

# The *Advocat*

*The Newsletter of Friends of Feral Felines*

*Spring 2006*

## Annual Meeting Notes

The Friends of Feral Felines Annual Meeting was held on January 11 at the Westbrook Library. The minutes of the last meeting of the Board (October) were read and accepted; an informal end-of-the-year Treasurer's report was presented as well.

The nominated slate of new officers were elected unanimously: Neva Cram, President, Pat Larrabee, Secretary and Nancy Harmon, Treasurer were elected for two year terms in these positions. Jean Cobb continues in the position of Vice President for another year as she was elected in 2005.

Under old business, the bulletin board system designed to help us with continuity of service to our callers and cats was introduced. The website is [www.bulletinboards.com/view](http://www.bulletinboards.com/view) and the secret code is FOFF's phone number. Once in the site, there are a number of "forums" or subject areas - colonies, barn cats, TNR (meaning non-colony cats we are working with), and fostering. We can add or delete forums as we need them - for example, if we are working with a very large colony involving a number of different trappers, we could set up a forum just for that colony until the work is finished - and then delete it. When you go to the website (which is long in length) be sure to click "view messages" at the top and then you can see the history of the topic being discussed. Questions about this should come to Neva.

It was noted that the prospect of a board retreat was still an issue to be discussed.

Under new business, the group accepted 4 amendments to the Bylaws. The first change was to replace the word

"stray" (Article II, line 6) with the word "feral." The second change was to Article II, line 8, to replace the words "religious and scientific purposes" with "humane purposes."

The third change is in Article III, 2nd paragraph, line 1, to replace the word "shall" (The Board shall appoint an executive director) with the word "may." The fourth and last change was to create an Article X which defines a Corporate Member of the Corporation as someone who donates their time to FOFF.

The Budget for the upcoming year was presented based upon the goal of working with 350 cats in that year which will total \$52,510 (which includes donated in-kind time by the vets). All together the budget will total \$75,710 with particular emphasis on Volunteer recruitment and fundraising. The Budget is the "plan" for how FOFF will spend money and can be amended if needed. This budget was adopted.

A potential fundraising calendar for 2006 was presented. Not all events are secured at this time. The first fundraiser will be at Pet Quarters on Feb 4th and 5th. Since Sylvia is on "family leave," please call Neva to sign up for tabling times.

There was also substantial discussion about the possibility of collaborating with the Animal Refuge League on a grant to provide greater services to feral cats. Discussion on this will continue. Since the US Humane Society has endorsed TNR as a viable and humane methods of working with feral cats, there is now more interest - and hopefully funding - in this area.

## Cat Calendar

### Fundraising Events

**Pet Quarters, South Portland**  
April 8 & 9, Sept. 9 & 10.

**Uno's Pizzeria, Maine Mall**  
Mar. 16, April 13, May 11, June 13, July 13, Aug. 17, Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov 16, and Dec. 14 (all Thursdays). Uno's will donate 20% of your ticket to FFF with a coupon! Eat in or take out. Copy the coupon on page 4 as many times as you like and give to friends!

### **Nauticats Cat Show**

Fri., Sat., & Sun., March 17, 18, & 19.

### **Other Fundraisers**

Blue Seal Feed Store, S. Windham, in May

Perennial Sale in May.

Westbrook Community Days, June 2, 3, and 4.

Greek Festival tabling, June 24.

Flatbread Fundraiser and Raffle in June.

Annual Yard Sale in August.

Common Ground Fair Sept. 22-24.

### **Friends of Feral Felines Meetings**

Board meetings of Friends of Feral Felines are held on the following Mondays, at 6:00: March 13, May 8, and October 9.

General membership meetings are held on the following Mondays at 6:00: April 10, June 12, Sept. 11, and Nov. 13. The April meeting will highlight fostering techniques for feral cats of all ages. June will cover Ailurophilia and implications for feral felines. September's topic will be colony management, and November will cover current and future directions of FFF. All meetings are held at Walker Memorial Library, 800 Maine St., Westbrook.

