



Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Special-Needs Shelter for Cats & Critters * Volume VIII, Issue 1 * Winter 2011



WITTY KITTIES MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 2000, Witty Kitties provides quality care and shelter to cats with specific chronic medical needs within the five-state area we serve. Our organization is committed to collaborating with local humane organizations in rescue work and low-cost spay-neuter services. We provide rescue, care and appropriate housing for a variety of reptiles, as well.

As part of our overall service to the community, Witty Kitties works to educate the public regarding proper care of these companion animals and, ideally, to find permanent, quality homes for them.

Website URL: WittyKitties.org

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DID YOU KNOW???

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



Lillian - Witty Kitty of the month for January 2011

DOES NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE ANYMORE?

by Jenni Doll, DVM

I went to sleep last night thinking about a Canada Goose I had put down earlier in the evening. It was really sad, but waiting wasn't going to help her. The longer I waited, the longer she suffered. She was taken from the Iowa River in Iowa City last Friday, after being chipped away from the ice she was frozen to. Two days before, another goose had been taken away the same way. That one didn't make it.

After taking her home, I got to wondering. Is this the mate of the first goose? If so, will it eat? Was it sick already, and therefore unable to swim about and keep from getting frozen into the ice? I slowly warmed her and waited till the next day to really check her out. It was pretty apparent she had neurological issues. Starvation? Liver? Lead? Trauma? In just two days she went from being able to stand, to only being able to sit up, to then being unable to hold her head in a normal position. When it comes to wildlife, I am not big on working up possible medical issues as most of them are just dying and we happen to find them while on their way out. They usually are hard cases to solve as standard lab blood values haven't been worked up in most species. Mind you, in trauma cases it is different: Animal is hurt. Find out how. Can you fix it? Fix it if you can. Fairly straight forward.

But I digress. So, I woke up in the middle of the night wondering about the goose, only to dose off, to be awakened in the morning by my clock radio. IPR was talking about another pair of geese being taken from the same river.

So now I'm thinking that DNR needs to get involved by now. Is there something 'going around?' Maybe this is natural old age. But I got to thinking that their sitting in a river in a large city likely meant something environmental was going on, possibly the fault of humans. If so, did that make it 'natural?'

What does that mean? 'Natural.'

The first time I ever thought phrases like "Let's just let nature take its course," or, "I like my animals to be the way nature meant them to be" were **stupid** (There! I said it) was during my first year as a veterinarian.

I worked at Four Corners Veterinary Clinic in Maple Valley, Washington. I was finally getting acquainted with the clientele, and learning that the spectrum of people ranged from, "Gee, I'd rather put a bullet in that cat's head before putting \$25 dollars into it," to, "Do absolutely everything you can. Money isn't an object." The latter was only true half the time. For the other half, money, indeed, was an object after handing over the bill and finding they hadn't a cent. I got chewed out by my boss a lot for falling for that group.

There was a guy in his 30s that really exposed me to the fact that nature has little to do with anything. He was arguing with me because I was STRONGLY urging him to let me spay his very pregnant Golden Retriever. Let me tell you why. The previous summer, the same dog became pregnant by her older half brother. Both of them suffered from idiopathic epileptic seizures and had passed it on to their babies. He had trouble finding them homes, and hadn't even considered having those neutered, either. I expressed how difficult it would be finding homes for yet more epileptic dogs, not to mention how stressful it would be to the dog in question, who was not yet two years old. He reasoned that since they usually didn't show signs of seizures till a few years of age, he'd still try giving them away, letting the new owners discover whether the pup would eventually have seizures. Nice. His other reasoning was, "You just want my money. I don't think it is natural to take away their parts."

(continued on page 2)

I had to hold my breath and think before finally saying, "OK, Number 1. Golden Retrievers aren't 'natural.' They are the result of specific breeding over many, many years by people who decided to do so based on whatever arbitrary trait they liked about them. Along with the wonderful traits came bad ones, like hereditary epilepsy. They are domesticated. They are people's product, not 'nature.' "

He looked at me like I was an over-educated idiot who was trying to do her evil deeds to his beloved dog. He left the office without anything being resolved.

The good news is he did schedule the spay after talking to my boss, who told him I wasn't an idiot. But the bad news is that he waited another two weeks into the pregnancy. The poor dog was ready to burst. But, believing in my heart it was best, I did spay the then term-pregnant dog, thus terminating the lives of 13 babies. It was miserable, messy, sad, and horrible. I kept wondering which of them would have been OK, and which wouldn't.

It was especially hard because Golden Retrievers are my all time favorite breed. My favorite and most loyal dog ever was a Golden. I hope to have another some day should a needy one cross my path, and I'm not already in possession of four dogs. But if some of you still think I'm callous, I must tell you euthanizing a happy dog who doesn't understand that his owner needs to do so because the expense of treating the seizures, doing routine blood work and **still** witnessing frequent seizures has become too unbearable for the family.

