



Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Special-Needs Shelter

Winter 2006

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
Cindy Thompson
Dona Pearce, Editor

Website Address

www.wittykitties.org

They Have No Business Being Here!

by Jenni Doll, DVM

I had just finished spaying a beautiful 5-month-old Chocolate Lab, a purebred. Before her, I had spayed Lilly, a very sweet 6-year-old purebred Silky Terrier who had been owned by a family who kept her tied in the backyard all of her life. They are moving, and "don't want to take her with." The absolutely gorgeous Mainecoon-looking kitty with declawed forepaws is lucky; we found a scar on her tummy, so no spay for her today. It has already been done. The precious 12-week-old kittens will be next, I guess. We'll get to those seven baby Labs next time. . .

I was rambling through part of a recent workday at the Muscatine Humane Society (MHS), trying to organize my thoughts and plan the rest of my day in accordance with how many sterile surgery packs I had left. But, as is often the case, I get a bit crabby as I look at all the absolutely normal animals that have been left there -- or just never claimed when picked up as strays. The ones I see are the lucky ones. These are the ones that have passed a temperament test and appear to be appropriate for adoption. Once I get to them and "do my thing" (spay, neuter, etc.), they will likely stay on adoption until someone wants them. That ranges from days to sometimes over a year.

As at MHS, the Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center (I CAC) also has completely normal, wonderful animals. I would estimate 50% are purebred. The reason I keep bringing up the fact that the animals are purebred is that people still seem to think that if they go to a shelter to get a pet, they'll have to "settle" for a mixed-

breed pet. Personally I prefer mutts, but some folks are set on a specific type of dog or cat. It saddens me that a higher value is put on these animals, and that "pure" justifies breeding a dog or cat over and over again, for "the love of the breed." However, just because a dog or cat came from such a beginning and was purchased for -- no doubt -- a high price, doesn't mean it won't end up unwanted



Witty Kitties' Buttons

(continued. . .)

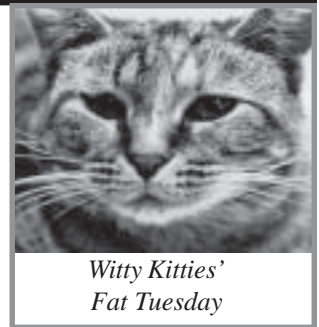
later on, becoming one of my patients.

Right now, two purebred Persians are at Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center. They were strays. No one doubts their breed, and they aren't very old. They are healthy; one has been neutered. Who owned them? What do they know that they can't tell us? Why do people insist on breeding cats that have crowded teeth, can't breathe through their noses, and constantly weep from the eyes? As I have said, I ramble, and my mind wanders. . .

How long was that box of kittens sitting at the front door? Were they there all night? Is there room for them? Who dumped the cats at Witty Kitties this summer and fall? Both are beautiful and have not one problem. One, whom we called Sheila McVee, was adopted, but Jasmine is still here. She, and a few other completely normal and healthy cats, are probably wondering what the heck they're doing at a special needs shelter.

I know folks reading this already have enough pets, and a warm spot in their hearts for them, but maybe some of you have more room than you thought you had. Visit a shelter, or call Johnson County Humane Society to ask what fosters they have. If any of you are like I was until seven or eight years ago, you may never have set foot in a shelter because "it is just so sad." But, they aren't sad. As I said before, the animals in adoption that you, the public, see, are ready to go. The chances of them being euthanized is slim, and only occurs if a severe illness (REALLY severe) occurs, or a violent behavior becomes apparent. It is true, at certain times of the year, different shelters have to euthanize animals, not only sick ones, but those beautiful, healthy ones, too -- all because there is no room. To blame the shelter and say, "Oh, I could NEVER do that. I love animals too much" is a cruel and insensitive statement. Having held kittens in my shirt, waiting for them to "pass on," crying as I help euthanize their mom, trying to make it as peaceful as possible, perhaps by petting her ears or giving her treats, I know that it is the shelter worker who must love animals the most. Being a stray cat, especially with kittens, is a slow death. Most don't

