**Good-Bye...**

We are so sad to formally announce that after 20 years, Witty Kitties is closing. This newsletter will be our last. Our Facebook page and website will be active for a while longer — more details are on page 3. All seven board members have contributed stories for this issue. We hope you enjoy it!

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**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.

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**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, Llama poop scooper

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**Before There Was This**

*by Jennifer Doll, DVM*

For months I have been telling myself I’d have a nice article, ready to go in my brain, for the last newsletter. Procrastination didn’t worry me, until now. Here I sit, deadline approaching, with my mind a big vast space of images and memories, and not a single idea that I can translate into a sentence, let alone a paragraph, comes into my brain.

Witty Kitties was amazing. Fact! Yet I can honestly say I don’t know the half of it. In the past ten years or so our awesome volunteers and board members have taken on so much of the day-to-day stuff: meeting new volunteers, giving tours, handling adoptions, keeping supplies stocked, etc., etc. In recent years I haven’t met as many visitors and volunteers as I used to since I have distanced myself, for many reasons. I wanted to devote more time to my family, my own animals, and work at Iowa Humane Alliance. There is also the fact that meeting new people can stress me out more than I let on, regardless of how amazingly kind they are. Ironically, meeting people who are not likeable (I can’t recall ANY visiting Witty Kitties!) doesn’t take as much energy, since the conversation stays superficial and unemotional (barring any suggestion of radical beliefs on said person’s part), so they leave my brain as soon as they leave my sight.

But people who share my passion for animals, and who will make sacrifices for the good of animals, pull me in quickly, and suddenly I have had a two hour conversation with someone I have just met, loved every second of it, and then realize that I had forgotten some important task I had scheduled for that day. Or perhaps the person shared an amazing story that was so sad it broke my heart, and then I couldn’t stop thinking about it. Or the conversation was so inspiring that the person left me feeling in awe, again unable to stop thinking about them.

I shudder to think of how many people still believe animals do not feel pain or some level of discomfort or even emotion, in the case of more complex vertebrates. I can only hope that there are more of “us” than of “them,” people who are willing to put their “money where their mouth is.”

That phrase always brings to my mind a woman I may not have mentioned in the newsletter before, but who truly puts her money where it is most needed – a woman who gave me my first experience in real high volume, high quality, low cost spay/neuter (HVHQSN) work, Eleanor Dvorchak.

(Continued on page 2)
My assistant and I did not know what to think of Eleanor at first. We sat right on the curb in front of ICACAC for longer than I had anticipated, as she talked and talked about her work. It was still all foreign to me, almost impossible, what her hopes were for numbers of surgeries. At the time, each week I was doing at most 25 surgeries at the farms we were visiting and maybe a dozen at the shelter.

Eleanor ran SNAP (Spay Neuter Assistance for Pets), a program that offered spay/neuter subsidies, primarily in the Muscatine County area. She is amazing, yet I have never told her that. Why do I feel so strongly about Eleanor that I want to dedicate so much of my last article to her? I will tell you what I know about Eleanor’s story, and you can decide why that is. (Eleanor, if you are reading this, I am using my memory of things told to me throughout the years. If I am way off, sorry, but at least you look damn good!)

The story of Eleanor:

Once upon a time, Eleanor and her husband, Tom, had a dog that had to be quarantined at the Muscatine Humane Society. I have no clue what type of dog, nor do I know the circumstances of the bite. I do know they lived just off the golf course in a beautiful home and did not likely let their dog roam.

Every day Eleanor went to the shelter to visit her dog. As time went on, she developed a relationship with Chris, the Director there, and observed the large number of dogs and cats coming in each day. She also saw the sad fact that at that time of year, adoptions were fewer in number than the intakes. When every cage and kennel was full, and there was nowhere else an animal could go, it had to be euthanized. This was a revelation to Eleanor, and she started the SNAP program to provide financial assistance for people to have their pets sterilized.

With her “SNAP ladies,” she was out there providing food, dog houses, whatever was needed within her ability.

Once she found me, a youngish vet who was learning just how difficult it is for shelter staff to euthanize healthy animals, and how many people could not afford the most basic care for their pets, she knew her dream of HVHQSN could be achieved. And boy oy boy, did she put me through the ringer!!!

