



Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter



A Special-Needs Shelter

Winter 2009

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. 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
[www. Witty Kitties.org](http://www.WittyKitties.org)

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Thanks to everyone who attended our 2nd Annual Wine Tasting at The Secret Cellar in October. We had a great event that was a rousing success! It was a beautiful night with a real nip in the air, so it was perfect wine-tasting weather! The cats were on parade, along with a few other critters, and everyone had a great time. Thank you for your support!



SHOULD I FOLLOW MY HEAD OR MY HEART? OR MY GUT?

by Jenni Doll, DVM

It always happens like this: Only last week I was getting towards the end of a day of work at one of the shelters I work with. My mind was on my work most of the time, but it did wander quite often to a particular cat I had met earlier in the day. I guess you could say I was even a bit obsessed at times, finding my brain distracted toward him more as the day wore on.

This isn't odd for me. This particular cat is like thousands I've met before him. He is homeless. Mind you, I am always trying to put the unwanted pet population problem in perspective in relation to all the suffering of humans and animals that goes on throughout the world. I remind myself how lucky I am to be who I am, where I am, in the time I am. So why couldn't I ignore him? It isn't because he has no home. Humans have inflicted domestication and homelessness on cats for so long. That isn't my fault.

But when the problem is in close proximity to me, the need to do something immediately is quite demanding. And, I actually was feeling I "owed" it to this cat more than most.

Why? I see dozens of cats who will never find a home, who will be euthanized for lack of space and money for shelters. And I am learning to take part in that difficult task comforted only by the knowledge that if I can make a cat die with as little mental and physical pain as possible, I will be giving him a passing that would not have been so peaceful in so many other circumstances.

What was so special about **this** cat? Well, when the humane society staff picked him up he was extraordinarily thin and dehydrated, eyes sunken, and coat unkempt. So what? So many strays come this way. **But**, he also suffered from a very displaced dislocation of the left knee. From the feel of it, it had been like that long enough for the muscle and other soft tissue to not allow for easy replacement. At any rate he couldn't stand on it. So what? Cats come in with injuries like this frequently, and we shouldn't be surprised by that. Well, this cat is unable to lie on his left side, so had been hunkering down in the horrendously cold weather for the last few weeks, lying primarily on his right side. Thanks to the super sub-zero temps of last week he developed frostbite to both right paws, and now they were swollen to the size of baseball mitts. If it were not so sad, I'd laugh at how funny they looked when I first saw him. I mean they were **huge**. So what? We are seeing tons of cats with frostbite this time of year.

But (and this is a big "but"), this cat was a four-paw declaw, meaning all four paws were without nails. To make it worse, his only good leg **wasn't** good! The left foreleg, the one that was neither frostbitten and

(continued. . .)

didn't have a dislocation, had a re-growth of the nail. What this means is that a tiny piece of the bone that is removed when a toe is declawed was accidentally left behind during surgery. When this happens, as the new nail grows, it breaks its way through the skin. To say the least, this is painful and almost always ends in a stinky infection.

The shelter found the cat was microchipped. They traced the cat back to his owner. His owner adopted him from a shelter two years ago, then had all four paws declawed, making it almost impossible to defend himself. Then he was allowed outside. His owner never looked for him and, when notified of the cat being found, he wasn't interested in him.

Even worse, the shelter is already filled to capacity, with cats **without** problems -- cats that would find homes without the shelter needing to spend a tremendous amount of money it didn't have anyway. It wasn't looking good for the poor boy.

Despite all of his problems, he nibbled on his food, and made himself comfortable in his box. I have no way of knowing for sure just how accustomed he was to whatever amount of pain he was in, but he did seem contented with just being warm and secure. After checking him out, I went back to my usual work, trying to forget his likely fate. I reminded myself of all the other cats who can be helped with less effort. Maybe he is suffering to the point where helping him isn't worth it? Should I follow my head? My heart? My gut? I won't say which I listened to, but it was a vote of 2 to 1. I took the majority. I gave in.

His name is Sid.

