



Palm Beach Island Cats, Inc.

P.O. Box 173 • Palm Beach, FL 33480 • 561-512-4884

September 2011 Newsletter

*Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.
Saint Francis of Assisi*

IT'S NATIONAL FERAL CAT DAY, so what is PBIC doing to celebrate?

The day starts out like any other as volunteers approach traps they've been watching for an hour. The neighborhood cats are wary, but they shouldn't be. The volunteer comes to offer help, not to harm them. The long hair white male with bright blue eyes stares back, and the volunteer realizes he can't be more than a year old. He ceases his frantic efforts at escape at the approach and eyes the human warily. He's already shredded the newspaper lining the trap and turned over the can of tuna-flavored cat food used as bait, and it's only been four minutes since he was trapped. It will be at least eight hours before he is free from the cage, but that can't be helped.

Softly apologizing in what is hoped to be a calming tone, the volunteer quickly glances him over checking for problems that must be treated while he is under a general anesthesia. His long hair is matted and has even been torn out in the throat area. Several fleas are seen and his ears are infected from mites. Jotting the information down on a clipboard, the volunteer then places a towel over the top of the cage before loading him into the back of the truck. If luck holds, this scene will be repeated six times by sunrise -- and that's not counting the cats that will be picked up and released at day's end because their new ear crop signifies they have now undergone the neutering process, been vaccinated against rabies and medically treated for parasites.

By 4:00 am, the six traps are maxed out. The contents of the truck include a pure black male who appears to be deaf, a calico female who recently gave birth, two gray male shorthaired cats, a tiger striped female and the first one trapped already affectionately being called "Booger" due to a lack of creativity and the early hour.

The site for the spay/neuter clinic is wild as hundreds of cats have been brought here, trapped and distressed as they await their unknown fate. The volunteer signs in, and the clinic volunteer says thanks – actually says thanks – for making more work for the clinic! Animal rescuers know that what they are doing is truly a noble effort. Everyone should agree! Today, the clinic volunteer trades out the cats that were spayed and/or neutered to the volunteer who is bringing more cats for surgery. And these hard workers now volunteer for the "aftercare" until time for the cat to be released. And so, after the cats cages are tagged to assure a return to the colony location, the volunteer enters the hospital to find quite a spectacle. On duty are multiple veterinarians and a lot of volunteers.

The cats just retrieved are groggy and in foul moods as they awaken in their small cages. It's a necessary discomfort, but one that will end soon. A towel is thrown over their cages because trying to calm the felines seems only to infuriate them, and by now the volunteer is tired of listening to the yowling. But the day is far from over. The cats need to be observed until nightfall when they will be set free once more. This time, however, they won't be breeding and will be vaccinated against disease. They will be calmer, and maybe with a lot of luck, one day domesticated. It has been a good day, and one that will remain in the memory for a lifetime.

But the story doesn't end here . . .



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The volunteer will care for this colony of "wild" cats daily. They will be fed, a shelter will be built if allowed, and the animals will be observed without ever being touched or petted; the volunteers have done their best to educate the neighbors. Caring for the feral cats is a massive responsibility for these people. However, the volunteers all say it is well worth it - for they've each been responsible in saving these animals lives. Additionally, they have made sure the neighborhoods are disease-free and more homeless cats are not born.

Through the day Booger stays in his cage and glances up staring into the volunteer's eyes. The volunteer almost feels like he is saying thank you, although he's somewhat certain the cat will never forget the horrors of the day. The urge to reach out and pet the thick hair is repressed knowing that to do so would most certainly result in a trip to the hospital for the volunteer. True feral cats do not understand the human touch and will certainly fight what they see as a threat. Then finally, without so much as a glance back, Booger lunges from the trap and disappears behind a nearby hedge. The volunteer sighs and waves goodbye because it's all that is allowed. Nevertheless, a warm glow spreads over the volunteer because he knows that today was one of the more successful ones.

This article was written by Stacy Mantle, a freelance writer, who currently resides in the southwestern deserts of Arizona with a number of cats, a coyote/wolf hybrid, and a very understanding husband. It has been edited for size for this newsletter. It was originally written as a feature story highlighting the meaning of National Feral Cat Day and what it's like for the many volunteers.

*PBIC is publishing the article (in part) to bring attention to what the job is for the many wonderful volunteers managing the feral cat population. What the article did not say is that this work is repeated 365 days a year across the nation, and it's no different here in Palm Beach. Every effort is made to stabilize the feral cat population by preventing future generations of homeless cats, vaccinating the cats against disease and providing medical care for the sick or injured cats. Nutritious food bolsters the cat's natural immune system to help them fight disease and maintain good health to hunt the mice and rats ever present on the Island. Many residents mistakenly complain about the cats being fed saying the cats are fat and lazy au contraire ... felines **never** lose their instinct to hunt!!*

National Feral Cat Day is celebrated annually on October 16. PBIC is observing the day with a party at Nick and Johnnies beginning at 6 p.m. Free food, cash bar, lots of fun along with a raffle drawing. Everyone is invited, so please join us and your animal-friendly neighbors.

National Feral Cat Day

Compassion for Cats: Coast to Coast

This October 16, Make a Difference in the Lives of Cats





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SAVE THE DATE DECEMBER 7, 2011

Everyone is invited to attend the

Furry Friends Health Symposium at The Beach Club

755 N. Ocean Blvd, Palm Beach

Pet owners will hear about the many dangers to pets from common foods, medications, vaccinations, parasites, plants, animals, reptiles, toads and more, and be told what symptoms and conditions require immediate attention. The importance of a healthy diet will also be explained.

If you would like to join the Host Committee or be a table sponsor, please contact Teresa Dailey at 561-889-1008.



PBIC is now on Facebook!

Everyone is urged to visit our Facebook page and 'become our friend'. When we reach 25 Face book fans who like us, PBIC will earn its own URL whereby everyone can go directly to our page rather than go through your and search for our page.

If you prefer the newsletter by mail, send us your mailing address; if you like online reading, see the website or send us your e-address.

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Meet the Guest Speakers Furry Friends Symposium

Dr. Michele Tucker is originally from Kentucky. She attended veterinary school at Auburn University in Alabama. She practiced for two years in Mobile, AL at a general practice. Following that employment she moved to Florida to work in emergency medicine.

Since 2001 Dr. Tucker has been practicing at Palm Beach Veterinary Specialists as an emergency veterinarian. In 2010 she was named Director the Florida Animal Blood and Tissue Bank.

Dr. Tucker is a member of the Palm Beach Veterinary Society, the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society. She also is a volunteer for the state of Florida Medical Reserve Corp.

David M. Green V.M.D. graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Penn State Univ. in 1965 and received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from the University of Pennsylvania in 1969.

After graduation Dr. Green served in the Army for two years running the clinic on post and caring for the K-9 corps. Dr. Green settled in Miami, FL., in the early 70's. He opened and combined two practices dedicating himself to an ambitious program of continuing education, developing new skills, and making available the latest developments in small animal medicine and surgery.

Dr. Green sold his Miami practice in 2004 and moved to Jupiter. He now works part-time at Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League.