



Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Shelter for Special Needs Cats & Exotic Reptiles * Vol. XI, Issue 2 * Fall 2014



Cinnamon Toast

Faith

Chester

Neko

Hank

Jazzy

WITTY KITTIES, INC. MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 2000, Witty Kitties provides quality care and shelter to cats with specific chronic medical needs within the five-state area we serve.

Our organization is committed to collaborating with local humane organizations in rescue work and low-cost spay/neuter services.

We provide rescue, care, and appropriate housing for a variety of reptiles, as well. As part of our overall service to the community, Witty Kitties works to educate the public regarding proper care of these companion animals and, ideally, to find permanent, quality homes for them.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jenni Doll, DVM, President
Torben Platt, the Reptile Guy
Kathleen Schoon, Volunteer Coordinator
Trish Wasek, Webmaster
John McLaughlin, Infrastructure
Amy Holcomb, Facebook Coordinator
Maggy Tomova, eBay Sales Manager

My semi-annual "why I don't have a cell phone this time" excuse...

by Jenni Doll, DVM

It seems I need to send out a message like this way too often, and when I do I just loathe myself.

I, for the billionth time, have no cell phone. Well, I HAVE the phone, just no use of it. I am not one of those moms who had to keep reminding her teenage son to be careful not to lose or break his phone. Joseph had his first cell phone for three years without incident. I, on the other hand, went through at least three phones during that time. Joseph was constantly telling me how bad I was with my phones

I lose phones because I seem to be constantly running around doing too many things at once, and letting other things go. I also break phones because I tend to be carrying too many things at once and drop it, or have it where I shouldn't, like by water. Usually the incident involves animals.

Today is no different.

We have officially lived in the new house for almost two weeks, yet are still moving stuff in. Today I scheduled the kitty move, my pet kitties.

It started out fine. I first got Kirsten to school at 7:30, got groceries, and took the dogs for a walk (all the while carrying Calvin, the stray kitten Torben found last night, rail-thin with a broken leg).

I went to the old house, did outside chores, and then went into the house and crated the kitties, two of which probably haven't been in a crate since they were kittens. They were mad, to say the least. As they cried and scratched I loaded their accessories.

Driving to the new house, I saw Schoonie, the male emu, walking

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Ruff is a handsome, grey FIV+ kitty who doesn't have a mean bone in his body. He's been with us since May, 2010. Don't you think that's long enough??

A Girl and Her Cat: A Love Story

by Amy Holcomb

The throwaway girl and the throwaway cat met on my deck in the spring of 2001.

The girl is Cynthia, my daughter who I adopted later that year when she was 8. She had moved into my home after being in foster care most of her life. She had been through two disrupted adoptions, meaning she had lived with two families who were supposed to adopt her, but they decided not to adopt her because they couldn't or wouldn't deal with her challenging behaviors related to her autism. During this time she had been separated from an older brother she dearly loved and a foster mom and friends she was close to.

The cat was Howie, a two year old handsome gray and white cat who had been thrown out by the neighbors down the street because he peed in the house. He wasn't neutered, and he was probably marking his territory. A few neighbors and I fed Howie but he had no home and had been living on the streets for two years.

When Cynthia moved in with me, I had four cats. She was excited to have pets, but my cats wanted nothing to do with this loud-talking, tantrum-throwing girl who had moved into their quiet peaceful home. Even though Cynthia was glad to finally have a forever home, she was a sad girl dealing with a lot of significant losses. I knew how cats can make a person feel better and bring comfort but my cats stayed far away from Cynthia.

When Cynthia was sad, she would sometimes go on my deck for a good cry, and that's where she met Howie as he was making his rounds of the neighborhood. They became fast friends, and it's not an exaggeration to say that they saved each other's lives. They spent a lot of time together on my deck that summer. Cynthia finally had a cat to comfort and

love her, and Howie had his very own person who loved him dearly.

As fall came, and it started to get colder, I was worried about Howie facing his third winter outside. Cynthia was begging to adopt him, and Howie tried his hardest to get in the house when we opened the door. How could I resist this girl and this cat? I made an appointment with our veterinarian and took Howie to be fixed up before he moved in with us.

