

Wild cats find a home with student, faculty help

By Kezia McKeague
Contributing Reporter

Amid the students, professors and employees on campus, there is another community of residents: stray or abandoned cats and their offspring.

At least three young adult cats, for example, make their home under Olin Physical Laboratory.

The observant passer-by may notice a small head, either black or gray, peeking out from a hole that leads to their shelter underneath.

More noticeable than the usually reticent cats, however, are several bowls of food and one of water.

Brigget Beck, a library technician, feeds them every morning, Monday through Friday, in addition to checking up on them later in the day.

"They're spoiled," Beck said. "They get both canned and dried food."

Sharon Snow, the head of special collections and archives, is in charge of the weekend feeding shift, while Ann Bailey, the library's mail room coordinator, helps with the expense of buying enough food.

"Ann sometimes brings 20 cans over at a time," Beck said.

Besides the co-workers in the library, the Olin cats can claim a benefactor in the chemistry department. Willie Hinze, a professor of chemistry, provides food once a day, enlisting his wife's help when he cannot be there to do it himself.

First noticing a mother with five kittens in late spring, Hinze estimates that the cats are five or six months old. A secretary in Salem Hall adopted one from the litter, but the number of remaining cats is a matter of debate.

Beck says she regularly sees only three, though she thinks there might be four. The mother, meanwhile, "does a disappearing act," showing up every two weeks or so.

"They (the cats) are probably accustomed to the traffic of walkers, the general flow of people, but they were not raised with direct human contact, and so won't tolerate it now."

Becky Robinson
National Director of Alley Cat Allies

Like any homeless or feral cats, the ones under Olin have reverted to instinctive survival behaviors.

According to Becky Robinson, the National Director of Alley Cat Allies, an organization dedicated to helping feral cats, the young offspring of feral females learn to be "wary and distrustful of humans" unless tamed before eight weeks of age.

Although Beck said that two of the cats are becoming increasingly friendly with her, none will allow touching or petting.

Robinson affirmed that hissing is a common reaction.

"They are probably accustomed to the traffic of walkers, the general flow of people. But they were not raised with direct human contact, and so won't tolerate it now," Robinson said.

Sophomore Meredith Laughridge first noticed the cats in June while walking to class.

She and her roommate, sophomore Dev Chaponis, soon began leaving food.

"We tried to tempt them with tuna so we could take them home with us during summer school, but they were really afraid of people," Chaponis said.

Long-term care for these cats has proved to be a cooperative effort. Facilities Management even plays a role.

"The facilities people have been really good about it," Ann Bailey said. "They

now and then go back to weed, leaving space for the food bowls."

The Olin cats, however, are not the first strays to appear on campus.

According to Beck, a construction worker recently adopted a pregnant cat found by the trash bins behind the library.

Also, Hinze remembers seeing a few wild-looking adult cats around Wait Chapel last fall.

Snow even took some kittens home with her after finding them in the lobby of Scales Fine Arts Center a few years ago.

"I placed an ad in the paper, and they soon had new homes," she said.

This university is far from unique in hosting a feral cat colony.

College campuses are one of the prime territories because they have many readily available food sources, such as the dumpsters of cafeterias.

According to Alley Cat Allies, the flow of cats onto campus most often stems from pet owners' abandonment or failure to spay and neuter their cats, allowing them to breed uncontrollably.

Reproducing to the limits of their food supply, feral cats in unmanaged colonies lead meager lives shortened by malnutrition, disease, trauma and high kitten mortality.

In response to their plight as well as to complaints from the public about noisy mating behaviors, organizations at many colleges around the nation implement a program called Trap-Neuter-Return.

They promote TNR as a humane alternative to simply eradicating a colony.

TNR involves spaying or neutering feral cats, then returning them to their original territory where they are looked after and fed by caretakers.

This solution has proved successful in decreasing the population, reducing birth rates and improving the overall health of the colony.



Will Wingfield/Old Gold and Black

A small feral cat colony has taken up residence near Olin Hall and with the help of several students and faculty members, the colony is fed on a regular basis. Colonies like this one are a common sight on campuses nation-wide.

In addition to using the basic approach of TNR, organizations like the University of Texas-Austin Campus Cat Coalition ensure that all cats are vaccinated at the time of surgery and that kittens are socialized and placed for adoption.

Identical programs dealing with sometimes hundreds of feral cats have been set up at Stanford and North Carolina State University, among others.

The caretakers of the comparatively small population under Olin plan on taking the cats to a veterinarian for spaying or neutering as soon as possible.