## Animal Control Officer Speaks at February Meeting

Carolyn Ross, Animal Control Officer (ACO) for the City of Westbrook, was the speaker at FOFF's first educational meeting of 2006. Although we often work with ACO's, it was good to hear directly what their role and responsibilities are. ACO's are employed by the town or city and are part of the Public Safety Department (the police). The State employs 4 Animal Humane Officers who specifically investigate animal cruelty situations. Lots of an ACO's position is involved in paperwork such as ensuring that all community dogs are duly licensed. In addition, she will investigate community concerns regarding companion animals as well as other animal situations. In a dangerous situation, she may call in a police officer as back-up.

The towns/cities generally follow the State Animal Welfare Laws ([www.maine.gov-images.informe.org/agriculture/awforms/2005%20ANIMAL%20WELFARE%20LAW%20BOOK.pdf](http://www.maine.gov-images.informe.org/agriculture/awforms/2005%20ANIMAL%20WELFARE%20LAW%20BOOK.pdf)). It may be easier to google Maine State Animal Welfare Laws than trying to copy this address. Did you know that after you have fed an animal for 10 days, the animal belongs to you? This web site is really worth skimming to see the issues that pertain to feral cats. Carol also encouraged us to email her with any questions ([cross@westbrook.me.us](mailto:cross@westbrook.me.us)). All ACO's in southern Maine will be receiving a letter from FOFF regarding how we can collaborate and what our role is in the animal welfare scene.

The next Membership meeting (Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>) will focus on Fostering Techniques including using "Tellington Touch" to assist with this process. This meeting is open to the public and we hope to see you there.

- Neva Cram

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## Paws Up!

Donation in honor of the 4th anniversary of Minnie's coming to our home. "She's quite the character and has graced our house with her charm and personality. She never grew to be very big, hence her nickname "Peanut." (photo at right)

- Ellen T. Keenan

## Financial Assistance for Veterinary Care

The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) Helping Pets Fund provides financial assistance when people cannot afford veterinary care for their pets. They can help in three types of cases:

1. When a pet owner is receiving government assistance for low-income individuals
2. When a pet owner experiences a temporary financial hardship
3. When a veterinary practice acts as a Good Samaritan and no pet owner exists

The Fund does not grant money directly to individuals. An AAHA-accredited veterinary practice applies for a grant on behalf of the pet in need. For veterinary practices, assistance is limited to \$700 per calendar year. Each pet and family is limited to \$500 per calendar year.

After a completed application is submitted, the AAHA Helping Pets Fund replies quickly with approval status - usually within 24 hours. To efficiently manage demand, assistance is available only through AAHA-accredited practices.

Download a grant application form at [www.aahahelpingpets.org](http://www.aahahelpingpets.org)

AAHA Helping Pets Fund

P. O. Box 150899

Denver, Colorado 80215-0899

Tel. 866/4HELPEPETS / Fax 720/963-4404

Email: [info@aahahelpingpets.org](mailto:info@aahahelpingpets.org)

The following practices are AAHA-accredited:

Falmouth Veterinary Hospital  
LLC  
Falmouth, ME

Androscoggin Animal Hospital  
Topsham, ME

Veterinary Centre of Cape  
Elizabeth  
Cape Elizabeth, ME

Naples Veterinary Clinic  
Naples, ME

Scarborough Animal Hospital  
Scarborough, ME

Hilda Taylor  
urban catsitters  
Portland, Maine

Bath-Brunswick Veterinary  
Associates Inc  
Brunswick, ME

To adopt a pet, check out  
[www.petfinder.com!](http://www.petfinder.com!)



# The Companion Animal Sterilization Fund Tax Check-Off

If you are reading this newsletter, then you already know that Maine has a severe cat overpopulation problem. Thousands of perfectly adoptable cats are killed in Maine's shelters each year because there are not enough homes for all of them. Thousands of others are tossed outside or are born outside to live the hard life of a feral cat.

In addition to supporting FFF an easy way to help stem the problem of cat over-population in Maine is by checking the tax check-off box on your Maine income tax return called "The Companion Animal Sterilization Fund." This tax check-off funds "Help Fix ME," Maine's low-income spay/neuter program which pays for

spaying and neutering both cats and dogs. The tax check-off is found on schedule CP of your Maine tax return.

Although feral cats are not eligible to be spayed or neutered under the Help Fix ME program, the program still benefits ferals indirectly. With fewer cats reproducing, there will be fewer cats and kittens disposed of out on the streets to become ferals.

