



# ANIMAL TALK

Summer 2008

P.O. Box 14956, Portland, OR 97293

## Where the Wild Things Are: The Story of a Feral Family



From the top: Pasha, Trixie, Poppy, Mimzy, and Johnny.

We all know about the plight of feral cats—the cats who won't let humans come near them or touch them. They don't live very long. They have hard lives. Most of them live in a constant state of fear. Most of them are feral because a human abandoned them or their parents.

But sometimes, a human comes along who decides to have a relationship with them on their terms. Sometimes, they meet someone like Laurie and David Stubbs, who have been caring for a

nine-cat feral tribe for over 15 years. Here's their story, as told by Laurie:

Every feral colony has a back story, and this one is sort of interesting. Heroic, even. Back in about 1991-92, we noticed four kittens starting to peek out of the neighbor's wood pile. We guessed they were about 4-6 weeks old at that point, still round and awkward. There was the father cat, Poppy, two mother cats, Mommy and Auntie Em, and another female who was hit by a car before we could name her. Mommy had three kittens, and Auntie Em had one. Knowing they had no food source, we began feeding them immediately. Em, in an attempt to be a good mother, gave it her all, but it was too late. She was grossly undernourished, sickly, and blind as she kept nursing her one kitten. We caught her and took her



to the vet, but she could not be saved. She also could not survive as a blind feral. She had literally been giving her life so her kitten (Trixie) could survive. It broke our

hearts, and she became our heroine. Miraculously, Mommy took in her orphaned nephew right away and was able to maintain all of the kittens and

herself because we fed her lots of good food and cream.

At first, Poppy and Mommy were true ferals—they never allowed us to get near them. But



Mommy finally allowed human contact, and was eventually adopted by our neighbor, who dotes on her.

Poppy, however, is an adamant people hater despite being given three squares a day for almost 15 years, plus warmed cream every evening on our front porch.

As the kittens grew, another three strays followed their noses to our feeding dishes in the backyard and then settled in as permanent residents. We called them Gracie, Buffy, and Festus. We got all nine of our brood spayed and neutered, thanks to the wonderful people at the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon. (And we believe the real heroes of this

story are the FCCO volunteers who hold the monthly clinics that spay and neuter feral cats.) Eventually, we were able to convince the three new ones to come inside (they probably were never really ferals, unlike Poppy and his brood), where they have become our warm, loving friends. It will be hard to lure in Poppy (age 16 or 17) or his children (age 15) because they've been ferals for so long. But we're going to try to bring some of them in. They've been a joy over the years and deserve to have a nice warm retirement in their twilight years.

Poppy is ragged and horribly dirty, but we can't catch him to help him look any better. One day one of my neighbors came over and gave me a piece of her mind about him and what a terrible pet owner I was. I told her his story, but I'm not sure she was convinced.

Sadly, the only time we've been able to touch Poppy was when he was knocked out under anesthesia so the vet could work on him. He has no idea what he's missing by avoiding us so vehemently.

Despite being hissed at, clawed, bitten, developing cat scratch fever (twice), and generally being unappreciated by these lovelies, we love 'em.

### 10 SIGNS YOUR CAT IS PLOTTING WORLD DOMINATION

1. Used to sleep on top of TV, now monitors CNN 24 hours a day.
2. Notably absent from home during surprise feline invasion of Poland.
3. When you enter the room, Snowball and the other members of the Tri-Cateral Commission stop talking and begin playing with yarn.
4. What you thought was "heat" is actually a four-legged goose step.
5. Well, \*somebody\* subscribed to [alt.cats.world.domination](http://alt.cats.world.domination).
6. Autopsy of the last mouse left on your doormat reveals "tattoo" to be blueprint of the UN Building.
7. Kitty chow on the floor spells out, "Drop the car keys and leave the door open or the dog gets it in the head."
8. Then: dead mice in the kitchen. Now: dead third-world dictators in the basement.
9. Now sleeping only 21 hours a day, down from 23.
10. Somehow, you're now subscribing to "Feline of Fortune" magazine.





