

# The Scratching Post



A Publication of **Fancy Cats Rescue Team** • ☎ 703/464-0760 • P O Box 182 • Herndon VA 20172-0182 • [www.fancycats.org](http://www.fancycats.org)

## AOL Walks for Fancy Cats

On Oct. 13, AOL animal lovers joined in the Sterile Feral Cat Walk in Alexandria, Va.

Aimed at increasing awareness of a growing crisis and raising funds for local animal rescue groups, the Feral Cat Walk was a tremendous success. The walk was a 5-mile trek down the Mount Vernon bikepath next to the Potomac.

Sporting Team AOL shirts, employees who participated on behalf of Fancy Cats Rescue Team included Nicole Swan Gore, Dana Panczyszn, Ann Nordeen, Deb Smith, and Donna Mullins.

Recognizing that all animal lovers share common goals, two dogs joined in the feral cat walk - "Annie" Mullins, and "Robert Tucker" Smith.

The dogs were very supportive, and were great examples that cat people and dog people do indeed play well together, working toward improving the lives of all animals regardless of species.

Over \$1,200 was raised for Fancy Cats from the walk, which was organized by Alley Cat Allies. It will be an annual event, so please keep it in mind next fall.

For other ways you can contribute to Fancy Cats, please see page 2.

## A letter from an FELV cat

### Dear Santa Claws:



My name is Star and I am a Fancy Cat. I was rescued and placed with a woman named Cathy, who has cared for me for an awfully long time as my foster mother. It is in her care that I found out that I have Feline Leukemia. Cathy loves me very much, but is trying to find a long-term home for me, but no one seems to be responding yet.

I think they're afraid that I'm sick, but I'm not. After I found out I had this illness I did a lot of research on the Web, starting over Cathy's shoulder as she walked me through my health issues.

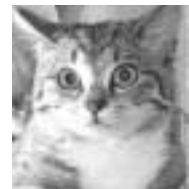
Cornell University's vet school had a whole page dedicated to FELV (<http://web.vet.cornell.edu/public/fhc/felv.html>). It said that, like a regular, non-FELV cat, my life could be very long. Long enough to enjoy many years napping in sunbeams or playing with little furry mice, but that I need to be kept away from other cats, unless they also have FELV.

*See Star, page 5*

## FELV LOVEBUGS For Adoption [www.fancycats.org](http://www.fancycats.org)



Teddy



Trinity



Oliver

## REMINDER!



Fancy Cats Rescue Team is a United Way and combined federal campaign participant. Please remember to designate #8929 on your form.

To donate money online to Fancy Cats, please visit our Web site at [www.Fancycats.org](http://www.Fancycats.org). You can contribute using Paypal or by donating to us through Helping.org.

Fancy Cats financial contributors will be listed in the next newsletter.

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## The Scratching Post

The Scratching Post is a quarterly newsletter for Fancy Cats Rescue Team. Submissions should be sent to Dana Williams, newsletter editor, at P.O. Box 182, Herndon, VA 20172-0182.

Fancy Cats Rescue Team is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization founded in August of 1997 and incorporated in February of 1999 in the State of Virginia.

Fancy Cats Rescue Team is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. Most volunteers have full-time jobs or are students and donate their non-working hours to help save cats from needless euthanasia.

"Our mission is to end needless euthanasia by having our cats spayed and neutered... To find suitable, lifetime homes for our cats with loving adopters... To educate potential adopters on issues such as sterilization, declawing and behavioral problems."

A copy of the latest financial report and registration filed by Fancy Cats Rescue Team may be obtained by contacting the State Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23209.

Donations are tax deductible and we are an approved United Way/CFC organization. Our United Way number is #8929.

