



Friends of Feral Felines

CAT'S TALE

Summer 2006



Warm Weather Feral Cat Care

By Michelle Nedopak, FFF Volunteer

Feral cat caretakers understand that cats need special care during cold weather, but feral cats also have particular needs during the warmer months. While people are enjoying the warm, sunny days, hot weather presents its own set of challenges for caretakers.

The most important aspect of caring for cats during the heat is ensuring that they have an adequate supply of clean water. People may often think that cats can drink from nearby streams or pools, but this water can frequently be unsafe for cats and can lead to health problems. It is important for caretakers to provide the cats with enough fresh water to keep them healthy and hydrated. Water should be kept in shaded areas in sturdy, tip-proof bowls.

For caretakers particularly concerned about keeping their cats cool, water bowls can be filled with ice cubes, then with enough water to fill them completely, or larger blocks of ice can be frozen and placed in the bowls. Depending on their proximity to the feeding area, caretakers may also make several stops throughout the day to ensure that the water bowls are full.

The dangers of antifreeze to animals during the winter are well-publicized, but this same fluid is also used to cool auto engines in the summer and presents the same poison hazard that can easily kill cats. Car owners should be sure to clean up any coolant spills before cats are tempted to drink from puddles of this sweet liquid that they find in driveways or parking lots.

Lawn care is a big part of the summer routine of many homeowners, but fertilizers and pesticides can prove toxic to cats and other animals. Be sure to read the labels to ensure that any products placed in your



yard or garden are safe for animals.

In addition to caring for their lawns, many people spend considerable time on their gardens and can become frustrated with cats that are digging in their gardens. An easy solution is to sprinkle the soil in the area with a substance to repel cats, such as citrus peels or sprays, cayenne pepper, coffee grounds, lemongrass, citronella, eucalyptus, mustard, vinegar, or commercial repellants (available at pet supply stores) specifically designed for this problem. Placing rocks on exposed



Well-cared for feral cats of Nicole Schoepflin

areas of soil will also keep cats away. If cats still won't take the hint, try a motion sensor connected to your sprinkler system or hose to scare the cats away with a spray of water.

Place plant stakes or wooden chopsticks every 8-10 inches throughout the garden to keep cats from digging.

Feeding areas will attract bugs and pests if care is not taken to keep them clean and trash free. Keeping them neat will also lead to fewer complaints from neighbors! Food should never be just dumped in a parking lot or other area for cats.

Canned food, in particular, will be most likely to lead to a bug problem. To make things easier for caretakers with many colonies to feed, or who do not live too close to the feeding areas, it is not necessary to feed cats canned food during the summer months; simply feeding dry food will be fine for the cats. For those wishing to continue the cats' diet of canned food, it is best not to put out more canned food than the cats will eat within 30-45 minutes, since the heat will spoil the food and uneaten food will quickly attract bugs. If possible, any remaining canned food should be cleaned up as soon as the cats are finished eating. Summer storms can also lead to wasted food (and money) when extra food is washed away by rain.

Even dry food can attract bugs, which can be ingenious in finding ways to reach food. Ants can be a particular problem, as many cats will not eat food with ants crawling around in it. An "ant moat" can be created by placing a smaller, heavy container inside a larger one. The smaller container, such as a ceramic bowl, is filled with food, while the larger container, such as a roasting pan, pie tin, or chafing dish, is filled with water that the ants cannot cross to reach the food.

Slugs can be kept out of cat food bowls if a few pieces of dry food are placed outside the bowl. They will usually not bother climbing the food bowls if they can reach this more easily accessible food. A ring of salt around the food bowl will also keep slugs away, but it is as easily washed or wiped away as the chalk line used for ants.

Continued on page 2

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



Dear Friends,

This is a true tale of four feral cats, Miff, Muff, Moe and Molly (names have been changed to protect the innocent). The caretaker worked with our group to TNR (Trap / Neuter / Return) these feral cats. The cats had a good life with a compassionate caretaker who provided daily food, water and shelter.

