

projectpurr

VOLUME 12

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nonprofit volunteer feral cat advocate organization

Project Purr Board Members: Margaret Rinner, Director; Lynne Achterberg;
E.V. Sharp, DVM; Suzanne Haberman; Sheri Benkosky; Lucinda Swan

Project Purr is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit feral cat advocate organization. Our goal is to decrease the feral cat population and control the spread of disease through a humane no-kill Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program in Santa Cruz county California.

Adobe Animal Hospital/Project Purr Spay/Neuter Program for Feral Cats/Kittens

Feral cats are non-domesticated un-owned cats (feral cats/kittens needing services for wounds, abscesses, URIs, etc., require regular rates and can NOT participate in this discounted spay/neuter program. Please check with Adobe Animal Hospital for those estimates.)

All cats/kittens must come in humane traps. Do NOT use cat carriers or boxes. Cats/kittens in cat carriers or boxes will be refused service.

To borrow a trap please call:

Watsonville Animal Shelter

580 Airport Blvd.
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 454-7303

Santa Cruz County Animal Services

27 Janis Way
Scotts Valley, CA 95062
(831) 454-7303

Santa Cruz SPCA

2260 7th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95026
(831) 465-5000

Adobe Animal Hospital is located at 1600 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz, CA 95065. The phone number is (831) 475-6365. (*Adobe does not lend traps*)

Adobe is open Monday - Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. No surgeries are preformed on Saturday or Sunday.

Plan ahead! Call Adobe Animal Hospital before trapping to determine when surgery times are available. Cats and kittens need to be dropped off before 8:30 a.m. Late drop-offs or unscheduled cats may not be treated the same day. Adobe Animal Hospital will try to accommodate you.

Only the following items are included in the spay/neuter package.

- Anesthesia
- FeLV Test (Cats/kittens testing positive will be humanely euthanized.)
- Spay (female) / Neuter (male) (OVH/CAST)
- Vaccines (FVRCP (Distemper) and Rabies)
- Mandatory Ear Tip
(Mandatory ear tipping is the humane surgical removal of 1/4 inch of the right ear. This serves as a permanent visual identification mark that shows that this cat has been tested for leukemia, spayed/neutered, and vaccinated.)
- Kittens must be 4 months of age (approximately 4 pounds) for surgery.
- You must bring each cat/kitten in an individual trap for surgery.
- Before surgery, YOU must pay \$25.00 for each feral cat/kitten at Adobe Animal Hospital.
- Cats/kittens testing positive for FeLV must be humanely euthanized.

Surgery After-Care Instructions

Spayed/neutered cats/kittens must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. Take the cat/kitten home and leave it in the covered trap in a safe, quiet, and warm location overnight. Release the cat/kitten the next morning in the exact area where it was trapped. The stitches will dissolve. Provide fresh water and quality dry food daily in the established feeding location. It is best to feed early in the day. Food should be eaten or gone by nightfall to avoid attracting nocturnal creatures such as skunks, opossums, raccoons, and predators. Continue daily feeding after release even though the cat may not return for several days.



Topolina (Runt) became the runt of the next litter I raised from Larkin Valley Road. All four of the Larkin Valley were also adopted guess who was left?

(See full story inside this issue)

Fall 2004 Rummage Sale

We've done it again!!! A fantastically successful sale was held at the field on the corner of Thurber Lane and Soquel Drive in Santa Cruz in September We raised \$12,000 for funding the feral low-cost spay/neuter program at Adobe Animal Hospital!!!

How can we ever thank all the wonderful donators and volunteers who make this dream-come-true a reality for Santa Cruz's feral cats!! It's really hard work but sooo satisfying to know how we are making a huge difference. Seeing and talking with all the caring people is such great energy!

Thank You Everyone!
We always need help!! Get involved!!

Call us at 423-MEOW

We have storage!!! And we're already getting ready for the next big one! Mark your calendars for Memorial Day Weekend 2005.