Fancy Cats Rescue Team Board of Directors:

Cheryle Scheppan, President  
 Debbe Evans, Vice President  
 Maryann Stanners, Secretary  
 Dave Evans, Treasurer  
 Carin Parker, Officer at Large

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Neil Santerre	Loretta Paruti

Cathy McCullough-Awad, Founder

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 Kristi Nix, Medical Coordinator  
 Jill DeRoos, Medical Coordinator  
 Dana Williams, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Dave Evans, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Kristen Tunstall, Administrative Coordinator  
 Loretta Paruti, Training Coordinator  
 Eric Scheppan, Financial Coordinator  
 David O'Donnell, Web Master

Photos taken and Scratching Post nameplate designed by David O'Donnell

## HOLIDAY WISH LIST

When you're preparing for your special holidays, please keep in mind the cats in our rescue facilities and foster homes this year. The kitties have started making their wish lists, so if you'd like to contribute, please call us to make arrangements to schedule a drop off at the Fairlakes Petsmart at 703/464-0760.

Wet, canned 9 Lives cat food  
 Science Diet Sensitive Stomach dry cat food  
 Non-scoopable litters like Esquiscat or Johnny Cat  
 Large, powder-free latex gloves  
 Cat beds or towels  
 Furry catnip mice  
 Fun cat balls and toys  
 Cat nail clippers  
 Rescue Remedy  
 Small litterpans  
 Paper towels  
 Large, strong trash bags  
 Small paper plates and plastic spoons  
 Brushes  
 Bleach  
 Antibacterial dish soap or hand gel  
 Sponges

Monetary donations to support our vet bills can be sent to:

Fancy Cats Rescue Team  
 Attn: Holiday Gift  
 P.O. Box 182  
 Herndon, VA 20172-0182

All donations are tax deductible.

If you would like to volunteer instead of making a donation or purchasing a gift, please e-mail Dana Williams at [gifts@fancycats.org](mailto:gifts@fancycats.org) or call her at 703/464-0760.

## PRESIDENT BUSH ASKS AMERICANS TO VOLUNTEER

Following Sept. 11, Americans rushed to help the disaster relief efforts in our country. Thousands of people helped New York and Washington by giving their time, their blood and their money to help those affected by the tragedies.

Later, President Bush urged Americans to give back to their communities by becoming involved with service organizations.

If you would like to serve with Fancy Cats, please review some of the volunteer needs listed on page 7. Your community and its lost and abandoned animals needs you. Any time, money or love you can give is appreciated.

# FANCY CATS FANATICS

Volunteers talk about their experiences as animal life savers

## KRISTI NIX, MEDICAL COORDINATOR

When I was about seven years old, my mom asked what I wanted to do with my life when I grew up. My response was quick and sure: to have a house big enough for all the cats without homes and someone to love them. It must have been a defining moment for me, as almost 30 years later, I'd give the same, sure response (except to add that I also aspire to be a veterinarian).

I'm not sure where my unquenchable passion for animals originated; what I do know is I cannot remember a time when cats, their unique personalities, warm purrs, and loyal rubs didn't warm me from the inside. And I think they sense that passion in me, as so many in need have managed to wander into my life. I help them all and am better for it.

I am married to the Army now, and Cody, I, and our two wonderful felines Dusty and Jamila move a lot. But everywhere we go, I find the cats in need or they find me. This chapter of my life has brought me to Fancy Cats, and I'm loving every minute of it. The two- and four-legged friends I have made along the way enrich my life more than I could ever have imagined. And when my husband retires from the military, he promises me we are going to have that house I want, full of felines. I can't wait!

## ELENA SCHLOSSBERG, VOLUNTEER

I have been a volunteer for Fancy Cats two years. I use to go in and pet the kitties whenever I would shop for my own "children." It wasn't enough to go in once a month to pet and talk to the kitties. I felt like I should start putting into action my philosophy about helping animals. From that point I took two days out of the month to clean cages or fill in when there was a great need. It felt like my responsibility to devote some time to helping.

I know there are people that do much more than I do, so I feel as though my little bit of help is the least I can do. My greatest joy came when there was a desperate need for fostering a blind cat that was living outside...."Tator Tot" was his name. I promised my husband we would only keep this sad looking cat until he was adopted out. We already had three cats and he swore we absolutely positively would not have four cats. Needless to say, HE fell head over heels for this audacious handsome silly blind kitty that has become an integral part of our household. The most wonderful gifts in life happen when you are the one giving. I thought I was helping Tator Tot but he was the one who gave me a gift.....