Sorry to say, their happy home was short-lived. A close neighbor did not like them. They were trapped one-by-one and sent to CMPD Animal Control.

Miff, Muff, Moe and Molly spent ten days in a cage hoping that their caretaker would reclaim them. Sadly, this was not the case. On their last day, before they were scheduled to be euthanized by lethal injection, they were rescued. A lovely woman called Friends of Feral Felines and said she had some horses and would be willing to adopt some feral cats for her land. She generously agreed to adopt all four cats. This lady agreed to follow the relocation guidelines which call for the cats to be in a large cage at the new location with food, water and litter boxes for three weeks. The feral cats need this time to get used to the new sights, smells and sounds of the new location.

FFF volunteers transported the cats and provided the cages, bowls, food and litter. After three weeks, the cage door will be opened and Miff, Moe, Muff and Molly will be free to explore their new home and hopefully stay put. They will again be provided daily food, water and shelter. This lovely lady will be their new caretaker.

Miff, Moe, Muff and Molly are the lucky ones. They have a second chance at life.



Warm Weather Feral Cat Care

Continued from front page

Fleas are a big concern for caretakers and an even bigger issue for cats who suffer through the itching of flea bites. Change any bedding material in cat shelters frequently to prevent a large flea infestation, or remove the bedding entirely during warmer months. Non-toxic flea powder can be sprinkled in cat shelters and around other areas where cats enjoy lounging, or try sprinkling herbal remedies such as mint, rosemary, eucalyptus, fennel, or dried pyrethrum flowers.

Diatomaceous earth, which can be purchased in a form harmless to animals and humans, can be sprinkled around the area twice a year to kill insects, including fleas and larvae. Be sure not to use the kind designed for swimming pool filters, as this is too finely ground and can be irritating when breathed into the lungs.

Some cat caretakers have found feeding the cats nutritional or brewer's yeast (NOT regular baking yeast) to be beneficial in keeping them flea-free. This requires feeding it to the cats almost year-round, as it must be in their systems well before the start of flea season. Garlic

To give your feral cats their best chance at life, please do the following:

- ♦ Very Important: Register your feral cats by location and caretaker by calling our hotline - 704-348-1578. Our files are confidential - no information will be given out.
- ♦ Maintain good relations with your neighbors, store owners, etc. Let them know what you are doing (TNR), that no more kittens will be born, and that all cats are vaccinated for rabies. If there is a complaint, listen and give them your full attention. Find out their exact problem and address the problem. Try to find a middle ground that you can both live with.
- ♦ Alley Cat Allies, the national group for feral cats, has a good article entitled "Community Benefits of Feral Cats" that is most helpful in addressing neighbors' complaints. You can find the article on their website (www.alleycat.org) or call our hotline and we will mail you a copy.
- ♦ Keep your feeding areas clean and neat. Move food and water dishes away from neighbors or stores to a better location. Pick up food at dusk to discourage other wildlife (raccoons and possums).
- ♦ Call our hotline ASAP when your feral cat is missing so we can check with CMPD Animal Control and arrange for their return to their own territory.
- ♦ Landowners, farms and ranches (or people who know them): please open your homes and hearts to these innocent animals - it is a win-win situation. They will provide fun and free rodent/snake control in exchange for daily food, water and shelter.

As always, thank you for your generosity, compassion and determination in helping our animals find a more humane life.



is known to help prevent fleas, but it is not safe to feed to cats; instead, use garlic tablets found at pet stores.

If you have earned their trust enough to safely handle any of your feral cats, traditional flea treatments purchased from a veterinarian are a good option. Please be sure to use caution when handling feral cats! Flea treatments can also be applied by a veterinarian when the cat is taken in for spay/neuter. Remember, if you are trapping in warm weather during daylight hours, be sure to place the covered trap in a shaded area.

With proper care, caretakers can help feral cats keep their cool during hot weather.