It wasn't even a year before discovering the nature issue again. It was this event that almost kept me from helping an animal rescue group again.

I had taken in one of the few truly feral cats I've ever dealt with from a local group I'll not name. It was a terrified little female tabby not even a year old. She had been in a trap for three days before being taken in to the clinic as no one was able to deal with her. She was my first jab-while-still-in-the-trap cats. Once anesthetized, I examined and radiographed her. She had a fractured pelvis with soft tissue damage to the spinal cord. Because of this, she could not pee on her own. Her bladder would just be in a constant state of being full. Once pressure built up to a critical point, a little would come out, but never enough to empty it beyond about 80%. Long story short, if left, the kidneys would eventually fail.

The 'rescue group,' as I'll call it now, wouldn't even breathe the word 'euthanize,' as it went against everything they believed in, whatever that was.

So began the daily expressing of her bladder. In a tame cat, it should be done several times a day. But because she was so wild and had to be sedated heavily each time, it could only reasonably be done once daily. This was no easy task. Each time you approached her cage, she climbed to the top and hung there, using her forelegs mostly due to the weakened state of her back end. She'd thrash and strike and growl. All the while I knew she had to be absolutely terrified of me. So, I'd sedate her with the syringe at the end of the stick or else net her and roll her up. It took only twice to convince me she was never going to let her pelvis heal this way. I mentioned as much to the group, but was met with, "Well we'll take her home." Worried about her situation, this went on another three days or so. She ate not a

bit. I doubt she drank, either. It was hard to tell as she trashed her cage constantly. I had to give her fluids a few times because of the dehydration, which didn't help her kidneys, either. Sure, her bladder didn't get quite as full perhaps, but the poor flow was going to start to create a toxic state.

I finally expressed my concern for the cat's physical state, as well as her psyche. She was a young, terrified little thing who only knew fear and pain at the moment. I only made it worse. I suggested euthanizing her.

I wasn't prepared for the barrage of words that followed. I was cruel, unfeeling, inhumane, unfit to care for any of their animals again (that last one I agreed with). They took the cat back, saying they would let nature take its course. From what I heard it did. It took a week before the poor thing died. Whether from lack of food, water, or her kidneys, I don't know.

After that, I decided animal rescue groups were a bunch of wacked-out, crazy radicals who really didn't think about each animal as an individual. I swore off of them forever.

But the most recent dilemma has been with the coyotes we now have. They are an absolutely stunning pair. They are now about nine months old and covered with beautiful winter coats. Most of you know the story. They were orphaned shortly after birth and raised for six weeks in a home. Assuming a rehabilitator would have no problem getting them into the wild again, we took them in without a second thought. Unfortunately, we had them another two weeks before locating a rehabber. It wasn't long before we learned teaching them the ways of the wild would be difficult. At their age they couldn't be started out for many months. But to wait meant their coming of age in the dead of winter. In the meantime, would we be able to give them an environment that restricted our contact and keep them from associating us with food? Unable to find a sanctuary within Iowa (it's illegal to cross state lines with them) that was not a simple zoo/tourist trap, I just started building a cage. In a matter of weeks they were finally running around in an approximately 40 x 60 foot pen that would inhibit climbing out (which they do well) and digging (which they do equally well). An added bonus is the two-story tree house with stairs that they have no trouble scaling.

During morning chores it is wonderful seeing them at the top of their domain, watching the geese and ducks, hoping another would accidentally fly into their pen. They run and scamper and fight and dig to their hearts' content. I love taping up boxes with treats inside for them to tear apart. They get a great variety of toys and foods. Some mornings when they aren't interested in coming near me, I'll just lie on the ground and let them circle me until they are brave enough to take their food from me. In the evenings, they seem more than happy to jump on my back and grab my hat.

It is obvious to us all that they are here to stay. Once that decision was made, we learned the more we can interact with them the better. So that is what we do.

But it wasn't a painless decision. Are we depriving them of a life they would have preferred? I have had plenty of opinions telling me it is cruel to keep them like they are, and that I should try to put them out into the wild so they could do what was natural. Natural? So they could get hit by a car? Shot? Starve? I

got to thinking about where on this planet I could let them run wild without humans being an issue. When a coyote is hit on the road, it isn't natural as far as I'm concerned. So why should I let them go out and risk that? How many acres would it take? One of the best rehabilitators in the area is only 2 miles from the city. She has a wonderful acreage, but admits the proximity can be a problem.

I guess that whole thing goes for any wild animal we've taken in. Most of the baby squirrels or possums or raccoons we've taken in were orphaned due to a mom being hit by a car, shot by a gun, killed by a pet dog, or killed by a tree being felled by a chainsaw. How natural is that? I wonder just how much of this natural business is really going on? Deer are hit on roads. Do we shoot them to lessen this, hopefully preventing the suffering of those that didn't die immediately? Do we let them starve due to overpopulation? Or do we shoot them to lessen their numbers?