You know that your cats are living feeling creatures. When you adopt them, you adopt them for life. By checking the check-off box on your Maine tax return you will be helping help those who love their cats just as much as you do but just can not afford to spay/neuter them. More importantly, you will be helping to stem the problem of cat over-population and the tide of homeless and feral cats.

Tell your cat and dog-loving friends about Maine's

**New Tax Check Off !**



Because there aren't enough homes for all of them . . .

Maine's State Tax Form now has a check-off box called

**the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund**

\$5    \$10    \$25    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Board Retreat

After one snowed out date, the Board did gather for a day long retreat to discuss issues pertaining to Friends of Feral Felines. In fact, the agenda was CATS, COMMUNICATION, CASH & CONCLUSIONS.

In the CATS area, we reached the following conclusions: 1) FFFF provides TNR services within Cumberland and York counties; 2) Colony "owners" requesting TNR will, if accepted, receive neutering, rabies shots, Revolution™ and ear tipping. If desired by the owner, colony cats will receive random testing, 3) Barn cats will receive all (no ear tip) of the above including testing, 4) Cats with potential for adoption will receive all of the above (no ear tip) plus distemper. FFFF will attempt to develop a series of foster homes willing to foster cats with Leukemia.

COMMUNICATIONS discussion included: 1) a Treasurer/Trapper agreement which will enhance

the approval process for trappers, 2) Upgrading of the website is happening, and a committee will be needed at a later point to design a new website, 3) The phone system seems to working reasonably well, with Fran Findlay answering calls for adoption "on line 1", Jill Counoyer answering calls regarding barns and barn cat "on line 2, Help with ferals, on line 3 is answered by rotating screeners and more are needed, and Volunteers on line 4 will now be answered by Marybeth Davis.

At the annual meeting, it was decided to define a member of FFFF as someone who actively contributed volunteer time to the organization. In addition to members, we have many, many wonderful people who support FFFF through donations. Board members will be calling present and past volunteers to update them on FFFF's current activities and to encourage their active participation.

COSTS was an exciting discussion

in that we learned of a substantial bequest from a supporter of our group. This bequest will not be available for a year while in the legal system but it is good to know it is coming. We also discussed the need to develop some of the easier revenue generating activities - such as being responsible for a FFFF donation can, or requesting your local Shaws or Hannaford, to arrange for return bottle slips to be donated to our organization. We also will be focusing on recruiting (and reviving) volunteers to work with us, and recruiting more veterinarians willing to work with ferals at significant discounts or some no-cost situations.

CONCLUSIONS essentially consisted of impressive "to do" lists for the Board, and we hope to find you all receptive to our efforts if possible.

**Look us up on our fabulous web site :  
[www.feralfelines.net](http://www.feralfelines.net)**

## FoFF President Attends Conference on TNR

Recently, the Animal Refuge League (ARL) offered me the opportunity to attend a 3-part Conference on Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) offered by PetSmart through a magic combination of teleconferencing and web site use. Darren Winham, ARL's new Development Coordinator, and an assortment of animal companions attended this conference as well.

The conference segment the members of Friends of Feral Felines may be the most interested in was the session on "Feral Cats and Trap, Neuter & Return: What Recent Science Demonstrates." It was presented by Margaret Slater, DVM, PhD. from Texas A&M University. Dr. Slater began by outlining the benefits of TNR as she perceived them. They are:


- Neutering decreases fighting, roaming and noise
- Neutered cats produce no kittens
- No unwanted kittens
- Overall improvement of the health of the cat colony as observed by weight gain after neutering, and
- Colony managers report the cats become more socialized and have improved coat qualities (remember the picture of Mike Chase on the last newsletter's cover.)

Dr. Slater also stated the need to combine TNR and adoption programs to significantly affect colony size. TNR alone can take years to slowly decrease the size of the colony. Coupled with a strong adoption program, the colony size can drop dramatically. In some case studies, feral cats may become adoptable after a significant socialization period, and that 82% of feral kittens may be adoptable. She also stated that kittens over 8 weeks of present more socialization issues than the younger kittens. In a North Carolina TNR study (where cats reproduce year round with a peak in the spring) the cats has an average of 1.4 litters per year of an average of 3 kittens. By 6 months of age, 75% of these kittens had either died or disappeared. She spoke of many recent studies that have tracked the results of TNR. A very significant point was the combination of with a strong adoption program, is a very effective collaboration. An impressive statistic from the San Francisco/SPCA Collaboration (TNR, Animal Rescue Officers & local Shelters) was that over a 6 year period, cat euthanasia was down 71% and cat surgeries (I assume sterilizations) was up by 23%.

