

Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Shelter for Special Needs Cats & Exotic Reptiles * Vol. XIII, Issue 1 * Winter 2016



Cinnamon Toast

Snickers

Beau

Cassy

Hank

Libby

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



Good-bye Sammy. You were a difficult young llama, but grew into a loving and adorable creature. I'll miss your gentle eyes and having you smell my hair. Jenni

Fatal Attraction (maybe)

by Jenni Doll, DVM

Let me set the scene for you:

Last Monday morning as I was getting ready for work, and Kirsten was getting ready for school, Torben was preparing for his day off. We were moving about as usual, the dogs getting more and more excited. They know that on a day off from work for either Torben or me, they get an earlier and longer walk than usual. Torben had put on his boots and walked into the living room.

"There's something in my boot," he said.

"Huh, weird," I said.

"I think something is biting me!"

"It's a spider," I said. "Yep. Bet it's a spider."

He sat down. "Ouch, it really hurts."

"Spider. Seriously. Spider. I'm not looking."

(In case you are one of the rare people on the planet who do not know, I must tell you I am afraid of big spiders. I had once put my rain boots on barefoot, then felt pain. I took the boot off, and tipped it up-side-down. A very very very large spider plopped out. I feel like barfing just thinking about it. Maybe I'll stop typing a bit. My hands are shaking.)

OK, better now. We all now know, big spiders creep me out!

Back to Torben in pain.

"Ouch, it really does hurt!!!"

I was about to walk into the bedroom, saying "Ewwwww. Spider!", to get away from the huge spider that I was certain was in his boot and would soon be left to crawl around our home, when I turned to look out

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of morbid curiosity. Torben had just removed his boot. Attached to the end of his big toe was a flapping brown bat!

It was quite surreal now that I think of it. But the moment I saw it all I could think was "Man, we failed."

The reason for my reaction is a story that starts 72 hours earlier (ooh, sounding like a movie now, isn't it?)!

A local shelter will once in a while entrust us with a bat that had been taken in after found to be flying around a home. At this time of year bats are sleeping in crawl spaces and attics and such, enjoying the 40-something degree or so temps, huddled together, conserving their energy stores. Once in a while one may wake up, fly around a bit, then rearrange itself in the group and go back to sleep. When this happens it may accidentally end up in the living quarters of a home. Surprised homeowners typically freak out and either kill it, or take it to animal control to be killed, so it can be tested for rabies.

(I find this fact rather sad for bats, because less than 3% of the bats tested in Iowa in the past decade actually have rabies. If a bat is in your home and you haven't been touched by it, your chance of getting rabies is zero. BUT, I know rabies is fatal, and I see why people freak out. On the other hand, I just hate mosquitoes and I know the cute little flying fuzzy mouse-vampire-looking things love them, and need a chance to do their job.)

Anyway, this particular bat, I'll call Bootsie, was somewhat asleep when we got him, and had been kept cool to prevent his instinct to wake up to spring. Unfortunately, on day two he was scratching around quite a bit. When that happens, you have to start feeding the bat. Bootsie enjoyed a meal of "super worms," those gross mealworm-looking things you may have

seen people eating on the TV show Fear Factor. Bootsie ate surprisingly well, grabbing the worm with his little claws, eating it like a kid eats an ice-cream cone, bite, lick, lick, lick, bite, lick, lick, lick... Our plan was to put together supplements to add to the worms the following day, to get Bootsie through the rest of the winter.

Here is where Torben and I failed Bootsie. We couldn't find the screen cage we own. The screen is important because it won't damage the bat's wings if it flaps around, and it is something the bat can cling to, yet not escape. We did have a rodent cage with bars less than a centimeter apart. This is what we put Bootsie into after he had eaten his fill. We then put the cage in our bedroom (cats don't go in there, so couldn't bother him), and went to sleep ourselves.



Needless to say, Bootsie had squeezed out of the cage and flown around before resting comfortably in Torben's boot. So we failed Bootsie terribly, as you will see in a moment.

But at this point you might be thinking. "OMG Jenni, what about rabies? Torben could have rabies now!"

