



Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Special-Needs Shelter for Cats & Critters * Volume IX, Issue 1 * Winter 2012



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 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.

Website URL: WittyKitties.org

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DID YOU KNOW???

You could see this issue in living color if you subscribed to an email copy of the newsletter! Let us know your wishes at staff@wittykitties.org.



Witty Kitty Isabelle is looking for her forever home

IN- 'SA-NƏ-TĒ

by Jenni Doll, DVM

I'm not so sure I agree with Albert Einstein's definition of "insanity," doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. When I first heard it many years ago, it made sense. But since then, I've found that nature throws in so many variables to the equation that it is almost impossible to do the same thing exactly the same as done previously.

No, I go more for those traditional definitions: "dementia, lunacy, madness, craziness, mania," and so forth. However, even those aren't necessarily a bad thing. I think some of the most fun, creative, effective things I've done in life were during a period of certain madness. However, that is not to say my **worse** ones were not made during times like that.

No, I'll give an example of just one of many insane days I experienced a few months ago. It doesn't involve a crazy animal chasing me, or Torben getting bit (those fall into my humorous stories), nor does it involve an animal escaping or doing anything bizarre. No, the only species I believe is capable of true insanity is the human.

Karla Sibert, of Iowa Equine Rescue and Awareness League, often uses me as her veterinarian in abuse/neglect cases when the equine-specialists are not available. The scenario is routine. I look at the horses. If I feel they are showing signs of endangerment and/or neglect, I say so and they are removed from the premises, with the assistance of law enforcement, of course.

The two stallions in this story were of a very low body score, and showed evidence of untreated injuries of the limbs especially. Law enforcement and another veterinarian besides me agreed on their deficiency in care. I wrote a report and submitted it. But, as is often the case, the owner contested it (I find it amazing how much time, money, and energy people will put into getting their animals back despite the fact they never gave 'em a glance previously). **Insane.**

I received the subpoena. Off Karla and I drove to one of quite a few cases like this. We drove two hours to (fill in the blank) county courthouse. It was as most old courthouses are -- huge, spacious, beautiful. Admittedly, I still find them fascinating to be in. The architecture, art, and history seem to be written all over them.

We went to the clerk's office to sign in and show our subpoenas. Oddly, though, the office was locked. That was not something we had seen before. A note on the door said that due to budget cuts, the office would be open only on certain days and for shorter hours. The attorney on the case said not to worry, that she would take care of making sure it was recorded that we had arrived, and do whatever else the clerk's office would have done.

The courtroom was on the third floor. At least we had a nice view of the atrium up there. It wasn't unusual to wait a while. So Karla and I chatted and people

(continued on page 2)

watched. The main people we watched were the officers sitting on the bench about 20 feet from us. When we first got to the hallway where we were to wait, there were four of them. Two were county deputies, one a jail officer, and I believe the other a patrolman. They were chatting, shooting the breeze, and obviously waiting for their own court cases to start.

We waited about an hour before the county's lawyer said she was still working on something. She asked Karla for some advice, as it is not uncommon for many animal cases to go to court, so even the lawyers aren't up to speed on some of the logistics -- for instance, who pays for the horses' care while under Karla's care. The lawyer went away.

I noticed there was a third jail officer in the group near us by now. Just like Karla and me, none of them had set foot in the courtroom, either.

Another hour went by. Two officers left without going into the room, and a new deputy arrived. I started calculating in my brain what they made hourly and how much it cost taxpayers for them to be sitting there. Karla and I whispered how nice it would be to get paid what they were.

The lawyer came back. "He (the defendant) wants the horses back." Well, no duh. That is why we are here, right? I thought. She and Karla talked. I kind of space out during these times, so I don't know exactly what was being discussed. I just wanted to go in and testify so we could get out of there.

