



The *Adv*ocat

The Newsletter of Friends of Feral Felines

Fall 2009

FOFF GETS A NEW LOOK

With FoFF turning 15 years old last year, we've been working to update our look with an official logo. Since our earliest days, we've used the illustration that appears on this newsletter's masthead. The illustration was created by a local artist and one of our first volunteers, Annie Wadleigh (see sidebar for Annie's story).

This year, Annie collaborated with graphic artist and new volunteer, Judy Paolini (see Judy's sidebar below), to come up with a new, illustration and word mark to represent FoFF's identity.

In the coming months, look for our new look to appear throughout FoFF's communication materials and T-shirts, hats, and mugs!

Thank you, Judy and Annie, for sharing your creative talent!



FoFF's new logo, created by Judy Paolini and Annie Wadleigh.

ANNIE WADLEIGH

Drawing on her love for animals

In FoFF's earliest years, Annie Wadleigh, a Portland artist and poet with "an abiding love for animals," responded to FoFF's call for volunteers. She offered her creative talent to the organization and gave us a sketch of her cat Merwin, who she had found and rescued as a dirty, starving kitten on the steps of Portland's First Parish Church. The sketch depicted Merwin's feral mother carrying him through the city's streets.

FoFF's organizers fell in love with the illustration and have used it as a logo ever since. It appears in the masthead of this newsletter, and has become a very familiar and beloved image to FoFF supporters over the years.

To carry the spirit of Annie's original sketch into our new logo, Annie agreed to illustrate the kitties for it, collaborating with graphic artist Judy Paolini.

Thank you, Annie, for your enduring creative contribution to FoFF!

~~CAT~~ EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

Even feral cats have their day—and month! October is National Feral Cat Month, and October 16 is National Feral Cat Day.

Over the years, FoFF has used this time to advocate for non-lethal management of feral colonies and promote Trap-Neuter-Return. We've done such things as running PSAs in the media, organizing shelter building projects, and creating library displays.

Wednesday, October 7, North Star Music Café on Portland's Munjoy Hill will host a benefit show for FoFF. Stay tuned by email for details. If you're not on our email list, you can sign up on our website.

JUDY PAOLINI

Inspired by cats and gardens

Judy has been a professional designer in Portland for more than two decades, specializing in brand identity, packaging and marketing design, product design, and writing.

This year, she offered her time to FoFF as a volunteer, just as we had begun to think about designing a new logo. Her timing couldn't have been better, and neither could her work.

Judy also published a book last summer, *The Inspired Garden: 24 Artists Share Their Vision.*



RECOGNIZING OUR VETERINARIANS

Many thanks to the veterinarians who support FoFF with services that are so critical to our mission. Their willingness to take on the challenge of working with feral cats, and to make their services more financially manageable for a small nonprofit is something we can't thank them enough for. If one of these is your veterinarian, we hope you'll join us in showing your appreciation.

- Biddeford Animal Hospital
- Brackett Street Veterinary Clinic (Portland)
- Edgewood Animal Hospital (Gorham)
- Freeport Veterinary Hospital
- Gray-New Gloucester Animal Hospital
- Hollis Animal Clinic
- Kittery Animal Hospital
- Limerick Mills Animal Hospital
- Mann Memorial Veterinary Clinic (Arundel)
- Peaks Island Veterinary Service
- Poland Animal Hospital
- Sacopee Veterinary Clinic (Cornish)
- South Portland Veterinary Hospital
- Southern Maine Veterinary Clinic (Lyman)
- Stoneledge Animal Hospital (Westbrook)
- Tender Touch Veterinary Hospital (Scarborough)
- Westbrook Animal Clinic

RECOGNIZING THE LESNESKIS—TWO DEVOTED FEEDERS

By Lois Thompson, Feeding Coordinator

I'd like to recognize two long-time feeders, Jean and Paul Lesneski, who have faithfully watched out for and fed our waterfront cats for more than 10 years.

They are taking a well-earned break but have offered to stay on as backups. We always need those!

