

# Cat's Tale



FRIENDS OF FERAL FELINES

FALL 2002



During the ice storm this cat shelter housed a small colony (6) of feral cats.



## Do your feral cats need warm shelter?

Southern winters are mild for the most part, but we do have our share of frosty nights and damp rainy days. Be prepared to protect your feral cat colony from wintry elements by providing a sturdy shelter in which the cats may huddle to keep warm and dry.

Shelters should be compact - large enough to allow for several cats but not so large as to lose body heat generated by the cats occupying it. Alley Cat Allies recommends the shelter be at least two feet wide by three feet long and 18 inches high with an opening small enough to prevent dogs from entering. The

structure need not be complex and can be built inexpensively from a variety of sources, including:

- **Wood** - Materials should run around \$25-30 (see our website for easy instructions).
- **Cardboard Boxes** - a large box can be used for the main area with small boxes attached to create hallways. Waterproof the boxes by taping trashbags securely over the finished structure including the bottom.
- **Milk Crates** - wire them together and cover with plastic.

- **Dog Houses** - Reduce the original door size and add a flap.
- **Large Plastic Trashcans** - Secure the top and cut a door into the side.

Whichever shelter you choose to use, remember to elevate it a few inches off the ground with bricks or cinder blocks. Also cover the floor with hardwood shavings, straw or fake sheepskin for extra warmth. For more information on building structures log on to [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org) or call Friends of Feral Felines at 704-348-1578.

## Understand current feline vaccination guidelines

**Jerry Williams, D.V.M.,  
Cat Clinic, St. Louis, Missouri**

There are currently vaccines available to immunize cats against nine different diseases. In almost all cases the recommendation of the vaccine maker is to revaccinate cats every year. The question facing the veterinary profession now is: Do we follow the vaccine maker's advice and recommend to all our clients that we vaccinate their cats for all these diseases year in and year out?

In order to decide which and how many vaccines to recommend, the following four questions must be considered:

**1.) Are the vaccines we use always completely safe?** The answer is, without question, no. It is possible to have allergic reactions to vaccines and the most severe form of allergy, anaphylactic shock, can be fatal. In recent years, it has also been learned that certain vaccines on rare occasions can cause a highly malignant cancer (fibrosarcoma) to develop at the injection site. Both these tragic consequences are rare, but they do occur. In my 25 years of practice I have seen two cats die of vaccine related anaphylactic

shock and have dealt with several vaccine associated fibrosarcomas. The reason for using vaccine is to prevent life threatening diseases and no one in our profession believes we should stop vaccinations altogether but we clearly need to assess benefit against risk.

**2.) Is every cat at risk of being exposed to each of the diseases for which we can vaccinate?** Again the answer is clearly, no. Some of these diseases can only be transmitted by direct contact with an infected cat so cats who live entirely alone indoors may be at no risk at all for some of these diseases. Vaccination would be unnecessary if there is no risk of exposure. In order to assess what your cat's risk factors are, your veterinarian should be asking questions with respect to whether your cat stays entirely indoors or is allowed outside, whether there are other pets in the household and whether your cat ever leaves the home to travel or is taken to boarding kennels, grooming parlors or cat shows.

**3.) Are all these diseases serious enough that we need to vaccinate against them?** Once again, no. Some of these disease are fatal, some very serious

*see VACCINES inside right*



**FERAL UPDATE**  
over 1,550 cats  
sterilized to date!

## CALENDAR

**DECEMBER 14 & 15: CAT SHOW** at the Piedmont Kennel Club (off Carowinds Blvd.). We will have home-baked goodies and some stocking stuffers to sell.

**DECEMBER 20-24** Books make great gifts! If a book is on your gift list this year, be sure to visit the Barnes and Noble bookstore on Sharon Road (across from SouthPark Mall) or the Barnes and Noble store at the Arboretum. At Christmas time, non-profit groups have the opportunity to make some extra funds by wrapping books for customers. Visit either location and have your purchase beautifully wrapped, cross a gift off your list and help the feral cats!

**FEBRUARY 5: FFF MEETING** at the MORRISON REGIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, 6:30-8:30pm. Call 704-336-2109 Everyone welcome. Refreshments will be served. New Members Welcome!