He was treated for fleas, worms, and an upper respiratory infection, and, of course, he was neutered. Even though I was the main cat caretaker, Howie knew his place was with Cynthia.

Howie's move into our home went very smoothly (he always used the litter box). He immediately made himself at home, and my other cats accepted him with no problems. Howie did, however, insist on going outside every day to continue to patrol his neighborhood.



It didn't take long for me to realize that this cat that the neighbors had thrown out like a piece of trash was no ordinary cat. He came whenever Cynthia called his name. If he wouldn't come for me when I called him when he was outside, I had Cynthia call him, and he would come running. He went to bed every night with Cynthia, and when she was feeling sad, she would call him and he would come to comfort her. I let him out of her room at night when I went to bed, and every morning when he heard her alarm go off, whether he was inside or outside, he would go running to her room to wish her a good morning. I don't think I've ever seen such a strong bond between a person and her cat.

Howie also had a special way with other cats. When Cynthia talked me into adopting a puppy, Fluffy,

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around in front of Witty Kitties. This meant he was NOT in the pasture where he belonged.

Emus are easily stimulated into crazy racing about, out of control, with no destination in mind. So I calmly tried to walk Schoonie home, which didn't work.

I then saw the female emu, Flynnie, at the fence. I hoped to get Schoonie in through the gate she was near, but couldn't leave it open for fear she would then leave the pasture as well. I called a friend, hoping she would be home so she could man the gate. No answer.

Trotting, frustrated, I started to put my phone into my sweatshirt pocket. I decided against it because I thought my wallet and keys would make it fall out. So I put it in my mouth while freeing up some cattle panels with which to corral the emu. I bit too hard, really hard, and cracked the screen.

I know folks who still have working phones with cracked screens. I also know someone (you know who you are.... Christi) who flushed hers down the toilet and can still use it! Does mine work? It did long enough to talk to my friend when she called back. The phone accepted the call without my prompt. It has not worked since.



Hey, we didn't bite your phone!

The phone is only about 8 months old.

Do I really think I'm as stupid as I say I am in situations like this? No. Careless? No. I'm afraid I am a person who has more in her

We're on **ebay!!!**

Little did we know what was in "store" for us when Maggy Haslett-Tomova joined the WK Board of Directors. She dreamed of developing a steady stream of income for Witty Kitties, and even had a plan!

Many hours of taking photos, writing descriptions, and uploading later, Maggy is on her way to fulfilling her dream. Last month she sold over \$300 worth of items on eBay to benefit Witty Kitties. As Maggy gets more experience, she hopes to do even better [ed. note: we think \$300/month is pretty darn good!].

Have some items you'd like to re-gift? How about Christmas decorations you've not used to years? Anything you'd like to donate for sale will earn Witty Kitties 100% of the sale price. Just drop off items at the shelter with a note saying they are for eBay.

There's a link on the wittykitties.org home page to Maggy's eBay listings. She has quite an eclectic collection that will be continually updated. Check it out when you need a small gift or stocking stuffer!

life than she should. I have no business keeping up with all I think I should be doing. Therefore I hope to downsize my responsibilities. Will I? I had better. I can't afford the mistakes I tend to make when overwhelmed. (Did I mention I did \$2,700 in damage to my van simply by backing into something in my own driveway? This is in addition to backing into something completely different only last summer, in the same driveway, and with the same van!)

So, if it seems I am reluctant to take on more animals than I used to, it is not because I don't want to. It is because I simply can't. Witty Kitties has a smaller population on purpose. I felt I was not providing the medical care the kitties need.

Finally, I did get Schoonie in. Now I need to walk the fence to figure out how the heck he got out.

Wish me luck.

Volunteer Corner

Manny, the Midnight Manx

by Tim Van Loh

Manny got outside tonight while I was talking to Amy. A real slick move (he had just entered the commons room from Room 1 and bolted out).

He rushed out into the night. I tried to catch up to him as him moved down towards the cylinder. He put speed on to evade me (he knows he is quicker as he has done it before and he knows when he is in open territory—things are not like inside).