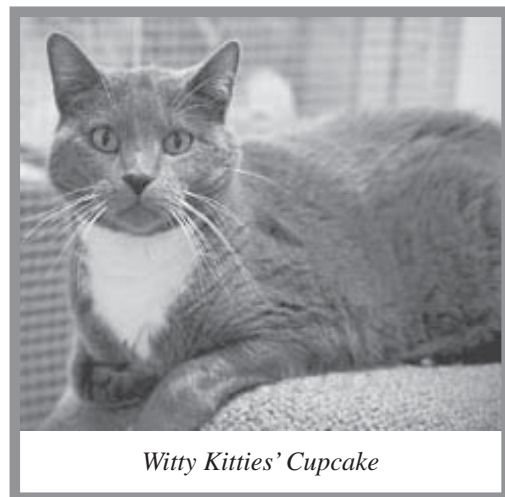
live more than a few years, if they survive kittenhood, that is. I know in my heart that to die in a warm room, with a full belly, having their ears scratched, and knowing they have been treated with love and kindness, is much better than being hit by a car, attacked by a dog, or hurt by a cruel person.



*Witty Kitties'
Fat Tuesday*

If more people visited their local shelters, they might find a pet that would somehow fit into their home after all. Sure, all houses have a limit. My 12 cats and 4 dogs in our little house is enough to make us crazy sometimes. But maybe your two cats wouldn't mind a new adult cat friend who was turned into the shelter because the kids in the last home quit playing with it. Or maybe your adult dog can teach a puppy some of its manners. Maybe taking puppy classes is just the thing to refresh your memory about how to train a dog.

Maybe your neighbor's cat keeps having kittens. How about mentioning that even though they find homes for each litter, to think of all the kittens the kittens will have later on. How about the toll it takes on the mom to keep having kittens, or the diseases she could be picking up from the Toms? Encourage folks to spay or neuter their



Witty Kitties' Cupcake

animals. There are organizations that can assist if personal finances don't allow for this procedure. The Johnson County Humane Society, the SNAP (Spay Neuter Assistance) Program in Muscatine, and UNASH (via the ICAC and begun by Florence Unash) may be available if you qualify.

There are just too many animals out there and not enough homes! We've all read that somewhere or another. But do we really SEE what that means? Let's all do what we can to eliminate the problem -- educate others. Ask your vet if doing ONE measly spay or neuter per month for free is possible. Take in a foster for a shelter if they are full. Anything and everything helps. We are all more powerful than we think. We just need to be brave enough to take that extra step.

Making a Difference

Ready to keep that new resolution to volunteer more and make a difference, but don't know how? Look no further! Witty Kitties LOVES their volunteers, and can always find plenty for them to do. The rewards (lap sits, purrs & kisses from our darling kitties) far outweigh any monetary rewards, and bring comfort to animals who need and crave love and attention.

Call us today at 319-848-3238. Leave a message and we'll get back to you to discuss what you'd like to do and when you'd like to do it. Call now -- you'll be glad you did!

Cat Trivia (and some Fascinating Facts!)

A cat can be either right-pawed or left-pawed.

A cat can jump as much as seven times its height.

A cat's hearing rates as one of the top in the animal kingdom. Cats can hear sounds as high-pitched as 65 kHz; a human's hearing stops at just 20 kHz.

A group of adult cats is called a clowder.

A group of kittens is called a kindle.

Abraham Lincoln loved cats. He had four of them while he lived in the White House. Abraham Lincoln's cat, Tabby, was the first of several White House cats.

According to one legend, the "M" marking on the forehead of the Tabby Cat was created by the prophet Mohammed as he rested his hand lightly on the brow of his favorite cat, a Tabby.

Black cat superstitions originated in America. In Asia and England, a black cat is considered lucky.

Cats can see color. Studies have shown that cats can distinguish between red and green; red and blue; red and gray; green and blue; green and gray; blue and gray; yellow and blue, and yellow and gray.

-- from www.i-pets.com

Witty Kitties T-Shirts!

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 red, green, yellow, black or white. The cost is \$15 for children's shirts and \$20 for adults.

We have a variety of shirt colors with blue or orange logos. Styles include T-shirts, tanks and long-sleeved shirts, and the sizes are: Childrens S, M, L, and Adult S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL.

We may not have all sizes in every color and style, but give us a call and let us know your size and favorite styles and colors. It's that easy! (319) 848-3238.



