



# Friends of Feral Felines CAT'S TALE

Winter 2007



## Get the Jump on Kitten Season

By Michelle Nedopak, FFF Volunteer

The recent cold spell makes it hard to believe that spring is just around the corner, but with the arrival of warm weather comes the birth of many litters of feral kittens.

It might be tempting to put off spay/neuter of feral cats in your colony while it's still chilly outside, but it is better to sterilize the cats now, rather than take the chance of finding new kittens in just a few short months. It could take a while to catch a particular cat in a colony, especially if the cat is wary of traps, so it's always a good idea to start trapping early before the cats have a chance to mate.



*Feral mama cat and her kittens*

Cats can start reproducing as young as four months of age, so last year's kittens will be ready to have babies of their own. Kittens can be safely spayed or neutered when they are about 12 weeks old, so it is not necessary to wait until they are full grown to start trapping them.

Mating season usually begins as soon as the temperatures rise to a reasonable comfortable level. Chances are that cats could begin mating earlier with even a short spell of warm weather.

Every kitten born to your feral cat colony is another mouth to feed, and another cat to put the effort into trapping for spay/neuter. It is far easier to prevent the birth of kittens in the first place than to put off dealing with the situation and have to face the consequence of all the additional cats in the colony later.

Each year, large numbers of cats are euthanized, including many feral cats seen as nuisances by landowners who do not want the cats on their property. As feral cat colonies increase, cats may need to expand their territory to surrounding areas to find enough food. This can mean an increased chance of feral cats in a colony moving into a hostile environment.

Friends of Feral Felines has ongoing appointments for low-cost spay/neuter of feral cats available through our network of participating veterinarians. Please call our hotline at 704-348-1578 to speak with a volunteer about borrowing a humane trap to get started on spay/neuter of any unsterilized cats in your colony right away.

## Urgent Need for Help

There is a senior citizen in West Charlotte who needs our help! She has been feeding feral cats over the years and has been forced to leave her home. These cats can go through our program of Trap/Neuter and Return, but they need to be relocated or they will end up for euthanasia at Animal Control by March 1st, 2007.

Her need is this:

- ♦ Landowner, farm or ranch for relocation of several or all the cats
- ♦ Donations of \$20.00 toward spay/neuter/rabies vaccination for each cat
- ♦ Volunteers to help trap the cats for spay/neuter/rabies vaccination
- ♦ Transportation to the new location for the cats and cages

Your kind assistance and generosity would be very much appreciated by this lady and her feral cats. Please call our hotline if you can help in any way - 704-348-1578. Thank you, thank you, and thank you on her behalf!

## Thank You, Volunteers!

FFF would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time to wrap books at several area Barnes and Noble locations or baked items for the December cat show. We could not have made our holiday fundraisers a success without you! Thank you to everyone who showed up on time to wrap books, stayed through another shift, or volunteered for multiple time slots.

Please continue to check our volunteer website for future opportunities and upcoming events:

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

### FFF Wish List

- ♦ **Urgent need** for landowners or farm owners willing to accept feral cats in need of relocation
- ♦ Volunteers for feral cat trapping teams in all parts of the Charlotte area
- ♦ Light colored towels for use at our clinics
- ♦ Medium to large pet carriers for post-surgery recovery of feral cats
- ♦ Donations of dry or canned cat food
- ♦ Volunteers!

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



Dear Friends,

Welcome 2007! The volunteers of Friends of Feral Felines and I would like to thank you most sincerely for your support throughout 2006 and response to our recent holiday letter. Your generosity continues to support many of the spay/neuters of our feral unowned community cats in Charlotte and the

surrounding areas. We are so very grateful for your kindness to them.

In 2007, Spay/Neuter/Rabies Vaccination will continue to be the primary focus of our program of Trap/Neuter/Return of feral community cats. We are off to a very good start! Monday through Friday appointments are available through our veterinary network; Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday appointments are available through our joint venture with the Humane Society of Charlotte; and several of our Feral Angel Clinics will be scheduled this year. All are very low-cost spay/neuter/vaccination programs for feral cats offered to the public. Please call our hotline at 704-348-1578 for information, free loan of equipment and appointments.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Bill Laudati

Our busiest month is December, but the work begins in late September or early October. That's the time when we contact the four Charlotte area Barnes & Noble bookstores to set schedules for our annual holiday book wrap fundraiser. One of the stores is at the Arboretum, and Bill Laudati has been coordinating the schedules there for the past four years. We don't know if Bill helps to wrap his own presents, but he sure is good at wrapping books! If you helped us this year at the Arboretum store, Bill was most likely there to meet you to get you situated and back again when your shift was over. He's there every day that we are scheduled and will contact Barnes & Noble to see if there are additional spots so he can schedule those, too.