Dr. Slater also spoke to health issues of feral cats. She did state that a single rabies shot is effective for more than a three year period. Feline leukemia and feline AIDS (FeLV/FIV) testing was a procedure that she emphasized that each TNR program needed to be clear as to their process. A cat with FIV may be very long lived with a good quality of life. A cat with FeLV will die within a year and the mother will pass the disease to her offspring, and is contagious, according to Dr. Slater. One study showed that the prevalence of FeLV was about 5-6% and FIV was 2-8% in a studied colony. These test are expensive and each TNR group needs to decide where to spend its money.

It was most generous of ARL to allow a FoFF representative to attend this conference, and greatly appreciated.

- Neva Cram



## A Tasty Way To Raise Dough

Uno will donate 20% of your check to the

**Friends of Feral Felines**

To Benefit: Friends of Feral Felines

Fundraiser Date: Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 13, May 11, June 15  
July 13, Aug. 17, Sep. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 16, Dec. 14

**Valid only at:**  
Next to the Maine Mall  
South Portland, ME  
(207) 780-8667

Please present this certificate at the time of payment to have 20% of your check's value, excluding tax and tip, donated to the organization above.

**Valid for date listed above.**

*Copy the Uno's coupon above as many times as you like and give them to friends! All the dates on the coupon are Thursdays.*

## Harbor Fish Helps Wharf Cats

Did you know that a 32 oz. jar full of coins could be worth over \$57? Or that a Coinstar™ machine can count 600 coins per minute? And that one collection can located at Harbor Fish Market in Portland has brought in hundreds of dollars for Friends of Feral Felines over the past seven years -- penny by penny, quarter by quarter?

Not only do Ben and Robyn Alfiero of Harbor Fish keep an eye on the wharf cats, they also donate gift certificates to our fundraisers and provide counter space for our humble can. Formerly serviced by the late Mike Chase, the Harbor Fish can has

been adopted by long-time volunteer Hilda Taylor.

You too can adopt your own can! If you know of a cat-friendly retailer or restaurant who will host a can, let us know! As the adopter, it'll be your responsibility to collect the can money every 4-8 weeks (as needed), convert it to a check and mail the check to Friends of Feral Felines. It's that easy!

Call FFF President Neva Cram at 772-7654 to get your can today!



Ben Alfiero of Harbor Fish Market on Custom House Wharf in Portland holds the FFF Collection Can. Paws Up! to Harbor Fish for all that they do for FFF and the wharf cats!

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## The 10 Most Common Poisonous Plants for Animals (from the ASPCA)

*Spring is the time when we start thinking about plants. Here are some to keep away from your pets, to keep them safe:*

### Marijuana

Ingestion of *Cannabis sativa* by companion animals can result in depression of the central nervous system and incoordination, as well as vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, increased heart rate, and even seizures and coma.

### Sago Palm

All parts of *Cycas Revoluta* are poisonous, but the seeds or “nuts” contain the largest amount of toxin. The ingestion of just one or two seeds can result in very serious effects, which include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, seizures and liver failure.

### Lilies

Members of the *Lilium spp.* are considered to be highly toxic to cats. While the poisonous component has not yet been identified, it is clear that with even ingestions of very small amounts of the plant, severe kidney damage could result.

### Tulip/Narcissus bulbs

The bulb portions of *Tulipa/Narcissus spp.* contain toxins that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation, drooling, loss

of appetite, depression of the central nervous system, convulsions and cardiac abnormalities.

### Azalea/Rhododendron

Members of the *Rhododendron spp.* contain substances known as grayantoxins, which can produce vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness and depression of the central nervous system in animals. Severe azalea poisoning could ultimately lead to coma and death from cardiovascular collapse.

### Oleander

All parts of *Nerium oleander* are considered to be toxic, as they contain cardiac glycosides that have the potential to cause serious effects—including gastrointestinal tract irritation, abnormal heart function, hypothermia and even death.