## JEN ASHWORTH, VOLUNTEER

I have always been the type of person who is incapable of wandering past a group of adoptable animals without pausing to coo at them. One day last year, I decided that my time would be better spent actually volunteering for cats, rather than simply wagging my fingers between the cage bars.

Luckily, I met Cathy McCullough-Awad, who allowed me into the Fancy Cats circle and also graciously allowed me to adopt one of the cats she kept at her house. When I first started volunteering, I was in the market for a second cat. It had been over a year since one of my cats had died an untimely death, and while I still missed Emma; Quill, my very persnickety and rebellious male cat, needed a new friend. So, even though all of the cats staying at Petsmart caught my eye, Cathy kindly introduced me to the special loves that she had rescued and kept at her home. It was there, that I met Fluffy (also known as Abby nowadays). She was a bit under the weather, but what a love she was...she was so affectionate, but very timid at the same time, as if she wanted to cram a year's worth of hugs into five minutes.

Initially, Quill's reaction to my plan for an "insta-friend," backfired, and I would find him hiding in the bathtub with the closed shower curtain offering him some bit of privacy from the dearly affectionate Abby. Those days are behind us now, and Abby and Quill make a lovely couple, he is white with black patches, and she is black with strategically placed white patches. He is salt and she is pepper and when they cuddle together they look like yin and yang. I can't imagine life without her; I still hold out hope that her good manners will rub off on the mischievous Quill.

In recent months, I have not been able to devote as many hours as I would like to Fancy Cats, but the hours I have spent volunteering have been very rewarding. My friends always insist that it must be heartbreaking to see so many cats fall victim to unfortunate situations. While I thought this would be the case, instead, I am relieved to find that there are so many loving, hardworking people who choose to devote their available time to cats who need them so much. Fancy Cats volunteers are actively fighting the good fight for these cats, and it is an amazing group of which to be a part.

The call for animal rescue workers is spreading like wildfire throughout the nation and it's exciting to see so many people join together for the good of all animals. I am grateful to everyone who is a part of this group for rescuing so many cats, their lives may not have been so happy had it not been for your intervention. Thank you.

## JOEL RENNICH, VOLUNTEER

I began working for Fancy Cats in July 1998 when Fancy Cats also worked out of the Petsmart location in Seven Corners. There were only 15 cages at that rescue and I used to feel overwhelmed by having to work for two hours cleaning. (Go ahead and laugh.) When the group officially moved to the Fairfax location, I started working adoptions because it was farther from my home. I'd "give up" two Saturdays a month to work adoptions and clean the "off-day" one other weekend a month. Helping these cats showed me that there was life outside of my office. It also was a great time for me to spend time with my spouse.

There's only one occupational hazard with rescue work, you tend to adopt at least a cat a year. I'm up to four... and I'm considered a beginner!

*photo of Looseyfur (adopted 7/98) by Joel Rennich*

## COLLEEN KNIGHT, YOUTH VOLUNTEER

I started volunteering for Fancy Cats Rescue Team in February 2000. Fancy Cats takes in strays and cats that have been at the pound for a while and are about to be put to sleep. Some people even give away their cats, or even worse, abandon them! I enjoy volunteering at adoptions because you can see unwanted cats go to good homes. There are a few jobs that aren't exactly fun, like cleaning litter boxes, but the cats are so nice and I love cats so much that I don't mind. I have two foster cats, Emmerson and Mel. Fostering provides temporary homes for some of the cats until they get adopted. The cats enjoy not being in a cage for a while and being in the care of loving people.



*Art by Colleen Knight*

# HOW COULD YOU?

When I was a [kitten], I entertained you with my antics and made you laugh. You called me your child, and despite a number of [torn rugs] and a couple [hairballs], I became your best friend. Whenever I was "bad," you'd shake your finger at me and ask, "How could you?" – but then you'd relent and roll me over for a belly rub.

