



CAT TALES

Summer 2014

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BECOMING A CARETAKER



In mid-winter of 2002, I started catching glimpses of a cat when I was outside feeding birds. The cat would quickly disappear from sight when he became aware of my presence. I put food out for the cat. He came here to eat for a few weeks or so and then didn't return. He must have left word for other cats as, not long after he disappeared, another cat showed up, and then another. The two newcomers visited regularly for several months and then they stopped coming. Others arrived.

In early summer of 2003, a calico cat showed up with her kittens. The kittens appeared to be a few months old. The Mom cat and her kittens visited each day and eventually decided to stay. Mom cat became pregnant and had another litter of kittens in the fall. She'd given birth to her kittens elsewhere and didn't bring them here until they were ready to start eating cat food.

Several other cats (feral and stray) showed up in late summer and stayed or visited regularly throughout the winter. I was wondering where all these cats were coming from! When Mom cat had another litter of kittens and started bringing them here to eat, the other cats moved on. The Mom cat had another litter in early fall. Something needed to be done to stop the breeding...

I had seen an ad for the Cat Action Team in the local newspaper in the past. I contacted my veterinary clinic to ask if they had a contact number for them and they did. It was a great relief to have help from this charity and the support from the members I had contact with. TNVR was started here in the winter of 2005. Several of the cats and kittens were spayed or neutered at our expense as well. The results: no kittens born (or have shown up) here in five years, most of the cats are now seniors, some of the cats disappeared and some have died. The occasional newcomer shows up for food, but none have stayed.

Vicky Smith





O'Leary 4-H Explorers "Enjoying" Making a Difference

L. to R.: Desiree Arsenault, Krista Adams, Mary Gallant, Olivia Batten

As the Overall Leader of the O'Leary 4-H Explorers, I, Mary Gallant, along with Jordan MacDonald as Junior Leader, started this new Club back in September 2013. To our shock, we had

25 young and enthusiastic children sign up to join. One of the components of the 4-H program is to complete a Community Project which could entail anything from volunteering in your community to helping another non profit organization etc. I, as a Cat Action Team member since 2005, have been greatly involved in fundraising, helping out on Neuter Days, and helping trap cats. I decided to put forward to the members, on one of our meeting nights, that it would be nice to support an animal group of some kind. To my surprise, one of the parents, knowing of the Cat Action Team, suggested that the Cat Action Team (CAT) could be supported. So, here the story begins :

The members were so excited to hear all about CAT and wanted to know how they could help these poor little kitties. They decided that they should try to raise money to donate towards the Trap Neuter Return program (TNR) for cats in our area. The members said "How about we do grocery bagging and donate that? I said "Great idea members"! One of the member's parent was so impressed that he, thought that we should have our own 4-H T-shirts to wear for the day. He had them made up and donated them to the Club. We were quite pleased with this. Yay! We booked our local Co-op store for December 23, 2013 and, despite the snow storm, some of us got in there to get the job done. We did great! \$371.50 was raised and given to CAT president, Krista Adams.

Then we got the word from a CAT member that we were able to help with three cats in our area. We received pictures of them; they are so cute. There are two little black, and one grey one. Seeing them, it really feels good to be able to help them. Maybe some day we could go visit them to see how they are getting along now that the weather is getting warmer. We do hope we have made a difference!

To wind up our story: We, as a 4-H group have learned to do by doing! Now we would like to put a challenge out there to other 4-H clubs, anywhere, to try to make that difference in an animal's life. Help support one of your local animal groups, or maybe even the Cat Action Team here on PEI

*Mary Gallant Overall Leader
Jordan MacDonald Junior Leader
O'Leary 4-H Explorers*



Catnip Mice Slaves

On February 4, 2013, I went to Charlottetown to pick up supplies to take over the catnip fund raising project for the Cat Action Team. You know how it all got started (*see CAT TALES, July 2011 on CAT web page*) with Francine Labbe doing this for over 12 years. I got to meet her for the first time on that cold winter day in February. What an amazing person she--is getting the catnip mice project started and keeping it running while working full time. She showed Marlyn Gallant

and me how to stuff and close with the tail on. She stills orders our catnip so we never run out.

I had been sewing some mice for a year or so: Ron Curtis would drop off some already-cut bodies to me, and I would sew ears and then sew the bodies together. Very simple: then he would pick up and deliver to Francine.