A neighbor had stopped in earlier looking for her black and white cat, Mickey, who had been missing since Sunday around noon. That now seemed spooky.

I searched for Manny for the better part of an hour with a very powerful spotlight. I clanged the food cans, but as he was full from having just eaten, it was ineffective (first time ever!). I called and called with no response. He was nowhere I could see in the ravine or around the new house, including behind it.



Misteree searched with me some of the time—easy to see his glowing eyes and the glowing eyes of the settled-down deer out there. I saw a possum approaching, the raccoon having gone about his nocturnal biz.

Isabelle was unsettlingly absent, creating the possibility of a chase into faraway unfamiliar territory.

Remindful of when I was about 10 years of age, living out in the country, the neighbor's dog, Woods, led our boxer, Count, astray. A railroad engineer called later to let us know Count had been hit by his train (about a mile away - I used to bike down to the old bridge and throw rocks at passing RR cars and look for spikes).



Manny, on watchful patrol.

Searching yet again behind the new house I turned around towards the house and saw there was a cat in the weeds that I must have just walked past without seeing. It wasn't Manny, but I thought it might be Isabelle. No it wasn't. It was Rusty Cooper! He drew close to me as I reached out and patted him, then he moved back into the weeds.



Returning back down the driveway I could see a pair of glowing eyes and some white (!) coming up the drive towards me.

Manny trotted right up to me in a bit of a hurry. He was quite glad to see me. He trilled and flexed his claws into me and I think he was even purring. Where had he been and doing what to create such circumstances?

I gave him Fancy Feast beef & chicken appetizer inside. There was a soft meow that sounded most definitely like an apology at one point while he was in bed. Soon after he gave me a paper-cut scratch on the wrist as his temper returned.

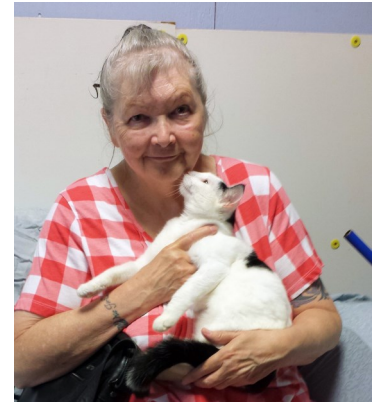
I'm glad he was able to scratch me tonight. He was home.

Ed. Note: Manny is the only witty kitty not available for adoption. He has chosen Tim as his friend for life, and vice-versa.

HAPPY ADOPTIONS!!



Rachel and Matt Harney, of Iowa City, wanted to add one new kitty to keep their other two FeLV+ cats company. Tater Tot (l), who had been with us for 5 years, stole their hearts first. Then Gummi Bear whispered sweet nothings into Rachel's ear, and after waiting 4-1/2 years, she too finally found her dream home. Witty Kitties doesn't seem the same without these two long-time residents, but we are thrilled for both of them!!



Having recently moved to Coralville, Lindy Fordice was looking for a furry companion to keep her company. She met Halo (now called Louise) at our summer fundraiser. We're told that Louise has turned into a perfect cuddler kitty!



Dexter had barely settled in at Witty Kitties before Claire Tucci and Andrew Adrian, of Iowa City, found him. He climbed into Claire's lap and never stopped purring! After looking for weeks, they finally met a kitty who spoke to them... literally!!



Bunny (r) and new brother, Jack, playing hide and seek from mom and dad, Rachel & Mike Boock of Arlington, VA. Bunny waited 2-1/2 years for them to find her, and Rachel tells us she loves giving kisses, chirps when she's happy, and cuddles up with Jack in a real bed at night!

Emily Beck, of Iowa City, adopted her first cat ever, and chose Basil, who is FeLV+. She knows he could live for years, just like Tater Tot and Gummi Bear. She fell in love with this impish little boy, with his crooked, snaggletooth smile, who plays like a kitten and loves everyone he meets!



