

# StreetTAILS

Spring

2010

official newsletter of the feral cat coalition of oregon

## Story from the Streets

### **Tiny Vinny and His Feral Family Move**

About two years ago while walking my dog, I noticed tiny kittens dashing around in a neighbor's front yard, about three houses away. Upon my return home, I printed out several low-cost spay/neuter coupons and left them for my neighbor with a note. She called laughing and exclaimed, "Oh, they're not mine." She had been feeding a pregnant mom on her front porch who, of course, returned the favor with her litter a few weeks later.

By now she had approximately a dozen ferals in addition to the kittens coming and going. One young tom was actually sleeping inside the box with the kittens on the tiny front porch as it was early December and cold and wet. The neighbor was under a lot of pressure to be rid of the problem, both from her husband and other neighbors, and their proposed solutions didn't end well for the cats. Ultimately, she agreed to continue feeding everyone until I could trap them all and get them to an FCCO clinic. Over the next few weeks we made the transition of moving their feeding station to my house and two and a half years later all is going well. People say nobody goes out and looks for ferals to take care of - I guess we're an exception.

Of all the cats, only one kitten, the tiny runt, appeared interested in human company. I brought him inside right away and fell in love. Shortly afterward I had an accident breaking three ribs, causing me to spend hours and hours in a prone

*Story continued page 2*

## IT'S KITTEN SEASON!

*by Kris Ellingsen, DVM*

I write this on the ides of March, having spent last Friday morning spaying cats at an FCCO clinic and seeing firsthand that the feral feline community is already doing what intact cats do in spring – reproduce. This time of year is called Kitten Season! Have you heard this term and wondered what it is or why it occurs every year? To explain, we need a brief cat biology lesson.



*Kitten Season has begun*

Many people are surprised to find that the feline reproductive system is seasonal. Female cats are designed to give birth only during warm months (spring through early fall) when the days are appropriately long: there must be 12-14 hours of light per day (photoperiod) to stimulate her body's natural hormones. Cats are referred to as polyestrous, which means that they will go into heat cycles (estrus) periodically during their fertile years.

These heat cycles may start as early as the fourth or fifth month of a kitten's life, and will continue until she is either bred or spayed. A cat's estrus cycle will last approximately seven days, and sometimes longer, and repeat every two to three weeks unless she mates. A female may mate with multiple toms during estrus, and later give birth to kittens from each of those toms. It takes approximately 63 days after mating for a female to give birth to kittens, and she can go back into heat almost immediately. Thus, Kitten Season continues throughout the summer and into early fall.

As you can imagine, female feral cats are naturally exposed to the

**Kitten Season** *continued page 2*

## 15th Anniversary Celebration



Join us all year as we celebrate 15 years of FCCO, our volunteers, feral cat caregivers, and most importantly, the cats!

In June we'll have a celebration with details to come later (and posted on our website). In the meantime, our 15th Anniversary edition tee shirts are now available for purchase at clinics and on our website. See page 3 for details.

Thank you FCCO volunteers and supporters for all you do for our organization and the feral and stray cats who need us.



## President's Corner *by Kris Ellingsen, DVM*

### Hooray for Our Volunteers!



*Dr. Kris Ellingsen*

It was really great to see and meet some of FCCO's many amazing volunteers at the Volunteer Recognition event at the Portland facility in February. Thank you especially those of you who made the longer drive from our outreach cities of Salem and Longview to attend!

Each of us has our story: what brought us to FCCO, what we do for FCCO, and why we do what we do. I enjoyed sharing stories with a few of you and finding the glue that binds us all - caring deeply for the cats that no one wants. Perhaps we feel blessed that we share our lives and homes with these incredibly mysterious creatures, and wish to do what we can for those cats who aren't so lucky. I believe we also enjoy the company of like-minded individuals (I'm not

as crazy a cat lady as I thought I was!) who marvel at what we can accomplish together. From a small group of veterinarians 15 years ago to the 700-strong FCCO volunteers in Oregon and SW Washington, we are making a difference.