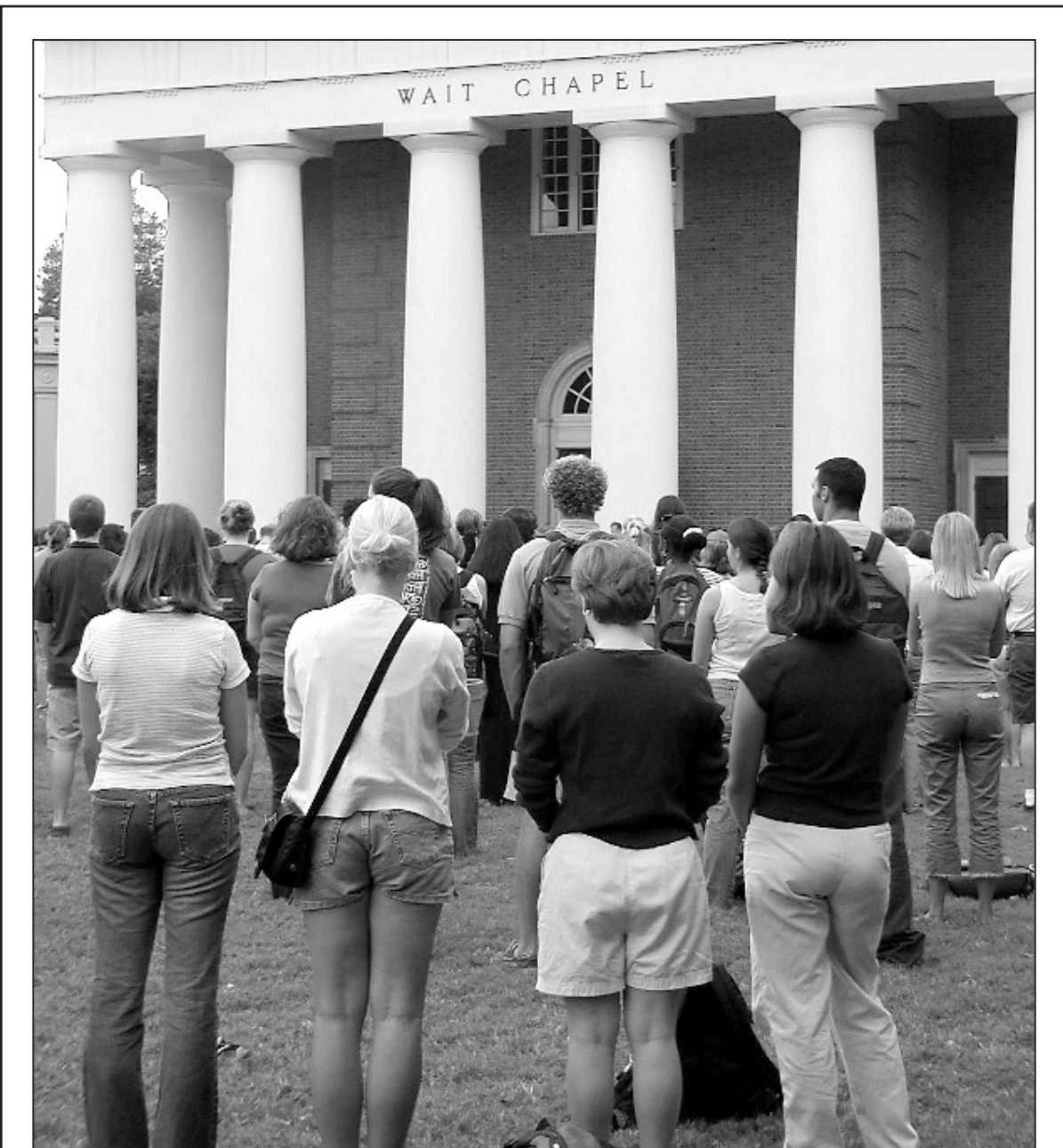
As a result of this article, they will use humane traps available at the Forsyth Humane Society.

The cost of the surgery, which averages \$35, will be covered by the Sturmer Spay/Neuter fund, a public service provided by the Forsyth Humane Society.

"The purpose of the fund is to help qualifying low-income families pay for altering their pets, but we never use all the money. So this is another very appropriate use for it," Steve Young, the executive director, said.

Young commends the volunteers at the university who have assumed the responsibility of caring for the Olin cats.

"What Gandhi once said is really true: 'The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated,'" Young said.