That did enter our minds early on. I have been receiving rabies immunizations regularly, so was not afraid for myself when feeding him, or pulling

his little mouth off Torben's toe. Torben, on the other hand, had only received one immunization more than a decade ago. I didn't like that at all. He, however, didn't worry much at first.

The morning of the Bootsie-flapping-wildly-on-Torben's-toe incident, I went to work and pondered the situation. Torben didn't want to kill the bat to have it tested. I didn't either, but.....

I had noticed that Bootsie didn't eat well after the boot incident. (I used a worm to help get him off the

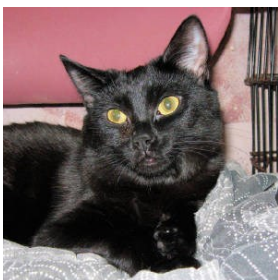
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For the Love of Cats

by Amy Holcomb

“When a man loves cats, I am his friend and comrade, without further introduction.” --Mark Twain, *Who is Mark Twain?*

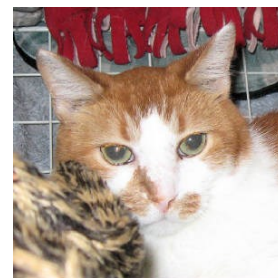
I think it's safe to say that all of Witty Kitties' volunteers love cats and that gives us all something in common, no matter our histories and current circumstances. Most of us have a cat or two (or a lot!) at home, and others don't have any cats so they come to Witty Kitties to get their “fix.” If you visit Witty Kitties on a Saturday morning, you will no doubt see a flurry of activities as we scoop and scrub litter boxes, clean up vomit, poop, and pee, sweep, mop, do laundry, wash dishes, and my favorite- smell bedding to see if it's been peed on. We do all of these not so fun jobs because we love the cats. While doing these jobs, we all stop now and again to pet cats, watch cats, discuss cats, play with cats, brush cats, break up cat fights, feed cats, take pictures of cats, lay on the couch with cats, and well, you get the picture... we love cats!



We are especially thrilled when our cats make progress. I was reminded of this on a recent Thursday night when I was doing evening chores with Tim. One of the first cats I noticed when I arrived was Olivia, who was zooming around Room 1

chasing balls and springs. My heart melts when I see Olivia. She is a beautiful shiny black cat who came to us with her sister Violet last August. She was scared when she first arrived, but it didn't take long for her to come out of her shell. She is playful and so affectionate. Our hearts were broken when Violet died from complications of feline leukemia just a couple months after they arrived. We were concerned that Olivia wouldn't do well after her sister died, but she has adjusted well. We are thrilled that she has gained weight and has been healthy. Olivia was born with feline leukemia, and we know that cats who are born with feline leukemia don't have a big chance of living past the age of three, so we are so happy for every day she has to play and be loved. On Saturday mornings as I clean Room 3, I often hear laughter coming from Room 1, and I know that Olivia is working her magic.

As I walked into Room 2 that Thursday night, I was greeted by Pippin. Pippin is very shy guy who had a hard time adjusting to Witty Kitties after being in a home for several years. It took time, but now he purrs for us, enjoys being petted, and even greets us with quiet meows when we enter his room. He is a handsome white and orange cat with the cutest orange patches on his face. We hope someone will give this sweet gentle guy a chance and give him a home.



I was also thrilled to pet Pepsi (aka 6-Pack) as I made my way around Room 2. Pepsi is a beautiful mostly white cat with calico markings. She was found with one of those plastic 6-pack can holders around her neck. Surgery was required to remove the plastic, which was embedded in her skin and causing pain and infection. Pepsi



was very afraid of people when she came to us and the idea that we would ever be able to pet her seemed far-fetched. However, with lots of patient loving care from our volunteers, Pepsi slowly warmed up to us, and we can now pet her! She loves to have her chin scratched and sometimes she even collapses with happiness as we pet her. I remember lots of celebrating among the volunteers when we started to be able to pet her. She has such a beautiful, sweet face. Her favorite place is to be outside in her outdoor enclosure, and she has somehow managed to break through the barrier that we put in front of the cat door to keep the cats inside during frigid weather. We really wish we could see her breaking out, but she always does it when no one is looking. Pippin and Pepsi have no special needs, and we would love for them to find homes of their own. Any adopter would be lucky to have them.