Big thanks go to our Volunteer Coordinator, Kat Cottrell, for organizing the event, and to Judy and Helen Dancer for providing the delicious edibles for all of us to enjoy. And special thanks to FCCO board member Dr. Jacqui Neilson for her educational talk on feline behavior and litter box issues. This is a topic many of us in multiple cat households can relate to. Who knew litterbox stories could be so entertaining?! I hope those who attended took home some useful information.

Thanks to all of you who stopped by to celebrate our volunteers! Every one of us does our part to make FCCO what it is and does for feral and stray cats.

## Story *continued from page 1*

position on the couch. Tiny Vinny slept under my chin purring for hours each day as I mended - my little feral angel.

Well into their third year, the colony has become very territorial here and for the most part do not allow any new cats to move in. My neighbor and I are most grateful to FCCO. I'm enjoying the ferals now and I know my neighbor is relieved, not to mention how much better the ferals' quality of life is.

Thank you, FCCO, from all of us.

*- B. Maxwell, Clackamas*



*Tiny Vinny, with an ear tip, eating inside now.*

## Beat the Heat!

For our February "Beat the Heat" special we spayed/neutered 362 cats. To help these cats, \$3,388 was raised from our last newsletter appeal. Thanks to everyone who participated!

## Kitten Season *continued from page 1*

appropriate photoperiod in springtime to start heat cycles. With tomcats around, it is inevitable that they will be mated and become pregnant in early spring, and likely one or two more times throughout the season. These tomcats can be feral, or simply unaltered pet cats that are allowed outdoors.

While we all adore those cute furry bundles, when they are born feral they contribute to the spectacular overpopulation of cats. Shelters and rescue operations dread Kitten Season because of the huge increase in intake and the added challenges of adopting adult cats - including last year's

kittens. If for no other reason, this alone is ample justification for the spaying and neutering of pet and feral cats.

Help avoid an overwhelming Kitten Season by encouraging your family members, coworkers and neighbors to have their pet cats or the ferals they feed spayed and neutered, now before there are kittens. If someone you know has a litter of kittens they are looking to place, help get the kittens spayed/neutered before they go to a new home, and help get the mom cat spayed. No effort is too small. A spay in time saves...lives!

## WISH LIST

Donations to our Wish List offset our need to purchase products, which means more funds for the cats. Contact us at 503-797-2606 or [info@feralcats.com](mailto:info@feralcats.com), or bring items to a clinic in your area if you can help with any of these items.

Whenever possible, we prefer to use "green," earth-friendly products.

- 1-inch masking tape
- 6-foot plastic folding table
- 8-foot plastic folding tables (2)
- AA batteries
- Duct tape
- Heavy-duty, 33-gal. garbage bags
- Office supply store gift card
- Paper towels (rolls)
- Postage stamps



# FCCO Events and Opportunities

## 2010 LPGA Safeway Classic "TICKETS Fore CHARITY"

August 16th - 22nd  
Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club

Love golf? 100% of the money from each weekly tournament ticket purchased from FCCO goes directly to FCCO. Weekly tournament tickets are good for admission all days. For more information and tickets, visit [feralcats.com/tickets\\_fore\\_charity.html](http://feralcats.com/tickets_fore_charity.html).

Come by and check out the FCCO booth at the following events:

**Northwest Pet and Companion Fair**  
April 17th & 18th  
Portland Expo Center  
[www.petfairs.com](http://www.petfairs.com)

**Pride Northwest**  
June 19th & 20th  
Tom McCall Waterfront Park  
[www.pridenw.org](http://www.pridenw.org)



Looking for a different way to support FCCO? Help keep our office supply costs down just by shopping.

