

Diana Hensley

O'Malley Alley Cat Organization founder

"It's very rewarding, but it's a roller coaster. There are days that are really great and days that have heartache."



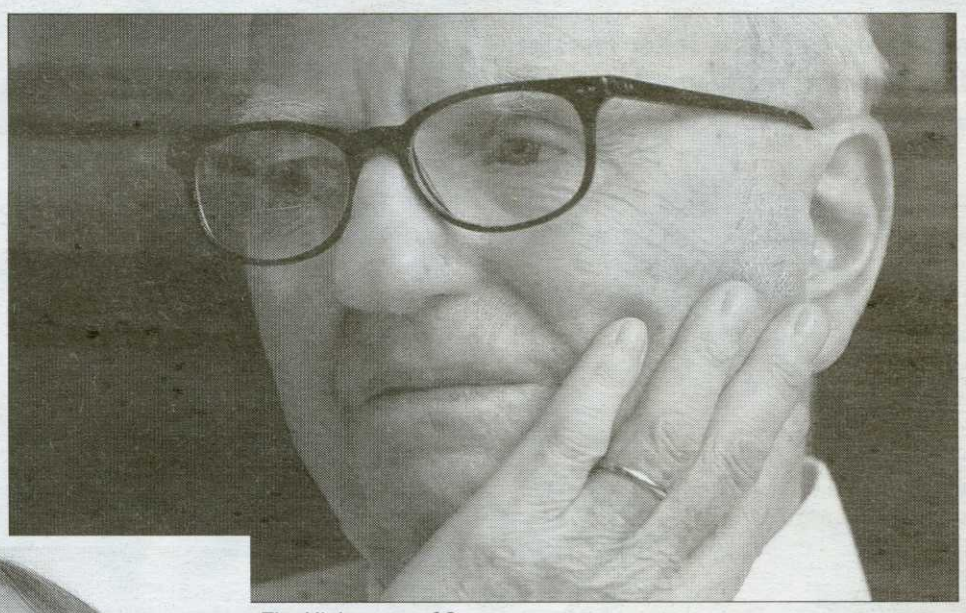
Judy Mahoney, left, and Diana Hensley with the cat rescue group O'Malley Alley Cats, unload live-capture traps from the back of a pickup at a rural home March 6 west of Nacogdoches to catch a group of feral cats. Hensley's work with the group earned her a nomination as a 2012 Real Life Hero.

Andrew D. Brosig
The Daily Sentinel

Real Life HEROES

These are their stories

Photos by
Andrew D. Brosig | The Daily Sentinel

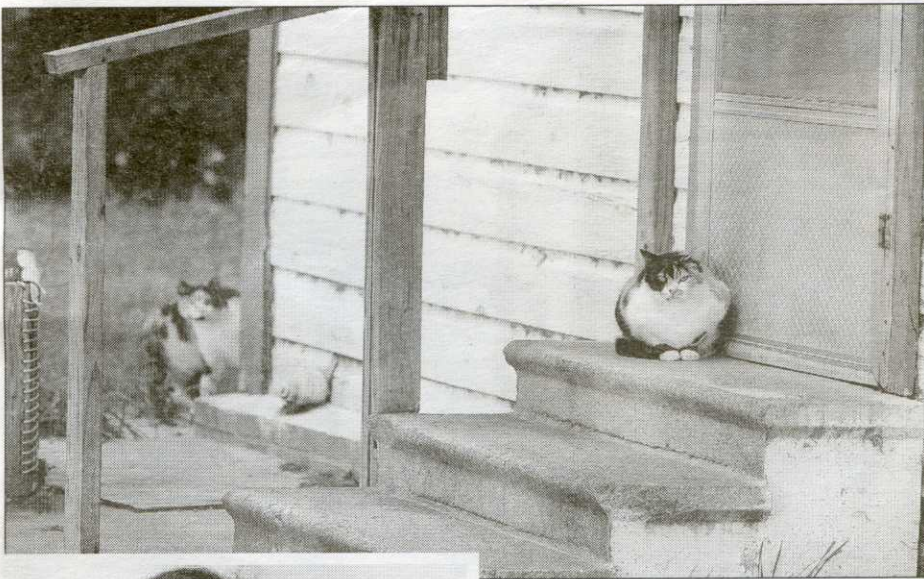


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Feral cats eyeball the camera March 6 at a rural home west of Nacogdoches. Hundreds of feral cats are alive, with scores having been adopted, due to the efforts of 2012 Real Life Hero Diana Hensley and the local rescue group O'Malley Alley Cats.

Photos by Andrew D. Brosig/The Daily Sentinel

Diana Hensley dedicated to the cause of controlling feral cat population

BY ERIN McKEON

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Cats are more than cute, cuddly, furry animals that can be a great stress-reliever for Diana Hensley. As the founder of the O'Malley Alley Cat Organization, she is dedicated to reducing the local feral cat population and is an advocate for spaying and neutering.

It's her selfless dedication to the cause that led Nacogdoches resident Donna Chapman to nominate Hensley as a Daily Sentinel "Real Life Hero."

"She's one of my heroes," Chapman said. "She's out there trying to make it a better place for the animals that we have put out there — that the human race is responsible for.

"We've kind of let it get out of hand," she said, "and she's out there leading a group of people trying to make a better place for them since they can't for themselves."

Hensley said she began unofficially trapping cats to have them spayed or neutered because "the number one killer of animals is over-population."

out and trap the cats, have them fixed and vaccinated and then released back into the community. Those animals aren't a danger to themselves or others, and many people take it on themselves to feed the resident cats.

"I'm an animal lover, and I always have been," Hensley said.

Though she didn't have animals when she was growing up because her family was always moving around, that hasn't stopped Hensley from having them now as an adult, and from helping others get the animals they want.

"Diana helped me and my daughter adopt some cats," Chapman said. "Anybody that can take that under their wings — it's a lot of responsibility, and it takes a lot of passion and time. We need more people like her."

Hensley said she doesn't think of herself as a hero and would rather the volunteers of O'Malley Alley Cat get credit.

"Our volunteers are the only volunteers who go to the spay and neuter clinic each week for hours at a time," she said. "If you're doing the right thing, there will be people who come forward to help you."

