



# Friends of Feral Felines CAT'S TALE

Fall 2007



## Cold Weather Preparation

By Beverly Sammarco, FFF Volunteer

Fall and the colder weather is here. Just as you prepare your home for winter, your colony of cats needs preparation too. If you are fortunate enough to be able to provide shelters and feeding stations for the cats, take a look at them to be sure they are sturdy and as airtight as possible. Remove any old straw, and clean the shelters out. It is possible that many of the cats will not be using them until the nights get fairly cold. This is a good time to treat the inside with a flea and pest control spray, let it dry with nothing in it for a day, then place fresh straw back in the shelter. Don't use towels or rug remnants, as they will mildew and smell. Tarps are a great way to protect a shelter to ensure as little cold air and water from blowing rains get in the opening as possible.

Also, take a look at your feeding stations to be sure they will be sufficient to last another winter. Plastic storage units with removable lids make excellent shelters and/or feeding stations. Cut holes in the bottom portion off to the side (not in the center) that are large enough for the cats but small enough that other animals, such as raccoons and opossums, can't get in. If you can put something underneath it, such as a pallet or some wooden 2x4s, it will get it off the cold ground. Then, when the straw needs to be refreshed, they need to be cleaned, or you need to add food, the top lifts off easily. The containers come in dark colors, too, so they aren't as obvious.

If you prefer to build your own shelter, we can provide instructions. You can be sure any protection from ole' Mr. Winter will be appreciated by the ferals!

Before starting your car in cold weather, bang on the hood a few times to scare any cats that may be hiding inside to use the car's engine as warmth!

## Simple Shelter Ideas

By Michelle, FFF Volunteer

Even the most basic shelter from the winter cold will make all the difference for chilly cats. If you don't currently have shelters available for your cats, now is the time to consider at least a simple shelter using some of the ideas provided here.

Use plastic storage tubs with the tops taped on. Place upside down with the lid facing the ground for extra stability, and cut a hole at end of one of the sides for cats to enter.




A basic wooden shelter

In a pinch, a cardboard box can be weatherproofed by tightly taping heavy-duty trash bags around it.

Foam coolers provide excellent insulation as a shelter. As with the box, tape plastic around them to make them more durable. They can also be used as a liner for another type of shelter, such as any heavy duty box or crate.

If you are lucky enough to know someone handy with wood, have them build a shelter for you. We can provide plans if needed. Shingles on top of a wooden shelter provide extra weatherproofing.

Preconstructed doghouses are a great alternative for those not handy enough to construct a shelter. Either a wooden house or an igloo style works fine.



### Feral Update

Since 1998, over 5,750 cats sterilized and vaccinated

## Feral Angels Clinic Update

FFF continued our low-cost, high-volume Feral Angels spay/neuter clinics for Charlotte area feral cats on September 23, when volunteer caretakers brought in 48 cats to be spayed or neutered at Paw Creek Veterinary Clinic.

Thank you to all the veterinarians, vet techs, and lay volunteers who worked hard all day to ensure that our clinic was a success.

We will hold more clinics in 2008 as we continue working toward our goal of humanely reducing the feral cat population.



# Letter From Ann Gross, Co-director of Friends of Feral Felines



Dear Friends,

**There are heroes everywhere...** Good people are stepping up to help our unowned community feral cats. They are providing food, water and shelter daily. And, most importantly, they are calling our hotline (704-348-1578) each day for TNR

(Trap/Neuter/Return and Rabies vaccination). We welcome their calls. We are honored to work with these compassionate and generous citizens.

Our dedicated volunteers, excellent veterinarians and staff, and generous supporters have demonstrated the same unity of purpose: non-lethal animal control of unowned feral community cats. It remains the most successful program for humanely reducing the number of feral cats in our communities. **It is also the single most important thing you can do for these animals.**

During our nine and a half years together, over **5,750** community feral cats have gone through our Trap/Neuter/Return program through the hard work and perseverance of all of our volunteers and veterinarians. We are so grateful to each and every one.

However, the challenge is still before us. We can-

not rest until we reach all people who are humanely feeding these community feral unowned cats. As we work together, we will help feeders become caretakers so that each feral cat can get to a veterinarian for TNR. The goal is to prevent more homeless kittens from being born.

Feeders are good...but caretakers are the best. Without spay/neuter/rabies vaccination, these cats are allowed to breed, and the nightmare of homeless feral kittens will continue. It is estimated that over 50% of feral kittens will die and never reach adulthood.