My first visit to Muscatine was to the parking lot of a St. Vincent de Paul site. I met Chris, of the Muscatine Humane Society, who also became a dear friend. From then on, I spent at least a day every week or two doing about 30 surgeries a day, with one assistant, in my 24-ft. mobile vet van. Slowly the surgery numbers went up, and up, and up, and some days I feared the “HQ” would no longer be the case. Eleanor had a mission, as did I, so we kept going.

My favorite memory of Eleanor was of a day when she went to the home of a man with two large, mix breed dogs. She was going to have them neutered for him at no cost. She had worked on the man quite a while, even brought him a doghouse for the back yard, as the dogs were often without shelter. She drove her SNAP van to his house to pick them up, which she often did on her own, and was shocked to hear the man say he had changed his mind and only wanted the female done. As I recall, Eleanor said in her accent (which to me sounded like New York City, with a touch of “stern Jewish mother”), “Do you smell that??”, while pointing in the direction of the Humane Society which had a crematorium. “Do you know what that is!? That is the smell of animals being burned because there was no where for them to go! They died and now they are burning!! You are NOT getting off that easy!”

She showed up soon after with both dogs.

Over the years, Eleanor donated more than generously to Witty Kitties, even bringing her SNAP ladies to clean occasionally, which is pretty impressive since Muscatine is a 60 mile drive.

By the time Eleanor and I parted ways – she and her husband moved to their winter home in Florida permanently, and Iowa Humane Alliance was beginning to form – I knew I had disappointed her. See, Eleanor had big dreams, and wanted others to have the same. She is much like me. Unfortunately, she hoped I was going to move to
The Class of 2020

Zowie - 10 years old
Arrived June 2011, FIV+

Pepsi - 7 years old
Arrived Sept 2013

Chipotle - 10 years old
Arrived Dec 2014, FIV+

AJ - 8 years old
Arrived May 2015, FIV+

Hamilton - 10 years old
Arrived Aug 2015

Roofie - 10 years old
Arrived Oct 2016, FeLV+

Esther Sue - 7 years old
Arrived Dec 2016

Kevin - 7 years old
Arrived July 2017, FIV+

Kix - 4 years old
Arrived May 2018, FIV+

Qwisp - 5 years old
Arrived May 2018, FIV+

Roger - 10 years old
Arrived May 2018, FIV+

Some Nuts and Bolts of Saying Good-Bye

After 20 years and nearly 300 special-needs cats, these are our last 11 kitties. Amazingly, nearly half of our kitties were adopted; the rest found their forever home with us. They lived in large rooms with couches, cat trees, windows, and outdoor space. They were monitored and pampered daily by an incredible group of volunteers. Over the past few years we limited the number of new cats we took in, knowing that eventually this special place would need to close, as lives moved forward along new paths. That day is nearly here.

The Class of 2020 will be “witty kitties” for several more months while we complete the regulatory requirements for closing a non-profit. Any kitties that remain when the official paperwork is submitted will be formally adopted by Jenni and Torben. Since the shelter building is on their private property, the Class of 2020 will be able to keep living in the place they know as home for the rest of their lives.

Witty Kitties closed its doors to visitors last April due to the coronavirus and will remain closed to visitors from this point forward. We plan to keep the Witty Kitties website and Facebook page online for the time being and when that changes we’ll post information online. We hope you’ll stay in touch — there is nothing we love more than hearing about the antics of our alumni!!

Finally, as part of our winding down effort, effective August 1, we ask that your donations come to an end. (See the back page for more info.) At that time we plan to close our PayPal account and remove ourselves from shopping websites, such as smile.amazon.com. If you would like to make one final donation towards the care of the Class of 2020, we would be grateful. We cannot thank you enough for your financial support over the years. We had a mission and you helped us accomplish it. We are forever in your debt.
All Good Things Must Come to an End
by Torben Platt

We have had sad times and happy times, good times and bad times. Most of my memories will be happy ones and I hope yours will be also, however it is time we all go our separate ways. I will miss most of you (but not all), and maybe once in awhile we can get together, have a beer or two and reminisce. We had a good run.....but enough about the United States, I want to talk about Witty Kitties.