Once I got Sid home, I found he was even worse off than I had thought. I had tried giving him antibiotics for his infected toe, and soon-to slough skin from the frost-bite. But getting pills down his throat was very difficult. I just couldn't get his jaw open wider than about 2 cm. After a few tries, I switched to liquid. Though his jaw feels normal and is symmetrical I can only assume he has had some sort of damage to his TMJ's. It doesn't hinder his eating whatsoever.

Then today was even more interesting. While under anesthesia, I found he certainly didn't have the mechanical ability to open his jaw any wider. So, there. Also there was sloughing skin from three paws. It occurred to me, and my husband Torben, (yes, he likes the hairy animals, too, and shows interest in this guy) that there is more than one reason not to let a declawed cat outside, besides the fact that they can't defend themselves or climb trees easily to escape trouble. The interesting thing is that when the nails are removed and the toes heal, they curl down a bit. This causes the skin on the top of the toes to contact the frozen ground. It is this

part of the feet that is sloughing. Despite this assumed discomfort, Sid insists on burying his poop and pee every time he uses his littler box. I decided not to cut back on his pain meds, though.

Finally, the decision about the dislocation. Well he ended up having a fracture at the end of his femur (hip) bone near the knee. The small broken piece and the rest of the knee ended up way up in his groin. Even if I could manage to get everything back into place to fuse the knee, it would have meant more weeks of pain, what with metal implants, more open wounds . . . so I decided to salvage the situation and amputate the leg. In just a matter of days, his "leg" would feel fine. He wasn't using it anyway, so he would get used to the change more quickly than most.

Oh, yeah, I had to remove the remaining piece of bone that was growing the nail that had punctured through his skin.

So, as I write this, he is pumped full of pain medication, and a new and not-so-inexpensive antibiotic that requires only a single injection but lasts a whole 14 days. He is moving around, and already ate a little. When I took him out of the big haven he is in, I was very impressed with how much heavier he is, and at how bright his eyes had become.

You'd think cats this bad don't come along too often, but only four days later, at another shelter, I came across a similar, but less dramatic, "add insult to injury" situation.

I named him Rip. As in "torn", (not as in "rest in peace" or as in Rip Torn, the comedian).

Rip walked into a person's yard last week dragging a leg-hold trap on one of his front legs. Fortunately for Rip, the folks who found him were able to remove the trap, and called friends who finally brought him to the shelter. He wasn't extremely thin, so I assume he had someone feeding him at some point. But after the requisite waiting period for strays, an owner never showed up.

The shelter wasn't ignoring his paw. They were giving him antibiotics, and had given him the routine vaccinations all incoming cats get. But he was going to lose all the skin on a few toes, but not likely the deeper tissue, thus leaving "stuff" exposed. He would eventually need them amputated. This was something the shelter may not be able to do due to the crowding and expense. As an injured and unneutered cat, Rip wouldn't be next in line for the adoption room. No, the adoption room is also filled to capacity. Also, there are a half dozen healthy, beautiful and already neutered adult cats waiting for a spot to open as soon as an adoption is made. **Next** in line are other healthy and beautiful cats who still need neutering. **Then** there are the not-so-healthy, yet fairly

comfortable and easily treatable sick or hurt cats. Then we get to where Rip sits. If Rip were a kitten, he may have the chance to "butt" in line ahead of the others, but he is about a year old. Granted, he is sweet, very tame, and cute, just not "kitten cute".

So, what happened to Rip? He ended up being a win-win situation after all. At the end of my work day, I "quickly" sedated him, tested him for FIV/FelV, neutered him, and amputated the toes of the bad paw, all for pretty much nothing. Though full of cats, the shelter felt he is sweet enough that he should find a home. Heck, as a gimpy kitty, he may even have a better chance. He is on the way to mending, and hopefully the adoption room very soon.

Time and time again I toil with problems like this. Shelter and rescue folks try to weed through who can be treated or not, who is most adoptable, who is suffering too much to even attempt treatment. I am always asking if it is a hero complex that makes me want to take on these odd cases, or is it guilt because we humans have insulted them in so many painful ways? It is reasonable to do the objective thing, and follow my head. "Follow logic and reason, Jenni, oh, come on!" says my head. But the heart says, "No! Do the 'nice' thing!" Then, my gut comes in to break the tie. I admit I still don't always listen to the majority vote, and fly by the seat of my pants and hope for the best.

