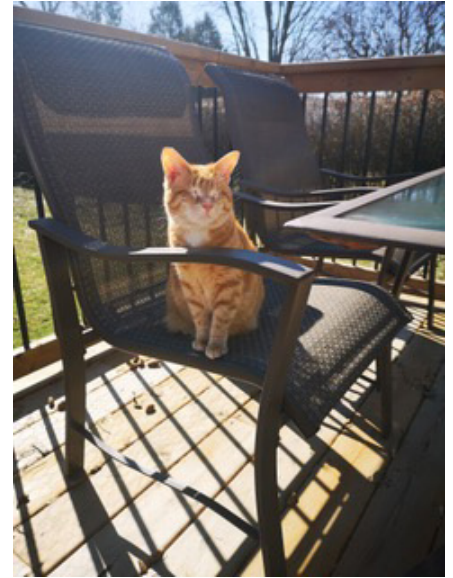
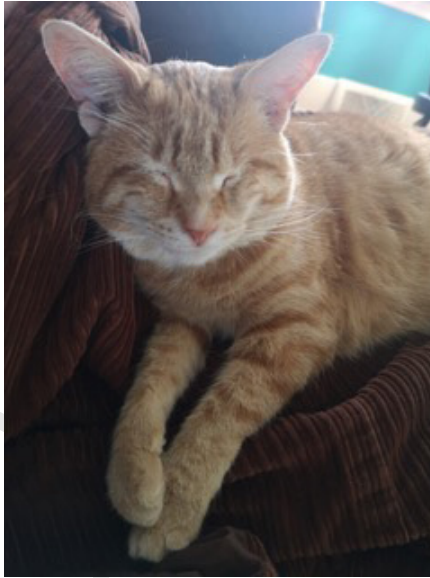
P.S. Our apologies if we missed anyone – the most recent fundraisers take a bit of time to show up in our account, but we'll catch you in the next issue.

P.S.S. If you're thinking of doing an online fundraiser for your birthday or another special occasion, please be sure to tag Feline Friends in your post so that we receive notification.

*Nobody who is not prepared to spoil cats will get from them the reward they are able to give to those who do spoil them. – Compton MacKenzie*







## What is it like to be owned by a blind cat? An update on Olive!

By Janine Prew

A few years ago, in my Facebook feed, I saw a picture of a little orange kitten squinting at the camera and I fell in love! It turned out that she wasn't squinting. When Olive was found, FFN initially thought she had a very bad eye infection. But the vet determined that her eyes were malformed and had to be removed. Her eye sockets were sewn shut for protection, giving her the adorable "squint" that captured my heart.

Because of the malformation, Olive was never able to see. This becomes clear when you meet her because nothing – and I mean absolutely *nothing* – holds her back!

When we adopted Olive, we thought there might be SOME adjustments to be made, some "special needs" to be met. But Olive truly isn't very different from other cats and we only needed to adapt two things for her – a vertical board covered in sisal to help her climb up onto our high bed (our bedroom is too small for a ramp or stairs) and we fenced in our

deck and a portion of our yard so that she can enjoy the outdoors like her sighted, adopted brothers.

Olive gets up on the coffee table, chairs, and on our cat-towers with no problems! She does trip on things, gets almost stepped-on a lot, and occasionally she runs into the walls. She also beats up her adopted siblings and is, in fact, the alpha cat of the household despite being almost half her brothers' size. She loves sunbeams, warm laps, and chasing bugs in the yard.

While she gets very excited when she hears wrappers, tin foil, or other crinkly sounds, some of Olive's favourite toys, ironically, are the small fuzzy balls that make absolutely no sound – at least, no sound discernable to our feeble human ears.

In the end, being owned by a blind cat has proved to be much the same as being owned by any other cat! We often forget that Olive is "different" but when we remember, she is a source of wonder, amazement, and joy.

Good news! FFN has received a grant of \$2,000 from Animal Aid Foundation! AAF was founded to address the issue of animal over-population and homeless pets, which they do by supporting spay/neuter programs like ours. FFN is so grateful to be chosen! Honorable mention to Jamie Lamond for writing the grant application ... your time and effort are greatly appreciated.





### COZY AND COMFORTING

FFN is very fortunate to have been chosen to receive a FREE Thermotex Therapy Systems Ltd. therapeutic pet bed! A thousand thanks to Roxythe\_kitty and her humans, Pam and Kory in Calgary, for donating these pet beds to benefit foster kitties like ours! The beds comfort pets and safely relieve pain and inflammation with far infrared heat therapy. When someone purchases a Thermotex pet product using the promocode ROXY, they receive a 10% discount and 20% of the sale is made available for donation to animal rescue foundations. Thank you to the special person who nominated FFN! Above, a lucky foster kitty is shown enjoying the warm, cozy bed.

### IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Thank you to everyone who has supported FFN – the donations of cat litter, food, kitten milk, heated beds, and funds have been tremendous! We also want to thank our partnering vet clinics, the pet stores, and all the businesses that have and continue to support us. Fundraising, donating auction items, raffle prizes, cat food, supplies, and featuring our foster cats for adoption are just a few of the ways you enable us to continue helping homeless cats.

We were very fortunate to have several people donate gift certificates to local businesses to our recent auction, making a double impact by not only supporting our charity but also supporting local business during these difficult times. We hope to see everything safely up and running soon, and wish everyone the best in the upcoming months!

## Do you know what to do for an animal in an EMERGENCY?

Here's what to do if you need to report an animal in distress, animal abuse, or if your pet has an after-hours medical emergency :

Call **1.833.9.ANIMAL (264625)** to report an animal in distress or being neglected. This includes animals that are injured, in pain, sick, suffering or abused, abandoned, or lacking proper care, water, food, or shelter.

Call **311** (animal control) to report a wild animal in distress, injured, or deceased. Also to report a wild or domestic animal roaming on public property.

Call **911** (emergency) to report an emergency where a life is in immediate danger or distress such as an animal attack or animal in a hot vehicle. Also to report Illegal activity such as dog/cock fighting rings.

### YOUR PET – AFTER-HOURS MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If your pet needs medical attention, please contact your veterinary clinic or one of the following:

**Emergency Veterinary Clinic of Waterloo Region** at **519.650.1617** – open weeknights, weekends, and 24 hours on all statutory holidays. 405 Maple Grove Road, Unit 14, Cambridge, ON, N3E 1B6.

**London Regional Veterinary Emergency and Referral Hospital** at **519.432.3300** – open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. 41 Adelaide Street North, London, ON, N6B 3P4.

**Pet Poison Helpline** at **1.855.764.7661**.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
garet markvoort