Exotics Corner

by Torben Platt

As most of you know we have a considerable number of reptiles here at Witty Kitties. Like the cats, goats, pigs, emus, etc., they have ended up at our shelter because they were strays or unwanted. Most of the reptiles we have are tropical animals and obviously not native to Iowa. Reptiles are ectotherms. In other words, they cannot generate their own body heat and are dependent on the temperature of

their environment. This is why the warmer parts of the world tend to have the most reptile species and why our heating bills at the shelter are so astronomical! However, Iowa and other not-so-tropical areas do have a fair number of native reptile species, so the question is how do these lizards, turtles, amphibians, and snakes survive the winter? I'm sure our neighbors are comforted by the fact that should one of our pythons or alligators escape they would surely perish by the time the temperature got below 40 degrees. Iowa reptiles seem to get through the winter, though, so what is their survival strategy? Well, like some mammals, they hibernate. In the fall as the weather becomes cooler they gradually start eating less and less and begin to look for a place to take a 5-or-6-month nap. The place they choose (called a hibernaculum) is very important in determining whether or not they survive to awake in the Spring. It cannot be too cold or they will freeze. If it is too warm, they will use up their fat stores and starve. Turtles and frogs probably have the easiest time because they just need to find someplace beneath the ice of a frozen pond or in a mud bank. Their metabolism slows as the temperature drops and they simply go to sleep wherever they end up. Some



turtles (especially snappers) show a tendency to hibernate in the same place every year, but this occurrence is much more common in terrestrial reptiles like snakes. Many species of snakes are very loyal to their hibernacula and return to the same "den" every year. These sites are extremely important and are getting harder and harder to find in Iowa. Often times a snake will spend the summer eating, finding a mate, and doing whatever a snake does, and then return to their hibernaculum in the fall only to find a new building or parking lot has been erected. Or a new road has been put in between the summer habitat and the wintering site, which the snake now has to cross (usually to its own detriment). If a snake hasn't found a satisfactory wintering site by the beginning of November, it is usually too late. In fact, the elimination or disturbance of a den

site has had disastrous effects on snake populations throughout the country. The infamous "Rattlesnake Roundups" of the American Southwest are a particularly tragic example of this. Participants go to den sites and catch the snakes as they emerge in the Spring (or pour gasoline into the den to make the snakes emerge). The snakes are usually killed for their skins or rattles. Thus whole populations are wiped out very quickly. Most snakes try to mate before even eating when they awake in the spring, since males and females are together at that time before they disperse. This means possible future generations of snakes are also eliminated before they even exist when a den is destroyed. Anyway you look at it, it's tough to be a reptile no matter what time of year it is, so please, try to be nice to the poor little things (even if you're maybe just a little scared of them).

Available for educational and entertaining presentations
at:

- Birthdays
- Schools
- Clubs
- Photo Shoots
- Marketing Ads

That Reptile Guy
Torben Platt

Call: 319-848-6075 e-mail: torbenplatt@earthlink.net
Also willing to take in unwanted or rescued reptiles

Memorials & Honorariums

In honor of my mother, **Eleanor Louise**, by Margalea Warner.

In honor of our son, **Jordan**, by Micheal & Valerie Smith

In honor (and awe!) of **Jenni Doll & Torben Platt** for their tireless efforts, by Dona Pearce

In honor of Marilyn & Dennis Schippers' kitties, '**Zoe**' & '**Hanna**,' by Peg & Jim Kubczak

In honor of our son, **Rob Pearce**, by Jon & Dona Pearce

In celebration of '**Chili's**' mom & dad, **Sarah & Jeff Neighbor**, and their recent marriage,
by John & Jerry Kinneman & Sondy Kaska.

In celebration of Kat Schoon's recovery, by Dona Pearce

In memory of Jo and Roger Rayborn's kitty, '**Timmy**,' by Peg & Jim Kubczak.

In memory of our beloved '**Duncan**,' '**Muffin**,' & '**Murray**,' by Jon & Dona Pearce

**"Grieve not, nor speak of me with tears, but laugh and talk of me
as if I were beside you there. . . I loved you so . . . t'was
Heaven here with you."** — Isla Paschal Richardson

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



Meows of Thanks!!!

The words 'thank you' seem so inadequate, but they will
have to do as we give joyous thanks to the Muscatine
Humane Society and the SNAP Program for assisting us in
finding homes for 'Buddy,' 'Buttons,' 'Waldo' and 'Sheila
McVee' in just the past few months.



Let's not neglect the Iowa City Animal Care and Adoption Center in our tribute to wonderful
facilities who lend a helping hand when we most need it -- ICAC gave Witty Kitties donations of
cat food that surpassed their storage space.

