

# cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK

## From hisses to purrs

THE STORY OF MAGGIE & WAFFLES

by Marg Usprech



Maggie (left) and Waffles (right)

Maggie and Waffles are just two of the homeless cats that were trapped in Stratford. Both were young Moms under a year and both were extremely difficult to trap. Waffles moved her babies several times, and at one point there

were no sightings of her kittens for a week. Volunteers set up a temporary shelter, set out traps and wildlife cameras and monitored the situation throughout the day. It involved many, many volunteer hours including going out at 4am to try to trap them. It was interesting to see the different animals – skunks, possums, rabbits etc. come at different times – they all had a schedule! Mom would never show up with the babies when we were there. We followed cat paths through the bush area and set traps where we thought they would be. Still Mom would sound the alarm for the babies to stay put. We needed to get this family in, so we decided to trap Mom so she could not warn them. That did the trick, the babies entered the trap and this family was whisked away to safety.

Maggie was also difficult – there was no way she would go into a trap! We also learned she had been trapped previously by someone trying to remove a skunk from their property, so that explained it. We trapped her babies using a standard trap and continued to try to trap her but luck was not on our side. We

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## It's membership time!

DON'T MISS OUT! It's time to renew your FFN membership. Lend your voice by becoming a FFN member, and help us help more cats and fight overpopulation through our spay/neuter programs. Memberships are \$15. As a bonus, you'll receive a 10% discount at the following businesses: Feed-All Pet Centre, \*Split Rail Country Store, Shuttercraft Window Coverings, \*Ruffin's Pet Centre, \*Global Pet Foods, McPhail's Pet & Animal Needs (St. Marys), and B&B Pet Supplies (Mitchell). You can pay by e-transfer to [info@felinefriends.ca](mailto:info@felinefriends.ca) or by cheque, payable to Feline Friends Network, 134 Brunswick St., Stratford, ON, N5A 3M1. Please be sure to tell us you're paying for a membership, and give us your mailing address, phone number and e-mail address in the message section of your e-transfer or in a note enclosed with your cheque.

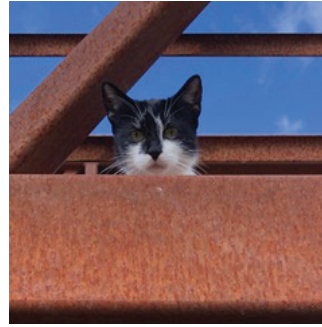
*Please note that discount applies to cat-related products only at businesses marked \**

decided to use a drop trap, but she still would not go under it. The next step was to put one of her kittens in a squirrel trap and place it under the drop trap. Bingo, it worked, and Maggie was re-united with her babies.

Trapping can take hours, days and weeks sometimes. At other times, cats will walk into the trap the first day. It takes many volunteer hours, with volunteers going out in the wee hours of the morning and waiting. It is our believe both Maggie and Waffles had a home at one time. They are not feral, just frightened house cats that found themselves outside.

A special thanks to Brit, who joined me on our early morning adventures and for helping with the drop trap (no way I can lay on the ground and spring into action like she did).

Below is an example of a drop trap that was used last year to trap another cat family in the same area that Maggie was trapped.



Maggie (left) and one of her kittens (right)



Waffles with her kittens (don't miss the one behind Mom)



Example of a drop trap



*Waffles was so frightened and desperate to escape, but look at her now! She's adorable. It reminds us not to assume a hissy cat is feral. It is often very loving and friendly, just terrified of what it doesn't know and understand. – Val Pinder, foster caregiver*

*“One cat just leads to another.”*

*– Ernest Hemingway*



Little One

## A tribute to Little One

by Cheryl Jones

*Editor's note: Little One lived with Cheryl for seven months... well cared for and loved. She passed away on 20 January 2021.*