As I finished up chores that night and was talking to Tim in the main room, we looked into Room 1 and saw a sight to behold. Ale was sitting up washing his face after eating a fine meal provided by Tim. Ale is a “double whammy” cat, meaning he has both FIV and

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(FATAL ATTRACTION, continued from page 2)

sock). I kept picturing his little body in the tip of Torben's boot, getting squished. Bootsie had been able to squeeze to less than a centimeter wide, so likely didn't need much space in the boot. But still I kept wondering, "Is Bootsie going to live anyway?"

Regular (sane) people would have had that little sucker to the lab long ago, but that night Torben and I were still pondering. I was worrying about Torben, and I could tell he was thinking about it too, asking me things like, "What are the chances the bat has rabies?" and "How long does it take before it is too late to get shots?" That evening, I decided to take Bootsie in the next day for testing. After Torben went to bed, I googled the Hygienic Lab on the University of Iowa Oakdale campus and printed the necessary forms.

At this point in the story, I have a confession to make to Torben. The rest of you can skip to the next paragraph.

Torben, you know how I told you I had checked the bat on Tuesday morning and found him dead? I lied. He was sleeping. I looked at him and said to myself, "Gee that is a fricking cute little guy. How perfect and precious those wings are, the fuzzy body, the little ears and claws. But I guess I like Torben just a tad bit more."

I apologized to Bootsie and put him into a box and drove him to the lab, his final resting place.

As I write this on the following Friday, I still don't know the results of the lab test, yet I am confident we

will be sane people and both go in for our rabies titer check, and get post-exposure injections for rabies should the test be positive and our titers low.

So, I am confessing that our wildlife rehabilitation efforts are not always happy. As a matter of fact, very many are not. I decided I could write this story after thinking about a conversation I had with a fairly famous wildlife rehabilitator, Linda Nebbe. (Linda is frequently a guest on the IPR show that her daughter, Charity Nebbe, hosts.) I told her about something I had done that I felt was dumb and that cost the animal its life. She then told me a similar story about an experience she had had with the same results. It is a shame our mistakes can lead to the injury or death of a patient. But I know without a doubt the lessons stick, and the experience makes it better for any future animals that come our way.

I do sit here, uneasy about how different Torben's and my thought processes are from probably 99% of the population, yet know it is something that is totally natural for the two of us. We worry about the animal first, then ourselves. I am not sure why, but I hope it is just a circuitous route our brain pathways take that is much longer than the thought process of a typical human being. The end result is often the same: A person was bit by a bat. The bat was euthanized and tested for rabies. Duh. But our brains have all kinds of other "things" sprinkled in, extra stops our neurons have to make, before getting to the same conclusion.

I'm not sure if that is pathological or not.

Maybe someone can tell me.

(FOR THE LOVE OF CATS, continued from page 3)



FeLV. We have never seen a cat like Ale. He usually lays all bunched up in a little pile (some call it "loafing"), and his fur is greasy because he doesn't groom himself. He does stretch out and purr while being brushed and petted, but

otherwise we rarely see him move. While we watched him wash his face, I told Tim how Ale had actually looked me in the face when I was in his room earlier,

and we both found this to be great news. Any time Ale acts just a little cat-like is reason to celebrate.

These cats work their way into our hearts, and we love them all. We come to Witty Kitties during our free time to care for cats who do not belong to us. We grieve together when they die, and we celebrate together when they show progress, or best of all, when they are adopted. We volunteers are tied together by our love of cats, especially the cats of Witty Kitties. Please visit Witty Kitties, and maybe you too will become one of us!

REALLY HAPPY ADOPTIONS!!

It's a special day when a witty kitty gets adopted, but it's *twice* as special when the adopters are also our volunteers!!