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"Me and kitties and a rainbow birdie."

Original artwork by Kirsten Platt,
age 4

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

*In memory of **Olive and Gruagh**, beloved pups of Hans & Jean Schoon, by Cat & Chris Schoon*

*Sylvia is being sponsored in memory of **Joyce Ortberg**, the Cat Lady, by her loving granddaughters, Kelsey & Abby Boone*

*In memory of our mother, **Eleanor Louise**, and our fur person, **Who Me**, by David Crombie & Margalea Warner*

*In memory of **Betty Pittman**, by Elizabeth & Dana Pittman*

*In memory of **Maggie**, by Mark & Betty Stewart*

*In memory of **Adele Marie Turner**, by David & Barbara Wiemer*

*In memory of our kitty, **Emily**, by Jen & Steve Fasnacht*

*In memory of **Angel**, kitty of Debi Fawcett, by Lori Peterson*

*In memory of **Snuggles Brighten**, beloved pet of Ronnie Brighton, by Ronnye Wieland*

*In memory of **Beano**, the naughtiest little dog anyone has ever loved, by Jenni Doll*

*In memory of **Gus**, beloved cat of Dr. Beth Shannon & all the staff at the North Liberty Pet Clinic, by Cynthia & Amy Holcomb*

*In memory of our beloved cats who passed away last year — **Oliver, Crummy, Drizzy**, and my heartsong, **Murphy**, by Lisa & Bill McKirgan*

*In memory of **Hanna**, by Zoe & Gracie Schipper*

*In memory of **Juno**, the dog Sasha learned to love, by Marilyn, Bruce & Sasha Fehn*

*In memory of **five foster kittens** I was caring for at the Iowa City Animal Shelter — too small and fragile, by Deb Peterson*

*In memory of **Shylo, Billy, Cupcake, Speedy, Apollo, Leroy and Jiggs**, all beloved Witty Kitties*

*In honor of **Bob and Bodil Platt**, by Mike Stone & Kirsten Platt*

*In honor of **Shirley Gianni**, by Tony & Janet Gianni*

*In honor of **Fawz Bakir & Simon**, by David Crombie*

*Linda Skvor sent a donation to Witty Kitties to 'pay it forward' for the generous spirit of **Maddie DeJong***

*In honor of **Rachel Klapper & Rico Penziner**, by Liz Ford & Jack Klapper*

*In honor of **Mark & Diana Russo**, by Sondy Kaska*

*In honor of **Barb Satkamp's** September birthday, by Gail Clark*

*In honor of **Cindy Thompson-Adhikari**, by Nancy Thompson*

*In honor of **Dona Pearce** and all her good works and deeds to help homeless pets, by Bernice & Norm Friedman*

*In honor of **Sheryl Garrett**, by Mark Brown*

EXOTIC CORNER

by Torben Platt

Greetings from Exotic Corner, In this installment I am going to borrow (o.k., steal) the theme my lovely wife used in one of her recent articles, the one she wrote from the viewpoint of our 4-year-old daughter, Kirsten. This article will be written from the viewpoint of our 7-year-old alligator, Lex, who resides in the "exotic corner" of Witty Kitties. Needless to say, I will have to do a little more guessing at what Lex might be feeling than my wife did with Kirsten (at least they are the same species), and I am forced to be a little anthropomorphic because I want the article to be more than 3 or 4 words long (eat, sleep, stay out of my cage). Here's what I think Lex would say:



"My life here is sure a lot different than it would be if I was living in the wilds of the deep south, in a backwater bayou or swamp (or golf course). This is both good and bad, of course, like most things in life. I was probably hatched in a gator farm somewhere and then (illegally) ended up in a pet store in Indiana, of all places. I was little, about a foot long, and cute, and I caught the eye of a young human being who purchased me and thus rescued me from what would have probably been a short, uncomfortable life.