*Blanche*

## Canine Corner

*"You don't throw a whole life away just because it's banged up a little."* (from the movie Seabiscuit)

This is Blanche, a wonderful little 7-week-old girl who has been graced by a lot of angels.

Her story began on April 8 when a Good Samaritan found Blanche lost and alone, wandering down 82nd Avenue with a badly injured leg. The person picked her up and found her to be a sweet, friendly, exhausted, and miserable little puppy. Her rescuer took her to Dove Lewis. After treating her, Dove Lewis transferred her to the Multnomah County shelter, who called us to see if we could help because they don't have the resources to care for a dog who needs urgent care.

Because of your support we were able to help Blanche. We got her out of the county shelter and took her to North Portland Veterinary Hospital. She broke hearts everywhere she went -- she was loving and happy in spite of the pain she must have felt.

I never saw the injury (Dove Lewis had wrapped it up well) but Dr. Shanks and the staff at North Portland were visibly shaken by the amount of damage her leg had suffered. The leg could not be saved, so they did an amputation.

In just a few days, she was running around and showing all the staff her new strut. We soon took her to a volunteer's home so she could heal completely.

One day Blanche was at a Feral Cat Coalition clinic enjoying the attention of the volunteers. One of the vets, Dr. Sulis, generously invited us down to her new practice for x-rays for Blanche, because it appeared that Blanche's back legs might need some correction to develop properly. (We're not sure if it's related to the injury, but she looks a bit like she's been riding a horse.)

The x-rays were inconclusive, and our next step is physical therapy. We're very hopeful that this is correctable, since she is still so young and has a lot of developing to do. Meanwhile, she continues to win hearts with her lively spirit, her courage, and her big-dog attitude!

Thanks to all your support, this little girl is looking forward to a wonderful new life.

*-- Ronnie Balog-Ressler,  
Dog Coordinator*



## SPAY AND NEUTER COUPONS

We have coupons for spaying and neutering cats and dogs. These coupons make this procedure very affordable. Several good, full-service vets participate in this program. Call us at 503-284-8768 for more information.



# Alumni & Success



## FELIX

“We are really enjoying Felix. He is such a great cat! Nothing seems to bother him. He is so calm and patient! I should take some lessons from him :) He seems to be happy and has adjusted well. Felix and Jasmyne (our dog) get along well. However, Jasmyne is really jealous and insists on getting love if Felix is getting love too. Who knew animals could express such emotions? Felix does sleep with Laura. That completely warms my heart! We are really enjoying having a cat in the family again.”



## BLUE

Blue was caught in a very dysfunctional household, where dad had a cat and mom had Blue. When dad got mad at mom, Blue got kicked out the door and dad’s cat stayed in. Finally a neighbor talked mom into letting go of Blue. He came to us and here’s the rest of his story, from his new “dad”:



“Just wanted to drop a quick note and let you know that Blue is doing absolutely wonderful. He was shy at first, but as you can see from the picture, has made himself quite at home. He’s been renamed Bubbles because he is so affectionate and bubbly. He’s also quite playful, attacking his scratching post with all four legs and batting at anything that moves. If I’m not paying enough attention to him, he’ll meow or get up on his hind legs and “tap” me gently with one paw. Thank you, Animal Rescue!”

*“I can see why they say owning a cat reduces stress and improves the health of humans.”*

## HARRY & ALLEN

“I adopted these brothers nearly 14 years ago from Animal Rescue. They’ve been wonderful pets. Sadly, Harry (on the right) died last year. He had lots of medical issues, including injection-site fibrosarcoma. He had surgery and radiation and it didn’t recur for over five years. Allen is adjusting to being alone, and he’s the light of my life.”