If you didn't already know, cats are amazing creatures. I say this with the memory of how determined Little One (once part of an FFN feral colony) was at coming indoors and adapting to all that happens inside. She was trapped and came into my home in June 2020. The best birthday present ever! Marg and I waited to see if litter training would be a challenge, but she did that like it was no big deal. Little One fought some infections off and adapted herself to being out and social with my babies. We figured out some feeding issues and she was not fond of my schedule from work at all! It became a common thing that working nights for two or more nights didn't agree with her. And, staying up past 10:30 pm

was a thing of the past for me. She would sit beside me and meow till I went to bed. I loved the kisses she provided to me and she enjoyed cuddling beside me. I was her slave and no one else's.

So, again, don't lose hope for any cat. They love beyond what we know. They feel more than we see and they all deserve the very best we can give them. Of all the cats I have fostered, Little One will be with me forever. I love her dearly and am very happy to have spent this time being with her. It was my greatest honour.

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## Spring online auction fundraiser March 24 to 30

Do you miss shopping? We can help you with that! Our spring online auction is set to run from 9am, Wednesday, 24 March to 9am, Tuesday, 30 March, 2021! Get ready to bid on all sorts of great new or like-new items. Our popular auctions take place on Facebook ([facebook.com/felinefriendsauction](https://facebook.com/felinefriendsauction)) and are easy to participate in. We offer contactless pick-up in either Stratford or St. Marys, and payment is

by e-transfer or cash at time of pick-up. So please mark your calendar and bid generously – all proceeds go to support our programs and help cats! If you have items in good condition that you would like to donate, please contact us via Facebook Messenger through our Facebook page – [facebook.com/felinefriendsnetwork2006](https://facebook.com/felinefriendsnetwork2006).



## Buy two, Ruffin's gives one

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY to support a local business and help FFN's foster cats & kittens at the same time! Tracy, manager at Ruffin's Pet Centre Stratford, is holding two very special promotions to benefit the cats and kittens in our care this spring. Promos will run from 15 March to 15 April.

**Promotion #1 Milk for Foster Kittens:** buy two cans of KMR kitten milk and a third can will be donated by Ruffin's to FFN.

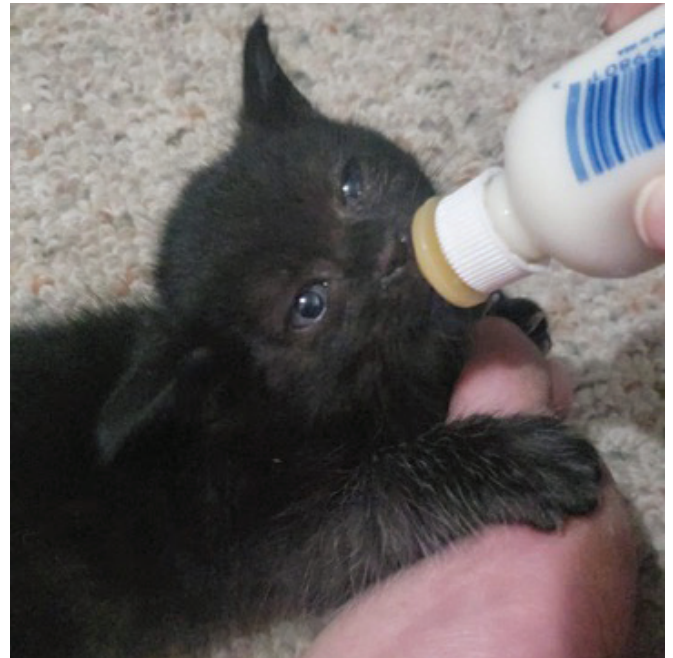
**Promotion #2 Blue Wilderness:** buy two, 3oz cans of Blue Wilderness food and a third can will be donated to FFN.

A huge thank you to Tracy, Ruffin's staff and owner, Mark Fitzgerald.

## A perfect match

Fostering can be difficult when it comes time to let them go, but also rewarding knowing they have found their perfect match. Thank you Dawn Benson for fostering this beautiful girl.