**MaxPerks at OfficeMax and Worklife Rewards at Office Depot**  
When you shop for office supplies and are asked for your "rewards number," use the FCCO main telephone number, **503-797-2606**, and pass the credit on to the cats! FCCO can get up to 10% back when you buy ink, toner, paper and so much more. It adds up!

# Click Your Heels to the Furball



Dorothy is on the Yellow Brick Road to **The 12th Annual Furball** and is almost at the Emerald City! Join her - and us - at the World Forestry Center on May 1st at 6pm for the *Wizard of Pawz*.

Among the exciting auction items this year are a trip to the Land of Oz (Australia), a trip to the Emerald City (Seattle),

and an electric bike perfect for you and your little Toto. Details about the event, our wonderful auction items, as well as how to purchase tickets, can be found on our website at [feralcats.com/furball.html](http://feralcats.com/furball.html). Dress as your favorite character or in glam 1930's Hollywood movie premiere attire.

If you can't attend, but still want to be a part of this important event, we have an opportunity to double your donation. A wonderful supporter, who will come out from behind the curtain at the Furball, has generously offered a **dollar for dollar match up to \$25,000** in support of the Furball! Be sure to check the box on the enclosed envelope to make FCCO's largest fundraiser the most successful yet. Every dollar not only counts - but is doubled! As a supporter of FCCO, we know you have the courage, brains and heart to be part of the *Wizard of Pawz*.

## 15th Anniversary Tee Shirts

$$\text{Cat Logo} + \sum_{n=1}^{10} 4(4)^{n-1} = 1 + 4 \left[ \frac{1-4^{10}}{1-4} \right] = 1,398,101$$



Intrigue everyone around you when you wear the FCCO tee shirt, updated to celebrate our 15th Anniversary! On the front of the blue shirts is the above equation. On the back is our 15th Anniversary logo and the "answer" (below).

Shirts are \$15 at clinics or on our website at [feralcats.com/merchandise.html](http://feralcats.com/merchandise.html) (add \$3 s/h).

**What happens when cats multiply.** Calculation is based on one unaltered cat and all offspring having a litter of 4 each over a 10 year period.

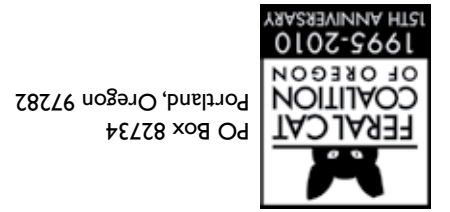
## Vehicle Donations Speeding Along

Recently a donor signed over a vehicle from the ultimate feline car company - Jaguar. Whether or not you can "unleash a Jaguar" yourself, remember that donating a vehicle is easy. In 2009 over 109 cats were helped because of vehicle gifts. Read more details at [feralcats.com/vehicle.html](http://feralcats.com/vehicle.html).



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## TNR Clinic & Event Schedule

April 1, 2, 8, 9, 16, 18, 22, 23, 30 - Portland: 503-797-2606  
April 25 - Longview: 360-673-7300

May 6, 7, 14, 20, 21, 23, 28 - Portland: 503-797-2606  
May 16 - Corvallis: 541-754-8381

June 3, 4, 11, 13, 17, 18, 24, 25 - Portland: 503-797-2606  
June 6 - Salem: 503-585-1522

July 8, 9, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, 29, 30 - Portland: 503-797-2606  
July 11 - Coquille: 541-396-4439

*Get Your Furball Tickets!* The 12th Annual Furball is May 1, 2010 at the World Forestry Center in Portland. Join us for this year's "Wizard of Pawz" event! See page 3 for more information and visit our website to order your tickets today!

**General Message Line: 503-797-2606**

[www.feralcats.com](http://www.feralcats.com)

To help save resources and have the newsletter delivered to your email inbox, plus receive our monthly *WebTails* with current events, send an email to [djahn@feralcats.com](mailto:djahn@feralcats.com).

## Coalition Contacts

### Board Officers

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**Moving?** *Remember to send us your new address when you move!*