### 2ND ANNUAL YARD SALE

We plan to have our yard sale next year in May or June and we have already started collecting items to sell! If you are cleaning out closets, your attic or moving and want to get rid of "stuff" you don't need anymore, donate the items to Friends of Feral Felines! Contact our hotline at (704)348-1578. We will make arrangements to pick the items up and take them off your hands! Our website will have details of the date and time as soon as we secure a location.

## WE NEED:

**Volunteer needed** for our Christmas Book Wrap at Barnes & Noble - Sharon Road for 2 hours or longer. Times and dates available:

- Friday - 12/20 - 1 pm - 9 pm
- Saturday - 12/21 - 2 pm - 8 pm
- Sunday - 12/22 - 12 noon - 8 pm
- Monday - 12/23 - 12 noon - 10 pm
- Tuesday - 12/24 - 9:30 am - 6 pm

If you have a **medium size carrier or dog house** (in good condition) that is no longer needed, it could be used for shelters for some of the larger cat colonies. Please call us and we will make arrangements to pick it up.

### VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

- Assistance in Trapping, Transporting, Recovering Feral Cats
- Mailings - Folding and mailing newsletters, other letters
- High Volume Spay/Neuter/Vaccinate Clinic
- Spring Yard Sale
- Baking Cookies and Cakes
- Animal Shows
- Utilizing your own special talents to help our efforts.

**WE NEED CARETAKERS** for cat colonies in south Charlotte, Waxhaw & Pineville. This will entail visiting the colony daily with food and water and continued spay/neuter efforts. If you can help, please call our hotline at 704-348-1578.

**Does your place of employment match your contributions to organizations?** Check with your Human Resources Depart.-- it's a great way to increase your donation to a worthy cause!

Non-profit  
Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #3801  
Charlotte, NC



### FRIENDS OF FERAL FELINES

PO BOX 473385  
CHARLOTTE, N.C. 28247

**Memorials**  
In memory of Margaret M. Keenan,  
from Kim Hombs, DVM, Atrium Animal Hospital  
beloved pet of Rose & Hobart Fountain

**In Honor of...**  
Tate Allen, DVM, Oak Cedar Animal Hospital  
from  
Rose & Hobart Fountain

## Thanks!

Thank you, Shelly

A very special thank you to Shelly Forward, our treasurer for the past four years. Without her expertise, we would not have fared as well. Our gratitude is surpassed only by good wishes and hope that she will continue to be our financial advisor. We appreciate all of her hard work and efforts. Beverly Sammarco, another dedicated volunteer, has accepted the position of treasurer. Beverly also runs our successful annual yard sale to be held this spring and our bake sales. We are most fortunate to have her kind assistance.

We welcome a new veterinarian to our network. Dr. Kessler of the Gathney Animal Clinic. We are grateful to have her professional services and that of her staff. Thank you to our dedicated veterinarians and vet staff: Park Cedar Animal Hospital, Monroe Road Animal Hospital, Pineville Animal Hospital, Mathews Animal Clinic, Carolinas Veterinary Clinic, Belmont Animal Hospital, Eastridge Animal Hospital, Carolina Place Animal Hospital, Veterinary House Calls/Mobile Care, and Gathney Animal Clinic, without whom, we would not exist.

Thank you to our kind and generous supporters for their contributions. All the funds raised will allow us to continue our T/N/R/Program for the homeless feral cats in Charlotte and surrounding areas.

Thanks to our volunteers whose hard work and efforts have helped over 1,550 cats by trapping, taking them to our veterinarians for sterilization and then releasing them back where they came from, healthy and with food, water and shelter.

### Lake Norman Realty's Lucky Cat Program

T/N/R plus an educational program is now available in the Lake Norman area (similar to FFF in Charlotte). Volunteers are needed. For more information or to become a volunteer e-mail [luckycat@lakenormanrealty.com](mailto:luckycat@lakenormanrealty.com)



A Letter From  
**Ann Gross**  
Co-director of  
Friends of Feral Felines

Dear Friends,  
Lisa Steffy and I wish to thank all of our hardworking volunteers - our veterinarians, or veterinary staffs and or lay volunteers - without whom none of our work would be possible. Our non-profit T/N/R - Trap/Neuter/Vaccinate program for homeless feral cats continues to operate successfully on a weekly basis.

In addition, during the past several months, we have been working hard on setting up a low-cost high volume spay/neuter/vaccinate clinic for homeless feral cats. Our hope is that we will be able to start in January 2003 with 20 cats and February 2003 with 40 cats. Your continued encouragement and support has made this all possible. Please call our hotline for further information. This clinic will operate in addition to our weekly veterinary network.