Jean and Paul originally signed up to volunteer from a table at Pet Quarters

in Scarborough (our tabling events always bring in great new volunteers). They remember some of our early waterfront cats like Teeny, Penny, and Grandmother, cats who have unique places in FoFF's institutional history.

They even adopted a waterfront kitty, "Charlie," who was about three months old when they trapped and fostered him. The plan, as ever, was to tame him and adopt him out, but he never

totally overcame his shyness, and he is now in his eleventh year reigning at the Lesneski home.

Jean and Paul have been reliable friends to FoFF, and we'll never let them go entirely.

Thank you, Jean and Paul!

If you're interested in being a feeder, please contact our office.

REMEMBRANCES

♥ Leaving me catless for the first time in 35 years, my frail, blind, 21-year-old **Clarissa Marie** died in my arms at home July 24. This little stray was a "social worker" in a long-haired tuxedo cat suit and my pet since Christmas 1993. She is buried in my garden, with the ashes of her cat friend Sweetness. Her legacy is contributions to benefit FoFF's and Lancaster Humane Society's efforts, and that warm spot in my heart.
—Rita Lane

♥ A donation in memory of **Seldon W. Richardson**. —Hilda M. Richardson

♥ A donation in memory of **Abby** at Free Range. —Lois & Tris Thompson

♥ A donation in memory of my father, **Sherwood Snow**. —Donna L. Snow

♥ A donation in memory of **Miss Olivia**. —Shirley A. & Albert Chaffee

♥ A donation in memory of **Abby**. —Free Range Fish & Lobster Co.

♥ A donation in memory of **Zeke**. —Sharon Bell

♥ A donation in memory of **Cassidy**. —Kathleen Meehan & Martin Schindler

♥ A donation in memory of **Sue FitzGerald**. —Shirley M. & Robert Edwards

♥ A donation in memory of **Griffin**. —Evelyn S. Newlyn

♥ A donation in memory of **Casco**. —Suan E. Leach

♥ Donations in lieu of wedding gifts requested by **Terry Girouard & Len Jordan**. —Budd's Gulf, Cumberland
—J. Wesley Jr. & Jean Wright

—Suezan I. Moore
—Robert Lightfoot

♥ A donation is in lieu of birthday gifts requested by **Madelin Chapman**. —George H. & Anik Domb

♥ Remembering **Murphy**, a large and loving white cat, plucked from a feral colony. He was found to have a terminal illness, and FoFF volunteers provided loving hospice care to ease his final days.

♥ Remembering **Dinah**, my Alice-in-Wonderland cat (see tribute on insert). —Jill Cournoyer

FACING THE END WITH A FERAL CAT

By Jill Cournoyer

In the 1990s, I was trapping in Saco, and I worked with a woman who was also my catsitter. Returning from vacation, I found a new cat among my rescued ferals. The sitter told me she'd trapped the cat and left her at my place, assuming I'd take care of her. I had little choice, then, but to take in Dinah the Cat (from *Alice in Wonderland*).

FoFF didn't yet have a barn cat program, so when we took in adult ferals, we took them forever! Dinah was one of my most feral cats, staying out of sight until feeding time, and then shrinking from my hand. So she shocked me once, after I'd had her for several years, by demonstrating an attachment to my home.

I lived in a third-floor apartment with a porch. I'd rigged up chicken wire once to contain the cats, but my landlord made me take it down, so I took my chances letting the cats enjoy sun and fresh air on the open porch.

One day, Dinah was gone. I searched for her, alerted neighbors, and left food in the driveway, hoping she'd return. Given how feral she was, though, I felt she had chosen complete freedom.

Weeks later, I heard a strange meow and scratching sounds around the porch. I looked with astonishment to find Dinah frantically clawing her way up the posts between the first- and second-floor porches. She had—after all—chosen life in a home. As she grew fatter over the years, I always joked that she returned home only to ensure that she never missed a meal.

Last spring she became leaner. Then her white fur became dirty and spiky—she'd stopped grooming.