*"My foster, "Whitney," has been adopted. The family adopting her are absolutely wonderful. The mom and her 10 yr old son are in love with her. She will be their first pet ever. Whitney has moved from the spare room to my 10-year-old son's room. She absolutely adores him, and is the first cat I've met that prefers kids! My son is pretty sad but I think it's good for him to understand what it means to take care of an animal in need. She is a lucky cat and will have a wonderful life!"*



## Tiny hungry bellies

With last year's shortage of KMR (Kitten Milk Replacement) we were left scrambling at times to meet the needs of kittens in our care. This year we are getting prepared for the calls we know are going to be coming in. If you would like to donate KMR or Purina Kitten Chow, please email our Kitten Coordinator Brittney Bourgeois at [info@felinefriends.ca](mailto:info@felinefriends.ca). These items can also be purchased at local pet stores, including Feed-All Pet Centre, Global Pet Foods Stratford, Pet Valu, Ruffin's Pet Centre Stratford, or go to our [Amazon wish list](#).

*"A kitten is in the animal world  
what a rosebud is in the garden."*

– Robert Southey

## Annual General (virtual) Meeting

This year's AGM, held 21 February 2021, was our first held online. Thank you to all who attended, and especially to **Dan Kane** of local computer and networking solutions company, **GoTech**, for giving his time and expertise to host the Zoom meeting and ensure everything ran smoothly. Thanks also to **Chocolate Barr's Candies** for the donation of a lovely & delicious door prize!

Despite 2020 having been an unusually challenging year, from spay/neuter surgery postponements to the cancellation of our wine raffle fundraiser, our volunteers persevered to help homeless cats, and we reached a major milestone: 3,000 cats spayed & neutered since Feline Friends started! We also came out in a strong financial position, ending the year with a healthy surplus despite a drop in fundraising revenue, thanks to the generous support of donors, an increase in grants and adoptions. Our 2020 financial statements may be found on our website – [click here](#) to view them, or email [info@felinefriends.ca](mailto:info@felinefriends.ca) to obtain a copy.

The numbers of cats & kittens in our programs in 2020 were as follows:

- 193 cats entered the TNR/Foster/Adoption program, down from 211 in 2019
- 146 of those were found to be friendly, and entered the Foster/Adoption program, an increase of 5 cats compared to 2019
- 47 cats went through our TNR program, a decrease of 23 cats from 2019
- 23 kittens born outside were trapped by volunteers, involving many early morning and evening hours of volunteer time over days and sometimes weeks to get the entire family, including the mom cat
- A steady increase in homeless cats found within the City of Stratford – we had 22 in 2018, 47 in 2019 and 55 in 2020

- Cats with more major medical issues: 2 with gun shot wounds, (one did not survive and the other had to have extensive dental surgery due to his teeth being shattered) and others ranging from leg amputations, dental, parasite burdens, infections and bite wounds
  - 66 cats were spayed/neutered through our Low-Income Spay/Neuter Assistance Program, down 40% from 110 cats in 2019 (because of COVID-19, the organizations that do financial assessments for us were closed to the public and unable to do assessments for up to 6 months, while spay/neuter appointments were also harder to get)
- Four new board members were confirmed for the coming term: Brittney Bourgeois, who has fostered many kittens for FFN (specializing in neo-natal kittens) and has recently started trapping; Amanda Dobson, who has volunteered at FFN events and assisted with fundraising; Kimberley Jouwsma, who does volunteer scheduling and training, and spends countless hours working with especially frightened cats that need extra TLC; and Emily Smith, a caregiver for foster cats and has been trained in TLC techniques, and does fundraising and fostering. We welcome back Marg Usprech, Jamie Lamond, Shelley McLean, Brenda Ford and Sharon Morrice. Stepping down from the Board after having contributed for many years is Holly Roulston, who, fortunately for us, will continue volunteering with Feline Friends in other ways.