Billie Zito/Old Gold and Black

Unity in Wait

Students gathered in front of Wait Chapel to observe a moment of silence for those lost in the terrorist attacks Sept. 11. The service, held Sept. 14, was organized by campus ministries.

Campus ministries gets new centralized location

By Charles Kemp
Contributing Reporter

Today Kitchin House becomes the center for all of the Christian campus ministries. University president Thomas K. Hearn, Jr. is expected to speak, students will give a scripture reading and university Chaplain Ed Christman will give a prayer of dedication.

Several students from each of the denominations represented will lead the gathering as well.

Senior Joanie Fraser will be speaking at the dedication ceremony.

"It's nice to have someone who supports you or need to talk to someone. They provide a community for everyone - a home away from home," she said.

The campus ministry office is the center of several representatives of different Christian denominations.

The goal of the re-dedication of the campus ministry location in Kitchin is to emphasize the central location.

Sophomore Laurie Dimmock, the Bible study coordinator for Campus Crusade For Christ, said the new centralized location will be beneficial to all of the Christian denominations.

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"It gives the campus ministries a place where all leaders can be unified so that they can work together and know more about what each other is doing."

Laurie Dimmock
Sophomore

what each other is doing," she said.

Becky Hartzog, the associate chaplain and the Baptist campus minister, said, "Because we have that space together, this has enabled campus ministry staff to build a community spirit, and that has allowed us to bestow the same feeling on every student that comes our way."

Christman said this move has displaced some communication barriers that previous locations of campus ministries have had to overcome.

For example, when campus religious organizations were mobilizing to offer students support following the terrorist attack Sept. 11, Christman was able to coordinate a joint effort among all the groups in a more expedient manner due to the fact they now are housed in the same location.

Some campus-wide Christian

organizations, however, are virtually unaffected by the change. Student to Student, Forest Fire and Campus Crusade are among the groups not represented in the campus ministry office.

"There simply isn't enough space to accommodate everyone. However, everyone who has asked for office space received it," Christman said.

Other non-Christian groups are not represented in the campus ministry office.

These groups include the Jewish Student Organization and Islam Awareness.

"There simply isn't a need right now for the JSO to be part of the campus ministries office," Joshua Goldstein, a professor of music and the Jewish Student Organization faculty adviser, said.

Goldstein said since there are only about 60 Jewish students on campus, more space is not a pressing need for the JSO.

But he says that he hopes that if the Jewish representation on campus increases space would be made available to accommodate it as readily as any other religious organization.

"There is little tension between the denominations that have office space in the campus ministry office and my group," the Islam Awareness faculty adviser, Bashir El-Beshiti, an associate professor of English, said.

BRIEFLY

Campus organizations may have their announcements listed by sending e-mail to news@ogb.wfu.edu, faxing to Ext. 4561 or writing to P.O. Box 7569. The deadline for inclusion in each week's paper is 5 p.m. Monday.

Discussions to be held on women's issues

The Women's Health Center of Excellence and the women's studies department are sponsoring two discussions on gender and the workplace, which will be led by University of Arizona professor Barbara Gutek.

The first discussion will be held at 4 p.m. Sept. 27 in Pugh Auditorium, with the second taking place at noon Sept. 28 on the Bowman Gray campus.

The programs are free and open to the public, but require registration by Sept. 24. Contact Natalie Barrett at 713-4220.

Theater department offers London trip

The theater department is offering students and adults the opportunity to study theater in London, Dec. 31 to Jan. 12.

The cost is \$2,500 for students and \$3,000 for adults. A deposit is due Oct. 1, with the

balance due Nov. 1. Contact Jon Christman at christma@wfu.edu, Sharon Andrews at andrews@wfu.edu, or call the theater office at Ext. 5294 for more information.

History and film series continues in Scales

The history department will be showing Charlie Chaplain's *Modern Times*, one of the American Film Institute's Top 100 Films. The movie will be shown at 7

p.m. Sept. 18 in Scales 102. A discussion will follow the viewing. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Baptist Medical Center volunteers needed

Students interested in volunteering with the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center should contact Ashley Phelps at 713-3519 or the student liaison, Lindsay Wilson at Ext. 1511.

A minimum of a semester's commitment and 40 hours of service are required.

Student Union brings Blues Traveler to Wait

Blues Traveler will perform at 8 p.m. Sept. 28 in Wait Chapel. Tickets are currently on sale for \$21 in Benson 335.

Sen. John Edwards session cancelled

The College Democrats' town-hall meeting featuring Sen. John Edwards has been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.

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