

Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Special-Needs Shelter

Spring 2005

Witty Kitties' 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 providing low-cost medical care and spay/neuter services for local shelters, rural cat colonies and individuals with multiple cats through Animals All About, a mobile veterinary clinic. We also provide rescue, care and appropriate housing for a variety of reptiles.

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

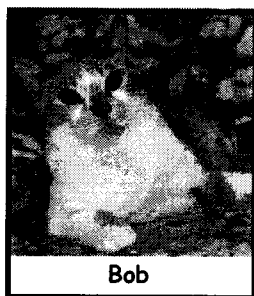
Jenni Doll, DVM
Torben Platt
Chris Schoon
Kathleen Schoon
Annie Tye
Dona Pearce, Editor

Website Address

www.wittykitties.org

What's the Point?

by Jenni Doll, DVM



Bob

Genocide in the Sudan. A tsunami killing countless victims. Extreme poverty taking tens of thousands of children's lives every day worldwide. A few dozen cats who don't have homes? With so many depressing tragedies befalling people, where on earth does a small bunch of kitties come in?

When you think about the greater scheme of things, we all are faced with an opportunity to contribute positively in one way or another. I believe it is our moral obligation, when graced with good fortune, regardless of amount, to extend a helping hand to those less fortunate. So, what's so special about some cats? Why not adopt a child? Join the Peace Corps? Why not do something "more noble"? I've been asked by a few, including myself, how housing and adopting cats, reptiles, and a handful of other critters at Witty Kitties is benefiting the world? Why do it?

Well, there are a couple of reasons. First of all, I do it because I can, and I'm good at it. Giving up public pet practice to help local shelters and humane organizations is something any veterinarian can do. But, there are few who do. I see hundreds of cats a year that will never find homes due to the fact that there are just too few homes, and too many cats. At Witty Kitties, a handful of them are able to have what they've never had before — a home, food, and attention. They are all strays that have been taken in by Good Samaritans who were unable to care for them due to having a contagious virus they didn't want passed on to their other cats. It can be disheartening to go out of your way to help an animal, putting time, money and emotion into it, to be told the only choice for a future is euthanasia. We have been here for many folks who have gratefully driven from as

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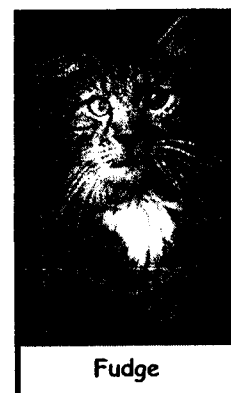
far away as northern Michigan to drop off their little charge. I feel that a happy solution will hopefully give more fuel and motivate that individual to continue doing good deeds, knowing what he/she has done is not in vain.

That brings me to the other reason I feel what we do here is important. With each individual who sees our organization, though not majestic, many feel that if we can make a difference in our little part of the world, maybe they can take on a mission of their own. It's not really a "pay it forward" exercise, but it's close enough. When you see charitable acts being done, you're more likely to perform them yourself.

Ghandi made an important point when he said you can judge the health of a society by how it treats its animals (paraphrased). Every little thing we do sends out a positive or negative effect in some way. With each small act, bigger ones form. I'd like to think that Witty Kitties is contributing a positive rippling effect in the world.

Do You Have What it Takes to Adopt an FeLV Positive Cat?

For most reading this, the terms "feluek", "FeLV", "Cat Aids" are at least terms they've heard. But what exactly is Feline Leukemia Virus? "Why bother" adopting a cat with a potentially deadly and infectious virus? I can give plenty of reasons. But first I'll give some facts about this virus:



Fudge

1. Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) has been around for at least hundreds of years, but was only first recognized and identified in the 1960's.
2. It is a coronavirus in the retrovirus family.
3. It is often compared to HIV because one of its hallmarks is its ability to cause severe immunosuppression, and lymphoma (cancer of the white blood cells).
4. It has never been isolated in a non-feline.
5. The primary mode of transmission from cat to cat is via saliva exchanged.
6. Not all cats exposed to it get infected with it. And not all cats who get infected with it die from it. As a matter of fact, the rough statistics for adult cats are that about one-third of cats exposed to the virus will actually fight it off, assuming it is an otherwise healthy cat. Another one-third will get infected with it, not get ill from it, but carry it and be able to pass it to other cats. The last one-third will die from virus-related illness within 3 years. For kittens exposed to it, the odds for fighting it and surviving are much less.
7. The vaccine helps improve the chances of fighting off the virus, but it is not 100% effective.
8. Similar to HIV, the virus is NOT easily transmitted on objects. Once it dries, it is dead. So, petting a cat with the virus won't put your own cat at risk when you go home to pet it.

OK, so what? Why would you want to adopt an FeLV positive cat? If you have cats at home already, it wouldn't be a great idea, if you don't like the possibility of it being passed along. But if you don't have a cat, or already have an FeLV cat, you can treat it as you would any other kitty. You must keep him/her indoors to avoid exposure of other cats, and to avoid stresses of the outdoors, such as dogs, stray cats, and other scary stuff.

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You obviously would also need to stay current on the rabies vaccine and FVRCP vaccine (“distemper shot”). As a matter of fact, though most house cats don’t need vaccines more than every 3 years, FeLV positive cats may do well to have it annually.

When our cats get a cold, diarrhea, or just don’t feel well, we never assume it is anything more than any of the many “bugs” cats get. We treat them as we would any other cat. However, if the normal treatments are failing, or the cat worsens rapidly showing more severe signs of illness, such as anemia or pneumonia, we know it is likely the virus taking its toll. At that point we decide to euthanize.

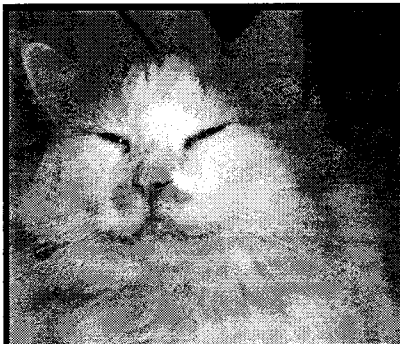
Otherwise, our FeLV cats are big chunky balls of love who love to snuggle, lick and purr anyone willing to sit in “the chair”. If you have never experienced this, you must try it.

If you think about it, the majority of our FeLV cats will be in the category of “never getting sick from it”, as we have been housing them since the year 2000. As time goes on, the ones that succumb from it will do so, leaving a gradually increasing number of healthier cats.

So, it really doesn’t take much to be an FeLV positive cat owner. We have adopted out a few, and the people couldn’t be happier. In one case, the people already had a cat with the virus and wanted a playmate for him. The new kitty was just the thing he needed.

One more tiny fact: As recently as 1991 when I became a vet, it was common for people to automatically euthanize a cat that tested positive for it with the in-clinic test. However, this is NOT recommended today, as the cat may just have been exposed and may fight it off in a few weeks (remember one-third of adults will do so, more if vaccinated for it). Also, the in-clinic tests are extremely sensitive in detecting the virus, and will sometimes pick-up other “similar looking” stuff, causing a false positive test. These cats, even if slightly ill, should be retested in two months.

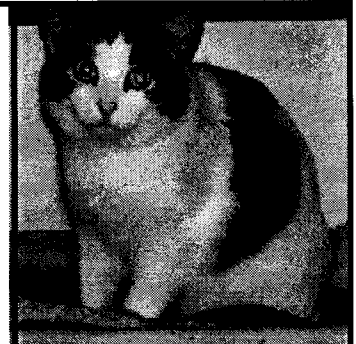
So, that is it in a nutshell. I hope if you find yourself “catless” someday, you’ll consider one of the absolutely wonderful kitties at our shelter. For some reason, they are the goofiest bunch I’ve ever met, but just as sweet and lovable as can be, with lots of personality. I’m not the only one who thinks so. Don’t believe me? Come meet them for yourself!



'Whitmore the Witty'



Life is good at Witty Kitties!