Memorials and Honorariums

*In memory of my husband, **Dennis H. Blome**, by Sue Blome, Cedar Rapids.*

*In memory of **Murray**, the stray cat who adopted Darren, Alice, Christopher, Hannah, and Lauren Pittman as his family. Rest in peace, sweet boy, by Dona Pearce, Muscatine.*

*In memory of **Lucifer**, Torben's good buddy and a really nice snake, by Dona Pearce, Muscatine.*

*In memory of **Tootsie**, Jenni's naughty, but lovable, little doggy, by Dona Pearce, Muscatine.*

*In memory of **Nancy Fultz**, one of the most caring people on the planet. How wonderful that Nancy was able to touch the lives of so many at Witty Kitties, by Dona Pearce, Muscatine.*

*In memory of **Pahsa**, dear cat of Pat Schabo, by Jo & Roger Rayborn, Cedar Rapids.*

*In honor of **Jenni Doll** and **Torben Platt**, by Debra Lee, Iowa City.*

*In memory of witty kitty **Daisy**, by Kim O'Meara, Cedar Rapids.*

*In honor of **David Morse** and his cat, **Arthur**, by Becky Zack, Palm Harbor, FL, who says "Right back at you, David!"*

ORANGE CAT

by Michelle McIllice, Witty Kitties' supporter

He was a goofy-looking orange cat who had made our neighborhood his home in recent months, and he was already anesthetized when the test results came back. His treating veterinarian interrupted me at work. "What do you want us to do with him? He has a virus. He's not adoptable," she explained.

Was she saying what I thought she was saying? She wanted me to make a life-and-death decision, on the spot, as he lay unconscious, ready for his neuter surgery.

I knew little about FIV but I did know that that I wasn't going to let anyone end his life, not now, not when it was just getting started. I was his hero, having snatched him from the streets. "Well, don't KILL him!" I spluttered into the phone. "Neuter him," I directed. "I'll figure it out."

We already had cats at our home, and I wasn't certain it was safe to bring in a kitty with FIV. Witty Kitties agreed to take him, as long as we gave him a place to live until a space opened up. So the Orange Cat came to live in our upstairs as he awaited a more permanent home at Witty Kitties.

During this time, we consulted with staff and volunteers both there and with the Johnson County Humane Society (JCHS). We learned that FIV is not an automatic death sentence and that it is not unsafe to have him around our other cats, as long as there isn't any deep biting going on. We weren't worried about that - the Orange Cat was missing most of his teeth, and we were learning that he was possibly the most non-aggressive cat in the history of the world.

A few weeks later, as fall faded into winter, Witty Kitties finally had an opening for him. We scheduled his moving day for the first Saturday in December, but those plans were thwarted by a nasty ice storm. So we rescheduled for the following Saturday - and Mother Nature rescheduled as well, sending another bad ice storm to Eastern Iowa. This happened two more times; every time

we had an appointment to move Orange Cat to Witty Kitties, a horrible winter storm hit. After four tries, we gave up. We were falling in love with him, he was getting along great with our other pets, we learned that FIV is very manageable, and we figured out that it was very, very clear that he was meant to be ours anyway.

He's been with us for almost seven years now. We tried to name him Reggie but it just didn't fit - he already responded to Orange Cat (originally a descriptor, not a name), and that doofy name fit him just right. He's sweet, he's cuddly, he's laid back, and he's been healthy. Both JCHS and Witty Kitties have continued to be resources for us as we've had an occasional question or concern relating to his FIV. Without them, we wouldn't have him - and we would have missed out on the opportunity to save, spoil, and love a very special cat!



Do you have a story you'd like to share with our supporters? Send it to "staff@wittykitties.org" and we'll try to put it in an upcoming newsletter!



The Tiny Tabby Sponsors Gato!

We recently received a \$250 donation to sponsor witty kitty Gato for a year (!) from The Tiny Tabby, in Port Ewen, NY. The Tiny Tabby makes plush stuffed kitties that represent cats considered by some to be less-than-adoptable. Their mission is to educate the public, encourage the adoption of "different" cats, and diminish the negative stereotypes of shelter cats. They donate 50% of all of their sales to cat shelters and rescues. The



Tiny Tabby featured black cats in October, and heard about Gato and us from one of their supporters.

