NOTES FROM THE FIELD:
Defending Alabama Caregivers

Alley Cat Allies provided expert testimony for the defense in the trials of Beverly Roberts and Mary Alston, who were arrested and convicted in Wetumpka, Alabama, on charges related to caring for community cats.

These are the notes from the field of our Director of Programs, Alice Burton.

When body cam footage of Wetumpka, Alabama, police officers handcuffing Beverly Roberts, 85, and Mary Alston, 60, hit the internet, people were understandably outraged. Knowing the two women were arrested as they were caring for community cats made their story go viral.

Unfortunately, I’ve seen this kind of case far too often. Alley Cat Allies created our Compassion is Not a Crime initiative because this criminalizing of compassion is very common. So when Beverly and Mary’s attorney reached out and asked us to provide expert testimony for the defense, I headed out immediately to take part in the proceedings.

My goal was to show the judge, prosecutor, officials, and residents that community cat caregivers are good Samaritans providing a community service, and should be supported instead of dragged to court.

And in the end, it was a very long and dragging day in that court. The prosecution painted the two women as troublemakers enabling cats to destroy city property. When I took the podium, I explained the reality of the situation: cats have always lived outdoors in Wetumpka, and Beverly and Mary were humanely reducing their population through Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR), spay and neuter, and adoption.

(See Notes From The Field: Defending Alabama Caregivers on page 4)
In a **FELINE FRENZY**®
to **Save Cats’ Lives**

When white tom cat Lucius became the victim of a house fire in Galax, Virginia, he was left without a home and without the care he needed. Thankfully Lucius was unharmed other than ash residue on his stunning coat, but now he was living outdoors unneutered and unvaccinated. And though a kind local community cat caregiver stepped up to provide him food, she simply didn’t have the money to take him to a veterinarian.

Lucius is like many cats in Southwestern Virginia who have dedicated caregivers who pay out of pocket to care for them but struggle to afford spay and neuter services. That’s why Alley Cat Allies teamed up with our friends at Homeward Trails—and with our supporters like you—to launch our latest *Feline Frenzy*® in the area.

In the span of a few days we spayed and neutered, vaccinated, microchipped, and treated more than 100 cats—and that was just our first planned event!

“Homeward Trails is excited and grateful to be collaborating with Alley Cat Allies for the *Feline Frenzy* in Galax,” said Sue Bell, executive director of Homeward Trails. “The support of Alley Cat Allies will help so many cats and bring peace of mind to many cat caretakers.”

Alley Cat Allies’ *Feline Frenzy* brings together communities to help their feline members. By building upon—or creating new—connections between caregivers, advocates, animal protection groups, veterinarians, and policymakers, these events help cats in the short term and long term. The short-term effects include spay and neuter, vaccination, and microchipping. The long-term effects include humane education and policies, plus networking and collaboration opportunities for caregivers to protect cats into the future.

Powered by our supporters and donors, we’re hitting the ground running in the Galax area, and we already have more planned for local communities and their cats. In our first *Feline Frenzy* with Homeward Trails,

*[Continued on next page]*

**Traps-Neuter-Return (TNR)**
The only humane, effective approach to community cats. Cats are humanely trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, eartipped, and returned to their outdoor homes.

**Community Cat**
An unowned cat who lives outdoors.

**Lucius back home with his caregiver after his neuter, vaccination, and microchip at our Feline Frenzy.**

**Our goal is to bring our Feline Frenzy to even more communities in 2023. We can do it with your support!**

2 | ALLEY CAT ACTION, WINTER 2023

www.alleycat.org
we reached our 100-cat goal, and had time to create outdoor cat shelters, which we provided along with cat food to caregivers across the area. We look forward to setting new goals in 2023.

Most of the cats, including Lucius, were spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped to indicate they were part of a TNR program, then returned to their outdoor home. Some cats needed extra TLC. A kitten needed his face cleaned and eye medication? Done, no questions asked.

These are all Galax, Virginia, cats and kittens we helped with our Feline Frenzy. YOU made it possible!

“...we really appreciate Alley Cat Allies for helping us get our cats spayed and neutered and everything they’re doing,” said Cathy M., a Galax resident and caregiver. “We really, sincerely, deeply appreciate it.”

When she thanks us, she’s also thanking you! Your generosity empowers us to bring high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter and Feline Frenzy to the most in-need areas. We spayed and neutered 450+ cats in Atlantic County, New Jersey, and 500+ cats in Mayfield, Kentucky—and that’s just in the past year!

This year, our goal is to bring Feline Frenzy to even more communities across the country. With you by our side fueling our mission the only question is: when and where?

Eartip
The painless removal of the tip of a cat’s left ear under anesthesia. Identifies cats who were spayed/neutered through a TNR program.

And with each cat returned, health and wellbeing improved, the community improves too, including in peace of mind.

“We really appreciate Alley Cat Allies for helping us get our cats spayed and neutered and everything they’re doing,” said Cathy M., a Galax resident and caregiver. “We really, sincerely, deeply appreciate it.”