When Jenni started this shelter back in 2000, she wanted to make a place where FIV+ and FeLV+ cats, or those with some other handicap, could live out their lives in relative comfort. At the time, most shelters were simply euthanizing them. When I showed up, we began to take in other homeless animals that your average shelter could not keep or adopt out. Witty kittens began in what was once a garage work area, expanded into the entire garage, then into a pole barn, a heated shed, several acres, and most of our private home.

Our first and, for a while, only volunteer was the wonderful, patient, dedicated, selfless, Kathleen Schoon, and now there are dozens of you out there. Thank you for all the work you have done, building cages, putting out mailers and newsletters, feeding, watering, scooping litter boxes, and most of all caring for and loving ALL of our residents (even the snakes!).

We’ve had bears, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, deer, possums, squirrels, pelicans, herons, crows, hawks, pigeons, doves, geese, ducks, chickens, emus, alligators, iguanas, caimans, lizards, snakes, horses, pigs, llamas, goats, turtles, tortoises, and of course, many cats. We all shared in the heartbreak when a favorite critter passed away (mention Ben and watch Jenni burst into tears). But we’ve had more joy than heartbreak over the years, so let us be thankful for that.

By the way, since you are probably an animal lover if you are reading this, have you noticed that man’s inhumane treatment of animals probably started this pandemic? The “wet markets” in Asia are truly a disgusting place where many species are kept in horrible conditions until they are slaughtered, often by being skinned alive, and then eaten. Nothing good can come out of a situation like that. We here in this country are not much better with our trapping, slaughterhouses, and breeding facilities. When this country is broken up, I want to go to the peace-loving, vegetarian part.

I do not think that’s going to happen for at least a year or two though, so in the meantime, with regards to Witty Kitties (and as the song says), I hope you had the time of your life!

You may be thinking, “Hey, isn’t this a Witty Kitty article?” Of course it is. I may have founded Witty Kitties 20 years ago, but I had so much help from the most amazing people! I imagined naming every single one here, knowing I would do no better than those Oscar winners that go on and on at the microphone, boringly listing names until the orchestra starts playing and people have to lead them off the stage. Volunteers helped daily with cleaning. In emergencies, I never felt alone, as someone was always a phone call away. People sent donations on a regular basis, making it possible for proper food, heating, bedding, and medicines.

How could I possibly thank everyone? They know who they are and that I love them for it. But I feel this belated “Thank You” to Eleanor is appropriate because she showed me what I was capable of, even though it could be difficult at times. (Hello, I was doing surgery so late on our last SNAP day that people had to pick up animals at midnight in their pajamas!) She showed me that having dreams that may be beyond reality is important because you don’t know whether you can achieve them unless you try. I am very similar to her. We both kind of push and push, and then wait to see if we can push a little more, before something or someone finally says STOP.

So it’s finally time to say “stop” to my dream of Witty Kitties. Twenty years ago, I hoped Witty Kitties would be able to find homes for “unwanted kitties,” those that municipal shelters wouldn’t or couldn’t keep. I hoped Witty Kitties would educate people (and other shelters) about feline immunodeficiency virus, feline leukemia virus, and other special-needs issues. I also hoped people would appreciate a place where they could just sit and be with our cats; cats who may not have had a home in the typical sense, yet had it pretty darned good here, with their couches, outdoor hammocks, and cat trees. We’ve done all that and more, thanks to so many of you.

And now that my Witty Kitties dreams have been fulfilled, my dream of spaying and neutering myself out of a job can continue at the Iowa Humane Alliance.

Until then, Iowa can’t get rid of me!

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Until then, Iowa can’t get rid of me!
MEMORIES
by Amy Holcomb

When my daughter Cynthia and I started volunteering for Witty Kitties in October, 2007, I had no idea that Witty Kitties would come to be the best experience of our lives. Not only did we adopt three precious kitties, Grace, Lucky, and Timmy, from Witty Kitties, we made lifelong friends, and we met and loved hundreds of cats. Together with the other volunteers, we mourned the death of each precious kitty, and we celebrated the adoption of all the kitties that went to their forever homes (sometimes we shed a tear or two as we said good-bye).