### Castor Bean

The poisonous principle in *Ricinus communis* is ricin, a highly toxic protein that can produce severe abdominal pain, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst, weakness and loss of appetite.

Severe cases of poisoning can result in dehydration, muscle twitching, tremors, seizures, coma and death.

### Cyclamen

*Cylamen* species contain cyclamine, but the highest concentration of this toxic component is typically located in the root portion of the plant. If consumed, *Cylamen* can produce significant gastrointestinal irritation, including intense vomiting. Fatalities have also been reported in some cases.

### Kalanchoe

This plant contains components that can produce gastrointestinal irritation, as well as those that are toxic to the heart, and can seriously affect cardiac rhythm and rate.

### Yew

*Taxus spp.* contains a toxic component known as taxine, which causes central nervous system effects such as trembling, incoordination, and difficulty breathing. It can also cause significant gastrointestinal irritation and cardiac failure, which can result in death.

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## Member Benefit

We all need PET MEDS for the cats we rescue, spay and neuter, as well as the cats we keep forever. PET MEDS has arranged a benefit for the members of FFF, to order flea and tick preventives at 30% off. We will place our order through FFF and PAY FFF, simply designating “for pet

meds” in the memo line on our checks. Members can check PET MEDS online, put together an order and email it to [mommabear207@hotmail.com](mailto:mommabear207@hotmail.com). Mary Stitzell will finalize the order, get price quotes from PET MEDS, and return emails with final pricing. The final order and checks should be mailed

to FFF (address on page 1). You will be emailed when your order is received, and you can pick up the order. This will help a lot of us who have multiple cats and will form a relationship between PET MEDS and FFF, hopefully leading to a corporate donation from their company.

## Helping Backdoor Friends

I had never seen a cat so happy flushing moths from the tall grass and throwing herself at them for hours with wild abandon. I felt happy just watching her. All she had was a food bowl in a cat carrier placed outside my door. She wouldn't be owned, and I wanted to change that.

She and her male friend, both long-haired black felines, had found me late one frigid January night when no owned pet would be outside. Looking out my kitchen window, my heart sank when I saw how thin they were, and when I noticed the male's frost-bitten ears and fresh wounds. When I opened the door they scattered, but they returned the next night, probably attracted by the smell of my own two cats and the prospect of food. I was ready with bowls of warm Fancy Feast. I then began a nightly feeding routine.

I also set up a large cat carrier on the back porch, warmed with a bird bath defroster under a fleece blanket. Each morning, I'd look out and see the male, sitting beside the carrier on the icy porch, sometimes covered with snow, allowing the female the warmth and food inside. I was touched by his generosity and protective nature.

Despite all my attempts to befriend them, however, they remained standoffish. When I realized the female, whom I'd named Camille, was in

heat, I knew I needed help. I knew I couldn't bring them to a local shelter, as shelters typically euthanize feral strays. I was referred to Friends of Feral Felines, which provided me financial and emotional support in trapping and getting her spayed.

She was easy to trap and following her surgery, she spent five days recuperating in my basement. After her release, she disappeared for nearly a week, returning soaking wet one cold, rainy night. This time when I opened the door to put her food outside, she went by me and headed for the warmth of the basement. Clearly, she was now ready to call my place home.

Gradually, she worked her way up from the basement to the kitchen and finally the living room, where she has adopted a special blanket and chair as her own (at times to the dismay and hissing fits of my first resident cats, Cosmo and Cammie).

Camille still spent time outside chasing moths and also visiting her male friend and protector. Feeling that three cats was all I could handle, I had not even named the male cat, still thinking I could find him his own home. At one point, FoFF had a barn available, but he refused to be trapped.

However, he grew a little more trusting each day, so eventually I tricked him into a carrier while eating. At that point, when he went to be neu-

tered, I was asked to provide a name. Thus, he went from "that tomcat on the back porch" to "Henry." I noticed that after he was fixed, he had fewer wounds and did not travel so far.

Like Camille, Henry gradually warmed up to me, and once the cold weather came, he began to follow Camille's lead by staying in the basement for the evening. With my own cats, Cosmo and Cammie, still adjusting to Camille's presence, I was very wary of taking on another boarder. It became clear, though, that Camille felt otherwise. She would leave her cozy chair to visit Henry in the basement for hours--reciprocating his kindness and loyalty and honoring their friendship.