Moving Towards a No-Kill Nation

Human companion animal overpopulation is a problem of human creation, with significant human costs, and that can only be addressed through human action. Recently there has been a growing sentiment that allowing million of animals to die every year is unacceptable and renewed efforts are being made to reduce euthanasia rates. In the 1990's, this resulted in the "no-kill" movement, which is committed to eliminating the practice of euthanizing healthy and treatable animals altogether. Shelters with a policy of not killing animals have existed for a number of years, mostly as smaller private organizations that do not have municipal contracts and therefore have the option of limiting intake to maintain their policy. However, the "no-kill" movement put a new emphasis on eliminating euthanasia as a goal not just for individual shelters, but for communities as a whole.

The "no-kill" concept has been the subject of much controversy. In part this controversy has been generated by misunderstanding. On the one hand, some no-kill shelter personnel and lay people sympathetic to animals have been too quick to blame animal control agencies and shelters with public contracts for a steady stream of euthanized animals. Limited intake shelters have sometimes also used their no-kill policy as a fundraising tool, implying they are taking the higher moral ground by not killing animals. In reality, many no-kill shelters have the option of limiting intake while animal control departments and shelters with municipal contracts have few options to limit intake. As long as the incoming flow of cats and dogs exceed the number redeemed or adopted, from the perspective of many traditional shelter managers, their only humane option is to kill the excess. However, this is a matter of perspective rather than reality.

While seeking to alleviate the suffering of animals, these organizations with their open door policy and pride in not turning any animal away actually help perpetuate the continued disposability and commodification of pets. It is quite easy to drop off an animal at most traditional shelters, reinforcing the view that animals can be disposed of on a whim. Conversely, adopting an animal is typically more difficult. And then there is the "fate worse than death" implication on which

the traditional shelter view relies...in killing healthy animals, traditional shelters assume that the fate of these animals would be worse if it were not brought in to the shelter and "euthanized". This is not necessarily the case. Shelters should not be committed to take in all excess animals from their community if it means killing healthy animals. By killing unwanted animals, shelters are in effect hiding people from the consequences of their irresponsibility. Quietly and efficiently killing animals enables the continuation of the problem. If shelters refused to kill, on the other hand, the public would be confronted with the moral outcomes of its actions and would take other means of preventing overpopulation (such as spay/neuter) more seriously.

Beyond the many physical costs of overpopulation and the resulting euthanasia, there are the psychological costs suffered by humans sympathetic to the plight of animals...with the greatest cost on the animals themselves!

-parts excerpted from the Foundation for Interdisciplinary Research and Education Promoting Animals Welfare (FIREPAW)

The Fountain of Youth Has Whiskers

Cat lovers have always known that living with a cat is life-enhancing, but now researchers have compiled a mountain of statistics showing that cats can add as much as 10 years to your life. Dr. Horst Becker's astonishing claims come from the most exhaustive study ever undertaken on the relationship between humans and their pets. Seven scientists of the Berlin Longevity Institute worked for five years before drawing their conclusions. Becker and his associates studied more than 3,000 cat owners and found that these wonderful animals have an almost instantaneous calming effect. Just moments after a person picks up a cat, his or her blood pressure drops and the heart rate slows. According to Becker, "We didn't zero in on the amazing powers of cats until our figures began to show they acted like a fountain of youth for their owners. Any pet will add a few years to its owner's life, but cats add a whopping average of 10.3 years to people who've had one since childhood."

Project Purr is an organization offering financial resources to fund feral cat spay/neuter and a commitment to move our community towards "no-kill" status.

Here's the awful truth:

There ARE no no-kill shelters in the Bay Area. "High kill" shelters are uniformly public shelters. They just are.

They aren't doing anything wrong, they are just cleaning up the mess that the community in which they are located leaves behind.

There are low kill shelters but they aren't doing anything special: they are just private organizations that, when they are full, have the luxury of closing the floodgates.

Your low kill shelters and humane organizations are a great place for your disposable animal, but the only way they can remain low kill or call themselves "no kill" is to not take in your hard-to-place animal. That's why they can stay low kill. They can't take in your unstable, too large, unruly, unwanted dog. Or your exceptionally ordinary cat.

Private shelters are doing nothing special, its just that unlike a public shelter they can manage their intake. Public shelters can't so please, people, don't give them a hard time for killing animals.