So, we ask your help in reaching as many of the feeders as possible. Please encourage them to call our hotline (704-348-1578) so we may work toward this important goal. It would be helpful if you could assist them in getting started. Trap/Neuter/Return is something that any able-bodied person can do. Assistance is available for the elderly.

We have the information, guidance, equipment and low-cost veterinary appointments available. Being a caretaker is the goal so that each cat in the colony may live a healthier life, and the number of feral cats in our community will be greatly reduced through our joint efforts.

Thank you for your courage, work and determination on their behalf. As always, we look forward to working with you.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Mary Ralston

We'd like to introduce you to Mary Ralston. Mary, like most of our dedicated volunteers, is a cat lover and does so much to help us with the feral cats. A few examples of what she does are: helps caretakers with trapping, as well as doing the trapping herself; transports cats to the vet; recovers cats for caretakers who are not able to do so; picks up reclaimed cats from Animal Control (and sometimes adopts them herself!), bakes for our bake sales, and helps at our clinics.

This spring, Mary contacted us to let us know she was going to have a yard sale and asked if FFF wanted to participate with her. For a few weeks, we worked together to collect and price items, which prevented vehicles from being parked in her garage because everything needed to be stored inside. But, all the work paid off. We netted over \$580, and the garage was cleared of yard sale items so the vans fit inside again!

Mary and her husband, Len, live in South Charlotte. Their cats have it made at their house - they have a large deck with benches where they can lay in the sun and plenty of areas to cool off in the shade. Then there are the cats that stay in the house. They each have their own bed and bowl of food. There are one or two that would prefer to live alone,



Mary volunteering at our Feral Angels Spay/Neuter Clinic

so they get to stay in a room of their own. The others have the run of the house....of course!

As many of us know, working with our ferals takes lots of time and can easily be considered a full time job, even if you already have one. Mary helps her husband with his audio/visual business doing the bookkeeping.

Mary contributes so much to our organization and toward the well-being of the ferals and is always willing to help in any way. We appreciate all she does. Thanks, Mary!

*Cat's Tale* is a quarterly publication of Friends of Feral Felines

For newsletter submissions (always welcome!), address changes, or to be removed from the FFF mailing list, please email [feralnews@yahoo.com](mailto:feralnews@yahoo.com)

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## FFF Volunteer Update

THANK YOU to all of our great volunteers who worked at the FFF beverage booth the Blues, Brews, and BBQ festival on September 14 & 15. We collected a good amount of tips and are awaiting our total for our percentage of sales. We were hopping all day Saturday, so I am sure that we will receive a nice check for all of the sales. Thank you to:



FFF volunteers Michelle Ciemny and Colleen Crittenden

- o Colleen Crittenden
- o Michelle Ciemny
- o Leah Williams
- o Ann Gross
- o Becky Hudson
- o Beverly Sammarco
- o Kendra and Mike Cardino

- o Suzanne Lynn
- o Joe and Stephanie Shuster
- o Casy Murdock
- o Jeff Hicks
- o Maureen Sullivan



We would not have been a success without you. Thank you for showing up on time and ready to work. Everyone had a great time, as you can see by the photos. I hope you all had as much fun as I did and will help us out again next time!!

We will again be wrapping books at the local Barnes and Noble bookstores. The schedules will be listed online at [www.geocities.com/fffvolunteer](http://www.geocities.com/fffvolunteer). Wrapping will begin Thanksgiving weekend thru Christmas Eve. This is a big fundraiser for FFF, and we are in need of **MANY volunteers** to help us out! Please consider volunteering for at least one of the book wrapping shifts, and convince a friend to join you!



The Dixieland Silver & Golden Fanciers Cat Show will be on December 8 and 9 at the Piedmont Kennel Club on Choate Circle. We will need people to bake items and donate cat craft items for us to sell at the show. Craft items can be brought to the December meeting, to be held on the 4th.

We also need bakers for Christmas baskets. Beverly Sammarco will be putting together baskets for some of our vets, the Humane Society and the Animal Control Bureau to thank them for all of their help this year. She needs help baking, and we also need volunteers to deliver baskets to the vets. We want these baskets to look especially nice and have a variety of items in them.



FFF volunteers Colleen Crittenden and Leah Williams

If you can help bake breads, or other items, please contact Beverly at [bsammarco68@yahoo.com](mailto:bsammarco68@yahoo.com).

Thank you for all you have done this year and for your help with our upcoming fundraisers to wrap up 2007.