The people at Witty Kitties are what made it such a special place. I had finally found people who loved cats as much as I did! I remember coming one Saturday morning years ago, and Kathleen had a mask on as she was cleaning. I asked her why she was wearing a mask, and she said “I’m allergic to cats.” We both got a good laugh out of that. Witty Kitties was the type of place where people who are allergic to cats would still come to volunteer, and Kathleen was coming at least three days a week. Kathleen and Cynthia became fast friends, and Cynthia loved to help Kathleen clean and care for the cats. Kathleen also took the time to talk to me about doing TNR (trap/neuter/return) of free-roaming cats. She is the first person who showed me how to set a trap. TNR has since become my passion, and Kathleen is always there cheering me on.

The volunteers were very dedicated to helping the cats, especially as they became sick or needed extra care. I remember Chris bringing all sorts of homemade, yummy treats for any cat who wasn’t feeling well and spoon feeding them. Socks, Baby, and O’Malley came to mind. “Just one more bite,” she would quietly say.

The weekday morning volunteers would also bring special treats to entice the cats with poor appetites to eat. Even though I didn’t volunteer with them, I knew they loved the cats. I sat with Smokey more than one morning when he was nearing the end of his life, trying to get him to eat the hot dogs and deli meat they left in the fridge for him. “Please eat just one piece, Smokey,” I would plead. I remember Vicki sitting with Noche on the floor holding him as he took his last breaths. So much sadness, but we were in this together, and our love for the cats and each other kept us coming back.

We had many happy adoptions through the years, including by volunteers. Alexa fell in love with Cassy, and she jumped through hoops with her landlord so she could adopt her. One of my favorite cat pictures of all time is a photo of Alexa, with a big smile on her face, pushing Cassy in a cat stroller as they went for a walk. Another memorable adoption is when Jeri’s husband surprised her one Christmas by arranging to adopt Chuck, Jeri’s favorite witty kitty, after insisting they couldn’t possibly have another cat!

And of course we were thrilled when Camila chose sweet, gimpy Galileo to travel across the country with her to their new home. We also watched teenage volunteers Alex, Shailee, and Cynthia grow up at Witty Kitties. We were so happy when they too were able to adopt their own special kitties, Ruff (Dude), Hope, and Timmy. They have become wonderful, caring, young women, and we are lucky to have been a part of their lives as they grew up.

Of course, you can’t think about Witty Kitties without mentioning Jenni! I remember one evening when I arrived to do chores, I found Daisy dying. I texted Jenni, and as soon as she could, she came running into the infirmary to get the euthanasia solution so she could help Daisy along to a more peaceful death. I also remember Jenni wrangling more than one feisty cat so she could vaccinate them or give them other medical care. One Saturday morning years ago I watched Jenni pick up Walter, perhaps the most temperamental cat ever at Witty Kitties. Most of us were afraid to touch him and took a wide path around him to avoid him, but she picked him up and loved him. I have to admit I thought she was a bit nutty for picking him up, but she loved them all, and she showed it, day after day, for 20 years.

(Continued on page 9)
Of course this time was coming. Indeed, from the beginning, there was the implication that someday Witty Kitties would not be necessary. That someday there would be no more reptiles rescued or purchased by people who had neither the skills nor facilities necessary for their survival. That someday FIV+ cats would be considered adoptable, not expendable. Although that 'someday' has not yet arrived, your support of Witty Kitties has brought it closer. Jenni's advocacy and example persuaded some local shelters to now adopt out FIV+ cats. And Torben's reptile presentations, especially to children, will change attitudes in the next generation.

Over the years we watched a Noah's menagerie of volunteers wander into the converted Morton building that was Witty Kitties. Some only helped for a day, others were never motivated to quit, but each one was invaluable. You saw the worth and personalities of cats that others would discard. And you respected the reptiles others would shun. The casual observer could be forgiven for thinking that a “shelter for special needs cats and exotic reptiles” was unlikely to attract much interest. But for our 20-year run, we had what we needed when we needed it. It was quality, not quantity. To say we couldn’t have done it without all of you is a serious understatement.

