

- ◆ When you pick up your feral cats on Sunday afternoon, they will still be under anesthesia and analgesia (pain medication). **They should not be released before Monday afternoon.** This is because a cat's ability to defend her self will be diminished until the anesthesia and pain medication has had sufficient time to wear off. It can take up to 24 hours for the anesthesia products to leave a cat's system. Factors affecting anesthesia metabolism include the age and relative health of the cat. Young and relatively healthy cats will awaken sooner than older cats and cats with poor health.
- ◆ When you take your ferals home, place them in a warm comfortable location; away from other animals, and away from noises that could make them fearful. Depending on the ambient temperature, keep traps lightly covered to help keep cats calm. Ferals should remain in traps until they are released (no sooner than) on Monday afternoon.
- ◆ By Sunday evening, as your cats wake up from surgery, you can offer them small portions of water and canned cat food. If they eat too much, too soon, they may vomit: this is a result of the lingering affect of anesthesia remaining in their system. Kittens, with their fast metabolic rates, may be able to have their first post-surgical meal much sooner than adult cats. Very young cats, that seem clear-headed, may be offered food within hours of surgery. By Monday morning, a hearty meal should be offered to all cats.
- ◆ On Sunday evening, while your feral is still caged, check the newspaper he or she is lying on for urine, excrement, or blood. If you are able to securely remove soiled papers, it would be a good idea to do so. If you notice any blood on the paper, you may need to have your feral seen by your own vet prior to release. A tiny amount of blood on the newspaper may not be a concern. **Sometimes the surgical site may ooze, however, any blood noticed on the newspaper bedding should be addressed.**
- ◆ On Monday afternoon, you may be able to **RETURN** your ferals to their home site. Return date and time are dependent on age and sex of the cat, on weather conditions, and on the type of surgery the cat has undergone. An adult female undergoes a more complicated surgical procedure than a male and may require several days for recovery; these are days spent in a warm sheltered environment. It is critical to release your cats exactly where you trapped them. Under no circumstance should any cat be released to a location other than the one in which he or she was initially trapped. Releasing to an unfamiliar site means your feral will not know where to go for food, for water or for shelter. This will prove deadly, especially for a cat that has just undergone surgery.
- ◆ Please note that veterinarians who have volunteered for the TNR projects are not available for consultation after the TNR event. Please be sure to plan ahead. You will need to have any potential post-surgical problem addressed by your own veterinarian. All surgery comes with risk and we work hard to ensure cats have the best care possible.
- ◆ With each TNR event, we do find cats that are in need of additional medical intervention and we address those issues. Sometimes this means that there will also be follow up care on your part; such as for an upper respiratory infection, or for bite wounds. That care usually means the cat will need to be caged for 7-10 days to administer a full course of antibiotics. We would like to be sure you can follow through with medication we offer. For some of these cats, this may their only opportunity to get some much needed medical intervention.
- ◆ **Plan ahead**, and be ready to set up a room, a space, a cage that you may offer follow-up care for any of the ferals you care for. Dog crates (metal cages) make wonderful recovery spaces for ferals. Add a wooden shelf that is half the length of the cage, and set it at a mid-height level. Place a small cat carrier in the back of the cage and secure it to the walls of the cage with wire ties. Don't forget to place a litter pan in the cage. You can be assured that when you approach the cage, your feral will run into the carrier to hide, thus leaving you the opportunity to close the carrier door, open the crate door, and safely scoop the litter and give fresh food and water.

For the cats, Peg Nemoff