<p><i>Cat's Tale</i> is a quarterly publication of Friends of Feral Felines</p> <p>For newsletter submissions, mailing address changes, or to be removed from the FFF mailing list, please email feralnews@yahoo.com</p> <p>Layout & Design: Michelle Nedopak Newsletter Committee: Beverly Sammarco, Mary Ralston, Ann Gross, Terri McGirt, Michelle Nedopak</p>
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FFF Volunteer Update

Thank you to everyone that helped with the wine booth at Food Lion Speed Street this year. Everything went smoothly and we were able to raise some funds for the homeless kitties. Hopefully next year we will get an even bigger and better booth! Thank you again to all the great volunteers!

Upcoming Volunteer Events or Needs

Cat Design T-Shirts Needed for Quilt



We are in need of donated T-shirts with a cat design on them for our new T-shirt quilt. Charlotte Harkey of Quilt Patch Fabrics in Matthews has kindly donated her time to create a quilt for FFF to raffle as a fundraiser. Please let me know if you have any t-shirts to donate.

Auto Bell Carwash Fundraiser - thru August

Remember all those Girl Scout Cookies and Wrapping Paper, etc., you have bought over the years from all your co-workers and neighbors? Well, now it is your turn! We are selling tickets for the Auto Bell Carwash in Pineville, with a portion of the proceeds to benefit our feral cats.

To purchase tickets, please email me. The car wash tickets are \$11.95, which is the regular price of an Auto Bell carwash. The only difference is that FFF will receive 1/2 of the proceeds of each ticket sold.



Search Engine Helping Raise Funds for FFF

Use GoodSearch.com to search the Internet. Every time you do, money goes to Friends of Feral Felines. The site is powered by Yahoo!, so you'll get the same quality search results that you're used to. What's unique is that they have developed a way to direct money to our charity with every click. The more people who use this site, the more money will go to those in need, so please spread the word to your friends and family. You can use the search engine as many times as you want each day.

Wanted: Database Coordinator

We are looking for someone to create a database in Excel or Access using the paperwork we receive from the vet's office when a cat goes through TNR. This will help considerably to locate the caretaker when we receive a call from Animal Control telling us they have one of our cats to reclaim.

Please consider donating time to assist us with this very important project! If you can help, leave a message on our hotline (704-348-1578) and someone will contact you.

Simply go to www.goodsearch.com and enter Friends of Feral Felines in the Charity box, Verify, then begin searching the internet for whatever you need to know! This is a great, free, safe way to raise money for our homeless kitties! <http://www.goodsearch.com>

Cookbook Ideas

For anyone that bakes for the cat shows, please share your recipes. We plan to make them into a cookbook benefiting FFF to be sold at cat shows.



Notice: This doesn't get you out of baking for the cat shows, as that is one of our best fundraisers, but many people ask for the recipes for your great baked goods. Please email any recipes to me by the end of August.

Urgent need to relocate feral cats

Sterilized and vaccinated cats need to be relocated ASAP, or they will be trapped and euthanized by the Town of Matthews. FFF volunteers will do all the relocation work for you; the cats just need a safe home with daily food and water provided. Please call our hotline at 704-348-1578 if you can help!

FFF does not have any specific events coming up in the near future, but be on the lookout for the book wrapping at Barnes and Noble and the December Cat Show! If we find any other activities to raise funds for the feral felines, we will let you know via email or on our volunteer website.

Thank you for all your support!

Allison McLean

Volunteer Coordinator

fffvolunteer@excite.com

<http://geocities.com/fffvolunteer>

I am only one.

*I cannot do everything,
but I can do something.*

And the something I can do, I will do.