And SF SPCA? I love ya, I love your programs, and in fact, I volunteer for you. But you lie. You are not no kill. No one is. You kill animals that you decide people don't want. But you call them "unadoptable" first, so you can say you "don't kill adoptable animals." It's semantics and it fools most people, but its a LIE.

Don't feel bad about it: there are so many cool animals dying that no one blames you for making the tough decisions on the really hard to place, - unmanageable animals.

But don't lie. Don't tell people you - or anyone else in this area - are no kill. Don't paint Animal Control as the bad guy. Without them, you wouldn't be able to do what you do.

-Anonymous

The Buena Vista Landfill Four...

The Story of the "Runt"

It was an old mobile home brought into the Buena Vista dump that these four little newborn kittens first called home. The feral momcat must have jumped out when it was hooked up for towing, and luckily the little ones were found and rescued by the employees checking inside the mobile home before crushing it. But it was late that same night before that employee called Project Purr and brought them to me. The littlest one was cold, 4 1/2 ounces and eyes just open - maybe 6-7 days old. I had a heating pad and formula warm and ready. When we tipped them over to stimulate them, it was discovered two didn't have tails, but Manx syndrome was not our priority right then! Getting them warm first to avoid hypothermia, getting them to eliminate to relieve toxicity, and then feeding were our goals - in that order!

Three of the litter thrived and gained weight rapidly. We named them Rumpy (no tail), Stumpy (a tiny tail) and Tail (who had the longest tail ever!) It was the little Runt we worried about. After eight weeks the largest three were tested, spayed/neutered and given first FVRCP vaccines ... and they were adopted.

Another feral litter was trapped and arrived one by one. We named them the Larkin Valley Four ... and the Runt became the runt of that litter too. Those four also thrived and were adopted but no one chose the Runt. I agonized and worried some more. After making many posters and putting her on our website for several more weeks, I realized I needed



This the litter from the Buena Vista landfill. I bottle-raised them successfully. The runt was 4 1/2 ounces and ice cold on arrival.



Rumpy, Stumpy and Tail...

to keep her. It costs many months of day and night care - plus hundreds of dollars in expenses to get her up to this point, BUT she is mine and I am hers. A new name came - she is Topolina, little mouse in Italian and I wouldn't change the outcome for the world.



Topolina and the Larkin Valley Four

Cell Phone Recycling Program Update

Project Purr will no longer be accepting cell phones for recycling ... however, the good news is Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Library system is now accepting used cell phones. Drop off at any city or county library ... or call 420-5790 for more information.

Thank You to everyone who supported Project Purr in this fundraiser.

Of Interest to Singles

Dr. Herman Hoffman, a New York psychologist asserts that, "Cat lovers make home-loving, sensitive, gentle, and mild-mannered companions."

We don't know what type of research Dr. Hoffman conducted to arrive at this conclusion, but it sounds logical. So...if you are a cat lover and you marry a cat lover, the two of you will live happily long ever after.

What Is a Feral Cat

Many feral cats are former house cats who have been abandoned by people or gone stray. Others are born to a life outside. They live wherever they can find food - often grouping together in colonies - near dumpsters, city parks, behind businesses, and, perhaps, even in your own backyard!

Unaltered cats left alone do not "regain their instincts" and thrive. Instead, starvation, disease, and the stress of continued reproduction cause great suffering. However, feral cats/kittens that are tested, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, and fed often live long and healthy lives and pose little or no health risk to domestic cats.

Feral Cat Controversy

Trapping and euthanasia is not an option in a no-kill society. TNR is the most humane and the most effective way of controlling feral cat populations. When cats are removed from an area, other feral or stray cats will move into the area to take advantage of the abandoned food source.

TNR has been used with success nationwide and worldwide. TNR is the preferred method of control for feral cat/kitten populations in England, Denmark, and many other forward-thinking countries. TNR is more cost-effective than trapping and killing feral cats/kittens. The average cost of sterilization is \$50.00, while the average cost of euthanasia is \$125.00.

Health Issues

Raccoons, skunks, and bats are the most common carriers of rabies. A vaccinated, sterilized colony of feral cats/kittens poses no rabies threat to humans and can deter unvaccinated feral cats and wildlife from moving into the area.