Hope

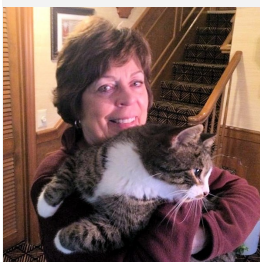
Oh my goodness, I wish Hope would let me sleep a full night through! Shailee even banned her from her room on school nights. A few times a night, she decides that she just HAS to let us know how much she loves us. She does this by laying on my head (or across my neck), purring as loud as a helicopter going overhead, biting my ears, drooling on my cheek, and kneading with her little needle claws up in my hair. I wake up in the morning looking like my childhood days when my mom "styled" my hair with a rat tail comb! She's curled up in a ball under the rocking chair right now, sound asleep, and my first thought reminds me of when Shailee was a baby — "Don't let her sleep now, or she'll be awake all night!" This is my big travel month again, so I have to laugh at what good sleep I've been getting lately in hotel rooms!



She's just such a little imp--we love her to pieces!
Chris, John, & Shailee (the official adopter!) Carlson, Tiffin

Chuck

Chuck joined our family on December 21st, just before all our Christmas guests arrived. He lived the first few days in our lower level family room before we introduced him to our twelve year old cat, Gracie. Soon



Chuck was exploring the whole house and trying to make friends with Gracie. However, no matter how charming Chuck tried to be, Gracie still continued to hiss at him. It continues today, but we think she is gradually getting used to him. One surprising thing about

Chuck is how much he likes to play. He gets his workout after breakfast every day by racing around the house. He loves having all this space to frolic. His favorite toy is the snake wand, but he also bats around the squeaky mouse. Chuck's current favorite place to sleep is on an afghan at the end of the couch. At night he likes to snuggle up next to us when he isn't prowling around the house. Chuck is such a cuddly cat and is loved by all our family and friends. We feel so lucky to have him in our family.

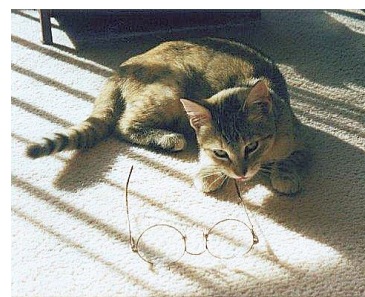
Thanks for letting us adopt him!
Jeri & Joe McGillicuddy, Cedar Rapids

Sheena—Still Fearless After all These Years! by Marla Griffith, Solon

Fifteen years ago, Jenni was a private practice vet with a mobile van called "Animals All About." She often helped farm families trap feral cats. Shortly after incorporating Witty Kitties, Jenni helped rescue a litter of kittens. Sheena was one of them, and although she was negative for FeLV/FIV, Jenni remembers Sheena as our very first adoption!

Jenni was our vet, and we had just lost a cat and wanted to adopt another. Sheena was a feral kitty, and at four months, she still fit in the palm of my hand. It was raining the day we adopted her, and she rode from Jenni's house to our house (2 minute drive) in the top of my bib overalls. Although tiny in size, she has always been fearless. Our two older boys were not too happy about a new sibling and tried to intimidate her. Nothing doing!

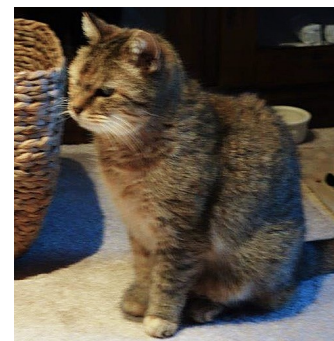
She was a true feral kitty and Mommy had taught her not to make a sound, so even though you could see her mouth move, no sound came out. I spent the entire winter teaching her to meow, as we didn't want to let her outside until she could actually meow.



We have cat doors, so our cats are inside/outside as their want. Sheena was so tiny she couldn't open the cat door. Although that frustrated her, it made us happy after discovering she didn't know how to meow. Then one day I watched as she backed up to a completely different but adjoining room and started running as fast as she could. By the time she hit the cat door, she had enough momentum to open it. I was laughing so hard, but had to go after her, as she still hadn't made a sound yet.

