

In Defense of “Cat Ladies”
by Sonia Sarkesian

I have a question. Every few months, you see a story on TV or on the internet about someone rescuing an animal. There were the Firemen who rescued litter of wolf puppies, the group of movie stars who rescued dolphins, the athletes in the winter Olympics in Sochi who rescued dogs and brought them back to the US. They are all considered heroes on TV and so they should be in my eyes. Yet a woman who rescues a litter of kittens from a wood pile or from under a front porch is considered a crazy cat lady. She is told to just leave them and they will go away. When she calls the Humane Society, they tell her they will determine if they are social. If they decide they are not, then they are euthanized. What cat that is captured in a trap and not accustomed to humans will act social? 85% of cats brought in are euthanized. There are all kinds of rescue groups for dogs; Pit Bull rescue, Greyhound Rescue, Dachshund Rescue, even Detroit Street Dog Rescue that has it's own reality TV show. But you can call twenty different shelters and no one has room for cats. There are a few groups that will help you neuter or spay and vaccinate the cats and then release them back outside.

My great-aunt Helen used to rescue cats and so did my Grandma Bessie. I never heard the phrase “crazy cat lady” back then. I thought they were wonderful! In my life I have rescued nine horses from a foreclosed farm and raised baby ducklings separated from their mother in my pond. I've taken in baby birds that have fallen from their nest and rescued a toad from a sewer that my mother actually wrote a book about. I did not set out to rescue cats, but I cannot in my heart allow them to die outside or otherwise live a very hard life. So I have rescued too many cats. I've begged family and friends to adopt and have found homes for some, but I have ended up with too many. So am I a “Crazy Cat Lady”? I am.

I believe all animals deserve a chance in life. I am just someone who would like to see a change in the way the media portrays cat rescues. They usually show a woman who hoards cats and has 100+ in her house. Then people shake their heads and reference the “crazy cat lady”. In the meantime, women who mean well and try to do the right thing in finding homes for these stray cats are left with no one to turn to for help. They are made to feel ashamed instead of being treated as a hero!