Helping Camille and Henry this last year has been a challenge and a commitment, sometimes stressful, but mostly rewarding. I knew these two backdoor cats deserved a chance at a better life, and it seems they're finally willing to accept one. And because of the help provided me by FFF, I was inspired to become a volunteer myself, wanting to pass along the knowledge that I gained working with feral cats. I am now a volunteer feeder and trapper, glad for the opportunity to help more Camilles and Henrys find happy endings.

*-Beth Davis  
FFF Volunteer*

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## Art Party for Crafty Cat Lovers!

Do you knit, crochet, sew, paint, make jewelry or have other creative talents? Would you like to make products for cats and their people to raise money for our rescue work? Then Friends of Feral Felines would like to meet you!

We're having an Art Party on Tuesday, April 18th from 5-7 pm at the Creative Resource Center, 887 Brighton Avenue in Portland. We'll have snacks and beverages available and each participant will make several simple cat toys for his or her own cat(s). Patterns and instructions for a variety of cat-themed projects will be available plus samples and books will be on hand to study. Bring your ideas to share and swap!

Participation is limited to 15 people. Advance

registration is required by contacting Hilda Taylor of urban catsitters at (207)761-9651 or by email at [citykitty@gwi.net](mailto:citykitty@gwi.net). A \$5 donation is requested to cover the cost of supplies (we can use ANYTHING in the studio including yarn, paint, glue, rubber stamps, paper, fabric, wood pieces and more!). The Creative Resource Center is located at 887 Brighton Avenue, across from the Breakwater School.

There's plenty of parking in the back -- just turn down Kent Street or Devon Street to access it. For more information, call (207)773-9543 or visit [www.creativeresourcecenter.org](http://www.creativeresourcecenter.org)

No time for crafting but you have supplies coming out of your ears? We can always use fleece material, cotton cat-print fabric, quilt batting, polyfiber filling and yarn! Contact Hilda to donate.

# Memorials

Charlie and his brother Pinky adopted Venise and I after FFF (Charlotte) helped us trap and treat them, their mother, siblings, aunt and cousins (9 total). Charlie left us on January 31, 2006. He had the best personality of any cat I have ever had. He followed me around on the farm like a dog and was one of my best friends ever! The memories of the smiles Charlie brought us will last forever!

- Mark H. Grier



Gift in memory of Janet E. from Joan Tourtelotte.

Gift in memory of my sister, Pauline Kerry, from Claire LeBel.

Gift in memory of Rebecca Googoo from Daniel Whitmore and Martha Kaye Hofer, Standish, ME

Gift in memory of Mike Chase. "When I said that I would take him [a cat named Happy], Mike drove all the way to central Massachusetts to bring him to me." - Jude Ayer, Worcester, MA

Gift in memory of Mike Chase from Jennifer Godsoe.

Gift in memory of Mike Chase from Dianne Curry.

Gift in memory of my Aunt Ruth Baker from Barbara Estabrook, Yarmouth, ME.

Gift in memory of Ruth Baker from Lois Brown.

Gift from Richard A. Lane, Peaks Island, "Merry Christmas from Rufus who dies in August, 2005, beloved friend of Veronica Foster of Peaks Island."



Sonny was a "feral" cat who lived along Winter Street in Portland and his caretaker Laura had fed him for several years and contacted Friends of Feral Felines to help trap, neuter and return (TNR) him to Winter Street.

I provided a trap for her and within a few days, we got our man, off to the vet to be neutered, vaccinated and tested.

During his recovery from the surgery, he started to go in and out of Laura's home, especially when her own cat, Tommy, was out and about. He decided that humans weren't so bad and over time, became quite an affectionate kitty. He began believing that indoor living was the way to go and during a cold snap in December, Laura tried to put him outside when Tommy came in (they like to hiss and spit at each other) but Sonny didn't want to go. For the first time ever, he clawed his way against the windowsill, insisting on staying in, but due to Tommy, Laura had no choice. She cried all that night, feeling so bad for him, being out in the cold, alone, knowing he wanted nothing more than to sleep on her bed and cuddle. The next morning she called and pleaded

with me, to try and find him a good home.

That evening, I raced over to her place and got a photo of him and the next day, I posted his picture along with a sad story at my workplace. Another cold snap was being forecasted and we wanted to find him a home as soon as possible.