A couple of months later (after she was allowed outside), I just happened to look out into the driveway. There was Sheena trying to attack a herd of very large turkeys. She would run toward them and try to bite their legs, but she was so tiny, the turkeys just ignored her. It was so funny. She also, from day one, climbed everything that came her way--from large houseplants to ladders to massive outside trees.

Nothing much has changed to this day. She still doesn't take anything from anybody and is pretty fearless. She is still little, but thankfully no longer fits in the palm of my hand, and except for being a little more white in the face from aging, she is still our little Sheena.



MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

From all of us at Witty Kitties, special thanks to each and every one of you, whose holiday donations help to make kitty wishes come true throughout the year!

In honor of **Chipotle**, thank you for taking care of him, by **Don & Cindy Anderson**, Independence, MO

In honor of **Scout**, by **Glorine Berry**, Iowa City

In honor of **Betty Pittman**, by **Mark & Sharon Butterworth**, Muscatine

In memory of **Bear**, beloved cat of Sue & Don Novak, and in honor of Witty Kitties, thanks to all of you for saving and caring for animals, by **Jim & Jerry Buttleman**, Cedar Rapids

In memory of **Chiquita**, our Mexican leukemia kitty who survived 8 years well, and her best friend **Odyssius** (Ody), who walked miles to move in here, twice, both of whom we lost at the end of 2015 and are deeply missed, by **Cynthia Charlton & Ed Howdershelt**, Wellman, IA

In honor of **Beau**, the cat for optimism, by **Caroline Dieterle**, Iowa City

Good-bye **Mumma Dog**. You were my low maintenance girl. I miss you, by **Jenni Doll**

In memory of **Ginny Gatto**, who rescued witty kitty Baby and who passed her generous nature and love of animals to her daughter, Jan Erceg, by **Jenni Doll**

In memory of **Mike**, a wonderful brother-in-law. He loved his wife and daughter dearly, and shared his passion and goodness with everyone he met, by **Jenni Doll**

In memory of **Mike Johnson**, friend to lost and stray souls, feline and otherwise, by **Anya Doll, Hannah Davita Doll-Schmitz, Snitter, & Lionheart**, Forest Grove, OR

In honor of **Lucy and Zoey**, by **Kate Elliott**, Iowa City

In honor of **Jenni Doll, Torben Platt**, and everyone involved in the care of these exceptional felines, by **Janelle Frederick**, Chaska, MN

In memory of all of my departed feline friends, by **William Galli**, Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Hyde**, by **Doug Hammer & Deb Marxen**, Harlan, IA

In honor of **Jenni Doll**, we admire your commitment, dedication, and generosity to animals, by **Cheryl Hetherington & Loretta Popp**, Iowa City

In memory of **Bobbin**, by **Holly Hotchkiss**, Iowa City

In honor of **Bob & Bodil Platt, Stieg Klein & family, Ulvar Klein & family, Kirsten Platt & Mike Stone, Jenni Doll & Torben Platt**, thanks for making the world a better place, by **Borg & Nancy Klein**, Greenbrae, CA

In honor of **Bob & Bodil Platt, Stieg & Nancy Klein, Borg & Nancy Klein**, by **Laural & Ulvar Klein**, Yakima, WA

In honor of **Chipotle**, by **Holly Kraft**, LeClaire, IA

In honor of **Jo & Roger Rayborn**, by **Peg & Jim Kubczak**, Mount Vernon

In memory of **Diesel & Jack Skellington**, room 3 cats at Witty Kitties, and in celebration of adopting witty kitty **Chuck** into our family, by **Jeri & Joe McGillicuddy**, Cedar Rapids

In memory of our beloved boss kitty, **Mr. Bear**, and all of our babies who are waiting for us at the Rainbow Bridge, by **Lisa & Bill McKirgan**, Cedar Rapids

In honor of all animal lovers, by **Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Molnar**, Charles City

In memory of **Makayla**, the sweetest cat of 18 years who was loved by the whole family, with love from mom and dad to Krissie Carl and family, by **Jeff & Yvonne Monk**, Kent, WA