Karen DeMart has been carefully designing our new information pamphlet which will be ready shortly. Beverly Sammarco has been busy working on possible grants to further lower the cost of T/N/R of these feral community cats.

In November, we had an information table at the Union County Horse Fair. We met many interesting and helpful people including the SPCA president. Cooperative networking will help all the homeless animals.

We look forward to seeing many of you participate at the Barnes & Noble Book Wrap on both Sharon Road and the Arboretum near Providence Road, the Piedmont Cat and Dog Shows in December and our meeting in February. See newsletter or call hotline 704-348-1578 for details.

Gratefully, Ann Gross

**MAKE A NOTE OF IT !**

**OUR ADDRESS HAS CHANGED:**

FRIENDS OF FERAL FELINES  
PO BOX 473385  
CHARLOTTE, N.C. 28247  
TEL: 704-348-1578  
www.friendsofferalfelines.org

**FOCUS FELINE**



*Dixie, the baby of the mother we had spayed through FFF.*

Dear Friends,  
I want to tell you how much I appreciate you and what you do. My husband and I both love cats. We also feel that because they are God's creation and we should care for them. People keep dropping cats off in our neighborhood and they are scared and hungry. We have taken in those that we could and helped others to find homes. Other neighbors who love cats have taken some in as well. But as you know, cats who have been away from human touch and love are a little more difficult. Things had gotten out of hand here.

Thank you so much for your generosity of time and commitment, for your support when I thought my heart would break, and for all the appointments that were scheduled that had to be broken. Finally all is well. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I appreciate knowing that you will be there for someone else in there time of need just as you were there for me.

Most Sincerely, Anna

**ANIMAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS - CHARLOTTE AREA**

- Animal Fund** - 9117 Eakers Court, CHARLOTTE, NC 28215  
Phone: (704) 536-5583 • msloaniii@aol.com
- Animal Rescue Center** - 801 Claremont Rd., Charlotte NC 28214  
Phone: (704) 393-5988 • Email: CATS@peoplepc.com
- Cabarrus Animal Protection Assoc.** - 3220 Old Salisbury Rd  
CONCORD, NC 28025-1546 • Phone: (704) 455-9562
- Charlotte/Mecklenburg Animal Control** - (704) 336-3786
- Friends of Feral Felines** - P.O. Box 561103, CHARLOTTE, NC 28256  
Phone: (704) 348-1578 • www.friendsofferalfelines.org
- Furball Lady** - Cat & Kitten adoptions/PetsMart-South Blvd & Harris Blvd.  
CHARLOTTE, NC • Phone: (704) 333-6026
- Margaret Hailey Cat Sanctuary/Pet Food** (feral cat sanctuary)- CHARLOTTE, NC  
Phone: (704) 392-4360 • www.solidgoldorders.com • KsCats28@hotmail.com
- Gaston Humane Society** - P.O. Box 2334, GASTONIA, NC 28053-2334  
Phone: (704) 824-8990

**Humane Society of Concord & Greater Cabarrus County**  
P.O. Box 3104, CONCORD, NC 28025 • Phone: (704) 784-4434  
vannoate@email.uncc.edu • www.dogsaver.org/cabarrushumane/htm

**Humane Society of Union County** - P.O. Box 101, MONROE, NC 28111  
Phone: (704) 821-7291

**Mecklenburg County Humane Society** - 1815 Park Drive  
CHARLOTTE, NC 28204-2444 • Phone: (704) 377-1714

**Project: HALO** (Helping Animals Live On)  
2500 Taimi Drive, PO Box 667924, Charlotte NC 28266  
Phone: (704) 395-2995 • Email: projhalo@aol.com

**The Animal Connection** - 6401 Mounting Rock Rd., Charlotte NC 28217  
Phone: (704) 522-9094 • Email: cbdoollittle@yahoo.com

**Wolfs Paw Adoption Agency** (all pets)  
Email: WindSweptWolf@AOL.com  
http://www.anglefire.com/nc2/wolfspawrescue/index.html

**Humane Society of Charlotte** - P.O. Box 221028, CHARLOTTE, NC 28222  
Phone: (704) 377-0534 • http://www.clthumane.org/