I remember those nights of nuzzling you in bed and listening to your confidences and secret dreams, and I believed that life could not be any more perfect. [We played with the birthday ribbon and the feather duster,] and I took long naps in the sun waiting for you to come home at the end of the day.

Gradually, you began spending more time searching for a human mate. I waited for you patiently, comforted you through heartbreaks and disappointments, never chided you about bad decisions, and romped with glee at your home-comings, and when you fell in love.

She, now your wife, is not a "[cat] person" – still I welcomed

her into our home, tried to show her affection, and obeyed her. I was happy because you were happy. Then the human babies came along and I shared your excitement. I was fascinated by their pinkness, how they smelled and I wanted to mother them too.

Only she and you worried that I might hurt them, and I spent most of my time banished to another room or to the garage. Oh, how I wanted to love them, but I became a "prisoner of love."

As they began to grow, I became their friend. They clung to my fur, poked fingers in my eyes, investigated my ears and gave me kisses on my nose. I loved everything about them and their touch – because your touch was now so infrequent – and I would have defended them with my life, if need be. I would sneak into their beds and listen to their worries and secret dreams, and together we waited for the sound of your care in the driveway.

There had been a time, when others asked you if you had a [cat], that you produced a photo of me from your wallet and told them stories about me. These past few years, you just answered, "yes" and changed the subject.

*See "How Could You?" on page 6*

# STAR WRITES A LETTER TO SANTA

*Continued from page 1*

The doctor's do say that I am more susceptible to other illnesses and diseases, but that there are vaccinations to help me.

While we were on the Internet, Cathy showed me a very cute picture of myself on the Fancy Cats Web site. I was listed in a special section with cats with special needs. And I was surprised to find out that Fancy Cats has seven cats that are FELV positive and are looking for homes. And I grew very sad, because we're all competing for the same loving home with owners who don't mind that our Web descriptions contain a four-letter abbreviation.

I'm a brave cat, Santa. Cathy says I have an award-winning personality, and that's why I'm called, "Star." I definitely should be on your "nice" list. But when I sit down and decide what I'd like for the holidays this year, I can't find myself asking for cat treats or my own spot in the middle of my people's bed. Instead, I ask for you to find me a home with someone as loving and affectionate as Cathy. With someone who is willing to love me as much as I love them. They might even be willing to adopt another Fancy Cat with FELV and take us both home. I promise that I know how to share with other cats. I have references too! You can check!

So Santa, while you're flying around the world on your sled behind some amazing reindeer that you rescued from your local reindeer rescue, maybe you could keep an eye out at some of the homes you visit for someone who might be looking for a Fancy Cat with FELV. Perhaps there's someone out there right now, looking for a pet that will love him or her more than life. If so, you know where to find me and the others... [www.fancycats.org](http://www.fancycats.org)

Sincerely,  
Star

FELV LOVEBUGS  
For Adoption cont.  
[www.fancycats.org](http://www.fancycats.org)



Phoebe



Trixie



Pepper

## ???WHERE ARE THEY NOW???

Over 775 cats have been rescued by Fancy Cats just this year! And we're wondering how everyone is doing out there in their new homes.

If you've adopted a Fancy Cat since 1997 when we started and would like to update us on his or her life, please feel free to write to us!

We'd love to hear how your Fancy Cat is doing and will post some of the responses in the next rescue newsletter.

Pictures are an added bonus. Feel free to e-mail photos and stories to Dana at [gifts@fancycats.org](mailto:gifts@fancycats.org). Be sure to mention what your cat's name was when you adopted him or her (plus the new name, if you've chosen one) and the year you adopted your lucky feline from Fancy Cats.

"It's a class reunion for Fancy Cats! How Purr-fect! I just got my teeth done."



"You mean I don't get paid for submitting my kitty memoirs! Boo, Hiss."

# HOW COULD YOU?

*Continued from page 4*

I had gone from being "your [cat]" to "just a [cat]," and you resented every expenditure on my behalf. Now, you have a new career opportunity in another city, and you and they will be moving to an apartment that does not allow pets.