"I'm having him come over to talk to you." Now that was unprecedented. Karla seemed as bewildered as I did. But, sure enough the man, the same one who allowed three of his horses to starve, one to the point of not being able to walk and who had to be destroyed on the spot, was standing by us with his hand out. We both shook it. Why? **Insanity**. That is why. I don't have the courage to say, "No thank you, I don't shake the hand of animal abusers." I'll digress here for a moment. I felt the same as when I shook the hand of the owner of the Iowa City pet store that sells puppies. They come from a broker who buys them from puppy mills. He claims not, yet never has allowed anyone to know exactly where they do come from. The microchips don't lie. But he does.

But, anyway, the guy gave us a sob story, how his ex was to blame, and they seemed fine a week ago, and on and on and on. Once again I tuned him out. I did hear the words, "I've had horses most of my life," as though it meant he actually knew what he was doing. From the experience of having horses when I was younger, and not knowing a fraction of what I should have, this isn't always true. I knew so little, and for that my horses suffered in their own way.

He also wanted to breed them, despite the fact that the

value of horses has dropped so significantly that people abandon them in pastures all over the state rather than keep them. Auction prices aren't even worth the cost of getting them to the auction. Breed? **Insane**.

I'll cut to the chase. The lawyer let the guy have his horses. No court case. The guy was to pay Karla for her care of the horses. He would pick them up on such and such a day.

We were at the end of our third hour in the courthouse when three of the officers who had been waiting went into their courtroom one at a time for a few minutes each. What the other officers were there for I can only guess. But when we finally left, four officers were still in the hallway. "Wow, must be an important case," I thought. But, I'll bet it cost a whole lot of money to have them all there. Gee, the budget cuts must be working, right? **Insane**.

Karla and I did the ranting and raving as we often do after something like this, regardless of how the case goes. We were both really peeved that we had been subpoenaed for a case that never happened. Our entire day was taken away. Well, at least there will be somewhat of a compensation from the county.

A few days later the horses were back in the man's possession. Two weeks hadn't gone by before I heard he was having difficulty being able to feed them. Surprise, surprise.

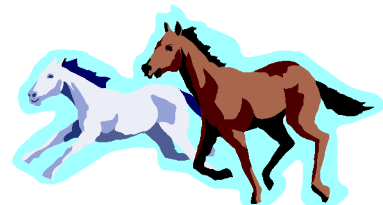
I griped about the whole thing for a few days, but let it go eventually. But a real sock to the gut was when I opened the envelope from the county. It was my compensation for my entire day. The county can redeem themselves. Remember, they have no trouble paying multiple officers for doing nothing.

It was a check for \$5.00.

That is as in FIVE-O.

Insane.

But you know what? I'm cursed with the desire to do right by animals when it comes to people not being of sound mind or reason, another definition of **Insane**. And, unfortunately, if that same county asked for my help again, would I do it again? Probably. **Insane**.



EXOTIC CORNER

by Torben Platt

Greetings from the Exotic Corner! Most of the denizens of the Exotic Corner seem to be making it through winter healthy and happy (knock on wood).



The coyotes, Scoopy and Minnie, remain their rascally selves, while Ben (the bear) has slowed down a little and put on a lot of weight. He spends most of the day sleeping, but hasn't really begun hibernating, and probably won't at this point. A treat is enough to coax him out of his house.

In emus, the male is the one to sit on and incubate the eggs, and ours did so in a most dedicated fashion. He remained on the clutch for about a month without eating or drinking (again, typical of the species) through snow and freezing temps before Jenni couldn't stand it anymore and removed the eggs. They are now in the warmth of the reptile room. I hope the duty-bound father emu is feeling relieved. I know I would be.

Speaking of the reptile room, everybody in there seems to be doing well, also. Unfortunately, we lost Kirsten's favorite snake, the corn snake, probably due to old age. We have also had a couple of escapes, but they have

been found before they wandered into Lex's pen (which would undoubtedly be curtains). We are now up to six Boa Constrictors, four of which are very adoptable, and four Ball Pythons, two of which are adoptable. Other adoptable reptiles include two three-toed box turtles, two sliders, and a couple of Iguanas. Of course, we still have many other reptiles, but most are obviously not adoptable. Lex (alligator) should hit the 10-foot mark by summer, if he isn't there already, and I expect our Reticulated Python to get to 20 feet by that same time. Lucifer, our 15-foot Burmese Python, is his usual friendly self and still makes the occasional trip to a school, library or rec center, where he is always the star of the show. With the addition of Mr. T, we now have two Sulcata Tortoises, but, unfortunately, they simply don't get along. This means Sully gets the run of the garage, while Mr. T is in the Iguana room. I'm sure both of them can't wait for summer. Our two Spectacled Caimans are doing well also, and will happily demonstrate this by lunging at any passers-by in the hopes of a quick snack (like a finger).