"The young man read up on my kind and took very good care of me.....so I grew, and grew, about a foot a year, until I was simply too big for the room in which he was keeping me. By now I was living in Iowa City and hadn't been outside in 5 years. And my owner was moving! What to do? Luckily, my owner knew about Witty Kitties and that there were people there who take in all kinds of homeless animals, even "bitey" ones, like me. So I was driven there and wow! — I had my own enclosure and pool outside. Ok, there were a couple of my smaller relatives from South America (caimans) living in there also but for some reason they quickly asked to be moved to different quarters when I showed up. Next to me were a couple of smaller alligators too, and a bunch of turtles, who all looked really yummy, er, I mean friendly, but I am not allowed to get near them, either. See, my not-so-big reptilian brain tells me that just about everything smaller than me is edible until proven otherwise. Now that I am almost 8 feet long and a male, I would be near the top of the food chain if I was living in a swamp somewhere. The only things I'd have to be worried about would be bigger gators and humans.

"Which bring us to one of the benefits of being here at W.K.: I don't have to be worried about either of those. I also don't need to worry about hunting for food. It's brought to me, and even in the winter, the temperature is kept at a nice comfortable 85 degrees here inside the garage. I don't require a lot of stimulus like you highly evolved mammals, and I don't really yearn for female companionship....yet. Even when I do, like this Spring possibly, that little female in the next cage is growing faster than me now (I slow down at about 7 or 8) and pretty soon she'll be just right (in other words, too big to eat). So, all in all, life is pretty good. Of course, once in awhile that old guy bundles me up, tapes my mouth shut, and takes me to a library or school or something, but I generally put up a good fight and soon he'll be too old and weak and I'll be too big and strong for that to happen. He'll have to take one of the smaller gators or caimans. Best of all, in another couple of months it will be Spring, then Summer, and I'll be out in my outside enclosure, basking in the real sun, eyeing those tasty-looking ducks and pigs, dreaming of the swamp, and how my ancestors and I once ruled the world."

Stay warm out there and as always, **thank you** to all our loyal supporters!

Torben (and Lex)

NEW T-SHIRTS! WE HAVE NEW T-SHIRTS!

You've all noticed the cool new Witty Kitties logo that has been around for a few months. Well, we're ordering new T-shirts with this snazzy logo on them. Be sure to check our website because the shirts will be available there in about a month. You'll also be able to pick out your T-shirt at the shelter once our new supply arrives. So, be the first on your block to get a new Witty Kitties T-shirt and become a walking billboard for the shelter. THANKS!

WITTY KITTIES IS ON FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN!

by Dona Pearce

The kitties at Witty Kitties aren't about to let technology pass them by. Last year they asked Katie Conlon-Fasselius to create a page for them on Facebook, and this year they requested that I add them to LinkedIn. So, when you're at either of these sites, check out the Witty Kitties page, and add yourself as a friend!

CAREER CONNECTION & WITTY KITTIES

by Kat Schoon

Mike Melchert is a young adult who has a real connection with animals — a Career Connection. As part of his association with the Career Connections program, Mike spends two mornings a week helping with the chores and daily upkeep at Witty Kitties. At the shelter, Mike is able to work for a small wage in a pursuit that interests him, while receiving valuable training in basic work commitment, job responsibilities, and skills, which we hope will help him transition into the work force in the future. In turn, we get wonderful assistance with the numerous daily tasks at the shelter, and also get to spend time with a great kid like Mike.

All of us at Witty Kitties have been grateful to have Mike's help as the chores can take the better part of the day when just one person is doing all the work. At any given time, we may be servicing four to seven individual cat rooms, with anywhere between two to 14 cats per room. Each room needs to have all cats fed, litter boxes scooped, floors swept and mopped, and all kitties loved and played with every single day. We also change out dirty laundry, wash dishes, and administer any medication that has been prescribed by Dr. Doll. More people pitching in on the chores leaves more time to spend giving attention to the cats.

Now, take a deep breath because there are a lot of people and agencies we'd like to acknowledge for helping to bring Mike and Witty Kitties together: Career Connections is a program administered by the Grant Wood Area Education Agency in conjunction with 27 local school districts, local businesses, Goodwill Industries of The Heartland, the University of Iowa Center for Disabilities and Development, Advancement Services of Jones County and Rural Employment Alternatives. All of these entities work together to help young adults just out of high school find meaningful work experience in areas of interest to them.