I faced a dilemma common to feral cat owners when their cat gets ill: If the illness is treatable, how can I get her to the vet and medicate her? How much stress is fair to put her through to prolong her life? Should I stress her by trapping and taking her to the vet for euthanasia, or should I let her die at home? How can I know how much pain she's in, since ferals hide illness so as not to arouse predators?

I'd been down this road before and knew that each situation is different.

Koko, one of my most feral cats, suddenly became acutely ill with kidney failure. Fortunately for us both, he became so weak I could get him in a carrier, and he was gently euthanized at the vet's. Buttercup, though, wouldn't meet such a gentle end. He also had kidney failure and was very uncomfortable. I had to get him to the vet, but he frantically resisted. (FoFF didn't yet have drop traps, which have been a godsend for catching reluctant cats less stressfully. I might have gotten a sedative from the vet, but I was sure I could quickly round him up.) Terrified, Buttercup raced around avoiding capture for an hour until he panted miserably. By the time I got him to the vet, we were both traumatized, and I felt terrible that his last hour of life had been horrendous. I vowed never to do that again.

This framed my thoughts as I watched Dinah, knowing she was dying. She spent her summer days on a deck chair, occasionally coming in. I'd approach her to see if she'd grown docile enough to let me touch her. But, sensing my approach, she'd jump off and jog away. I decided to honor her independence and let her die a natural death. She soon stayed on the deck, even though I left the door open. She snoozed in her deck chair and ate less every day.

One day, she was gone. I searched and never found her. I knew she'd gone off to die.

Here's to Dinah, plucked from the street and left in my apartment when I was on vacation. She was never seen by my cat sitters, she never wanted human touch, yet she was so attached to her home that, when she had her freedom, she clawed her way up a porch banister to return.

Truly, an Alice-in-Wonderland cat.



Dinah, at home, on her deck.

RECENT ADOPTIONS

We wish all these kitties a very happy life in their new homes, and we thank their adoptive families for providing safe shelter and loving forever homes.

- Misty and Fluff Ball
- Spooky and Oliver
- Sedrick
- Louie
- Oscar
- Tess
- Venus, Bella, Portia, and D'Artagnan
- Paws, Midnight, and Money
- Ebony
- Willow
- Lilly Moon and Luna
- Mickey and Cleo
- Peppy
- Dusty
- Mystery

FOFF CALENDAR

To stay up-to-date with meetings and fundraising events, see our complete and ever-changing calendar on our website.

<http://www.feralfelines.net/fundraisers.htm>

RESCUE ROUNDUP

By Jill Cournoyer, Trapping Coordinator

KITTENS GALORE!

We rescued many feral kittens through the summer, so now's the time, if you know someone who's been thinking of a young addition! We especially need adopters who would take a pair where one is outgoing and friendly and the sibling is still timid and shy.

Meet them on our website!

BARN, FINALLY!

After a long drought of barn adopters, we finally relocated a number of feral cats. We were delighted to receive requests from Greene, Readfield, Pownal, Leeds, Saco, Newry, and other towns over the summer months.

But...then we had trouble trapping the cats we'd wanted to relocate, and some turned out to be too friendly to be barn cats. Slowly, though, we're getting enough good matches to fill barn owners' requests. Among them is Mystery, a black cat brought to us from Old Orchard Beach last fall; now he's finally made it to a barn! Hooray!

BARN CAT PARTICULARS

Some adopters ask if they can come and pick out their barn cat. We generally don't have barn cats that are easily viewable for selection, because we don't have enough space for holding feral cats. We need to wait until we have a barn before we trap them. In some cases, we trap, neuter, and return a whole colony more than a year before we have a barn for them.

We like to deliver cats to their barns so we can properly set up the acclimation kennel they must stay in for at least a week or so, and to make sure any transition enclosure they'll use instead is secure. In one case, the cats were given a cozy milking shed with nice, large, screened windows—an ideal spot, ex-

cept we noticed that the door had a gap of about six inches at the top—wide enough for two scared ferals to escape. The gap was plugged, but if we had not been there to look for such details, the cats might have been long gone.