I'm going to wrap this up now, as I can almost feel our editor and president, Dona, waiting and tapping her fingers in a disapproving manner so she can get on with putting out the newsletter. I believe our articles were due two days ago. Sorry, Dona!

And, as always, thanks to all the supporters of Witty Kitties.

Torben

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD. . .

by Trish Wasek



Wow, have you ever seen so much food? If you look carefully, you'll see that Brando, a self-appointed guard kitty, is perched atop this mountain of food. Each cardboard "tray" contains a dozen cans of wet food, and the stack is three trays deep and over four feet high! (So far, there's only been one toppling of a portion of the mountain due to inexperienced leaping...)



Where'd all the food come from? Well, we were really lucky to qualify for the ARF Rescue Food Bank program late last summer. ARF (Animal Resource Foundation of Iowa, www.arfiowa.org) is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of resources to animal shelters and rescue organizations. ARF is affiliated with the Rescue Bank, a national pet food distribution program (www.rescuebank.org), and received 40,000 pounds of cat and dog food last August!



Volunteers from many different area shelters unloaded, sorted, and distributed huge pallets of food to local shelters and rescues. The food was donated to the national food bank by the manufacturers. All Witty Kitties had to pay for was its portion of the transportation costs. Sandy Miller, of ARF, coordinated the whole process. It was a lot of hard work, but for Brando and his pals, the payoff is good quality canned food for months to come!



WAY TO GO, GUYS! YOU DID YOURSELVES PROUD!

by Trish Wasek

Our incredibly generous donors made this year's holiday fundraising effort the most successful we've ever had! Your donations, which amounted to nearly a quarter of our annual operating budget, will be used for all the things we need to keep the kitties and reptiles comfy, including heat, food, litter, and medicine. If you haven't joined this awesome group of supporters, there's still time! Simply use the envelope included with this newsletter, or visit our website, www.wittykitties.org, and click on the PayPal icon on the home page. THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL – we couldn't do it without you!

Jeff & Tracey Bellach, Marion, IA
Glorine Berry, Iowa City, IA
Eric & Mackenzie Bochtler, Mercer Island, WA
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Cynthia Charlton, Wellman, IA
Gary & Gail Clark, Cedar Rapids, IA
Caroline Dieterle, Iowa City, IA
Stacy Dykema, Amenia, NY
Dean Eberly, Iowa City, IA
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Alice Smith, Cedar Rapids, IA
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Solon High School Band
Randy & Kris Sterner, Marion, IA
Julie Tabor, DVM, Cedar Rapids, IA
Cynthia Thompson-Adhikari, Cedar Rapids, IA
Maggy Tomova, Iowa City, IA
Joe & Sally Tye, Solon, IA
Jean Walker, Iowa City, IA
Jeff & Terrie Webster, Solon, IA

THANKS TO LEASH ON LIFE!

Thank you so much for the overwhelmingly generous mountain of donated kitty treats, toys, canned food galore, other yummy food, and litter. Leash on Life is our favorite place to shop and has the most generous clientele in the world!

We have all been enjoying extra awesome tasty food, and have been working up a good appetite playing with all of our new toys. Thank you for remembering us!



*Manny repurposing the
Leash on Life donation
box*

Most sincerely,



All the Witty Kitties

VOLUNTEER CORNER

by Jenny Harris

My connection to Witty Kitties came about when I was a freshman at Iowa about five years ago now. When I was in junior high, we read a book called "Caged." It was about a girl who had shoplifted, and as part of her punishment, she had to work at an animal shelter. This idea intrigued me, so I went home and proceeded to ask my mom if I needed to commit a crime to be able to work at an animal shelter. Luckily, she said no; otherwise, I might be on a much different path today.