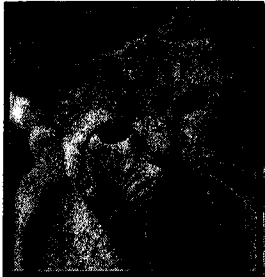


'Billy'

President's Message

by Kathleen Schoon

Are you looking for something fun and worthwhile to do this summer? We're looking for volunteers who can commit to helping us take care of our incredible kitties and the shelter they call home. We need a few people who would be willing to come in the mornings on a reliable schedule to feed, water and (yes, it has to be done) clean the cat rooms.



Mrs. Bigglesworth

This usually entails scooping cat litter, changing paper, sweeping, mopping and renewing food and water. Sometimes medicines are administered when needed. All of this activity always includes giving out affection and love to all the cats who will dance around you and sometimes on top of you as they generally try to thwart your cleaning mission and get your undivided attention while you are in their room. This activity takes a few hours' time out of each day, but the love, affection, appreciation and sheer joy that you get in return is more than you can imagine. It could be several mornings a week or just a few. It's all up to you. There is a possibility that your volunteer time could turn into a small, part-time job as we occasionally have the funds to pay for extra help.

Annie, a college student studying to become a veterinarian, is our only paid staff member and comes in five mornings a week. She doesn't make very much but the work she does is greatly appreciated by the cats and the remainder of the Board of Directors who volunteer their time. I am usually there to help Annie three mornings a week and Torben, Jenni, and Jenny's son Jojo clean in the evenings and on the weekends. This is becoming increasingly difficult, as Jenni and Torben's new baby Kirsten requires lots of time and attention.

These day-to-day chores keep our shelter space presentable and help to keep the cats healthy, fed and happy. The job is very rewarding, as you will receive the constant affection of all of the Witty Kitties and get to know them each personally as they thank you in their own special way for taking the time out of your life in order to make theirs a little bit better.

If this sounds like a job for you...please pick up your phone right now and call **848-3238**. Leave a message with your name and telephone number. Let us know that you are interested in volunteering on a regular basis and we will get back to you as soon as we can. I promise you won't regret it! Plus, when you turn up the radio a little, cleaning the shelter is just like aerobics at your favorite gym - and at Witty Kitties, the exercise is free!

Kathleen Schoon
President

Did You Know. . .?

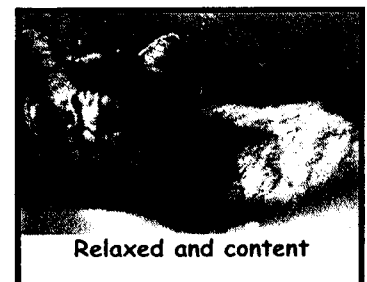
A cat will never break a sweat because it has no sweat glands.

A cat will spend nearly 30% of its life grooming itself.

A cat's ear pivots 180 degrees.

95% of cat owners admit they talk to their cats.

A cat's sense of taste is keener than a dog's sense of taste (and cats would not find this surprising since cats rule and dogs drool!)



Relaxed and content

Wish List

- * Cat Food (Purina Cat Chow - the original formula in the blue bag is the favored brand)
- * Canned cat food for A.M. - used as treats & for medicating
- * Cat Litter - scoopable
- * Donations of skill - carpentry (we'd love to have some catwalks in the shelter!), plumbing, etc.
- * Volunteers - please call to arrange a visit and see just how you can help our furry friends
- * Homes for our special-needs animals
- * Plastic grocery bags, newspapers, paper towels, small paper plates
- * Monetary tax-deductible donations -- any amount is welcomed!



Miss Marple says,
"Thank you!"

We never get tired of telling our supporters just how much we appreciate each and every one of you. Because of you, our jobs are a little easier and our load a little lighter. You're the greatest!

"Witty Kiddies" Club

Taylor Weetman is the newest member of the "Witty Kiddy" Club. She held a birthday celebration at the shelter with her friends and family on April 14. Party-goers cuddled kitties, raved at the reptiles, and played with the menagerie at the Doll/Platt house. Hundreds of pounds of cat chow, litter and toys were donated. Thanks, Taylor! You're awesome!!