COLONY RESCUES

Here's a sample of our rescue work over the last few months (a huge Paws Up to the those who feed ferals, take in kittens, sometimes make elaborate shelters and even homemade traps, take the time to get involved, and call us for help to do what's best!)

Westbrook: We began trapping again at a Halidon Road colony where we'd fixed nearly 20 cats and taken a number of kittens for placement a few years ago. Two kittens were trapped. Paws Up to Mr. Richer for catching the sweet little orange one (now adoptable) after learning how to work the drop trap! A long-haired white cat underwent a thorough dematting and shaving; her fur was so matted it was coming out in patches. Thanks to Rhonda, we set up a feeding station in the carport, now manned by FoFF volunteers, because the homeowner temporarily needs help. *Please call the office if you can help.*

Munjoy Hill, Portland: A backyard colony that we helped stabilize a year ago had grown again. This time, we trapped six kittens, two moms, and a male. The adults were returned after neutering. Their kind caretakers had set up a shelter using wood, tarps, and pillows. Pat Buckley is fostering two of the kittens, a smart, lap-loving orange guy, and a fluffy long-haired multicolor who is more standoffish. They are looking for a home together.

Parsonfield: A family is taming two kitten litters brought to their barn by mom cats. The moms, like many ferals, are former housecats who were dumped on a country road and turned feral.

Cornish: Paws Up to John Bruen and Emery Patten for helping a colony that has grown behind the Bay Haven restaurant for years. Kudos to Sharon of the restaurant for feeding the cats and alerting us. A neighbor, Alice, has also rescued and tamed the kittens for years. We trapped seven adults and relocated all but one. We also trapped three kittens, including a beautiful snowshoe Himalayan.

Old Orchard Beach: We're beginning to trap a group of twelve cats that need relocation.

Casco: This colony began with one abandoned cat. We've neutered two six-month-olds, and one of them, an all-black girl named Aria, has already become a love! We'll take in their mother, while their caretakers trap-neuter-return any others they can.

1ST ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY

FoFF's first annual volunteer appreciation party was held at Lois Thompson's house, and it was graced with gorgeous weather on July 21. FoFF's board members hosted about 20 volunteers who shared a pot luck lunch. Board member and party coordinator Lisa Flaim says, "The Board recognizes that our volunteers are FoFF's lifeblood. We can't do any of this without them, and we really wanted to do something fun to say thank you. We look forward to making this an annual tradition."

OUTREACH IN SANFORD

On August 10, Board member Lisa Flaim introduced kids in a summer day camp at Sanford Middle School to FoFF's work. We showed a short slideshow about the work that FoFF does and some of the cats we've helped over the years.

About a dozen 9 to 12 year olds attended. "This is a great way to spread the word and raise public awareness about what we do and why," says Lisa. "It's especially good to get young people thinking about animal welfare."

We look forward to doing more of these presentations in the community.

Let us know if your organization would like to host a speaker from FoFF!

FEATURED ADOPTABLES

DUDLEY THE EXTROVERT

By *Tianna Higgins, Dudley's foster mom*

With Dudley, you know right where you stand.

This handsome guy is extremely friendly and affectionate. When he greets you, he insists that you have a seat so he can bestow upon you the most glorious face rub; if that's not your style, he's just as happy with a good petting.

He *loves* to be close to his people: on your lap, desk, computer, or book...and he'll stay as long as he's welcome. He has to get in on any cuddling action, and he'll follow you around the house and loves to sleep under the covers.

While Dudley loves his attention, it must be on his own terms (he's a cat, right?). He does have boundaries (as we all do), and he's clear about them.

Please call the office if you'd like to adopt Dudley.

He'll give a warning bite when he's teased too roughly, and he'd rather not be picked up or nudged out of the way.

Dudley's adopters will need to understand that animals need personal space on their terms, just like people do. He should not live with small children.

He's a big guy with playful energy, so he'd like to live in a large apartment or a house. Although he never ventures far, he *can* be an escape artist, so exits should be secured for him.