And by the way, Mike really does have a true connection with the cats. He is a shy and quiet young man, and it is a joy to see him interact with the kitties. The cats seem drawn to him and, in turn, draw him out. Zeus likes to ride on Mike's shoulders while he sweeps, and Sylvia often reaches up his leg asking for a hug. They know that he is gentle and caring, and that this is clearly a human they can trust.

We hope that Mike's experience at the shelter leads to a long and lasting relationship between Career Connections and Witty Kitties. We also want to say a sincere and heart-felt thanks to Mike for giving all the critters his valuable time and love. It's people like Mike who help make Witty Kitties a much-needed refuge for all the very special animals who have found a home here.

A RESCUE VIA EMAIL

by Trish Wasek

Let's admit it. Sometimes scooping litter and mopping floors gets really old. So does answering emails and phone calls with "Sorry, we don't have room for another kitty." But every once in a while, something unexpected happens that makes you feel so good...

A few months ago, we received an email from a volunteer at another animal shelter. Her 82-year-old mom had found a shy, stray cat and had spent several weeks feeding him and gaining his trust. He would even sit in her lap now! But when she took Buffy to her vet for a check-up and vaccinations, he tested positive for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). The vet recommended euthanasia because, he said, an FIV cat shouldn't live with other cats. Her mom was devastated. She couldn't give up her other cat, and she couldn't okay the euthanasia. Did we have any room at Witty Kitties?

We did not have any room, and I started composing an email reply. But I wondered why the vet said that Buffy should only be placed in a home with no other cats. Unlike feline leukemia, FIV is not spread by casual contact. Sharing food bowls or litter boxes, or even mutual grooming, does *not* spread the virus. Rather, the virus is transmitted when an FIV cat bites deep into the tissue of another cat. If an FIV positive cat gets along with the other cats in a household, there is virtually no health threat to the other cats.

So why did the vet recommend no other cats in the home? The feline immunodeficiency virus was isolated only a couple decades ago, so perhaps this vet just didn't have all the information. Or perhaps the vet was confusing FIV with feline leukemia (FeLV), which is much more easily transmitted through casual contact between cats. In any event, I explained that FIV cats *can* live with other cats, gave the daughter several references from our website, and kept my fingers crossed that she and her mom would reconsider, in spite of the vet's advice. I wasn't optimistic though — most people tend to trust and take the advice of their vet. I felt pretty sure that poor Buffy didn't have a chance.

Several days later I heard from the daughter again. I was almost afraid to read the email. After looking at all the information on our website, she wrote, her mom had decided to take Buffy in after all!! She was in the process of scheduling him to be neutered! What a happy ending for a lucky stray who, just a few weeks earlier, had been hanging out in an auto salvage yard, frightened and hungry. It's just one stray cat, I know, but it felt so good -- what started out as another "No, we don't have any room" email exchange had ended up in a rescue. Very cool stuff, this shelter work!



Mike & his cleaning buddy, Zeus

WE'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS...

by Trish Wasek

December was an awesome month for Witty Kitties! Three of our cats found their forever homes and are in the process of adjusting to their new families. We are so happy for Digger, Gino, and Graham Cracker Krumm!! Here are their stories...

We met Gary and Karen Schroeder, of Brooklyn, Iowa, at one of our adoption events at Petco last fall. They were not "in the market" for a new family member at that time, but we had a nice conversation with them about Witty Kitties and some of the other shelters where we had mutual contacts. On one of their next trips to Iowa City, they came out to Witty Kitties to meet some of our special residents.

Unfortunately, a couple weeks later, they had to help Roscoe, their 17-year-old cat, over the Rainbow Bridge. They kept thinking about Digger, who had caught their eyes and hearts on their first visit. The next couple of times they came to Iowa City, they stopped by to visit Digger, but weren't sure they were ready for another cat (they still had five at home!). Also, none of us were sure that Digger would be able to negotiate their multi-level home, since he has very weak hind legs. So John and I tested Digger out on our stairs at home to see how he did. It turns out that carpeting is a *big* help, just in general, and carpeted steps were no problem at all.