Our volunteers brought special skills that we took advantage of when needed. Some of you glimpsed mortality while trying to pill a reluctant cat. I also remember a certain vet named Sheryl who vaccinated a resistant feline on a head-high shelf by doing yoga-like contortions.

Not everything I was asked to fix was fixable, however. After finding Astaire in the garage area several times when no one had actually let him out, we all thought the screen door handle wasn’t catching well and Astaire was pushing the door open and letting himself out. I put “door handle” on my Menards shopping list. I took “door handle” off my list the day we witnessed Astaire jump up, pirouette deftly, catch the door latch, pull it down, and nonchalantly walk out.

So be it.
Our Memories of Witty Kitties
by Karen and Maggy Haslett-Tomova

We first heard about Witty Kitties after we trapped an injured cat on Dec. 30, 2009, and spent the next few days trying to figure out who would take him in. We had heard about this place in Solon that was run by a former shelter vet. Maybe she could help us. We contacted Jenni and the rest, as they say, is history. We brought “Vince” to Jenni’s good care and we gained a family of close friends all dedicated to the health and welfare of animals. Indeed, we had finally found “our people.”

We fell so quickly in love with this group of caring, generous people and all the cats and other creatures housed at Witty Kitties that just nine months later, we asked our wedding guests to donate to this worthwhile organization in lieu of gifts. But no amount of financial contributions could ever repay what Witty Kitties has given to us. Not only did it give us a place to pet dozens, if not hundreds, of cats over the last decade, but it gave us a place to connect, a place to give, a place to share in the work of caring, a place to teach our children the importance of caring for animals, a place to meet many different kinds of animals, and even a place to feed marshmallows to a bear!

We will always remember scooping boxes and washing water bowls on Friday evenings—our ‘chore night’ for a few years. We will remember all the miracles Jenni performed on so many cats that others wouldn’t have even tried to save. We will remember Torben letting our then-three-year-old child kiss a snake! We will remember K’s artwork that decorated the walls of the Witty Kitties’ rooms for years. We will remember John recruiting our older child to wash litter boxes on Saturday mornings. We will remember Trish keeping us all on schedule and organized—a monumental task! We will remember the Fall Fur Fest, including the year we sold “llama poo tea” (aka fertilizer). We will remember volunteer parties at the shelter and Kathleen & Chris’s farm. We will remember Amy making and bringing delicious vegan cupcakes to such events. We will remember Cynthia’s posters educating people on why declawing is bad. We will remember Tim’s amazing photos capturing the personalities of Manny, Kevin, and many, many more feline friends. We will remember trying to catch certain cats who needed special food or meds. We will remember celebrating when cats were adopted and mourning the cats we lost too soon.

We will remember an old, one-nostriled black cat, who warmed our hearts as we saw him come out of his shell after we brought him into our home (and affectionately renamed him Half-Nose). We will remember feeding Willow and Pasado carrots and the llamas trying to eat our younger daughter’s braids. We will remember learning to raise our hands up high when an emu is quickly approaching.

Luckily, even though the doors of Witty Kitties are closing, we know that the people behind Witty Kitties are still doing good work at home and at other places that care deeply for animals in need. While Witty Kitties may no longer be “a place,” we will carry the experiences of being part of Witty Kitties in our hearts forever.
GOOD GRIEF
by Trish Wasek

I always thought I was a dog person. One of my earliest memories is playing with a puppy on an aunt and uncle’s front yard. My aunt warned me he had just nursed and may need to go to the bathroom. I didn’t care. I just wanted to hold him in my lap. He peed on me. I didn’t care. He was a living, breathing little miracle in my eyes. I begged my parents for a puppy, but my dad grew up on a farm and believed that’s where dogs belonged, not in suburbia. We got a goldfish.

Fast forward 25 some years, and I met John, Mac, and Bruno, in that order. Mac and Bruno, John’s dogs, came with him on our second date. (The first date was kind of a disaster.) Turns out Bruno was instrumental in bringing the two of us together. I often joke with John that I fell in love with Bruno first.