If you weren't able to help at Barnes & Noble but you have brought a cat or two to one of our Feral Angel Cat Clinics, you have met Bill. He is there early to help separate the cats into the "male", "female" and "unknown" categories, bring the traps and carriers inside the vet office so the cats can be prepped for surgery, arrange the traps outside for easy pick up and bring the carrier and cat out to you when you are ready to go home.

A few years ago, Bill spent countless Sunday nights at UNCC, trapping ferals through a program with the college to help reduce the cat population on campus. In addition, Bill helps trap and feed feral colonies for a friend in Albemarle and is a member of our board.

With all this going on, Bill actually finds time to "have

Financial assistance with spay/neuter costs is available as our treasury allows.

In light of this, we encourage each one of you to step forward and make sure that every feral cat in your area goes through our program. Please tell your friends, neighbors and co-workers. Spread the word! It will take your dedicated efforts and our teamwork to aggressively and humanely reduce the unowned feral cat population in our community. As T/N/R becomes well-known and popular, the number of unowned cats will be greatly reduced in Charlotte and the surrounding areas.

Let's make 2007 a banner year for promoting good health of our feral community cats with the end result being the prevention of the births of thousands of homeless kittens. Spay/Neuter/Rabies vaccination is the single most important thing you can do for these unowned cats, along with clean water, food and simple shelter.

Friends of Feral Felines is also so grateful to our veterinarians and their staffs, our volunteer vet techs and our lay volunteers who so generously give of their time and talent to help these innocent animals. We could not have our program of Trap/Neuter/Return without their compassionate and professional assistance.

As always, we look forward to working with you.



Bill Laudati

a life". He lives in the Weddington area with his wife, Carolyn, several cats and two dogs. He has two grown children and five grandchildren. Before he retired, Bill worked as an electrical engineer.

We appreciate everything that Bill does for our organization and the cats that he traps and feeds. It's a lot of work, as we all know, and Bill sometimes winds up sick right smack in the busiest time - when we are wrapping books! This year was no exception, as Bill was diagnosed with pneumonia. But, he showed up at every session nonetheless. Not to worry though, he has about 30 weeks to rest before it starts all over again!

Thanks for all you do, Bill!

*Cat's Tale* is a quarterly publication of  
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For newsletter submissions, mailing address changes, or to be removed from the FFF mailing list, please email  
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# Feral Feature: Missy & Mama Mittens

By Eileen Abbe

There really isn't a problem with stray cats, is there? Don't most people take care of their cats and get them fixed? And don't most stray cats eventually and miraculously find a home? Well, these were the faulty assumptions I had always had. That is, until about 4 years ago.

My introduction to ferals began when my husband and I went to our local video store. There was always a beautiful long haired white cat there. I thought that he must be lost, so shouldn't we try to catch him and take him home? Of course, he wouldn't come near us, so I decided to get some food to coax him. Certainly he must belong to someone because he was always so clean and healthy looking. One evening on a trip to the video store, I saw someone feeding him. It was one of the FFF volunteers, and she told me all about the organization and about feral cats in general. I was shocked that there were actually colonies of these cats all over the city. I was appalled at the irresponsibility of the many people who had let this happen by not spaying/neutering their animals.

It didn't take long for me to get involved by going to FFF meetings, feeding, trapping and eventually rescuing kittens. Although rescuing kittens is not the focus of FFF, it just seemed natural to do so. As a result of my rescue efforts, our personal population of pet cats grew from 5 to 10.

One particular cat stands out for me. She is a grey tiger who lives in a large colony of mostly black cats. A lot of these cats had already been trapped when I started



Missy

to help feed this colony. But as we all know, if you don't get them all, the kittens just keep coming and coming. I helped trap the remaining black kitties, but the grey tiger female was a real problem. I named her Missy because she acted as if she were the queen of the colony. She seemed to have a

real aversion to the humane trap and unfortunately, she was not trapped before she gave birth. I waited a reasonable time after she had her kittens to try to trap her and finally was successful. At that point, there was no evidence of any kittens so I assumed that they hadn't survived. Missy had a problem with one of her eyes and appeared to be at least partially blind. In addition, she had fleas and lice. When she was spayed, the vet at the

Feral Angels Clinic graciously treated her eye; she was also given the usual grooming treatments by the FFF volunteers. After her release, she became a chubby healthy cat with a very odd-looking (but uninfected) eye.