Toxoplasmosis can be caught from infected cats, but only if their feces come in contact with a person's mouth. Toxoplasmosis in humans is most often contracted from handling or eating undercooked meat.

Predation

The number one cause of bird decline is loss of habitat and not predation by feral and outdoor cats. Cats are rodent specialists - do not make them the scapegoat for our environmental ills.

Fix a Feral!

**Ferals Are Our Friends!
Spay/Neuter Saves Lives!**

Faith...

We Are All Capable of Becoming More Than We Are



My veterinarian says my new one-eyed cat received, “the Cadillac of eye surgeries.” There’s a nice round ball under his stitched shut lid so Theo appears to have a perma-wink. The eye surgery cost almost a thousand dollars, which wouldn’t be so unusual if he’d been my pet.

As if was, Theo was one of many cats rescued by Project Purr...who spays, neuters and helps them to live safely. Theo need further care: herpes had caused eye ulcers. When they cleared, Project Purr called a veterinary ophthalmologist to remove his long-diseased eye. After that, Lynne, a foster mother and feral trapper, rehabilitated Theo in a small quiet room above her garage.

She fed and groomed him, administered medications and gave him something new: human love and companionship. Under her care, he began to bloom. When my family and I visited, Theo swatted at a tattered toy mouse, but he didn’t jump high like other cats, so Project Purr paid for an x-ray to make sure nothing major was wrong before they allowed us to adopt him.

When Theo moved in, it was clear he hadn’t lived in a house. Everyday noises startled him. He watched us from under our dining room chairs where he could observe everything, but wasn’t easy to reach, even for our dog and two cats.

As each day passed, he grew more accustomed to us and to being a house cat. Now he climbs in the dishwasher and sleeps on our beds. Most important, he’s learned to receive affection, letting us carry and pet him, and allowing our dog to lick his face.

What does any of this have to do with faith? Everything, I think.

One of the core values of my congre-

gation is this: “As a spiritual community, we strive to discover the resources needed for our work in the world; seeking justice and peace among all people; bringing hope to those in need.”

The women at Project Purr live out this value, demonstrating their belief in the inherent worth of all cats. The donation we made doesn’t come close to the costs of Theo’s care and surgery. In that manner, they provide healing the way Jesus did. They do it because it’s the right thing to do and it is within their power to do so. They do it without hidden agendas. No need to become a follower; simply accept the gift.

Like Theo, when we’re too wounded to help ourselves, we need to be open to help when it comes. Receiving help means surrendering what we cling to. It means trusting there is a chance for life, not only for what we must let go; but also for ourselves.

The blind, the lame and lepers found their lives radically changed after their healing encounters with Jesus. We can only imagine how difficult it would be to suddenly see, suddenly walk, or suddenly be made clean, after a lifetime without sight, mobility or community. The drastic changes and unfamiliarity would be enough to make someone long for the familiar world of their pain. But, five or ten or twenty years later, would any of those who’d been healed choose to go back?

My cat purrs loud as a blender in my ear, and I know the answer.

-excerpted from a letter by

Cathy Warner

Lay Minister

Boulder Creek United Methodist

Three Feral Cats Find a Home at the Homeless Garden Project

*By Craig Metz
Co-Farm Director
Homeless Garden Project*

Over a year ago, Project Purr relocated three feral cats to our small Homeless Garden Project farm. We were told that these wild cats would never be the tame cats that we could pet and hold as we were used to with house cats. At first, this was definitely the case.

The biggest of the three we named Tiger because whenever we would encounter him in the garden he would hiss, spit and lunge at us. A black stocky cat we named Shadow because he would spend all day under our office shed except for the fleeting moments when he would sneak up to his food when he thought no one was around. Little Alex came to us still not a full-grown adult and would not come down from the top of our tool shed. She would cry and cry until someone put her food up on the roof.

Slowly things began to change. Tiger would occasionally sit at the end of a garden bed and watch us weed. Shadow began to dart out and rub against my ankle for microseconds as I would arrive with her food in the morning. Alex began to come off of her rooftop to eat her food on the planting table as we put seeds into flats. Then it progressed to the point where as they were eating we could softly pet them if we were very calm and patient. They just kept getting tamer and tamer. Now Tiger follows me around the garden and will fall asleep in my arms as I hold him. Shadow and Alex cry and run and try to trip us as we walk until we bend down and give them a long full body rub down. When we stop they cry for more.