When she thanks us, she’s also thanking you! Your generosity empowers us to bring high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter and Feline Frenzy to the most in-need areas. We spayed and neutered 450+ cats in Atlantic County, New Jersey, and 500+ cats in Mayfield, Kentucky—and that’s just in the past year!

This year, our goal is to bring Feline Frenzy to even more communities across the country. With you by our side fueling our mission the only question is: when and where?

Learn more about Feline Frenzy at www.alleycat.org/FelineFrenzy.
There’s nothing better than a “happily ever after!” In 2022, Alley Cat Allies ensured 300 cats, kittens, and other animals could be fostered and adopted! Though we’re not a shelter, we act when cats need us, and we have the right network—and your incredible support!—to help.

We still have cats looking for their new starts. Meet them all at www.alleycat.org/Adopt.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD:
Defending (continued from page 1)
Alabama Caregivers

Despite a strong defense, Beverly and Mary were found guilty on multiple counts. But believe me, this fight is not over. Alley Cat Allies will work in Wetumpka until the town embraces rather than punishes TNR.

The center of Wetumpka is a cheery slice of city lined with charming local shops. I got the sense everybody knows everybody. Yet local cat advocates told me they feel they have to operate in secret so they won’t be arrested. I let them know they deserve a medal, not handcuffs. We’re going to let all of Wetumpka know. Beverly and Mary are appealing their case, and Alley Cat Allies has much more planned to transform Wetumpka into a safe community for cats that reflects citizens’ humane values. With our supporters like you, we know we can achieve it.

From,
Alice

Defending
TNR in Texas

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is writing an opinion that could threaten TNR if he determines it is abandonment under Texas statute. Alley Cat Allies, acting in defense of TNR, submitted a legal brief and a petition signed by more than 1,000 Texas advocates in less than 48 hours with the answer: TNR is not abandonment, and it’s what Texans want.

With your help, Alley Cat Allies is staying engaged in the process with lifesaving efforts for cats throughout Texas. We’ve worked in Texas for decades and seen incredible success from TNR. We won’t let anything threaten that progress or the cats.

Adopt a CAT—Change a Life!

There’s nothing better than a “happily ever after!” In 2022, Alley Cat Allies ensured 300 cats, kittens, and other animals could be fostered and adopted! Though we’re not a shelter, we act when cats need us, and we have the right network—and your incredible support!—to help.

We still have cats looking for their new starts. Meet them all at www.alleycat.org/Adopt.
Throughout 2022, Alley Cat Allies worked with our friends at the Paw Project to provide treatment to cats suffering from declaw surgery—like Cubby, who lost her home when the pain in her paws caused her to avoid the litter box.

Cubby and many other cats now have a new lease on life thanks to surgery and pain management. But here’s the truth: the only way to truly protect cats from declawing is to make it illegal—everywhere.

Supporting declawing bans, treating cats who have been declawed, and educating veterinarians to refuse to declaw—we’re doing it all.

Alley Cat Allies rallies people nationwide to raise their voice for declawing bans. Landmark bans in New York in 2019 and Maryland in 2022 are two of the highest achievements, and there are a lot more to come!

One of his biggest inspirations is his late companion of 17 and a half years: Mandrake. Dignified, handsome, and extremely intelligent, Mandrake was a steadfast friend and, in Jeff’s words, “something very, very special.”

Learn how you can invest in a brighter future for cats with a donation at www.alleycat.org/Donate. Or, consider a planned gift at alleycat.org/PlannedGiving (CFC#10964) (EIN #52-1742079). Or, for more information, call 866-309-6207.
Sometimes the smallest sparks can inspire the biggest changes in our lives. For Mary H., a powerhouse TNR advocate in Buena Vista, Virginia, it was a single tiny kitten she met while working on a project in a local park. “Right away I knew something had to be done for this kitten, and all the cats in the park,” said Mary. “And I knew I had to be the one to do it.”

Mary hadn’t even heard of TNR when she first rolled up her sleeves to take action. But within a year and a half, she’d led efforts to trap, spay and neuter, and vaccinate an incredible 178 park cats. Almost 10 years later in 2023, only 12 community cats still call the park home.

Buena Vista Mayor William Fitzgerald heard us loud and clear. Upon touring the colony site with Alice and Mary, he agreed the cats should stay in their outdoor homes and their removal taken off the table.

“As Buena Vista and the park are going to try to be good stewards for the colony and the TNR program here,” Mayor Fitzgerald said.

Alley Cat Allies continues to provide expertise and support to the city to ensure the cats and the efforts of advocates like Mary are respected and protected.

“These cats may be feral, but they are not homeless. They have a beautiful 300-acre park to enjoy,” said Mary. “I’m relieved the city plans to embrace them for the future of this colony.”

As for the kitten who inspired Mary to become the cat champion she is today? Her name is Miley Paxton, and she is still Mary’s constant companion.