Announcing a Wonderful New Business Pet Owners Will Love!

Karla's Keepers

Have you always wanted a professional photo of your pet? Now you can get a beautiful picture of your pet from Karla's Keepers! Karla will meet you at any location and produce the perfect photo.

Visit www.karlaskeepers.net
or call 319-560-0347

Memorials & Honorariums

In memory of 'Gimpy,' pet of Sandy and Bob Fejt, by Wendy and James Tresouthick

In memory of 'Sugar,' beloved cat of Pat Haynes, by Joanne Flynn

In memory of 'Melanie,' beloved cat of Betty Pittman,
by Dona Pearce

In honor of Cynthia Thompson-Adhikari, by Alice Smith & her 5 geriatric kitties

In honor of Marilyn Schipper's birthday, by Valerie Smaith

In Honor of Sandra Kaska & Jerry Kinnamon,
by Robin Cunconan-Lahr

Honoring or memorializing a person or pet pays a special tribute, and helps our shelter animals who cannot help themselves.

Thanks to Chris Schoon for taking on the duties of Web Master! Be sure to visit our much improved web site:

www.wittykitties.org

Witty Kitties T-Shirts Available!

Looking for a way to support Witty Kitties but don't have time to volunteer? How about buying a T-shirt?? T-shirts can be any color you desire, but our logo is either blue or orange. The cost is \$15 for children's shirts and \$20 for adults.



We have the following shirts on hand:

- * Black long-sleeved shirts with an orange logo;
- * White long-sleeved shirts with an orange logo;
- * Black tanks with an orange logo;
- * White tanks with a blue logo; and
- * White short-sleeved T-shirts with a blue logo

Sizes: Childrens S, M, L, and Adult S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL.

We will special order any shirt you like -- in any color -- at NO added cost! Give us a call and place your order. It's that easy! (319) 848-3238.

Exotics Corner

by Torben Platt

As with any animal shelter we have had the unavoidable comings and goings; for example, our African hedgehog passed away after residing in Le'monds room for a couple of years. He had been found in a dumpster in Muscatine and brought in by M.H.S., ending up at our shelter. Like most insectivores, hedgehogs have high metabolisms so their life expectancies are short (4 or 5 years) but it was still a sad occurrence. We also lost Solo, our opossum, whom I'm sure most of you have met when visiting our place. These are also short-lived critters so this wasn't unexpected, either. Jenni had found him in the pouch of his mom (who had been hit by a car)

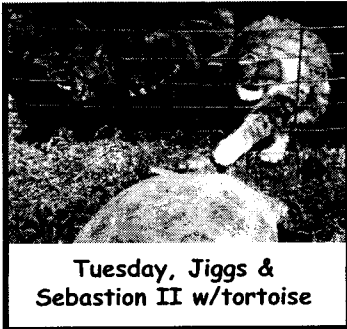
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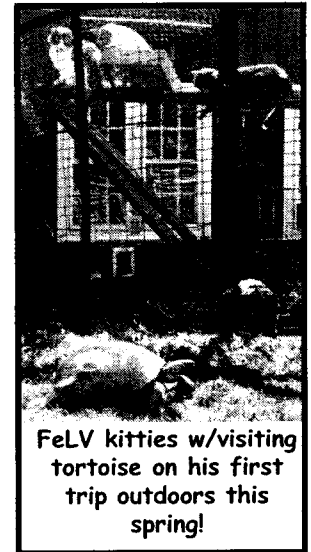
and brought him home. Now I know many people consider these animals pests, and ugly to boot, but Solo was one of the more lovable animals it has been our privilege to meet. He LOVED to be scratched behind the ears and, of course, loved those irresistible treats like rotten cat food and raw eggs. He ambled through our lives (and our house) oblivious to the cat's stares and the dog's barking, and he will be missed.