And, last, but certainly not least, thank you to the Johnson County Humane Society for taking in
the billions of fosters that they do, AND for financing hundreds of spays and neuters this past
year, among other things. They do ALL of this, despite NO money from the government!

"Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!"

AND. . . THANK YOU to all of you who came out to the shelter in order to help with the daily chores
while Kathleen was recuperating from her riding accident. We are thrilled to report she is well on
the way to a full recovery!

PLEASE NOTE: Jenni Doll no longer has a pet veterinary practice, but she HIGHLY
recommends Bright Eyes & Bushy Tails. They have emergency services and they
are located on Hwy. 1, about six miles south of Solon. Give them a call at
(319) 351-4256.

Wish List



Bob says, Thank you!

CAT FOOD - Purina Cat Chow, the original formula in the blue bag, is the favored brand;

CANNED CAT FOOD FOR A.M. FEEDINGS - used as treats and for medicating;

CAT LITTER - scoopable, please;

DONATIONS OF SKILL - carpentry (we'd love to have some cat walks in the shelter). Experienced folks with vet tech and grooming skills for periodic dematting, ear cleaning, etc.

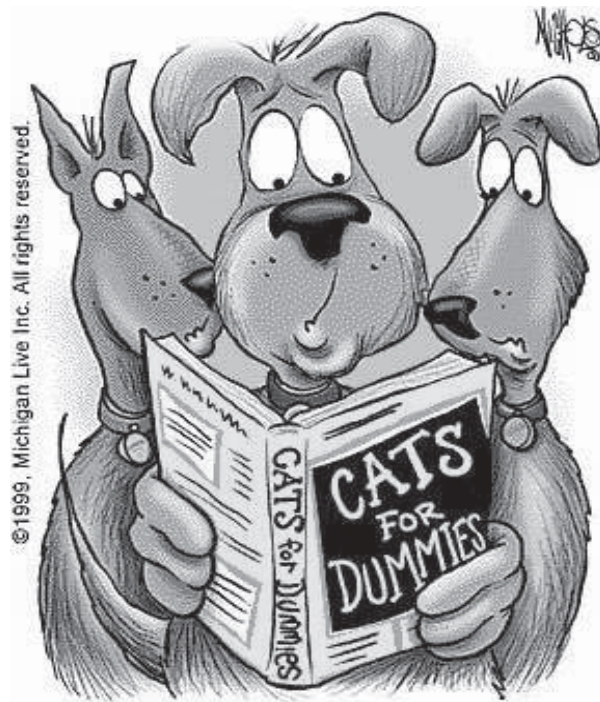
VOLUNTEERS - please call to arrange a visit and see just how you can help our furry friends;

HOMES for our special-needs animals;

PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS; NEWSPAPERS; PAPER TOWELS;

MONETARY TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS - any amount is welcomed!

AND, as always, to everyone who has already given items and/or \$\$\$ to us, THANK YOU! You are SO wonderful, SO supportive, and we appreciate your generosity very much!



NOTE: Check out a copy of *Adopting a Pet for Dummies*. You'll recognize someone in the editing/acknowledgement section!

HALLOWEEN FUNDRAISER WAS A BOO-TIFUL THING!

All the animals and all the board members at Witty Kitties would like to extend our most heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended our Haunted Shelter fundraiser this past October. Those who participated had so much fun . . . it was scary! This hauntingly happy event could not have been conjured up without all of those who helped out as well as those who dropped by to visit. We had many excellent volunteer spooks who really got into their ghoulish characters. We also had an endless array of delectable donated baked goods and other Halloween treats, almost all of which sold briskly.



Our 'be-witching' president, Kat Schoon



Dona Pearce, our 'angelic' editor

As much fun as it was for all of us, the real purpose was to raise money for the shelter, and we're happy to report that it was well worth it. We had an excellent turnout and can't tell you all how much we appreciate your being there, once again, for the animals that all of us care so much about. If we do it again next year, we may try to extend the event for two or three nights in order to maximize attendance. When spooking time rolls around again, we hope that all of you will want to join in on the fun once more. **Thanks** again from all of us!



Our newest board member, Cindy Thompson, and her husband, Janak Adhikari



Jen Fasnacht & sons Tre Allen & DeArzae Smith - 'Are we in Kansas, Toto??'



Jeff & Sarah Neighbors, a couple of real cut-ups!

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



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.

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)