Well, I can assure you it was not that simple. I had bodies cut, and material to cut, yarn to crochet into ears and tail. Then the ears and tails had to match to material because the cats like ears to match the tails.

They had to be stuffed with good organic catnip, making sure we put the right amount into each mouse. Now the tails had to be sewn on and then bagged and tagged, the catnip mice were ready for sale.

At first I was very excited, but it soon wore off when I looked at the yarn--I don't care to crochet. So I had to get some help as this was going to take a lot of time. Called my good friend Norma Brown who, at that time, looked after her husband who had suffered a stroke a few years before. She would come in for coffee on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I showed her a crocheted mouse tail and asked "can you crochet?" From that moment on, she became a mouse slave.

Ron, bless his heart, came in and showed me, my husband Brian, and Anne MacPhee how the cutting was done. Brian started cutting and Norma was doing ears and tails. First bag she brought to me had over 1100 ears and tails all bagged individual and amounts indicating how many were in each bag....awesome.

I did the sewing and another lady, Sandra Arsenault, did sewing too but worked full time. It was a busy time trying to get 300 to 400 mice done each month. Brian and I would stuff and then I would sew tails then bag and tag till the amount was done for that month. Then Brian went to work and I was left again to sew, stuff and bag with no cutter. Again Norma stepped up and said she would stuff. So it was sew bodies, give to her to stuff, and deliver back to me, and so on.

We had quite the production going on and the mice took over our lives. We did this for most of the summer. Then Norma offered to try cutting -- lo and behold she was a natural at it!

Once we got the right material cutter she was off and cutting. I bet she cut and stuffed in her dreams.

You have to always be a month ahead so Paula Connolly can have mice to deliver from, Kensington to Souris--another amazing lady.

I will say that the Cat Action Teams is so lucky to have these two wonderful ladies. They go above and beyond.

In September, we had to start planning for Christmas time. We had to have at least 900 mice. This was our first big order, but it worked great because we were ready for it. We are very pleased with our first year as Slaves to the Catnip Mice. Now we are moving into our second year and we hope to increase our production by about

500 mice.

We have to sneak this into our regular amount and not press the mice slaves too hard. Special thanks to Norma Brown, Brian Williams, Marlyn Gallant, Sandra Arsenault, and Travis Gallant for putting tags in bags for me.

I do know I will miss names of people who still do some sewing for Francine

Francine sent 100 mice to her friend in Quebec (she has done that for several years). Another lady bought 30 mice to send to Fort MacMurray in Alberta.

We made about 3000 mice in 2013.

. *Kathleen Williams*

I was aware of the CAT for quite a while as, years ago, I had trapped some strays and had them neutered and looked after them.

About a year ago, Kathleen asked me over to her home and showed me what she was doing and asked me if I could crochet and gave me a bag of yarn.

Later, she asked me if I would stuff some heads,when I brought those back she gave me a bag of catnip and said “you may as well finish stuffing them” . That bag of mice went back and forth from her house to mine. That started me stuffing. Then I got into cutting and now sewing. When we have extra time we go gather quilt scraps,so I can have something to do in my spare time. Then we do our delivery from Summerside to O’Leary. The catnip mice have taken over my life, and I love doing it.

Norma Brown



WELCOME TO THE NEW PERTH ANIMAL HOSPITAL



After a busy winter of renovations, Dr. Claudia and Dr. David Lister have opened the doors to their brand new veterinary clinic, the New Perth Animal Hospital. David and Claudia met at the Ontario Veterinary College where they received their DVM degrees. They came to the Island shortly after graduation and started practice together in Dundas PEI. In the years since that very first clinic, they have raised a family of four and practiced in both Montague and Southport. Two daughters have followed in their parents' footsteps, graduating from the Atlantic Veterinary College and becoming veterinarians themselves.

Dr. Dave and Dr. Claudia are thrilled to be working together again and love the fact that their new clinic is just a few km from home. The clinic is an interesting blend of old and new, arising from an 1860's rural store but having been completely modernized. Dr. Claudia and Dr. Dave are fully equipped for small animal medicine, surgery, dentistry, radiology and house calls, and Dr. Dave will continue his large animal work as well. They look forward to seeing old friends and also welcome new patients. For details on their upcoming Open House, check out their website www.newperthanimalhospital.com

CAT TALES Editor

Cat Action Team

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WINTER: February Deadline for submissions: January 15

SUMMER: June Deadline for submissions: May 15

FALL: October Deadline for submissions: September 15

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