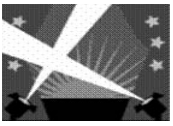
FFF Wish List

- ♦ **Urgent need** for landowners or farm owners willing to accept feral cats in need of relocation
- ♦ Light colored towels for use at our clinics
- ♦ Medium to large pet carriers to be used for post-surgery recovery of feral cats
- ♦ Donations of dry or canned cat food
- ♦ Volunteers for feral cat trapping teams at UNCC and Myers Park, as well as North, South, East, and West Charlotte

When you believe in something with all your heart ... stand up ... speak out ...

Make your voice heard

- George W. Cummings, Sr., Grandfather



Volunteer Spotlight: Nicole Schoepflin

I'm sure she thinks there is only a one-way door going in to her house, and once I saw the back yard, I could understand why.



Nicole Schoepflin, FFF
Volunteer, and Wilber

Nicole Schoepflin and her significant other, Rob Burchfield, live in a neighborhood on the east side of Charlotte. Together, they have transformed their back yard into a haven for the feral cats she has relocated over the years due to land development, demolition, because they had an injury, etc. Inside a large, high, fenced-in area is a playground of natural trees, large branches for the cats to scratch to their hearts' content, shelters, multi-level platforms and

large utility spools to climb on. Opposite that area is a smaller fenced-in area, complete with multi-level scratching posts and a tarp covering the top so the cats can get out of the rain. This unit houses most of the cats that are still very feral and who don't like to socialize with the others. Like most cats, they will scurry into the house during a thunderstorm or a heavy rain. How do they get into the house? Through a wood and chicken wire enclosed, 4-sided raised walkway! Built by Nicole and Rob, it goes from the larger to the smaller enclosed area and into a room that will soon be transformed into a playroom just for the cats. In addition, there are two large cages outside used for "holding" areas for cats that need to recover from surgery or who will be relocated to the area. They also contain platforms, shelters and litter boxes.

The cats range from very young to the oldest, who is 14. There are orange and white tabbies, torties, tuxedos, solid colors, and multi-colored cats. Regardless of what color, they are all beautiful and are happy and content in their own corner of the world. They get very curious when a visitor approaches, and some take cover very quickly. Others take a few steps toward the fence, and as soon as you speak or hold out your hand, they run off as well.

Nicole works as a digital artist, and there are unique samples of her work throughout the house. She is a native of New Jersey who moved here to attend and graduate from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In her spare time, Nicole enjoys making wall sculptures and has a special interest in muscle cars. In addition to caring for her own cats, Nicole is a caretaker for many colonies around Charlotte. Just when she thinks a colony is under control, another cat or a female and her kittens show up.

There must be a secret code among the cats that says, "meet here at 7:00 every night and she'll take good care of you!"

Nicole is an asset to our organization. There are certainly sad times when a cat she finds is too sick to live without suffering, when an entire colony tests positive for FIV, or when a cat is attacked by dogs or hit by a car. But, as she will attest, the good far outweighs the bad. Her heart holds a special place for each and every cat in her backyard and for every one she feeds!

FFF Needs Your Help!

Do you appreciate the help that FFF has provided to you with spay/neuter of your feral cats? If so, please consider taking the time to help FFF and other local feral cats in need.

Without the generous support of our volunteers, whether in the form of their time, their special skills, or monetary donations, our organization would not be successful. Our sincere thanks go out to those who have helped FFF accomplish our goals, and we look forward to working with many new volunteers and supporters in the future!

Feral Angel Spay/Neuter Clinic

FFF would like to thank Dr. Jack Miller of Miller Animal Hospital for hosting our most recent high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinic for unowned feral cats on June 24. Thank you to Dr. Jeannette McGarry for contributing her veterinary skills by spaying and neutering cats, along with Dr. Miller.



Volunteers ear-cleaning and flea-combing the cats

24 cats were brought to the clinic, including 10 males and 14

females. Spaying and neutering these feral cats will prevent many litters of feral kittens from being born and contributing to the feral cat population.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped make the clinic a success: Amber Bodenheimer, Annette Collins, Char Fobell, Ann-Marie Gearhardt, Rachel Giblin, Liz Grainger, Ann Gross, Cindy Henderson, Mike Hunter, Jennifer Moesta, Michelle Nedopak, Mary Ralston, Al Rich, Beverly Sammarco, Lisa Steffy, and Ellen Thomas.