A thousand thanks to all of the volunteers who enable Feline Friends to continue working towards our mission – to humanely reduce cat overpopulation through spay & neuter programs. As an organization that is 100% volunteer-run, with no paid staff, the countless hours, skills and commitment given by our volunteers is amazing. And to our donors and supporters, from individuals to businesses, we are truly grateful for your generosity. We truly could not do it without you!





## Puddy Products for people and pets

While she hasn't been able to display her amazing Puddy Products at markets or events this past year, Pat Burnell is staying busy! All of her knitted items are available in many colours and sizes. Please see a wide variety of her handmade children's toys, cat toys, children's / young adult's sweaters, hats, mitts, mats & more on our website at [felinefriends.ca/puddy-products](http://felinefriends.ca/puddy-products), and contact Pat at 519-271-0657 to order. Proceeds are donated to Feline Friends Network.



Clockwise from top: Mouzle catnip toys. 8" tall. \$10 | Mat Cat. 30" x 20". \$15 ea or \$25 for two | Crocheted, round, cotton dish cloths. 8.5" dia. \$3 ea or \$5 for two | Frog Princess & Prince. 12" to 14" tall. Child's toys. \$40/45 | Princess Purr. Child's toy. 12" tall. \$30 | Snake catnip cat toys. \$3 ea or \$5 for two.



## Remembering Marlene Macke

We are saddened to announce the passing of FFN supporter, donor and adopter, Marlene Marie Macke on Sunday, 10 January 2021. Marlene was a true animal-lover who we hope is now pain free and enjoying the company of her beloved animal companions who have gone before her. Feline Friends is very honoured to have been named as the recipient of a generous bequest in Marlene's will, so her care of cats in need continues.

## In memory of...

Our deepest sympathy and heartfelt thanks for the donations FFN has received in memory of loved ones. Since our last newsletter, donations have been made in the memory of Peter Hagedoorn, Marlene Macke, Jan Rycroft, Sabrina and Charlie. We are greatly honored that you have chosen to remember these friends and family members by helping FFN carry on our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs.

## Thank you!

...to our Giving Tuesday donors! Donations on 2 December, including our awesome matching donor dollars, came to \$3,819! To give you an idea of how far that money goes, it will cover approximately one busy (or two average) months of spays & neuters and additional vet care (for illness or injury) of foster and TNR cats at one of our vet partners. We can't thank you enough for your support of the work our volunteers do whole-heartedly, every day, to continue to help bring homeless cats and kittens in off the streets!

... to to **Usborne & Hibbert Mutual Insurance Co.** and **Farm Mutual Re** for their very generous donation! Special thanks to Sarah Fletcher for choosing FFN as her community fund recipient of \$1,000 in December! We are so very grateful for your kindness.

... to the **Bank of Nova Scotia Employees** in Stratford, who chose Feline Friends as a recipient of their 12 Days of Giving Campaign in December! They donated \$150 for the care of cats & kittens.

... to **Kimberley** of **Pet Valu** for donating food, **Tracy** of **Ruffin's Pet Centre** for donations of food & litter, and **Feed-All Pet Centre** for their kind support. Special shout-out to **Val Lariviere**, who has donated hundreds of dollars from the sale of her masks at **Feed-All Pet Centre**.

... to **Busy Momma!** **Jennifer**, and daughter, **Jaseena** have been selling homemade masks and cat nip pillows and donating the proceeds to FFN! See their work at [facebook.com/thebusymomma](https://www.facebook.com/thebusymomma)

... to **Alley Cat Café** and everyone who donated to their food drive for local rescues in December. You made a lot of cats very happy!

And to everyone who fed stray cats, provided them with shelter and made sure they got the help they needed, thank you! Feline Friends volunteers do all that we can, but we can't be everywhere. It's great to know that there is a community willing to step in and help a cat in need.