Two years later we bought four acres in Swisher that included a wonderful old corncrib. (Me being a city girl, I called it a barn.) John built Bruno a doghouse, inside a small fenced area, up against the barn. Bruno loved being outside, especially in winter. He was, at minimum, part huskie and malamute. John has a photo of him with a snowdrift between his ears, sitting in his backyard during a snowfall! I loved that dog. I was a dog person.

One evening in late fall, as we were pulling into the drive, the headlights shined on Bruno’s doghouse. John swore he saw something running out of the doghouse and under the barn. Something small. Bruno was large. John looked in the barn and didn’t see anything, and we kind of forgot about it.

Maybe a week later, John found a dead adult cat in the ditch near the barn. He searched the barn again, and in a dark back corner found what appeared to have been her home. Hmmmm. We started watching Bruno’s doghouse more carefully. Sure enough, we finally saw two tiny kittens run out of the doghouse and scurry underneath the barn. Apparently they had been living with our gentle old dog, tucked into his fur to stay warm, and eating his dog-food to survive. Good grief.

We started putting out kitten chow. I spent hours in that barn, sitting quietly in boots and parka, trying to coax the kittens up through some rotten wood floorboards with a trail of treats. At first a little head would peak up, look around, and disappear again. After several days, the braver torti would steal a few treats right near her and dive back under. They were so tiny. How could they survive?

John kept urging patience, which is not my strong suit. I was giving up hope of ever being able to touch them, let alone hold them. Finally, weeks of coaxing later, the torti followed the treats right up to my hand and let me stroke her head! OMG, it had worked! The orange one followed soon after. By early spring we could hold Calvin and Hobbes, get them vetted, and bring them into our home. Could I be more than just a dog person after all?

(For those of you who are thinking, “Why didn’t they just trap them?”, oh my goodness. You have no idea what neophytes we were. I don’t believe the thought ever crossed our minds. Besides, sitting in a freezing barn in the middle of winter, waiting for a kitten to come up from below, was oh so much more fun!)

Finally, at just the right moment, we met Jenni and discovered Witty Kitties. I was retired, John was soon to be. We wanted to volunteer at a shelter, and Witty Kitties was nearby. I’ll never forget the first time we walked in and saw some 60 cats and no cages. There were couches in the rooms! This was a shelter?? Jenni and Kathleen welcomed us so warmly when we asked if we could help. I had the distinct feeling that we had found our true purpose here. We were home.

And now it’s time to say good-bye. Good grief.

Witty Kitties has changed my life and given me so much to be grateful for. It’s amazing the number of good people out there who “walk the walk,” many of whom have become my dearest friends. And I’ve learned so much since those cold nights in our barn thanks to this good place. I know how to set a trap now! I know that declawing is really amputation. I know that a peaceful euthanasia is kinder than having a couple more days with a kitty who is ready to move on. (Thanks, Jenni!) I know that emus prefer to live in pairs. I know that a tortoise will die if left on its back too long. I know that blue tongued skinks can live to be 20 years old. I know how to hold, and dare I say, love a snake. (Thanks, Torben!)

And I know that a certain black bear named Ben had a soul, and fell in love with a certain human being named Jenni.

And I absolutely know that I am not just a dog person anymore.

Good. (bye) Grief.
By Kathleen Schoon

Witty Kitties is simply an amazing place! Frankly, I think it is the coolest place on earth! Our little shelter has always had many wonderful writers to tell its stories and that has never been one of my talents. However, now as we are faced with reflecting back and moving on from a 20-year relationship, I am really struggling with how to adequately express the profound impact that Witty Kitties has had on not only my life, but for so many of us.

I am so proud and grateful for the hundreds of animals we have had the privilege to get to know and care for. Each one, however brief their time may have been with us, has left an indelible mark in my heart.

Over the years, my husband and I have met and become dear friends with some of the most extraordinary, courageous, and selfless people you could ever meet and whom we will forever consider as part of our family.

My dream job as Development Director and Volunteer Coordinator for the past nine years with Iowa Humane Alliance is also a gift from Witty Kitties.