Cat at Feral Angel Spay/Neuter Clinic

Register Your Feral Cats With FFF

Attention residents of Mecklenburg County: If you have not registered your feral cats with FFF, please contact our hotline at 704-348-1578 to register the cats as soon as possible.

We will not share your information with any other organizations. 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 see if your cat was taken to Animal Control. You could be saving the cat's life!

Feral Feature: Murphy's Law

By Susan Poe

My 8 indoor/outdoor cats were headed for a new life in Charlotte, North Carolina. In August 2004, my husband and I, and eight cats (four cats in carriers in each of our separate cars) began the 6.5 hour trek from McLean, Virginia, to North Carolina in the midst of torrential rains and tornado warnings. Throughout this



Murphy

traumatic experience, we reminded our cats they would love their new home - nearly an acre of land to roam, a cul-de-sac, wooded area - what more could a domestic cat want?

Little did we know what life would deal us in our new "cat haven." The first day in this wonderful new home/life brought quite a surprise. While

sitting on the screened porch, I noticed a beautiful long-hair white cat with gray patches strolling through our wooded backyard. Within a few minutes, I spotted his three companions trotting behind him. I assumed these cats belonged to a neighbor.

My husband and I decided we needed to KNOW if they indeed had a loving home; therefore, doing what all cat-lovers do, we lured these gorgeous creatures with food. We did not anticipate the response. The leader of the gang, Murphy, driven by hunger, decided that his hunger took precedence over his fear. He began to feed on our sidewalk. Soon, thereafter, his friends also began feeding. These beautiful cats were obviously quite hungry and homeless.

Each day I fed these cats, and after one month, I began letting my indoor/outdoor cats outside to explore their new home. Naturally, the battles began. One of Murphy's friends constantly terrorized my cats.; however, Murphy was gentle and showed absolutely no aggressive tendencies.

By January, I was becoming quite frustrated. I was letting my indoor cats out during the light of the day when the feral cats would retreat deep into the woods. Then I would have panic attacks if one of my cats did not return by nightfall. Something had to change.

One day while shopping in PetsMart, I struck up a conversation with a lady showing cats for adoption. She told me her cats were feral cats she'd trapped in Lincoln County and subsequently socialized. I shared my story with her, and she told me I needed to contact Lisa Steffy with Friends of Feral Felines - Lisa would help me with my four feral cats.

After getting up the courage, I called Lisa and with her help, began the attempt to trap the feral cats. I must admit that I was terrified at first. Lisa gave me two traps and very detailed instructions. Amidst much anguish, but adhering to Lisa's tutelage, I successfully trapped two cats in the same evening on my first try! I got Murphy



Murphy & friend

and one of his friends. Emotionally, it was not easy, and I ran the gamut of feelings: anxiety (during the trap setting), then fear (would they survive a night in the trap?), guilt (one had to be euthanized because he was sick and leukemia positive), and elation (I released them, they forgave me, and they returned to feed!). Murphy and his other friends were leukemia negative and a year and a half later show no signs of the disease.

Murphy remains my favorite (I now have seven cats in my feral colony). He lets me touch him and he's so sweet that he even lets me pick him up and stroke him for a few minutes at a time (as long as I'm standing on the sidewalk where he feeds). Although he's not really the ring leader any longer, none of this would have happened without Murphy's leadership and willingness to be the first one to step up to the food bowl. He is the colony's Wal Mart greeter - always so sweet and pleasant to each feral as he greets them with a rub and assures them all is well and all are welcome.



Murphy

As for my indoor/outdoor cats, they have become total indoor cats. They watch their feral cousins through the screened porch and life is more peaceful.