Please continue to check our volunteer website for daily updates on current events, as well as future opportunities and upcoming events:

[www.geocities.com/fffvolunteer](http://www.geocities.com/fffvolunteer)

You can also add your name to our email list to receive email notices when volunteers are needed.

Allison Smith, Volunteer Coordinator  
[fffvolunteer@excite.com](mailto:fffvolunteer@excite.com)



### Feral FAQ's

*I work in a small office park and feed several feral cats. Some had litters of kittens, and now there are about a total of 11. I love watching the kittens play, and I want to continue feeding them, but the property manager wants all of them off the property. Help! What can I do?*

Contacting us is the first step in the right direction. There are several other steps that need to be taken as well. In addition to making sure the cats are fed and have plenty of water on a daily basis, the cats need to be trapped and sterilized so they will not continue to have more kittens to deal with.

You also should try to look at the kittens to make sure they appear to be healthy. Those that have runny noses and discharge from their eyes most likely have an upper respiratory infection. They need to be trapped first, taken to a vet and treated with medication.

We are able to provide you with several articles and fact sheets to discuss with the property manager. It is important to share information with him/her that the cats should be allowed to remain on the property and that they will be put through our TNR (Trap-Neuter-vaccinate-Return) program. Then, they can live out their lives in territory they are familiar with. Assure the property manager that after the cats are trapped and sterilized, they will not continue to reproduce and increase the problem.

If the property manager will allow, it would be good to provide a few simple shelters for the cats. Shelters and feeding stations should be located in an area that does not get in the way of the business or draw attention to the cats.

Relocation of feral cats is only done as a last resort, and it can be difficult to find a new location willing to accept the cats. If the property manager is adamant that the cats be removed, perhaps he/she knows of property where they can be relocated. We will provide you with all the information you need, loan you equipment and even speak with the manager directly if he/she wishes to contact us.

## Events Calendar



**Tuesday, Dec 4, and**

**Tuesday, Feb 5 - General**

Meeting, 7:00 pm (networking 6:30 - 7 pm) at Morrison Regional Library, Colony Rd, South Park. Dates subject to change, depending on room availability. Call our hotline or check website for confirmation. *New members always welcome!*

**Dec 8 - 9** - Dixieland Silver & Golden Fanciers Cat Show, Piedmont Kennel Club on Choate Circle (off Carowinds Blvd). Baked goods and cat-related items needed to sell!

### Thanksgiving weekend through

**Christmas Eve (dates TBA)** - FFF volunteers will wrap books in exchange for donations at area Barnes & Noble stores. Volunteer book wrappers needed!

**Please check our website or call our hotline for more details and confirmation of event dates and locations.**

## FFF Wish List

- ◆ Volunteers!!! Phone & email volunteers, as well as many other areas.
- ◆ Monetary donations are always needed
- ◆ **Urgent need** for landowners or farm owners willing to accept one or more feral cats in need of relocation. FFF will assist in the relocation process.
- ◆ Volunteers for feral cat trapping teams in north, south, east, and west Charlotte, as well as the surrounding communities
- ◆ Donations: dry or canned cat food, medium or large pet carriers for cat recovery, light colored towels for spay/neuter clinics, cat related items to sell at cat shows, items of value for our eBay fundraiser
- ◆ Feeders for UNC Charlotte feral cats

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## In Memory Of



**Janet Smith**, mother of Allison Smith, from her friends at FFF

**Spirit**, my beloved "soul mate" kitty who died of lymphoma in 2006, and our beloved **Banks**, who also died this year of lymphoma, from Annie Nicholson

**The Genes Family Pets**, living and deceased, from Elaine Genes:

**Sandy, Bandit, Bart, Toya, Sheba, Tippy, Lady, Dusty, Little Bit, Heather, Checkers, Goldie, Chico, Kit, Tattat, Petey, Spice, Sassy, Shaute, Mate**

## In Honor Of



**Susan Lawrence**, from Amy Rutledge

**Our Anonymous Angel**, a woman who sends regular donations but never wishes to be recognized, from all of us at FFF



**If you care to have your loved ones honored, please consider making a donation to Friends of Feral Felines in honor of or in memory of their name.**

## Register Your Ferals With FFF

Attention residents of Mecklenburg County: If you have not yet registered your feral cats with FFF, please contact our hotline at 704-348-1578 to register the cats as soon as possible. FFF will not share your personal information. It will be used for our database only.

If one of your feral cats is missing, please contact FFF, as well as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Control, to find out if your cat was taken to Animal Control and needs to be reclaimed. You could be saving the cat's life!