

Friends of Felines moves to 'mew' Keizer location

By LYNDON ZAITZ
Of the Keizertimes

Gunner, a black and white male cat, is roaming new territory.

Gunner is the king of the Salem Friends of Felines (SFOF) shelter, and he has a new address in Keizer. He is the only cat allowed out of a cage and allowed to roam freely, but he's characteristically aloof about his status. Gunner will abide a friendly petting without fuss and mentors kittens after they arrive for adoption.

For humans wanting to add a four-legged friend to their home, that task is now easier with the relocation of SFOF to its new Cherry Avenue site.

After more than 10 years at its Commercial Street storefront and shelter location, management and volunteers moved cats in recent weeks. Even though new space is equal in size to its former home, it allows for more rooms for visitation and quarantining when necessary. Their new address is in Keizer, but the name will not change.

Salem Friends of Felines is a no-kill shelter and there is no time limit for how long a cat can stay.

"We do adopt kittens very quickly," said board president Karla Canida, "But we do struggle at times to find forever homes for our older cats." The move to a new site will make the cats more



comfortable while awaiting adoption.

According to shelter manager Teri Long, the non-profit is adopting more older cats than in recent times. Salem Friends of Felines saw a big increase in adoption beginning last April, just as the state was closing down due to COVID-19. The pandemic also changed the way the shelter operates. They now make appointments for adoptions which helps keep the staff safe and following all COVID procedures easier.

More rooms at the Cherry Avenue location provides the shelter with designated sick and quarantine spaces; all cats brought into the shelter are quarantined for a few days to assure there are no health issues before they are placed with other cats.

The mission of Salem Friends of Feline remains the same: focusing on placing cats in forever homes and helping reduce cat overpopulation with a low-cost spay and neuter voucher program.



ABOVE: Shelter manager Teri Long holds Earl Grey.

LEFT: Gunner is the shelter's king.
Photo by LYNDON ZAITZ of Keizertimes

The organization has two management personnel and a number of volunteers, some of whom oversee the Thrift Store, which is next door to the shelter. Long said that volunteers for the shelter and the Thrift Store are always needed as are volunteers to foster kittens.

The shelter is open by appointment only from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Call 503-362-5611 for an appointment. The Thrift Store is scheduled to be open for business by the middle of March, if not sooner.

Salem Friends of Felines is located at 4157 Cherry Avenue N. The Thrift Store is located at 4155 Cherry Ave. N.

Fire chief marks 40 years

Keizer Fire District Chief Jeff Cowan marked his 40th year in the public safety field this week.

The Oregon-native began his career as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on March 17, 1981 in Oregon City with Willamette Falls Ambulance. He eventually achieved his Oregon Paramedic Certification in 1983 and his National Registry Paramedic Certification in 1984.

When he began in 1981, calling 9-1-1 and EMS were new ideas at the time. Fire departments didn't embrace ambulance services and emergency patient care at first. Paramedic standards of patient care were developing while new advanced surgical skills were required.

Working in Portland during the 1980s, racial tensions, drug use, and police clashes were common. In 1985, Cowan was hired in Kitsap County, Wash.

In Washington, Cowan served in the fire service for 23 years and progressed through the ranks of lieutenant, captain, battalion chief, and assistant chief. He returned to Oregon landing in Keizer in 2008 to serve as the fire chief. Cowan's career saw technology advancements such as digital electronic communications, GPS mapping, and better diagnostic equipment and procedures.

"As you can imagine, all the historical events that spanned 1981-2021 and there

were wars, 9/11, pandemics, conflagrations, fires, and tragedies," Cowan recalled.

"In my career, I have always been part of a team of rescuers that were there to make things better. While I have memories that span decades, it is the people I served with and for, that give me the most satisfaction. We were always there to help."

Cowan began his career at the age of 19. He has three college degrees; a paramedic degree, a fire science degree, and one in management and administration. He remains a licensed paramedic. Cowan has served as a chief fire officer since 1997.

Cowan says being a Dad is still his best achievement. He has raised three grown sons, Julius, Bret, and Ryan. He and two of his sons reside in Keizer.



Keizer Fire Chief Jeff Cowan now and in 1984. Submitted photos

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