You've made the right decision for your "family," but there was a time when I was your only family.

I was excited about the car ride until we arrived at the animal shelter. It smelled of dogs and cats, of fear, of hopelessness.

You filled out the paperwork and said, "I know you will find a good home for her." They shrugged and gave you a pained look. They understand the realities facing a middle-aged [cat], even one with "papers."

You had to pry your son's fingers loose from my collar as he screamed, "No, Daddy! Please don't let them take my [cat]!"

And I worried for him and what lessons you had just taught him about friendship and loyalty and about love and responsibility, and about respect for all life.

You gave me a goodbye pat on the head, avoided my eyes and politely refused to take my [carrier] with you. You had a deadline to meet and now I have one, too.

After you left, the two nice ladies said you probably knew about your upcoming move months ago and made no attempt to find me another good home. They shook their heads and asked, "How could you?"

They are as attentive to us here in the shelter as their busy schedules allow. They feed us, of course, but I lost my appetite days ago. At first, whenever anyone passed my pen, I rushed to the front, hoping it was you –that you had changed your mind – that this was all a bad dream...or I hoped it would at least be someone who cared, anyone who might save me. When I realized I could not compete with the frolicking for attention of happy kittens, oblivious to their own fate, I retreated to a far corner and waited.

I heard her footsteps as she came for me at the end of the day. She carried me to a separate room -- a blissfully quiet room. I started to purr in her arms.

She placed me on the table and rubbed my ears and told me not to worry.

My heart pounded in anticipation of what was to come, but there was also a sense of relief. The prisoner of love had run out of days.

As is my nature, I was more concerned about her. The burden she bears weighs heavily on her, and I know that, the same way I knew your every mood.

She gently placed a tourniquet around my foreleg as a tear ran down her cheek. I [nuzzled] her hand in the same way I used to comfort you so many years ago. She expertly slid the hypodermic needle into my vein.

As I felt the sting and the cool liquid coursing through my body, I lay down sleepily, looked into her kind eyes and murmured, "How could you?"

Perhaps because she understood my catspeak, she said, "I'm so sorry." She hugged me, and hurriedly explained it was her job to make sure I went to a better place, where I wouldn't be ignored or abused or abandoned, or have to fend for myself – a place of love and light so very different from this earthy place.

And with my last bit of energy, I tried to convey to her with a thump of my tail that my "How could you?" was not directed at her. It was you, My Beloved Master, I was thinking of. I will think of you and wait for you forever. May everyone in your life continue to show you so much loyalty.

--Jim Willis, reprinted with permission and updates from "Paws to Consider," the newsletter for the SPCA of Northern Virginia

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## THE JAKE FUND

We'd like to introduce you to a snazzy little black cat named Jake. Jake is one of the "special needs" cats that Fancy Cats works very hard to save because he is the epitome of a "good" cat.

When Jake came to Fancy Cats, Cathy, our founder, noticed something was wrong with him. He wobbled when he walked and was very thin.

It was clear to her that there was something, most likely, neurologically wrong with poor Jake. She called a local veterinarian who told her that Jake would need a CAT scan to determine if he had a brain tumor or a cyst.

It turns out that sweet Jake has some swelling in the cerebellum region of his brain most likely due to an

injury or abuse. Poor guy! We are now searching for a home for Jake. You can see his description at [www.fancycats.org](http://www.fancycats.org).

He likes other cats, but needs to be in a home where no children might step on him, because he does sometimes get under foot. Jake loves to play with other cats and has no problems going up stairs, but will need a little help keeping up his appearance. If you are interested in adopting Jake, please contact Fancy Cats at 703/464-0760.

In addition, we are starting The Jake Fund, for cats with emergency medical needs in his name. This money will only go to animals needing care past our usual tests, vaccinations and spay and neutering needs.

