

cat tales

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FELINE FRIENDS NETWORK



First-time foster mum

by Penny Dufour

I recently retired and, with extra time on my hands, I managed to persuade my husband that fostering kittens would be a fun way to start volunteering. Having been a project manager, I imagined it being quite simple and straightforward: I would probably get them at four weeks of age and keep them until they were eight to ten weeks when they would be spayed/neutered and adopted. Reality, I discovered, was a bit different.

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Please remember to ...

DONATE YOUR EMPTIES

Our bottle drive continues despite Covid-19 ... you can drop off beer, wine, and liquor bottles at any time at 179 Hibernia Street, Stratford. Outdoor bins have been provided for your use. Since 1 March 2020 bottle returns have raised \$2,175.60 for our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs! Thanks again to Heather and her hubby for storing the bottles and waiting in long lines to return them to help our kitties!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't yet renewed your FFN membership, end-of-year memberships are now on offer for just \$7.50 and are valid until 28 February of the following year. To see the discounts members receive from local businesses and for information on the available methods of payment, please see <https://www.felinefriends.ca/membership>.

*Dogs have their day but cats have 365.
- Lilian Jackson Braun*

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In May I received a call that a mother and four kittens would arrive the next day and excitedly readied their nursery. The mother cat, Bella, and babies Alice, Victoria, James, and Edward (I was reading *Twilight* at the time ...) were adorable, immediately melting my heart. Following FFN's instructions, I left them in their room for a few hours to get used to their new surroundings before slowly starting to go in and see them. By day two, the mother cat, Bella, was super friendly and purry, and the kittens did not mind being picked up at all. I was in heaven.

Over the next couple of days I noticed that the kittens' eyes were weeping and sticky, so I began bathing them. I then realized that James had a sore, red, swollen bum. We started antibiotic eye drops for all four kittens and kept James's bum clean and eventually started cream on his bottom also. All good. Or so I thought.

A few days later, the kittens started sneezing, requiring antibiotics for upper respiratory infections. Someone suggested that I have them in the bathroom with me when I showered as the steam would help them breathe better.



It works like a charm but be prepared for kittens climbing your towels, your shower curtain, and – with very shocked expressions – falling into the bath with you! It was priceless!

In the end, Bella was with me for a month, Alice and Victoria for about two months, and Edward and James for three months. The eye issues were reoccurring, James's bum was a constant worry, and his eye infection proved very stubborn.

Fortunately, all four came through their spay/neuter surgery without issues. James, however, also had a couple of small stitches – to fix a prolapsed anus – that subsequently caused a blockage within a few days, leading to another vet visit for their removal. But James's health slowly improved. We kept Edward so that James would have company and hoped that they would be adopted together. They were!

Even though I worried about them, I loved every second of having Bella and the kittens. They were a joy and so much fun! The kittens got on well with our two adult cats and LOVED our Doberman – who loved them right back. Everyone played together and I still miss the patter of tiny kitten paws up and down the stairs, followed closely by a Doberman ten times their size. Those little furballs made our happy household even happier.

I am so grateful for all the support I received from Marg and Holly – FFN's foster/adoption coordinators. Fostering takes time and commitment, but it is so rewarding – truly one of the best experiences I've ever had. I can't wait to meet my next litter of kittens!



Someone for Sidney

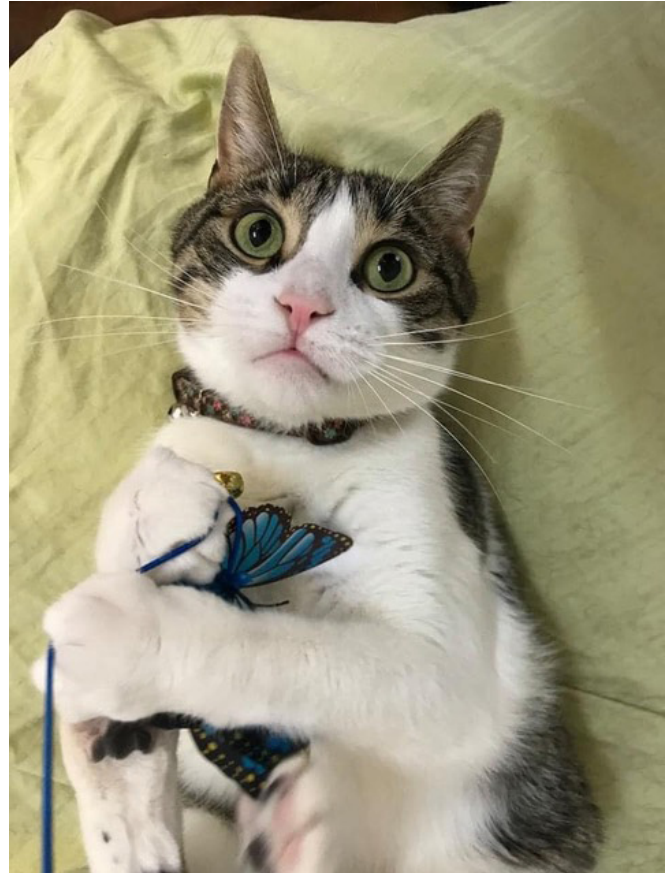
FFN is thrilled to announce that Sidney has been ADOPTED! As one volunteer put it, this is one of the biggest highlights of 2020 – maybe even the only one!