With that information and a final medical check, Digger went home with Gary and Karen right before Christmas. Here's an update from Karen and Gary:

"Digger is doing well in his new home. With our nice, long Christmas break, Gary and I have been able to spend a lot of time with Digger — it was purrfect timing! Cassidy, our 3-legged kitty, is still doing a lot of hissing and growling, but that is no surprise — he is always the one who takes the longest to accept a "stranger" in

HIS house. Digger enjoys playing with the laser light, a catnip cigar, and sleeping in the kitty cubes. Gary discovered that if he puts a pet bed on the computer desk while he is working on the computer, Digger enjoys cuddling with Gary while lounging in the bed. Digger loves having his tummy rubbed - he has a non-stop motor! We know you miss Digger - how could you not? But we sure love him and are so glad he is part of our family."



Digger with his new folks, Karen and Gary Schroeder

Gino and Krumm's story has a bittersweet twist. Courtney Boies and Joe McKibbin, from Marion, Iowa, discovered Witty Kitties on the web. They wanted to adopt two cats (so they could keep each other company), and they were specifically interested in special needs' cats that are hard to place. Our website mentioned that Gino and Leroy were best friends and loved tearing around the shelter and playing with each other. Courtney and Joe came down one Saturday morning and it

was love at first sight. Gino and Leroy were both feline leukemia positive, but the virus can't be spread to their dogs, and they had no other cats, so this was a perfect adoption! The plan was that they'd come back the following Friday after work to take the two lucky guys home.

During that week, Leroy began to run a temperature. At first we were hopeful that it wasn't anything serious, just a respiratory infection perhaps, and Courtney and Joe agreed to hold off taking Gino home until Leroy got better. But Leroy continued to run a temperature, and then began showing clinical signs of infectious peritonitis. We explained to Courtney and Joe that things were probably not going to get better for Leroy, but this wonderful couple was *determined* to adopt two special needs cats! They visited Witty Kitties again, and Krumm let them know (in no uncertain terms) that he and Gino were great pals also. And that's how Krumm, along with Gino, found their new home shortly after Thanksgiving! Courtney and Joe write:

"Tigger (Gino) and Socks (Krumm) are both doing so well. They play around together and they know how to get petted any time by us. They are totally fine with the dogs. An occasional hiss, but that's it! Usually they just walk right by the dogs (or under them!) and think nothing of it. Luckily, our dogs are very good. They all sniff each other and check each other out a lot. It has been really funny watching them! Tigger loves to run up and down the hall in the mornings when we get up, I'm sure just to annoy the dogs. Almost any time Socks sees an opening to climb up a leg and get perched on your shoulder he goes for it...even if you do happen to be wearing shorts. [Ed. Note: Socks is NOT declawed!] Thanks for everything! These little guys are a blast."



Tigger (formerly Gino) & Socks (aka Krumm) with their new parents, Courtney Boies & Joe McKibbin

I hate to end this on a sad note, but we did end up having to help Leroy over the rainbow bridge a couple of weeks after Gino and Krumm went home. There were many hugs and tears. Leroy was our baby, only 8 months old, and everyone who met him fell in love. Since our last newsletter, we have said goodbyes to Shylo, Billy, Cupcake, Speedy, Apollo, Leroy and Jiggs. The adoption of Digger, Gino and Krumm certainly helped to lift our spirits when we needed it the most. Thanks so much, Karen & Gary and Courtney & Joe — you're awesome!

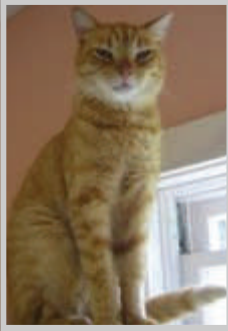


Our sweet Leroy

STILL AT THE SHELTER

by Nancy Fultz

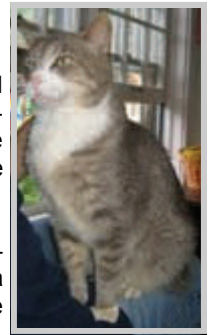
Oscar is a darling boy who will sit in your lap and let you kiss him, once he gets to know you. He was named after the Muppet, but he was only grouchy when he first arrived a few years ago, and that was probably because of all of the changes in his life. He has a really cute way of drinking his water — he dips his paw into the bowl and then licks the water off his paw! Visit our website to see a video of this or come meet him in purrson at the shelter.