# Success Stories



## MARIS & MERCEDES

“We adopted Maris and Mercedes (previously Iris and Annie) 3 1/2 years ago at age 9 months. They have grown into beautiful girls. Maris is the cat and Mercedes thinks she is a dog—she chases her tail and talks constantly. I had adopted another ARCF cat about 16 years ago so when she died 4 years ago I came looking for the cure to my broken heart. M & M have certainly filled the empty spot. Coincidentally, my neighbor had adopted 2 cats, Penny and Annie, from ARCF also. I cat-sit them all the time, in fact they are at my house right now while their mom is in Hawaii. I’m like the kitty spa and get-away. We have a great time with the four girls. I thank you for all your work.”



## BELLA

“Bella came to live with me in September 2006, after I had lost my beloved cat Sushi of 15 years. When she first came to live with me, she was a little aloof

and distrustful, but eventually she warmed up to me. But she disappeared to the bedroom when my piano students came for lessons.

After introducing Feliway (a pheromone diffuser) and making some adjustments (designating my bedroom as her domain), she began to warm up to my students, often finding a cozy lap of a waiting parent.

Bella has the softest fur ever, and she loves to sit in my lap when I chant my Buddhist prayers, talk on the phone, read a book, or watch a mystery on television. Thank you Animal Rescue for Bella!”

## CHACHI (loves) JOANIE

“We adopted Chachi and Joanie when they were almost a year old. Their foster mom had taught them to mind their manners but they

were a little untrusting of people. They adapted to their new home as a team, and spent lots of time playing together, but they have grown into very different individuals. Chachi



likes to be up high and chase toys flying through the air. Joanie likes to parade around and beg for attention. They

both enjoy being stroked and talked to and will curl up in our laps. I can see why they say owning a cat (or being owned by a cat) reduces stress and improves the health of humans.”

## “What should I do about this stray who just showed up?”

That’s a call we get every day, and usually multiple times a day. Here’s our advice:

First, unless the cat is obviously injured, starving, or pregnant, give it a few days. It may be someone’s pet who’s just passing through. If after three days the cat is still there and looks hungry, offer it some food. This will keep the cat there until you decide what to do next.

If the cat is approachable and friendly and has no collar or tag, you should check to see if it has a microchip. Any vet office or shelter can scan the cat quickly at no charge. If there is a chip, the cat is on its way to being reunited with its family.

If the cat is not approachable, you’ll need to trap it in a humane trap so it can be scanned and examined. We have traps to lend, and we can show you how to use them.



Note that just because a cat looks thin and unkempt doesn’t mean it’s been neglected or unloved. Cats can end up miles away from home by climbing into a car unseen, or being stolen and dumped by a disgruntled neighbor. The family may be desperately searching for their cat near their home, not realizing that Kitty is miles away.

If there’s no chip or ID, post “found cat” ads and search the “lost cat” listings. Here’s a list of the resources we use and recommend.

- *Multnomah County Animal Services Lost & Found*
- *Oregon Humane Society Lost & Found*
- *Dove Lewis Emergency Animal Hospital Lost & Found*
- *Portland Craigslist “lost and found” website*
- *Cats in the Bag website*
- *Oregonian newspaper and website*

Also, ask your neighbors, and look for signs and flyers, especially at pet supply stores and vet clinics. *(continued on next page)*



## In Memoriam

Christine and John Evans lost their Anastasia to FIP. She was a lovely cat and only 11 months old.

Lorraine Tobeck lost her dear friend Mickey.

Evyn, Kiefer, and Mandy lost their sweet Zeb to cancer.

Patty lost her sweet Lori.

Mary Davis’s rabbit BunBun will be sorely missed.

Terry Jo Bradshaw will miss her beautiful Cosette.

Lorraine Jones lost Ellen and Hilary, two delightful kitties who were kind and true.

Ronnie and Robyne lost their good friends Cotton and Rocky.

Denise put her sweet dog, Edgar, to rest.

