

Adoption

Adoptable Dogs

Adoptable Cats

Find a Shelter

Adoption Tips

ASPCA Mission: Orange

ASPCA's Meet Your Match

ASPCA Happy Tails

Success Stories

Pet Care Costs

Feral Cats FAQ

Start a Shelter

Top Ten Ways to Help Your Local Shelter

Pet Overpopulation in the United States

Ten Ways to Help Animals in Your Community

Home > Adoption > ASPCA Mission Orange > Austin > Community Heroes: Del Goss: Not Your Average Cat Lady!

Community Heroes: Del Goss: Not Your Average Cat Lady!

In addition to many occupational hazards—expense, heartbreak, cat pee on their car seats—volunteer cat rescuers must contend with the burden of tiresome stereotypes. In the public imagination, a person who spends time and money securing life, health and homes for forsaken felines is no doubt an unmarried woman, probably employed as a librarian. She likes hot tea and "Masterpiece Theatre," and she's a little too thin because she spends most of her grocery money on cat food.



One of Austin's leading "cat ladies" is Del Goss, a burly retired electrician who eats well and prefers margaritas to Earl Grey. A five-year volunteer with [EmanciPET](#), which operates both a stationary and mobile spay/neuter clinic, Del is an outspoken animal advocate and a strong presence in Austin's animal welfare community. As a "client wrangler" for EmanciPET, Del gets up before dawn twice a week to work at our mobile clinic locations, where he signs in clients on free spay/neuter days and answers their questions about the clinic's services. Del also keeps the electricity functioning safely at EmanciPET World Headquarters, located in an older building that is not without its wiring quirks. On his own, Del lobbies on behalf of a proposed spay and neuter ordinance in Austin

and works with virtually all of the area's Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) groups to reduce (and eventually eliminate) the suffering caused by feral cat overpopulation.

Del credits Spay Austin Coalition member Julia Hilder with getting him started in the animal welfare community. When he moved six years ago into an area with a large number of stray and feral cats, Julia helped him trap the cats for spay and neuter surgeries. Since then, Del has lost count of the number of cats, both feral and tame, whom he has had fixed, re-homed and/or placed with rescue groups. His most recent project involved the sterilization and vaccination of about 130 cats living in and around Frontier Valley, an older East Austin mobile-home park. Because of the large number of cats at the location, Del cooperated with Town Lake Animal Center Director Dorinda Pulliam to set up a special account at EmanciPET for their surgeries and vaccinations. Del estimates that he trapped about 90 of the cats himself, and TNR volunteer Jane Sullivan trapped another 40. Del and Jane found homes for the two dozen cats who were tame and adoptable. He now monitors the colony to make sure that it is healthy (but not growing); feeding the cats daily with food he usually purchases himself. "Give me your uterus or testicles, and I'll feed you for the rest of your life," he says of his arrangement with the Frontier Valley cats, displaying his characteristic irreverence. Del's sense of humor and plainspoken delivery make him a natural community educator, and Del is happy to speak to anyone, anywhere, at any time about the importance of spay and neuter.

In addition to his work on behalf of homeless cats, Del also helps to provide shelter for people. He is a longtime volunteer with Austin Habitat for Humanity, where his skills as an electrician are much in demand.

The latest pet care news, adoptable pets, and cruelty alerts.