Check out their store at www.thetinytabby.com. The plushes are very cute! They also have cat toys, iPhone cases, and more!!

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Howie was not happy with this wild, hyper, barking puppy who liked to chase cats. It didn't take long for Howie to get control over the situation. If Fluffy chased a cat, any cat, Howie would attack him. I can't count the number of times Fluffy came running to me to save him from Howie. With Howie's help, Fluffy was pretty well controlled when it came to chasing cats.

When we adopted Grace, a shy kitty who was scared in her new home, all of our cats except Howie did the usual hissing and swatting when she arrived. Howie, on the other hand, did what he could to help her feel comfortable. She stayed under my bed for days, and Howie was right by her side, sitting quietly, keeping her company and being a good friend to her.

When Grace was brave enough to come out from under the bed, and Fluffy discovered there was a new cat in the house, he went berserk. He barked wildly at her and chased her every time he saw her, scaring her so much that she was afraid to come out of my room. Cynthia and I were having a hard time stopping him from acting like this. When Howie saw what was going on, he attacked Fluffy every time he chased or barked at Grace. Sometimes I would notice Fluffy looking around for Grace, and Howie noticed too, and attacked him just for looking for her!

When our cat Tyger somehow got outside, and I didn't know where he was, I found Howie sitting by the tall grass behind my house, and I knew I would find Tyger there. He stayed there until Tyger was safely back inside.

Howie didn't just look out for our cats, he also helped homeless cats in the neighborhood. More than once I saw him leading hungry homeless cats to the food bowl I left out for them. People who met Howie for the first time would tell me "there's something special about that cat."

I couldn't imagine life without Howie, and I have always regretted that I didn't adopt him sooner. I thought of Howie as being invincible. So it was with

disbelief that I found Howie gasping for breath and crying one early August morning in 2009. He had seemed fine the night before when I gave him his good night pat. I woke up Cynthia, and we rushed him to the emergency vet.

As I suspected, they could do nothing to save his life. He had heart failure, and his lungs were full of fluid. We said our good-byes, and we stayed with him while he was euthanized. We were shocked and heartbroken. We couldn't believe that this wonderful cat, who was such a big part of our lives, was suddenly gone. We were so sad that he that had such a difficult ending to his life.

I was worried about how Cynthia would manage without her best friend. She was often sad and cried for her friend. She slept with his ashes by her pillow. I didn't know what to do to help her. I knew that Howie was irreplaceable and getting her another cat did not seem to be the solution. We kept on trying to live our lives as best as we could as we grieved for Howie. We continued to volunteer at Witty Kitties, a shelter for cats with special needs, every week.

Sometime that fall, a kitten was rescued from a hoarding situation and brought to Witty Kitties. He was probably hours from death, but Dr. Jenni Doll and the great volunteers at Witty Kitties saved his life. He was one sad looking kitten. Cynthia continued to grieve for Howie, and she was so sad all the time.

When Dr. Doll sent a plea to the Witty Kitties volunteers for someone to please adopt this kitten, I asked Cynthia if she wanted him. I reasoned that she had never had a kitten before and every girl should have a kitten at least once in her life. Plus, how can a person be sad when there is a kitten the house?

We brought him home on Halloween. He was still recovering. He was bony, his fur was full of lice eggs (despite several baths), he had diarrhea, runny eyes. and a snotty nose. Cynthia named him Lucky, and her love affair with this scraggly kitten began.

We quickly discovered that Lucky was no ordinary kitten... (to be continued, next issue)

Witty Kitties, Inc.
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Donating to Witty Kitties

Want to honor or memorialize a family member, friend, or beloved pet? You will help support the work we do at Witty Kitties! Just complete this form and mail your check to Witty Kitties, Inc., 3133 Roberts Ferry Rd, Solon, IA 52333.

Your donation is tax deductible. We'll publish your memorial or honorarium in the next issue and send a copy of the newsletter to the person or family you are honoring or memorializing.

No stamp? No problem! Give via PayPal—just click on the PayPal icon on our home page, wittykitties.org.

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Fall, 2014