When Witty Kitties formed back in 2000, a cat testing positive for feline immunodeficiency virus or feline leukemia virus typically would be euthanized. Jenni understood that the test results could be false or could change over time. She and Torben are such amazing people and thankfully they also felt that these animals deserved a second chance and a sanctuary that would offer them safety and good care. Now, so many of our local shelters and rescues feel the same way and are finding wonderful forever homes for positive cats.

So how do I ever summarize what this all adds up to when I recall the last two decades at Witty Kitties? It’s all the sweet, sweet feline faces, all the animals whose lives were changed for the better and so very deeply, all the volunteers who gave so freely and selflessly of their time, all the moments Dr. Jenni or Torben stepped into either life-or-death emergencies or long-term, best-in-the-world care-giving, all the times my heart was broken and all the times my spirit was revitalized and... well, you see my problem here, right? Right??!

So... thank you, Witty Kitties. For being my north star. And for being a refuge and sanctuary for the dozens and dozens of animals and a life-affirming experience for the many, many people I’ll never, never forget.

(Continued from page 5)

Also, as we think about Witty Kitties, we can’t forget John and Trish! John is the happiest litter box cleaner I have ever seen. Week after week, year after year, he scrubbed litter boxes on Saturday mornings with a smile on his face. He patiently fixed things as we pointed out what needed fixing. John also always took time to brush a matted cat or to sit quietly with a shy kitty, such as Pepsi/Six Pack. Whether she liked it or not, Trish was our go-to person, especially if we had a new volunteer who needed a job to do. She also gave countless tours to visitors and explained the history of Witty Kitties to all who visited. When she was done with her cleaning, and a new cat had arrived, she would patiently take pictures of the new cat for the web site, enjoying spending time with them to get the perfect picture. John and Trish have been the heart of the Witty Kitties volunteers for 14 years, and we all appreciate their ongoing commitment to Witty Kitties in what is supposed to be their “retirement.” They have become like family to many of us, and we are so fortunate that they found Witty Kitties.

And finally, as I think about the people and cats I have met at Witty Kitties, I think about Tim and Manny. I have never seen a pair like them. I loved all of Tim’s e-mails and stories about the adventures of all the cats, but my favorite stories were of Manny’s sleepovers at Tim’s house. He always had a good tale to tell, which often ended with a bite or a scratch from that surly Manny. The cats all loved Tim, and it was wonderful to watch them come to attention when he walked into the shelter.

Witty Kitties was a magical place full of cats with special needs and the people who loved them. While we all feel some sadness that Witty Kitties is closing, we are also celebrating all of the cats we helped and the people we have met. Aren’t we lucky to have been part of such a wonderful place?!

We want to take this opportunity to plug Jenni’s book (available on Amazon or Barnes and Noble) one last time. It will make you laugh and cry, but mostly you will be amazed! Plus, the meager earnings from her book sales will go right back into caring for all the critters she and Torben soon will call their own. So buy it!!!

Raccoons Stole My Baby Jesus

A look at the life of a vet as traditional veterinarian. “...I loved it...”—Simple Gynec

Jennifer Doll DVM

What happens when you are the only veterinarian willing to see the animals the other vets have given up on?

Witty Kitties, Inc.

Summer 2020
TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEFORE THERE WAS THIS............................. 1
THE LAST CLASS OF 2020............................. 3
SOME NUTS AND BOLTS ............................... 3
ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END .... 4
MEMORIES .............................................. 5

HAPPY TAILS TO YOU ................................. 6
OUR MEMORIES OF WITTY KITTIES ............... 7
MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS .................. 7
GOOD GRIEF .......................................... 8
MY NORTH STAR ...................................... 9

Donating to Witty Kitties

Since this is the Final Issue of the Newsletter, we won’t be able to print any more memorials or honorariums. However, if you wish to donate one last time, we will be accepting donations until August 1, 2020.

We estimate that we will have the funds necessary to care for our animals until we formally close later this year.

Your final donation is still tax deductible!

You may mail a check to Witty Kitties, Inc., 3133 Roberts Ferry Rd, Solon, IA 52333

or


THANKS FOR EVERYTHING... WE HAD A GREAT TIME!