Deciding to keep my indoor/outdoor cats inside became final when my neighbor threatened to "blow the head off" one of my indoor cats that happened to love this neighbor's yard. I decided then I needed peace, as did the feral cats and my indoor cats. To the best of my knowledge, my feral cats do not enter the yard of my neighbor.

The following is a tribute to Cynthia Queen from her dear friend, Jim Nivens.

The Cats...Hidden in the World

There they sat late one day. Hidden in the woods, what more can one say?

One said to the other, "Boy oh boy, this ain't the way..."

They would moan, "I'm very hungry and ain't got no home."

We can't help the way we were born, without a mom and dad and shelter, we will scorn."

"Oh, wait! What's that?" said one cat to the other.

"It's a pretty lady pulling in the drive. Man oh man. Maybe, just maybe, she knows we are alive."

"What's she doing?" said one to the other. "I don't know, but already we love her! Look, she's opening the trunk of her car and it looks like she's getting out some food. I want to go greet her, but she may think that's crude."

Here she comes, walking through the woods. It looks like she's bringing us some goods!

Man oh man, she sure is pretty. She's kind of small...look at her red hair-don't that beat all!

We look and listen for her each day and we love her in a cat's special way.

What's her name? Said the "Ole Tom".

I think her name is "Cynthia", but we will call her "Mom".

God bless you, Cynthia. I love you,
Jimmy Pop



Feral FAQ's

I caught a feral cat. I brought it to the vet's office but they refused to see me. My friend made the appointment for me. Why did the vet refuse to spay/neuter the cat?

It's great that a cat was trapped; however, after a phone call from the veterinary office, we were told that 1) the cat was brought to the office in a crate, not a trap and 2) an appointment was not made through an authorized representative of FFF.

We cannot stress enough these two important points: Cats are NOT to be brought to the vet's office in a crate (that is grounds for refusal of the cat right off the bat) and you cannot just take a cat to one of our network vets upon the word of your friend.

Appointments are made through our hotline by one of three FFF board members only.

We worked very hard to acquire the network of area veterinarians we have working with us today, and we pride ourselves on the wonderful relationship we have with them. By showing up without an "official" appointment and with the cat in a crate instead of a trap, it puts us in an awkward position. It only takes a few minutes to call our hotline. We have an informative message to listen to that perhaps can answer any questions you might have. Your message is returned within a few days, depending on the volume of calls, and you will be guided step-by-step on how to trap and the proper protocol for when you bring the cat to the vet's office.

It's not a difficult process, but it is a proven one. Please call us for all the details.

**A special thanks to
Mr. Morry Johnston
for being a friend of feral felines**

*Thank you to Cindy Henderson for being
in the right place at the right time!*

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A Cat's Tale
Friends of Feral Felines
P O Box 473385
Charlotte, NC 28247
704-348-1578
www.friendsofferalfelines.org



In Memory Of

Sweetie Pie, their beloved pet, from Karen and Don DeMart and Sara DeMart

My friend, Sweetie, from Beverly Sammarco

Roo, Christy and Jamie Watson's "little guy", from Beverly Sammarco

Sissy, beloved pet of Cindy Henderson, from her friends at FFF

Felix, Mr. Boo, and Beloved Dinah, from Ruth Marple

Frankie, beloved pet of Beverly Sammarco, from her friends 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.

Events Calendar



Tues, Aug 8 (date change & will be held in small conference room), Tues, Oct 3, and Tues, Dec 5 - FFF

General Meetings, 6:30 pm at Morrison Regional Library, Colony Road (South Park). New members are always welcome!

Through August - FFF volunteers will be selling car wash tickets for the Autobell car wash on S. Polk Street in Pineville as a fundraiser. Call the FFF hotline at 704-348-1578 or email our volunteer coordinator at ffvvolunteer@excite.com to purchase a ticket before they're gone!

Coming Soon - More information about our Barnes & Noble holiday book wrap, cat show in December and quilt raffle.

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



Feral Update

Since 1998, 4,375 cats
sterilized and vaccinated