# YES – I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO FANCY CATS RESCUE TEAM!

**100% OF YOUR DONATION GOES TOWARD THE \*CARE OF RESCUED ANIMALS.**

**CURRENT COUNT IS OVER 775 CATS AND TWO DOGS RESCUED IN 2001!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Friend \$25-50     
  Patron \$51-100     
  Sponsor \$101-200  
 Benefactor \$201-999     
  Guardian \$1000+     
  Other

**\*Help pay down our vet bills.**

As a rescue group, we are blessed with wonderful veterinarians who give us discounted prices and premium care for our rescued buddies. Please help us cover our expenses to show these vets that we are grateful for their commitment and service.

*A copy of the latest financial report and registration filed by Fancy Cats Rescue Team may be obtained by contacting the State Division of Consumer Affairs  
 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
 P.O. Box 1163  
 Richmond, VA 23209  
 Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.*

*Make your check payable to:  
 Fancy Cats Rescue Team and mail it to:  
 Fancy Cats Rescue Team,  
 P.O. Box 182,  
 Herndon, VA 20172-0182*

*We are a non-profit organization.  
**YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE!***

## WANT ADS • WANT ADS • WANT ADS • WANT ADS • WANT ADS • WANT ADS • WANT ADS • WANT ADS

### IN SEARCH OF A FOSTER COORDINATOR:

Foster Coordinator:

The Foster Coordinator will build a network of foster homes providing ongoing support and training for foster families and will help coordinate the adoption of foster cats. The position requires five to 10 hours per week and includes:

- Approving new foster homes
- Making home visits, when necessary
- Placing special needs, sick and overflow cats from PetSmart into foster homes
- Administering shots and deworming to kittens and teaching foster cats about how to give meds and watch for illnesses, when needed
- Networking with other organizations to find homes for special needs cats
- Keeping track of medical files for foster homes
- Recruiting an assistant foster coordinator

### IN SEARCH OF ADOPTION ASSISTANTS:

Adoption Assistants:

Adoption assistants help adoption coordinators at weekly adoption events. Working one or two adoptions a month from 11a.m. to 3p.m. is suggested. Responsibilities include:

- Helping potential adopters fill out necessary paperwork, like applications and contracts
- Working with the public to teach visitors about pet adoption and cat care
- Communicating with adoption coordinator about people or families who are interested in adopting cats
- Feeding, cleaning and caring for cats, as needed
- Organizing and facilitating youth volunteers

### IN SEARCH OF A FUNDRAISING COORDINATOR:

Fundraising Coordinator:

The Fundraising Coordinator will design and implement ways to motivate the community to give financial donations to Fancy Cats Rescue Team through fundraising events, programs and campaigns. Responsibilities include:

- Developing a letter writing campaign to local rescue advocates
- Finding and fulfilling grant applications
- Designing fundraising events like walks and pledge drives
- Networking with other rescue organizations to develop ways to work as a group and raise money for local animal rescue and rehabilitation efforts
- Assisting the volunteer coordinator in organizing volunteers for fundraising events
- Working with the financial coordinator to stay up to date on group financials.

### IN SEARCH OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR:

Deputy Director:

The Deputy Director will assist the director in his or her duties by helping to maintain the shelter at PetSmart and work on monthly education initiatives for volunteers and the public. Responsibilities include:

- Working as an adoption coordinator at at least two adoptions/month
- Assisting the director with in-take of cats, including shelter rescues and working with medical staff
- Coordinating house visits and organizing homecheck volunteers
- Filling in for director when she/he is unavailable or on leave

## DECEMBER/JANUARY EVENT CALENDAR

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Saturday, Dec. 1  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Sunday, Dec. 9  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Saturday, Dec. 15  
11 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Sunday, Dec. 23  
11 a.m. - 3p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Saturday, Dec. 29  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Saturday, Jan. 5  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Sunday, Jan. 13  
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Saturday, Jan. 19  
11 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Sunday, Jan. 27  
11 a.m. - 3p.m.  
Fairlakes Petsmart

Currently, we are developing educational programs that will assist volunteers and pet owners care for animals, please be on the lookout at our Web site for more information at [www.fancycats.org](http://www.fancycats.org), under resources.

Fancy Cats Rescue Team  
P. O. Box 182  
Herndon, VA 20172-0182

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