**The Tropics Exotic Bird Refuge** - (704) 932-8041

**Carolina Raptor Center** - (704) 875-6521 • www.birdsofprey.org

**Animal Rehabilitators of the Carolinas** (Wildlife) - (704) 552-2329

**Wildlife Rescue** - (704) 892-1010

**SOUTH CAROLINA:**

**Adopt-A-Pet of York County** - P.O. Box 1253, YORK, SC 29745  
Phone: (803) 684-5353 • Fax: (803) 325-2053 • Adoptapal@aol.com

**Animal Adoption League** - P O Box 2453, Rock Hill, SC 29732  
Phone: (803) 529-6900 • Email: mynextpet@yahoo.com  
http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/2615/  
Matthews and Pineville PetsMart on Sat and Sun 1-5pm

**Animal Outreach of Rock Hill SC** - 1938 Oak Pond Rd., ROCK HILL, SC 29730  
Phone: (803) 328-2793 • samd@cetlink.com  
http://www.members.tripod.com/annso outreach/home.html

**Union County Humane Society** - P.O. Box 101, UNION, SC 29379-0101  
Phone: (864) 427-1594 • Fax: (864) 427 3177

**York County Humane Society** - P.O. Box 10261, ROCK HILL, SC 29731  
Phone: (803) 802-0902 • Fax: (803) 779 0838

**Recycled Pets Inc.** - 2354-A Ebenezer Road, Rock Hill, SC 29731  
Phone: (803) 981-5087 • (803)328-0217 • Email: bck@perigee.net  
http://www.recycledpetsonline.org/

**Our Volunteers -  
Friends of Feral Felines**

Money does not motivate them,  
Neither does glory.

The only thing they are interested in is the work.  
They are willing and prepared and zestful about  
accomplishing something together.

They are completely in the moment with no ulterior motive.  
We go to our work with the hope of a positive and humane outcome.

All we know is that we have a desire and will to work.

That is our perfect world.

*Adapted from "Just Begin!", Oprah, Nov. 2001*

**Pets as gifts?**

Kittens under the tree make for delightful photos, but harsh reality can set in mighty fast if the new addition to the family comes as a surprise. You can hide a bad necktie in the closet, or return a sweater, but a pet demands a life-long commitment. Many animals given as gifts each year are the wrong animals for the people who receive them and are then taken to the local pound.



As an alternative, give a book on pets and responsible pet ownership. This approach gives everyone in the family an opportunity to choose the right animal, and to consider the investment and new responsibilities first. That way everyone - including the new pet - will live together happily for many holidays to come!

Friends of Feral Felines urges you to call one of the adoption agencies listed in our newsletter or on our website, friendsofferalfelines.org, to adopt a loving kitten or cat.

**Vaccinations... continued**

and some (e.g. chlamydia and ringworm) are very mild and treatable disorders. For that reason it is probably not necessary to use every vaccine available.

**4.) How long does the protection from these vaccines last? If a person can get a single dose of smallpox vaccine and be immune for life or a tetanus shot and be immune for 10 years, why can't the veterinary companies make vaccines that last longer than one year?** The answer is, they do. They are just not telling you. To get a vaccine on the market the drug companies have to prove that it works, but they are under no obligation to do what are called "duration of immunity studies." So vaccine makers can arbitrarily label a vaccine to be re-administered every year without ever testing at two or three or five years to see if more vaccine is really needed. Currently some of the veterinary colleges are testing vaccines for duration of immunity and are finding that some of the vaccines labeled for annual use do last as long as three years. So it may be appropriate for veterinarians to recommend less frequent vaccination in spite of the vaccine labeling.

In order to address these issues an Advisory Panel on Feline Vaccines was formed through the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and the Academy of Feline Medicine (AFM). This panel consisted of several practicing veterinarians, representatives of two vaccine companies and professors from two veterinary colleges. The panel's goal was to make recommendations to practicing veterinarians regarding their feline vaccination program. In 1997 the panel published its guidelines in the form of a 25 page booklet which went to members of the AAFP and AFM. In 1998 a summary of the guidelines was published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association and other veterinary journals so that all veterinarians would have an opportunity to read it. These guidelines, which I will attempt to summarize, vary considerably from what has been the convention in most veterinary practices. Since I am a member of the AAFP and a fellow of the AFM, I support and follow the recommendations of my colleagues on the panel, but many veterinarians do not. Some veterinarians are as yet unfamiliar with the guidelines and others disagree with them.