In memory of **Nancy Fultz**, my daughter, by **Judith Nudson**, Topeka, KS

In honour and fancy recognition of **Christian J. Bullwinkle Schoon's** birthday, may his ever growing popula-

tion of indifferent cat boarders finally come to acknowledge him, warmly, **Mark & Yurika Overbaugh**, Los Angeles

In memory of the kitties we have lost this year, **Aslan** and **Linus**, who are missed every day, by **Amy Parker & Matt Schikore**, Iowa City

In memory of our late cat **Josie**, who passed away last April 2015, by **Roger & Jo Rayborn**, Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Pamela Read & Jeff Shander** and **Mama Kitty**, by **Susan Read** (online)

In honor of **Jenni Doll & Torben Platt** and **Trish Wasek & John McLaughlin**, by **Chris & Kathleen Schoon**, Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Beau** (we love you!), by **Doug & Sarah Schoon**, Coralville

In memory of **Wolf**, much loved and sorely missed, by **Joe & Linda Skvor** and family, Marion

In memory of my husband, **Don Sims**, and in honor of Witty Kitties, who saved so many of our kitties when Don was so sick, by **Margie Sims**, Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Nancy Thompson**, who works and volunteers at the NYC SPCA and *loves* cats, by **Alice T. Smith**, Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Jordan Smith**, by **Valerie & Mike Smith**, Mt. Vernon

In memory of our cats **Simon** and **Bella**, by **Mel & Diane Sunshine**, Iowa City

In honor of **Mason Swager**, by mom & dad, **Lloyd & Sandy Swager**, Racine WI

In honor of **Gato**, I can't believe he hasn't found a home yet, by **The Tiny Tabby**

In honor and celebration of my adoption of **Mildred Millicent the Magnificent** (aka Millie, formerly SusieQ) from Witty Kitties over three wonderful years ago, by **Margalea Warner**, Coralville

In honor of **Witty Kitties**, thanks for all you do for God's great critters, by **Jeff & Terrie Webster**, Solon

In honor of **Dennis Cowles**, by **Sally Weyer**, Iowa City

In memory of **Mumma Dog**, Jenni's beloved mutt, by her **Witty Kitties** family

In memory of David Morse's sweet **Arthur**, who would be extremely happy to know that he is helping kitties in need, by **Becky Zack**, Palm Harbor, FL

And finally, in honor and support of Witty Kitties, by:

John & Vicki Beckey, Muscatine

Allison Castle (online)

Paul & Karla Chapman, Clarence, IA

Bryer Day, Coralville

Stacy Dykema, Fairfax

Micki Feldmann, Cedar Rapids

Joe & Judy Fries, Cedar Rapids

Steve & Marla Griffith, Solon

Ken Guest, Council Bluffs

Virginia Guymon (online)

Courtney Hansen (online)

Diana Harris, Iowa City

Mark & Sue Hartung, Cedar Rapids

Maggy & Karen Haslett-Tomova, Iowa City

Lora Hesseltine, North Liberty

Kristin Johnson (online)

Jill Johnston, Cedar Rapids

Cindi Kautz, Muscatine

Mary Kaysinger (online)

Jennifer Kelso, North Liberty

Greg & Ginny Kunkel, Solon

Mike & Sarah Larson, Iowa City

Ron & Sherri Lietz, Cedar Rapids

Tony & Jeannie Link, North Liberty

Don & Janet McClain, Iowa City

Jerry & Carol Mennenga, Iowa City

Jeffrey Portman & Gail Standig-Portman, Iowa City

Eunice Prosser, Iowa City

Curt & Jennifer Reekers, Coralville

Robert & Ann Sacks, Portland, OR

Bill & Barb Satkamp, Cedar Rapids

Lora Schmoll & Jeff Guhl, Solon

Alan Solomon (online)

Randy & Kristine Sterner, Marion

Joe & Marlene Tamayo, Cedar Rapids

Bob & Lisa Venne, Southborough, MA

Jean Walker, Iowa City

Cynthia Wyels (online)

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.

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Winter, 2016