When relaxing, Dudley is very fond of people-watching from a windowsill, and he'll clear away whatever he must to get himself a front-row seat.

If you want a close feline companion with some confidence, Dudley's the guy for you. He's a luscious lover boy, and his own man.



This outspoken communicator readily voices his opinion and professes his love.

KITTENS GALORE!

Fall kitten season has FoFF bouncing with little balls of fur. Meet them on our website.



Melvin, surveying his domain.

Call the office if you'd like to adopt Melvin.

MELVIN THE MARVEL

By *Beth Davis, Melvin's foster mom*

It's been a year since Melvin was diagnosed with a liver shunt, but he has a wonderful life for himself. His condition gives him extra energy that requires outdoor exercise. Under normal circumstances, he would be an indoor cat, but that's too sedentary for him. So he gets to explore the yard on a harness and lead. He watches squirrels, birds, and groundhogs and plays with free-roaming cats and the next-door puppy (his new toy).

He is doing well on a low-protein diet and medication to manage his congenital defect, which causes a blood

vessel to bypass the liver. The condition prevents the liver from cleaning and filtering blood properly, so toxins and ammonia can build up and cause physical and neurological problems. As long as he does well with dietary and medical treatment, surgical correction is not necessary, but it may be in the future. He needs to be carefully monitored, and his medication dosages need to be adjusted often.

He is very happy and full of life. He has a great sense of humor and adventure. I have enjoyed every minute having him as a guest in my house.

Melvin is available for adoption by a family who can give this sweet boy a little extra love and attention.

YOU CAN HELP FOFF IN ALL KINDS OF WAYS

DONATE AN ITEM ON OUR WISH LIST

- Blankets/towels/linens
- Cat beds & condos
- Dry kitten food
- Binoculars
- Heavy-plastic shower curtains (for trap covers)
- Video camera
- Interactive cat toys
- TV with VCR (to show videos at tabling and other events)
- GPS system for transporters
- Night camera (to observe cats being trapped and in their new barns)
- Digital camera with telephoto lens

OFFER YOUR BARN

We're always looking for barns or similar outbuildings that could use good mousers. If you have one or know of one, please let us know!

SHOP AT THE THRIFTY KITT

AT THE "FOFFICE"
WEEKDAYS, 10AM TO 2PM

You'll find cat goodies handmade by volunteers, FoFF-branded T-shirts, hats, and mugs, and many more products for cat lovers. Buy a gift for a cat or a human friend, or treat yourself!

You can also volunteer to make items for sale or attend the store.

Where 100% of your purchase supports FoFF's mission.

SHOP 'N' SEARCH AT IGIVE.COM

Have you ever wished you could do more to help FoFF—without spending more money or time? Well, you can—just by shopping at iGive.com, where you'll find everyday items, from office supplies to airline tickets.



Over 700 stores in the iGive network include Staples, Barnes & Noble, Lands' End, Best Buy, Victoria's Secret, and Pottery Barn.

A portion of each purchase automatically benefits FoFF.

iGive is a free service, and you'll never pay more when you shop there. In fact, you'll find coupons, free shipping, and sales that will help you save. Just create a free iGive account to get started at www.iGive.com/FoFF.

You can also browse the web through iSearchiGive.com, where every search means at least a penny for our cause! Try it at www.iSearchiGive.com/FoFF.

FOFF FANS AND TWEETS!

Find us on Facebook and Twitter and become our fan and follower! You'll get all the latest news and info about events, adoptables, and developments in an instant, and you can leave your comments, as well!

It's FUN! It's social PETworking!



Become a FoFF fan on Facebook!

<http://tinyurl.com/FoFFonFB>



Follow FoFF on Twitter!

<http://twitter.com/feralfelines>

Of course, you can still reach us the good old-fashioned way, too!



TIME FOR A NEW LICENSE PLATE!

Animal Welfare Specialty License Plates are available October 1! Purchase and renewal of the plate contributes \$10 to animal welfare in Maine, with \$5 going toward cruelty investigations and \$5 to the Help Fix ME low-cost spay/neuter fund!



Available wherever you register your car.

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