Two days later, I got an e-mail from a co-worker, Sue Cooper, who was interested. After losing her dog of 11 years to sickness and almost a year of mourning, she and her husband, Joe, were ready to adopt a new family member. The next day, Sue and I went over to Laura's home and as Sonny waited in a carrier, I noticed an immediate bond between the two of them. In fact, Sonny was looking directly into her eyes. (For those of us who are cat enthusiasts, we know not all cats look directly into a human's eyes and Sonny was giving his new mom a sincere compliment).

That night, Sonny went to his new home and stayed in his own bedroom while Sue and her husband visited and played with him often.

The next day, Sonny ventured out and explored the house but in the evening, when bedtime rolled around, he wasn't anywhere to be found! After a thorough search of the house, they found him underneath their own bed!

## From Rags to Riches

They crawled in, called him up, and he immediately leapt up between the two of them, made himself at home and fell fast asleep on his back, purring like a champ. It's been three months now at his new home so I asked Sue for an update:

"Adopting King Sonny was one of the best decisions we have made. He is just the most lovable little guy anyone could ask for. Although I think there is some confusion on Sonny's part as to whether he is a cat or a dog. He follows us around from room to room. He jumps up and sits in my lap. He has his own bedroom complete with an overstuffed chair where he spends most of his day basking in the sun that comes in, watching the world go by.

He has brought us so much joy it is hard for us to remember life without Sonny in it. Thank you so much for posting his picture. Without that we would never had the good fortune of adopting him."

Sonny went from the streets to a large 6-bedroom farmhouse out in the country, complete with his own bedroom and 2 human laps to choose from. He went from Rags to Riches.

Life IS good.

- Story submitted by Carole G. Jean of Portland, FFF volunteer for 9 years

# Trapping Update: Larger and Larger Colonies Needing Help

In October, Friends of Feral Felines was featured on "Bill Green's Maine," a popular state-wide television show. While the camera zoomed in on the faces of approximately 20 barn cats FFF had trapped and neutered, happily chowing down inside their Gorham barn, two volunteers spoke about our trap-neuter-and-return approach. Whether by coincidence or not, since then we have received the most calls we have ever had within a few months regarding neutering large colonies.

In 2005, we provided trapping and neutering assistance to only a few colonies numbering 20 cats or more. From October 2005 to January 2006, we received calls for help with four colonies of from 20 to 50 cats and

three calls for colonies of 10 to 15. This results in a commitment to more than 200 cats in a short period of time.

This is an ideal time for potential trappers or transporters to learn the ropes of colony trapping. We would also like to train committed people as "colony captains" who would oversee the trapping of a particular colony. Additionally, we are looking for people interested in holding a cat in a large kennel a day or two prior to and then a few days after surgery.

As of early February, we had started working on three of the colonies. Nine of 19 cats living outside a Freeport home have been fixed so far, four have been done from a group of 14 at a Brunswick home, and a colony of nearly 20 in Westbrook is almost

finished.

In late February, 25 of a group of 40-50 residing behind a greenhouse on Route 100 in Cumberland will be fixed in one day through the generously donated services of the South Portland Veterinary Hospital. Hopefully, in the future, publicity garnered by FFF will lead to more awareness of the need to neuter one or two cats before they blossom into a colony of 10.

To learn more about the volunteer opportunities noted above, visit our website ([www.feralfelines.net](http://www.feralfelines.net)) or call our main number (797-3014), and look for the next volunteer training session.

- Jill Cournoyer  
FFF Volunteer

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## "Spay Day" 2006



*FFF President Neva Cram presents a certificate of appreciation to Drs. Chris and Jennifer Allen of South Portland Veterinary Hospital for donating their services to fix 22 feral cats for Spay Day 2006.*

Spay Day USA is the Doris Day Animal Foundation's national campaign to save the lives of homeless animals through the spay or neuter of our pets and feral cats.

For Spay Day for the third year, we are working with South Portland Veterinary Hospital to provide Spay/Neuters to ferals. SVPH provides the vet services and we provide rabies shots, a squirt of Revolution, and testing. This year on February 28 we spayed or neutered 23 cats!

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We had applied to the Doris Day Animal Foundation for a grant, but they did not provide the funding which would have enabled us to do more with additional vets in other areas.