We'd like to thank Ange Rolleman for the excellent bio (below) that helped this girl find her perfect match and the volunteers who put up with her antics, made her comfy, happy, and content, and never gave up. A special thanks to Kim Jouwsma for facilitating the adoption and for making sure that Sidney always came first. We love our FFN volunteers!

Poor Sidney has been in the care of the Feline Friends Network for 8 months now – far too long for any cat to be in a foster home. She has seen many other cats come and go from the foster home (which is a bit like a “mini shelter”), and she wonders why everyone has been adopted except her.

Sidney came to the Feline Friends Network when someone called to report that there was a cat hanging out in the middle of nowhere who appeared to be starving. Upon investigation it was found that Sidney was already spayed, so it seems she was previously someone's pet ... and that person abandoned her outside to fend for herself. Sidney would certainly have starved to death if she had been left out much longer as she was skin and bones when she was found. We can't imagine how confused and sad Sidney must have felt when her owner left her and never returned.

Unfortunately for Sidney, she hates other cats, and the only foster home willing to take her thus far has been one in which there are many other cats coming and going. As a result, Sidney is over-stimulated with the scents and sounds of all of the other cats, and this can make her cranky. For the most part she doesn't like to be pet or touched or held – which is what has prevented her from being adopted since most cat lovers want a cat they can pet. BUT in the very brief time (a few days) that she



stayed in a cat-free foster home she was a different cat – more affectionate and wanting to be close by. We believe that if another cat-free foster home would take her for a longer period of time, her loving and affectionate personality would come out. Even in her current foster situation, there are some FFN volunteers that she has special bonds with and who she lets pet her and rub her belly – in spite of being over-stimulated.

So ... are you the one who can help give Sidney the life she deserves? Here is what she needs:

- An otherwise animal free home
- A child free home
- Someone who is patient and willing to give her at least a few weeks to adjust so that we can assess her personality once in more optimal conditions
- Someone who wants to make a difference





Naomi

by Ann Cook

I met Naomi in August 2019 as a volunteer spending time with FFN rescue cats and kittens. This is a truly rewarding experience.

Naomi had lived outdoors, relying on food that she could find or that she received from kind people nearby. She became a mommy and had two more mouths to feed. Thankfully FFN rescued her and her little kittens.

When it became time for Naomi's babies to leave her, Naomi tried to hide from the volunteers and hissed at those who attempted to gain her trust. Of all the many cats I've met, somehow there was a connection between Naomi and me. When I carefully petted her and began to hear soft purrs, I felt compelled to foster Naomi and spend more time with her.

It has been ten months since Naomi joined our home. Her bright eyes light our lives every day. We are now able to rub her head and her back – not all the time and not every day, but

that trust is growing. On 16 June 2020, we made the decision to adopt Naomi and renamed her Printsessa. We couldn't imagine our home and our lives without her and we couldn't possibly uproot her life again. There is an unbreakable bond. All of the small gains are resulting in great strides of love-filled hearts.

Printsessa has fallen in love with our black cat, Prints. When she sees him, she runs quickly to his side with soft meows of affection (yes, they're both fixed!). We often find them cuddling together, fast asleep.

Rescue cats who don't immediately give cuddles and warmth are often overlooked. But with time and a lot of care, their trust and love strengthens. Printsessa is the addition to our family that we never knew we needed.



above left, Naomi then; above right, Printsessa now.

To err is human, to purr is feline.
– Robert Byrne

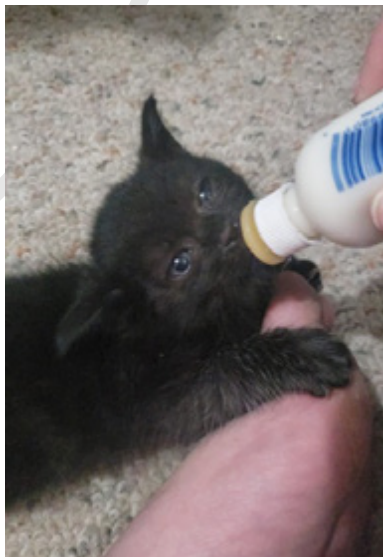
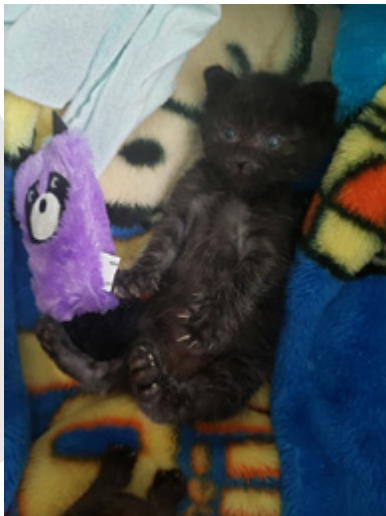


February to late October – that’s one long kitten season!!!