The cats help us in so many ways. They help keep the gopher and other rodent population in check. Perhaps more importantly, they give our homeless trainees (as well as staff) a chance to express their affection in ways that give immediate positive feedback in the form of purrs of love. Thank you Project Purr.



We hold their little lives literally in the palm of our hands!

Philanthropy Equals Giving

We are a tiny but mighty rescue organization located in beautiful Santa Cruz, California. We focus on Trap/Neuter/Return of feral cats. We have a wide network of feral cat caregivers and have been extremely successful to date. We welcome all ideas and creative solutions to the problems of feral cats.

First and foremost, we need your time and attention. It is not enough to merely say "All my animals are spayed and neutered." We need you to say "not only are all my animals spayed and neutered, but also the feral cats that I have encountered (whether in my neighborhood, at work, or behind my favorite restaurant) have also been spayed and neutered, with regular food provided!"

The process of rescue, we have found, enriches everyone involved. It is truly a "win-win" situation, especially for the cats! And, to repeat just once more, **We know what works. Now we just need to do more of the same.**

The giving season is here...and as is true for so many people, the next few months will be especially busy ones for Project Purr. Traffic to our website will jump as donors research their end of year donations.

Remember nonprofits exist to serve the public good...and people who work for nonprofits want to make the world a better place.

FREE!

Spay/Neuter for Feral Cats of Watsonville and Freedom

Encouraged and endorsed by Project Purr, the "Friends of Watsonville Animal Shelter" (FOWAS) has implemented an **Unlimited Free** spay/neuter program for the **FERAL** cats/kittens of Watsonville and Freedom.

Feral cats are unsocialized cats that are born outside or have strayed from home and, over time, lose their domestication and revert to a wild state. Residents must agree to keep and feed the feral cats on a regular schedule. More than thirty years of documented proof shows that trap-and-kill policies have no lasting effect on reducing feral cat populations. Trap and kill is expensive, cruel, and ineffective.

A feral cat management plan called Trap/Neuter/Return, such as the one offered by "Friends of Watsonville Animal Shelter", has a dramatic impact on ethically solving neighborhood feral cat problems. It is effective, responsible and humane. The breeding stops. Populations are gradually reduced. Nuisance behaviors associated with mating and breeding

are virtually eliminated. The cats are vaccinated against disease. The quality of life for these feral cats improves. Thousands of people are helping feral cats, and you can, too!

Vouchers, humane traps and details are available at the Watsonville Animal Shelter located at 580 Airport Blvd. Their phone number is 831/454-7303.

Project Purr is a 501(c)(3) organization with no paid staff members. To sponsor unowned/feral cats and save a life, send tax-deductible donations to Project Purr, PO Box 891, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

Cats and Kittens Assisted in 2004

Feral	208
Domestic	60
Total	268
Grand Total Cats/Kittens Assisted 1997-2004	3,806



**Cats nap. Only humans put them to sleep!
Do you believe she deserves
to live even though she is wild?**

Reducing Feral Euthanasia

Project Purr, in conjunction with Santa Cruz County Animal Services (SCCAS) and the Santa Cruz SPCA, is committed to reducing the euthanasia of feral cats in our community. In FY 2001-2002 the Santa Cruz SPCA took in 396 feral cats out of a total of 2,776 received. Close to 100% of these feral cats were euthanized due to the inability to find suitable placement for them. Statistics from 08/01/02 to 10/19/04 show 4056 cats and kittens entered SCCAS and 1173 cats and kittens were euthanized, 440 of which were **feral!** Unsocialized to people, wild and unadoptable, and yet healthy is all other respects.

Project Purr believes that found and rescued **feral** kittens are filling many available homes. If the feral mom and tom are not trapped/spayed/neutered, they breed repeatedly, making it extremely difficult for domestic cats/kittens to find homes. With the help of everyone concerned about the high euthanasia rate of cats, we propose to increase feral cat education, feral cat spay/neuter and feral cat caretaking.