Karen Bergen lost her beloved Mr. Tux, who was 10 years old.

Mary Sewall said goodbye to her sweet Sammy.

Ideally, you can foster the cat while searching for its owner, which may take a few weeks. We hope the cat will be claimed during that time, but if not, it's time to start looking for a new home. Because we're such a small organization, we rarely have an opening at our volunteer foster homes, but if you can foster the cat, we'll be glad to offer advice and support for finding it a new, loving, permanent home.

## MICROCHIP Fund Drive

*Why microchip?* The short answer is: People aren't perfect. As well-meaning as we are, we make mistakes. We leave a door, a window, or a gate open, and suddenly Frisky Toodles finds herself lost in the big, big world. With a microchip, her chances of being reunited with her family are vastly improved.

We currently do not have the resources to microchip the pets that we adopt out, because it is expensive (\$25-60 per chip). But this is a vital service that we should provide to the animals and their adopters. To meet this need, we decided to create a separate fund that will pay only for microchipping. This is where you come in: any donation that you earmark as "for microchipping" will be put in that fund and will pay directly for microchips. On the back page of this newsletter you can see the box to check on our donation form. You can donate any amount.

Microchipping saves lives and ends heartache. We think this is an important program and urge you to participate.

## Best Cat Toy Ever!

**HEXBUG™**  
**Micro Robotic  
Creature**  
**RadioShack**  
**\$9.99**



I just have to tell you about the BEST cat toy ever! I just bought one and put it down in front of one of my cats, and within five minutes all seven of my cats had collected around it. It was amazing! It's singularly the most attention any of my cats have ever paid to any toy.  
(Donna Metz)



From the Radio Shack website:

THE HEXBUG can roam on its own thanks to the bump sensor feelers that help it avoid obstacles. When it bumps into something, it changes direction. You can also clap or make noise to make it change direction.



## Donate using **PayPal**

ARCF now offers you the convenient option of donating with a credit card online through PayPal, a leading internet payment service established in 1998 (and known well by eBay users). You can access this option from our website: from our home page, click on "Donate" in the left column under "You Can Help." On that page, find the "PayPal Donate" button and click on it. You will be taken to PayPal's website, where you can fill out your credit card information or log into your PayPal account.

## ANIMAL PLACEMENT UPDATE

In **February, March, and April**, we placed **32 cats** and **8 dogs** in permanent, responsible, loving homes.

Our major expenses for those three months were:

Veterinary fees: **\$35,540.98**

*These expenses also include veterinary care for the pets of Portland's homeless.*

Food, meds, supplies: **\$300.32**

Advertising to find new homes: **\$46.83**

Newsletter *Animal Talk*: **\$907.78**

*This number increases as we increase our mailing list.*

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Email us at [arcf@pdx-petadoption.org](mailto:arcf@pdx-petadoption.org) or write us at P.O. Box 14956, Portland, OR 97293-0956.

## ANIMAL TALK

*Animal Talk* is a quarterly newsletter published by Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc.

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Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc., is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation funded solely by private donations. A board of directors makes decisions on policies and activities. All funds are used for veterinary care, food, advertising to find new adoptive homes, and publishing the quarterly newsletter, *Animal Talk*. Volunteers provide temporary homes for the animals until they are placed in permanent, responsible, loving homes.

Animal Rescue & Care Fund depends entirely on your donations to help the animals. Our work includes rescue, medical aid, food and shelter, humane education, neutering/spaying, and more. All workers are volunteers. Your contribution goes directly to help the animals. All contributions are tax-deductible.

- YES! I'd like to make a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the ARCF Microchipping Program, which will pay for all adopted animals to have microchips.**
- I enclose \_\_\_\_\_ for humane work. (\$35 sponsors an animal, but we appreciate any amount!)
- Check here to receive a photo and story about the animal.
- I'm interested in being a volunteer. Please call me at \_\_\_\_\_ or email me at \_\_\_\_\_.

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