As far as new arrivals are concerned, we have received four baby alligators (that were illegally for sale in a Scott County pet store) that have immediately taken over the top spot on the cuteness scale among the residents of our shelter. American alligators tend to have more easy-going personalities than crocodiles or caimans, thankfully, but they do grow to be large and potentially dangerous. These four will be residing at a zoo or other facility by that time, so our neighbors need not worry! Our large female burmese python laid a clutch of about 40 or 50 eggs which, like the good mother she and all pythons are, she dutifully coiled around and began to incubate.

Unfortunately, as with dogs and cats, there are more baby Burmese pythons than there are homes for them, so I removed the eggs and disposed of them (with Kathleen's, Annie's, and my step-brother Steig's help).



Tuesday, Jiggs & Sebastian II w/tortoise

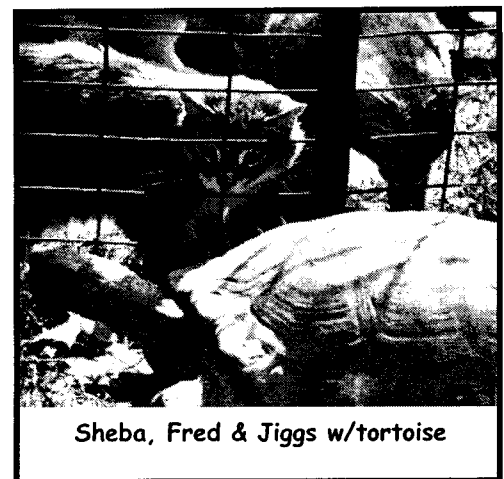


FeLV kitties w/visiting tortoise on his first trip outdoors this spring!

The pot-bellied pigs, emus, llamas, goats, ducks, chickens, iguanas, snakes, turtles, etc. are all very happy that Spring is here and they continue to thrive (knock on wood). Our most cantankerous, aggressive, and down right mean animal (Tootens the crested duck) has only increased his efforts to defend

his territory (our yard) and his woman (Peepins). This means that entering the yard to feed everybody has become a chore fraught with danger. I am very thankful that the emus don't share his attitude!

In closing I would just like to remind everyone to be careful when driving the back roads at this time of year. Many animals are on the move in the Spring and so are particularly vulnerable to being hit by cars. If you come across a slow-moving creature crossing the road, take a little time to let them cross or help them along by moving them to the side of the road to which they were heading. Turtles and snakes are especially in need of your assistance because they are often females looking for a place to lay eggs. Studies in Iowa have found that males have begun to greatly outnumber females in certain species of turtles for this very reason. If you find an injured reptile or a reptile you would like identified, you can always call us. We will be happy to help.



Sheba, Fred & Jiggs w/tortoise

Gifts, Memorials & Honorariums:

Do you have a family member, friend or special pet for whom you would like to provide a memorial or an honorarium? Or, would you just like to give a monetary gift? General donations, memorials or honorariums can be given for a specific person, pet or reason. **Your donation is tax deductible, and we'll publish your memorial or honorarium in a future issue. We'll also send a complimentary copy to the person you honor or the family of the person or pet you memorialize.** Just provide the necessary information below and then send this form back to us in the envelope enclosed in this issue (remember to add a stamp). Thank you! Everything you give helps us care for the animals that are already a part of our shelter and also permits us to help even more animals looking for a second chance.

Gift: \$ _____

Honorarium for: (name) _____ Person Pet

Memorial for: (name) _____ Person Pet

Send notification to: (name) _____

_____ (City, State, Zip)



How to find Witty Kitties:

Take I-380 to the Swisher/Shueyville exit (No. 10).
Go east 1.0 mile to Club Road (becomes Curtis Bridge Rd.).
Turn right.
Go 1.0 mile to Sandy Beach Rd. & turn left.
Go 1.1 miles to Roberts Ferry Rd. & turn right, then left at our
3rd driveway (3133 Roberts Ferry Rd.)

Please call (319) 848-3238 & leave a message to schedule an appointment.

Witty Kitties
3133 Roberts Ferry Rd.
Solon, IA 52333
(319) 848-3238