A short time after that, a kitten appeared at the colony. It was obviously Missy's one-and-only kitten that I thought hadn't survived.

The kitten definitely had her mother's trait of not wanting to be trapped. The kitten grew into a cat and was never trapped. She eventually disappeared...until the next spring when she returned with 4 kittens in tow. OK, I



Mama Mittens

told myself, this has got to stop, so I got the traps out and went to work. Mama Mittens, as I called her, and all 4 of her kittens were trapped within a few days. Mama Mittens was taken to get spayed and released back to her colony. I socialized the 4 kittens and found homes for 2 of them. The other 2 have become our house pets and are lovable, fat, and happy. All 4 of these kittens were females, so can you imagine what would have happened if they and their mama had been left there unspayed? Do the math on that - it's shocking.

Mama Mittens disappeared shortly after she was released, but mysteriously re-appeared the following spring only to disappear again. Maybe I will see her again this spring.

Missy is still at the colony and is doing very well. When I come to feed her, she runs to the car to greet me, rubs around my legs and now allows me to pet her while she eats. This is the only reward I need for what I do.

## Instead

By June Knight

I don't want promises of flowing gowns  
Baskets of jewels and golden crowns  
Give me instead the feel of soft fur  
The welcoming bark, the contented purr  
Of loved ones gone before.

I don't want promises of streets of gold  
Pearly gates and wealth untold  
Give me instead a moss-covered path  
To make our steps silent as we pass  
Through a shadowed woodland.

'Tis strange how women kneel in church  
And pray to God above,  
Confess small sins and chant a phrase,  
And sing that He is loved  
While coats of soft furred things  
Upon their shoulders lie,  
Of timid things of tortured things  
That take so long to die.

## Use Good Search to Support FFF

To help support FFF, use [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) every time you search the Internet. Each time you click on a search result, funds are raised for our organization in a simple and easy way.

The more people who use the site, the more money we will raise, so please spread the word to your friends and family!



## Events Calendar

**Tues, Apr 3, and Tues, June 5** - General Meeting, 6:30 pm at Morrison Regional Library, Colony Road (South Park). Dates subject to change, depending on room availability. Call our hotline or check website to confirm. *New members always welcome!*

**March 31 & April 1** - Crafty Cat Show at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart (Independence Blvd)

**July 21 & 22** - American Cat Fanciers Association Regional Cat Show at Cabarrus Arena and Events Center (4751 Highway 49, Concord, NC)

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

Volunteers will be needed for several upcoming events - more details will follow.

## My Bed Companion

By Tom Perkins

She snuggles close beside me  
her face against my cheek.

So soft and warm, how quiet is she,  
respectable and meek.

But at the hint of daylight  
she jumps down to the floor  
and hurries to get ready,  
then goes out through the door.

I wave goodbye. I scarcely know  
that she has left, and fall asleep.  
Once we jogged along together -  
now I can hardly creep.

Her back is straight. With head held high  
she walks with pride along the street.  
But in half an hour I must get up  
when that cat comes back to eat.

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Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #3801  
Charlotte, NC



**A Cat's Tale**  
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## In Memory Of



**Nick Nilson**, from Patricia McCabe

**Helen Perkins**, from her husband, Tom Perkins

**Yuriko Wallace**, from Steve Roselli, Colleen Crittenden, & the kitties

**Yuriko Wallace**, from W.C. Wallace Paint Company

**Rachel Giblin**, from Jaye Broome

**Sidney Curry**, from Patti Curry



## In Honor Of

**Susan Laurence**, from Amy Rutledge

**Aidan Hicks**, from Alice Tobin

**Sam T. and Kirby Houston**, from Dr. and Mrs. Paul D. Meredith

**Bear**, from Mary Hoffman

**My sister, Nancy Favor, and her 2 sweet kitties, Peter & Thomas**

**The kitties at Fortune Street**, from Kay & Dale Saville

**Venice Leone**, from Melba Tartlon

**Vincent Wright**, husband of Phyllis, from Mary Jane Siman

**Colleen Crittenden**, from Barry Gilmore and Patricia Burbank

*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 Feral Cats With FFF

If you have not registered your feral cats with FFF, please call our hotline at 704-348-1578. We will not share your information with any other organizations. It will be for our database only.



## Feral Update

Since 1998, 5,000 cats  
sterilized and vaccinated