My mother and I looked up local shelters and started training at the Animal Rescue League of Iowa in Ankeny. We made a routine of going to the shelter every Sunday. About five years later, it came time for me to move to Iowa City for college. I had planned on continuing to volunteer, but just never ran across a shelter or organization. During my second semester of college, I took an Intro to Law class that required 20 hours of volunteer service at any organization or non-profit we wanted. I searched the Internet and found Witty Kitties.



Jenny Harris with her niece, Cailynn

It's been about four years since I started volunteering at Witty Kitties. I remember the very first cat that caught my eye. His name was Zeus and he was a gorgeous Siamese in Room one. We bonded instantly and I thought I would never get attached to a cat the same way as him. Little did I know that I would end up having many more feline friends over the next four years to bond with. I must admit I think I secretly tell them all they are my favorite, and I hope that they don't catch on. Each cat has so much personality and individuality that it makes my time there anything other than dull or routine.

PARDON US -- THIS SEAT IS TAKEN



COUCH POTATO KITTIES! Ever wonder how our kitties spend their afternoons? Here's Charlie (in better days), Walternate, Garfield, Molly, Baby, Ruff, and Trevor, all getting ready for a winter cat nap. They love their couch, and each other!

(Photo by Tim VanLoh)

GOODBYE, DEAR CHARLIE

As we went to press, Jenni made the toughest of decisions. It was time to euthanize Charlie Kangaroo Butt. Charlie was our very first FIV+ kitty -- he arrived almost 11 years ago. He was a double-whammy kitty who also had cerebellar hypoplasia, making him a little wobbly but even more precious. We've been watching him go downhill slowly over the past few months, due to thyroid and other problems, and we knew his days were numbered. We loved him up as much as possible over the last few weeks. He even got "roaming rights" throughout the shelter.



Finally, there was no question that it was time. Many, many, many tears were shed. Godspeed, Charlie Kangaroo Butt. You'll be in our hearts forever.

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In memory of my husband, **Don**, and in honor of **Dr. Jenni Doll**, who helped us in a time of need. God bless you. By Margie Sims, Cedar Rapids

In memory of **Donald Sims**, by Marilyn Johnson, Solon, Steve & Laura Mallicoat, Solon, & David and Julie Scott, Bettendorf

In memory of **Jean Schmoll**, by Kim O'Meara, Cedar Rapids

In memory of **Betty Pittman**, by Dana Pittman, Letts, IA

In memory of **Rita M. Koeppen**, by Doug Fuller, Marion

In memory of **Socrates, Cubby, Cuddles, & Oreo**, by Glorine Berry, Iowa City

In memory of **Spot**, my diva boy cat, by Gail Clark, Cedar Rapids

In memory of Gail Clark's cat **Spot**, who passed away on 12/9/11, by Bill & Barl Satkamp, Cedar Rapids

In memory of **Digger**, our special "buff boy," by Gary and Karen Schroeder, Brooklyn, IA

In memory of our rescue kitties, **Jasper, Jessie, Jeep, Jilly & Muffet**, by Carolyn & Mike Borkowski, Bedford, NH

In honor of **Hissy Chin**, aka "Tickle Puss," and **Odo**, two lovely cats whom I lost this past year, by Amy McBeth, North Liberty

In memory of our cat **Snickers**, by Bill & Fawn Tendick, Libertyville, IL

In honor of Jo & Roger Rayborn's beloved cats: **Josie, Molly, Emma, Tess & Missy**, by Peg & Jim Kubczak, Mount Vernon, IA

In loving memory of Barb Dunbar's beloved cat, **Rowdy**, by Peg & Jim Dubczak, Mount Vernon, IA

In memory of **Rusty**, who was so lucky to have found Witty Kitties, and in memory of my sister's puppy **Jack**, who escaped his collar while being walked and was hit by a car. **Rusty & Jack**, rest & play in peace, by Janet Schminkey, Marion

In honor of **Moxie**, Mallory Engle's adopted Witty Kitty, by Janet Engle, Marion

In honor of **Kristina Venzke & Julie Venzke** -- Season's Best Wishes! By Regina Miller, Lone Tree

In memory of **Eleanor Louise**, by David Crombie, Arlington, VA

In memory of **Evelyn Rae Watter** -- she shared her kindness with all animals. By Veronica Wieland, North Liberty, IA

WANNA BE FRIENDS?