Project Purr believes that feral cat spay/neuter is the single most important thing we can all do to help the cat overpopulation!

• **MYTH:** Feral cats are unhealthy and carry infectious diseases that threaten owned cats and each other.

• **FACT:** Feral cats are generally in good health. The incidence of disease in feral cat colonies is no higher than among owned cats.

• **MYTH:** Feral cats cannot be eliminated using nonlethal methods.

• **FACT:** An established, long-term TNR program can reduce feral cat populations in both the short and long terms.

What about no-kill shelters/sanctuaries for feral cats?

This may sound like a compassionate answer, but it's not a workable solution. Even no-kill shelters are not able to place feral cats and there isn't enough land or money to relocate tens of millions of feral cats into sanctuaries....nor is it necessary!

Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR), the nonlethal feline population control and the most humane, effective and cost-effective strategy for managing feral cats and reducing their numbers, has not only prevented the births of millions of feral kittens, but has also extended and improved the lives of countless feral cats who would otherwise have been killed.

We need more community outreach to educate everyone about TNR, the only scientifically proven method of reducing feral cat populations and used in forward thinking countries worldwide.

The Aromas Six

Lisa Lewis is an occupational therapist who travels from school to school and Aromas is really where these came from... she trapped the mom, had her spayed, and returned, along with a few others. She has done a lot of rescue - one of the original PP people! These kittens were lovingly fostered on East Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz by her sister Logan, who is also a great colony caregiver. They were socialized, spayed/neutered and found great forever homes!



Low Cost Spay/Neuter for Feral Cats and Kittens

An affordable low-cost spay/neuter veterinary package for feral cats/kittens is available to the public at Adobe Animal Hospital in Santa Cruz as a direct result of a 16-year liaison with Project Purr. This is the first time such a low cost program has ever been available to the public in Santa Cruz County. Project Purr's cat rescue is the financial commitment to pay a portion of the cost to spay/neuter feral cats and kittens. *Although a \$25.00 fee from YOU is required, the unpaid balance for each feral cat/kitten spay/neuter surgery is paid for by Project Purr.*

This community-oriented program would not be possible without Adobe Animal Hospital's doctors, staff, and hospital. To-

gether Project Purr and Adobe Animal Hospital have altered over 3500 cats and kittens and given assistance to thousands of others. This benchmark is an amazing accomplishment towards the ethical treatment of all animals. Ultimately, this means lower stray intake rates for the shelters, tremendous cost savings for taxpayer-funded animal control, less competition for homes for adoptable cats, and less euthanasia for all cats! Each feral cat or kitten altered brings us closer to reaching the goal of no more unwanted homeless animals.

All-volunteer Project Purr is funded solely through donations!

“Free Kitten” vs. “Adoption Fee”

For those that feel they would get a better deal with a “free” kitten, please read below to find out what a “free” kitten really costs!

“Free Kitten”

Basic Kitten Vet Package includes:

- Vet Checks
- Testing
- FVRCP Vaccine
- Parasite Treatments
- Spay or Neuter

Total cost: **\$265.00/\$215.00**

(Estimates from vets vary)

Project Purr Kitten

Adoption Fee includes:

- Vet Checks
- Testing
- FVRCP Vaccine
- Parasite Treatments
- Spay or Neuter

Total cost: **\$95.00**

Don't breed!

Don't buy!

Save a Life!

Adopt homeless animals from shelters and rescue groups!

Your adoption fee will go towards saving still another!!

My Cats Taught Me a Lesson

My cats Georgie and Bugsie weren't exactly planned parenthood. I'm afraid I got a little cocky thinking even though the feral kittens I was trapping were older than any kittens I had socialized before.

Hey! I had gotten pretty good at it and I'm proud to say many of you have adopted my dear social fosters. Well, the lesson I learned from Georgie and his brother Bugsie is sometimes older kittens have wild ways that are so ingrained that they can never become completely social. I tried all my usual tricks but they fought me the whole time!

To put a truly wild thing in a large cage and little by little get it used to you and knowing the right time (even though it's crouched and hissing) to reach in and touch it without showing fear is hard. I try



Georgie

to control my breathing and make it a smooth motion.