Everyone loves kittens but FFN has grown to dread kitten season – for every kitten we take into our care, we know that there are many more left outside, unaltered and reproducing. A female kitten can get pregnant at as young as six months old, a mother cat can become pregnant while still nursing, and cats can have up to four litters EACH YEAR. This is why FFN does its best to trap and spay both mothers and babies.

Many people are unaware of the cost of fostering a motherless kitten and the around-the-clock care and love these babies need. FFN is fortunate to have a dedicated group of kitten fosters and bottle feeders who selflessly take on the challenges of feedings every

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*Kittens believe that all
nature is occupied with
their diversion.
– F.A. Paradis de Moncrif*



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two hours, stimulating bowel movements, and keeping the kittens warm and safe. It's exhausting work that takes a very special person. This year, one FFN foster took on SEVEN bottle babies. By the time she fed everyone and stimulated them to go to the bathroom, it was time to start the whole process all over again!

The approximate cost of formula for a single kitten needing to be bottle-fed is \$125. When you add to that heating pucks, medications, parasite control, and vet checkups, you can see how expenses quickly pile up.

Even kittens who come to FFN with their mothers often require extra care whether this comes in the form of parasites, infections (eye, ear, or respiratory infections are common in cats who have been outdoors) or, in the most unfortunate cases, birth defects or injuries.

FFN has fostered 85 cats and kittens so far in 2020. We'd like to extend a very special thank you to our kitten fosters and, for that matter, to all our fosters – we couldn't do it without you!



100 Feline Friends Who Care

We're happy to announce that we have achieved just over 50% of our goal to find one hundred very special Feline Friends – we're halfway there! We set out with the purpose of finding one hundred caring community members willing and able to give \$100 annually in order to raise \$10,000 a year to support our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs.

Thank you ever so much to those of you who have already joined this group! 2020 is especially challenging for charities like ours to raise funds, and we realize it's difficult financial times for many individuals and families, too.

If you are able to join 100 Feline Friends Who Care, please visit <https://www.felinefriends.ca/join-100-feline-friends>.

Your support makes a difference in reducing cat overpopulation and saving lives.

REMEMBERING DR. ROBERT CLOSE

With heavy hearts we say goodbye to a stalwart Feline Friend, Dr. Bob Close (*left*), who passed away on 8 June 2020. Dr. Bob's dedication to helping animals in need and his generous support of FFN earned him an honorary lifetime membership in 2014. Our sincere condolences to Dr. Bob's family and friends.



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 Gus and Ivy Rothco, Barbara Colley, Donna Attridge, Shirley Lorraine Weston, and Loretta Wheatley. We are also very grateful for a generous bequest from the estate of the late Martha Holmes. 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.



GOOD NEWS!

Stratford City Council has approved a 2020 Community Grant of \$4,500 to FFN to assist with the costs of our spay/neuter and foster/adoption programs conducted within Stratford. Thank you to council members for your support!



The stuff of online auctions

FFN's online *shop*-portunities continue to be popular, making them great fundraisers! That's why we're asking our members for help finding items that we can offer up to eager bidders. Maybe you own a business with goods or gift cards you could donate? Perhaps you know a cat-loving business owner well enough to ask them on FFN's behalf. Or maybe you've been holding onto a gift card that you know you'll never use or something else that you would like to re-gift ... to us! FFN is accepting donations of auction-worthy items – please contact us at info@felinefriends.ca to make arrangements. Note that if you don't see your donation listed in the next auction, it will be featured in another auction before the end of the year.

Also, a big thank-you to all who donated and purchased items in our July auction, which raised more than \$2,200! We are going to try and run at least two more auctions this year, including a fall-themed auction in mid-September and a Christmas auction in mid-November. Please watch for our Facebook posts and share with your friends and family to help spread the word! FFN is counting on these auctions to help us compensate for having to cancel our 2020 wine raffle fundraiser due to the pandemic.

A GREAT GIFT

FFN raised \$2,540 through the 2020 Great Canadian Giving Challenge. This is an annual online fundraising endeavour through CanadaHelps.org. Thanks to Holly for organizing and to all of our generous donors!

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
garet markvoort