Hockey, the blue-tongued skink, and **Isabelle**, the heartworm+ kitty, met at a Girl Scout winter day camp event last December. Who says scaly things and furry things can't be best friends?

BEAR-Y GOOD FRIENDS!



Remember Ben? Well, he's sitting pretty these days, and not just when he's in his tub! Witty Kitties put out a call a few months ago asking if anyone had meat that was past its prime or sell-by date that could be used for Ben and the coyotes that also share his enclosure. A volunteer with another local rescue group came to Witty Kitties' rescue! Jill Hess volunteers with Little Paws and also works part-time at HyVee on Mt. Vernon Road. She has been meeting Kat Schoon in Cedar Rapids at least once a week with a box or two full of un-saleable meats from HyVee. Sometimes she even has some bags of donated dog food. The food is slightly outdated or the packaging is incorrect. Dean Rettenmeier works in the meat department at this HyVee, and boxes it up for her. Randy Clark, the manager, signs off on releasing the food to Witty Kitties.

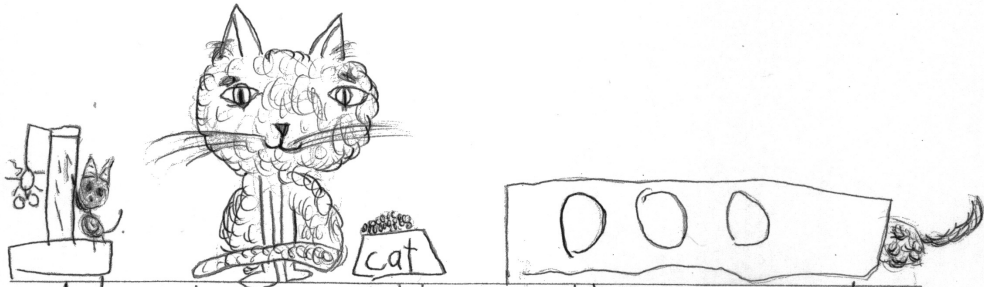
Witty Kitties (and Ben and the coyotes, too) say a BIG THANK YOU to HyVee, Jill, Dean & Randy!

KIRSTEN'S CORNER



[Editor's Note: This is a new addition to the newsletter from Jenni and Torben's daughter, Kirsten. After Kirsten campaigned to be allowed to adopt Henry, Jenni finally gave in, provided Kirsten would scoop his box. So far, so good. And they've been keeping each other warm, snuggled up together, all winter long]

Witty Kitties By Kirsten



At Witty Kitties they have lots and lots of cats. Witty Kitties is where cats go when they have problems. My favorite cat there is Henry he is my baby every night I tuck Henry in his bed. I also taught Henry how to play dead. Henry's problem is that he got his ears cut off. But my mom fixed it. I like Witty Kitties.

Witty Kitties, Inc.
3133 Roberts Ferry Rd.
Solon, IA 52333

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

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



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Gifts, Memorials and Honorariums

Want to honor or memorialize a family member, friend or beloved pet? Want to give a monetary gift to Witty Kitties? Just fill out the information below and send your check in the envelope provided in this issue. **Your donation is tax deductible, and we'll publish your memorial or honorarium in a future issue. We'll also send a complimentary copy of the newsletter 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 (don't forget to add a stamp!). No stamp? No problem! **Now, you can also give online — check out our website (www.wittykitties.org).**

Gift: \$ _____

Memorial for: (name) _____ Person Pet

Honorarium for: (name) _____ Person Pet

Send notification to: (name) _____

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Winter 2012

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