The thrill of the first purr is always a great joy for me. It takes lots and lots of repetition and small successes and backslides. Coaxing them to come to you with chicken baby food on your finger ... Figuring out what motivates each kitten... food, affection or play. Hopefully all three, which makes for the easiest kitten.

Bugsie was wild but he fell in love so hard with our dog Alice that we weakened and decided to keep him. He daily meows a loud love song to Alice while hugging her neck as he folds her ear back and kisses and grooms. I laugh delightedly every time.

Bugsie's brother Georgie would purr but he always hissed first and he never came to me. I had him in a hutch for two months working with him many times a



Bugsie

day and I finally gave up. He did have a place to go back to as a feral with his mother and sister who had been trapped/neutered and returned to a barn on country property where they had come from.

I admitted defeat, had Georgie's ear tipped, and set him loose. Well about three weeks later Project Purr got a call from Santa Cruz County Animal Services saying they had an eartipped cat and did we want to come down and see if he was one of ours ... yep ... it was Georgie. It turns out George must have realized how nice his life had been. He's a smart cat and decided he didn't want to be a wild cat.

He had showed up at a woman's house and cried piteously at her sliding glass door for a week until finally she let him in and he purred and ate food offered to him. The kind woman put up signs FOUND CAT, she put an ad in the paper. No one responded so she took him to the shelter to hopefully to be claimed by his owner.

Thankfully we had tipped Georgie's ear. It absolutely saved his life. Ferals are routinely euthanized at shelters.

I had misjudged Georgie. I brought him home. Now my work was really cut out for me. I had committed to this cat. So I started working on socializing again. He still hissed, but less and less. He got so he would roll over and show me his tummy.

He has a haughty aristocratic nature that I secretly admire. I tried to adopt him out but he would hiss and scowl at potential adopters. One woman said "he hates me but he sure seems to like

you!" It became clear after a few months that Georgie was mine. He had fallen into the rhythm of our household and had formed respectful relationships with our two dogs and collection of cats.

In fact, Bugsie accepted Georgie back with open paws and they are usually found together. They sleep on the bed in loving intertwined shapes that warm my heart. They don't like being picked up but like to snuggle with us in bed. They spook a bit more than some cats. For the most part they dislike company. My lap is the only one Georgie will sit in and only when he pats me on the leg to tell me he wants to. Sometimes he will kiss my cheek and bury his nose into my hair and make snuffly noises. I'm sort of embarrassed to say, it makes me feel special to have been trusted and chosen. Love is love.

Lucinda

Feting Feral Felines

National Feral Cat Day was October 16th, 2004, the fourth annual nationwide.

It's a very special day for those who advocate nonlethal feline population control and the use of on-going Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR). The SF/SPCA Feral Cat Assistance Program has been implementing TNR since 1993. The cats are humanely trapped and brought to The SF/SPCA by volunteer members of the program where they are spayed/neutered through their free Feral Fix plan.

On July 21, the program altered its 15,000th feral cat. The feral cats are also evaluated, vaccinated and eartipped for identification purposes. Kittens and tame (stray) cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy adult cats too wild to be adopted are returned to their familiar habitats under the lifelong care of our dedicated volunteers.

To celebrate Feral Cat Day, the SF/SPCA Feral Cat Assistance Program plans community outreach drives to educate the public about TNR, the only scientifically proven method of reducing feral cat populations.



nonprofit volunteer feral cat advocate organization

P.O. Box 891
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
(831) 423-6369 (MEOW)
webmaster@projectpurr.org
www.projectpurr.org

Project Purr Wish List

For our huge fundraising yard sale - large market umbrellas, pop-up shade pavilions, card tables, and new x-large tarps

For office and advertising - printing costs for newsletter/info packets, stamps, and weatherproof sign with our logo

For the kitties - we need a never ending supply of kibble and canned food!

Cat Kisses



*Sandpaper kisses
On a cheek or a chin
That is the way
For a day to begin!*



*Sandpaper kisses
A cuddle and a purr
I have an alarm clock
That's covered in fur!*



Author Unknown

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