Rusty

Rusty is a handsome marmalade cat who was left to wander outside. He loves being petted and having his ears scratched, and he has a soft, sweet purr. He's been at WK for a little over a year and would love to have a home of his own. He gets along fine with the other cats and loves to go into the outdoor enclosure — when the weather is nice!

Oscar and Rusty are FIV+. An FIV+ cat can live for many years without problems; however, the virus can weaken their immune system. FIV+ cats can live with 'regular' cats as long as they don't fight or mate. Since a spayed or neutered cat will have fewer reasons to fight (and no reason to mate!), most vets do not recommend that they be segregated from other cats.



Witty Kitties'
Oscar

These boys have made a New Year's resolution to charm everyone who visits them until they find a forever home. They say the shelter is great, but nothing is as good as a home where they don't have to compete for affection with 50 other cats! Come visit these cats and all the other highly adoptable cats at the shelter. They

would love to meet you!

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to the Johnson Ave. HyVee in Cedar Rapids for giving Witty Kitties a generous discount on a special order of 40 bags of HyVee brand scoopable litter. The kitties love it (as do the pooper-scoopers)!"

Spot & Co. Obedience Training encouraged folks in their training classes to donate to area shelters & rescues in this area. They mentioned Witty Kitties, and we were fortunate to receive a nice donation. Thanks to Sue Pearson & Judy Worth from Spot & Co.!

And, from new volunteers Nan Mercier & Dennis Corwin, a new, full-sized fridge for the reptiles' use! WOW! We are grateful and humbled by all of the gifts Witty Kitties receives.

MAKE MINE CHOCOLATE

by Nancy Fultz

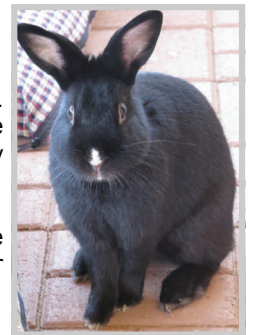
Last week, at a shelter I volunteer with in Arizona, someone left a bunny outside the shelter in a carrier. There was a note with the bunny that said, 'I didn't love my family as much as they loved me. I'm a little bitch. I'm not even worth \$1 for food. So, I've been kicked to the curb, literally.' And there were smiley faces drawn all over the note.

The sick person who wrote this note did not treat this bunny well. He/she did not even know the sex of the bunny — it's a boy, and he has not been neutered. His nails were so long they had curved back under and were pressing into the pads of his paws. So every time he hopped — it hurt.

The bunny rescue out here is full, so I took him home to foster until they have room. I took him to a vet and got the nails clipped, and I have an appointment to have him neutered soon. For a bunny, he is very sweet. He eats veggies and treats right out of my hand. He loves to be petted, but, like most bunnies, he does not want to be picked up. At first he was so scared he ran into his cage anytime I came into the room, but now he is starting to relax.

Because he is around one year old, I suspect that someone got him as an Easter gift last year. Every year at Easter, bunnies and chicks become victims of being cute. People who have no idea how to care for them buy them as gifts for children who quickly tire of them. Chicks are usually thrown into the garbage to die and bunnies are let out into the wild where they die because domesticated rabbits cannot fend for themselves. The lucky ones make it to rescue groups which are usually overwhelmed a few months after the holiday when the gifts are no longer 'cute'.

This year, please, 'Make Mine Chocolate'. Do not give bunnies as gifts unless the recipient fully understands that a bunny is as much, if not more, work than a cat or dog. That cute little bunny will live between 5-10 years, and is not a good pet for small children as they will scratch and bite if they feel threatened. Bunnies have a labor-intensive diet, as they need lots of fresh veggies chopped up. Even though you can train them to pee in a litter box, they will drop pellets everywhere they go. For more information visit www.makeminechocolate.org.





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. You can also give online: www.wittykitties.org!**

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