



**Letters to the Editor**

**New ordinance amendment limiting cat "ownership"**

To the Editor:

Many caring citizens in our county and elsewhere spend many hours and dollars caring for other people's cast-off cats, or ferals as many people like to describe them. Most of these cats began their lives as pets, but, because they became inconvenient, scratched the furniture, or outgrew "kitten cuteness," were thrown outside or abandoned elsewhere to fend for themselves. Many of these former pets were not spayed or neutered, either by the shelter that offered them for adoption, like our county shelter, or by their new owners. Once abandoned, they then began producing kittens who were not socialized. These unsocialized cats are considered feral, roaming our neighborhoods looking for food and shelter, and forming groups or "colonies." (Note: Some colonies also contain socialized cats, more recently abandoned by their "owners" and not yet "feral.")

Some local organizations and, again, caring local citizens, do their best to feed and "fix" these cats. Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) is a process of trapping the cat, neutering it, and returning it where it was found, but generally only if someone local is feeding. David Hatch, in his letter last week, claimed that TNR is "not responsible pet ownership." Of course it's not, but it is a necessary response for animals that irresponsible owners have foisted upon everyone with no consequences for their action. At least TNR limits the number of future kittens produced by these feral cats. Over time, with someone continuing TNR activity, feral colony numbers will be reduced and eventually eliminated, as outside cats generally live very short lives. By the way, cats fixed via TNR also receive a rabies shot and are "ear tipped" (tip removed on one ear) to indicate they have been "fixed."

Mr. Hatch's theory of "responsible pet ownership" with every animal in a loving environment, being cared for 24 hours a day, is, unfortunately, a pipe dream. People do not investigate

pet ownership requirements as they do a new car; they fall in love with a cute kitten, or their child does, and any consideration of pet deposits, food cost, vet bills, etc., goes by the wayside until it becomes a problem. Perhaps Mr. Hatch should carry his message about responsible pet ownership to these citizens and also those many dog owners who abandon their dogs to be picked up by animal control and housed for adoption or euthanasia at our county shelter. By the way, Mr. Hatch, our animal control organization doesn't accept cats generally and doesn't spay or neuter any cats or dogs they hold for adoption.

This amendment to the ordinance will make it much more difficult for anyone to care for feral cats in the county and will potentially make the feral population swell. Special license fees are less important than food for starving animals, you know. But, of course, Mr. Hatch and the Supervisors have all the answers!

Cheryl Fox

**Letters**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

The opinions of the Editor's Inbox do not reflect the opinions of the *Village News*. Please limit letter length to under 350 words. (The editor reserves the right to allow longer letters or edit letter length.) A name and address is required to be considered for publication; however, *Village News* will not publish or distribute a letter writer's address. Let us know your opinions on current events; send your letter to news@villagenewsonline.com. Thank you.

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