**The guidelines divide the vaccines into CORE and NON-CORE.**

The CORE vaccines are for rabies, panleucopenia (feline distemper), rhinotracheitis (feline herpes) and calici virus. The panel feels all cats should be vaccinated for these four diseases.

The NON-CORE vaccines are for feline leukemia virus (FeLV), feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), chlamydia, dermatophytosis (ringworm), and a new vaccine on the market this year for bordatella. The panel says "The decision to vaccinate a cat with a vaccine that is NON-CORE should be based on the realistic evaluation of all the risk factors, as well as vaccine efficacy and



**Taking on a seasonal glow  
Every year, brightly lit trees stand in millions of living rooms across the country. And those electrical cords from the strings of lights are mighty tempting to even well-mannered cats and dogs. Curiosity can seriously injure your pet with severe burns and even electrocution!  
Please seek emergency care immediately if your pet is burned or shocked.**



mending the use of FeLV, FIP and chlamydia vaccine for indoor cats since they are not at "realistic risk" of exposure. On this point the panel may again be at odds with many veterinarians who do recommend some of the NON-CORE vaccines for all cats.

Another recommendation from the panel has to do with the standardization of the location of the injection site for injectable vaccines. This is an excellent recommendation which sadly many veterinarians are still not following. A vaccine made to be injected subcutaneously (under the skin) will work equally well no matter where on the body it is given. So the panel recommends the FVRC-P always be given on the right front leg, the rabies always be given on the right rear leg, and the FeLV always be given on the left rear leg. One reason for this protocol is in order to assess which vaccines are creating problems such as the development of cancers (fibrosarcomas). Compiling this data will be impossible if veterinarians continue to give multiple injections at the same site or fail to record the sites or give vaccines in the muscle rather than under the skin where a developing growth is more readily detected. The reason for recommending that vaccines be given on the limbs also has to do with the development of fibrosarcomas. These cancers, when they occur, are very aggressive and efforts to surgically remove the cancer alone are usually unsuccessful. If the cancer develops on an extremity it leaves the surgical option of amputation of the limb. This may seem like an extreme measure but in my own practice is has proved life-saving for one now healthy, happy, three legged cat.

Because of the problems I have mentioned with injectable vaccines, the panel also encourages veterinarians to consider the use of alternative-route vaccines. There are currently no vaccines for cats which can be given orally but there are several intranasal vaccines which are administered as nose drops. You may be hearing more about such vaccines or other alternatives to injectable vaccines as time goes by.

It is my belief that the new feline vaccination guidelines are excellent and long over due. As more veterinarians become familiar with and begin to follow them, we as a profession, will better serve the true needs of our feline patients. You may find that when you visit your veterinarian that they may be recommending a different vaccination protocol than the panel has. If you find that your veterinarians is recommending multiple vaccinations every year for indoor cats, or is giving the injections over the shoulders rather than on the limbs, or is not recording injection locations in the record, I think it is fair to ask if they are familiar with the AAFP Feline Vaccination guidelines. The AAFP is making copies of the Feline Vaccination Guidelines booklet available. They have asked that I make it clear in this article that because the booklet is a lengthy and technical document which is in limited supply, it is available to veterinarians ONLY. For a cost of \$15.00 your veterinarian can obtain a copy by calling the AAFP office at 505-888-2424.

safety."

The panel addressed the issue of how frequently to administer vaccines. For the four CORE diseases, the panel recommends that in the first year of life all cats receive a one-year rabies vaccine and two doses of FVRC-P vaccine (a combination of distemper rhinotracheitis and calici virus). The next year when boosters come due the panel recommends giving boosters which are then regarded as three year vaccines. In the case of rabies this would be a vaccine labeled for every three year administration, but in the case of FVRC-P it would be a vaccine currently labeled for annual use, but given every third year. This is the point that has many veterinarians questioning the panel's recommendation. Veterinarians agree that for the prevention and early detection of disease it is important that cats have an annual check up which includes a thorough medical history and a complete physical exam, and in some cases diagnostic tests. The concern is that the annual FVRC-P vaccine has been the inducement for cat owners to bring their cats in each year and if the vaccine is given every three years, many cats' medical care will be neglected in the two in-between years.

The panel recommends that you follow label directions for annual use on the NON-CORE vaccines IF they are used. However, the panel is not recom-