And then there is the whole global warming issue, and how we are involved.....Oh wait. I better leave that topic for some future political issue in, like, the year 20-*Never!*

I guess there is no such thing as natural in my small local area. We humans interact and affect wildlife whether we want to or not. Our decisions to intervene with injured or orphaned feral animals can be called interfering with nature. Or it could be just our attempt to undo the unnatural damage we humans have done to make such things happen. No one can tell me convincingly they know all the answers to that one.

Anyway, so here I am, almost 20 years after my first interaction with that crazy rescue group, the one that convinced me those 'do-gooder-animal-folks' are insane. I still feel there is a small percentage of them that will never understand that sometimes we intervene to save, and sometimes to kill humanely. Sometimes we set the nursed-to-health animal free again, and sometimes we keep them for life.

And, obviously I've changed my mind on dealing with rescues, though my subsequent experiences weren't so great, either. But there are, for the most part, wonderful people who all just want to do what is right for the animal(s), egos aside. So, of course I changed my mind and now work right along as one of them. Yeah, I changed my mind.

Naturally.

EXOTIC CORNER

by Torben Platt

Recently, Jenni and I were removing a lump from one of the iguana's jaws. She was attempting to put a tube down its esophagus, and asked me to hold its tongue down so she could



do so. We both thought the lizard was a little more 'under' than it evidently was, and it immediately crunched down on my right index finger. As Kirsten and two of her friends were observing, I tried very hard to stifle the fusillade of cuss words that were ready to erupt from my mouth. Unfortunately, I was only partially

successful, but since the animal's jaws were locked on my finger for the next five minutes, it did give me an opportunity to reflect on the most painful injuries I have received while working with animals. Voilà! My next newsletter article! As almost all of us connected with Witty Kitties have been bitten and scratched by cats and dogs, I have decided not to include those. And I will, for the sake of brevity, only include the top 5. So without further ado, drum roll please.

No. 5: Since we're on the subject, let's start with iguanas. I have had an iguana or two in my house for most of my adult life, and although they are vegetarians, I can attest to the fact that they have extremely powerful jaws. I have only had one bite that required an emergency room visit and stitches, and it occurred while I was living in Seattle. It was New Year's Eve, and I decided to show my visiting nieces and nephew how 'cool' my 6-foot iguana was. As I recall, it was early in the evening when I got bitten, but I don't think we went to the hospital until midnight. The emergency room doctor had seen a lot of drunken idiots that night but only one that was bitten by a lizard. He invited my step-brother's entire family in to watch him stitch me up, much to their delight. Happy New Year!

No. 4: As many of you know, I was lucky enough to spend two weeks in the Llanos of Venezuela in 1996 involved in a population study of green Anacondas (a real big snake). Dr. Jesus Rivas was the leader of the project, and a tougher guy you will never meet. During the dry season, these flooded grasslands dry up so there are only small mud holes/ponds scattered around, and these are where the snakes congregate. You find them by wading through the opaque water, feeling for them with your bare feet. They are inoffensive under water but when you pull them out on the bank they begin to strike wildly and will bite anything they can (like a snapping turtle). Stieg (yes, the same step-brother from the first story) and I were the first to find one; he got the back part of the snake and I got the bitey end. I could not have been more proud of myself as we slipped and fell and slogged our way over to Jesus carrying the 14-foot snake. When we passed it over him, I got my right hand a little too close to the snakes gaping mouth and it got me. I instinctively ripped my hand out of its jaws, with the result that several of its teeth came out imbedded in my hand. Dr. Rivas rightfully began to berate me for hurting the poor snake (mouth injuries can quickly become infected in snakes), so at the time I was experiencing deep psychological AND physical pain, being yelled at by my hero and having a few half-inch fangs buried in my hand. Fun times.

No. 3: I'm going list all the bites I have received from our resident pythons here in 3rd place. When a large constricting snake bites you AND wraps you up, it is always an unpleasant experience. If the snake feels any movement at all he will bite and squeeze harder, with the result you almost always (if the snake is big enough) need the help of another person (or persons) to get it off you. I remember walking from the garage to the house with the African Rock Python's fangs in my knee and rest of him wrapped around my leg and asking Joseph if mom was home yet (she wasn't). There are better ways to spend an afternoon, trust me.

No. 2: Back to Seattle. I once had a black and white Tegu, which is a South American lizard that can grow to considerable size (3 or 4 feet). Unlike Iguanas, they are carnivorous, very similar in appearance and habits to a monitor lizard. The one I

had was close to three feet and had taken ill. I was hand-feeding it a dead mouse when it missed the mouse and got my finger. It clamped down with all its strength. I sank to my knees and then eventually lay on the floor next to the lizard and begged him to let go. I pleaded, I cried, I swore. I did it all but the damn thing would not let go. I can't remember how long this went on but I do know my fingernail was gone by the time I was able to free myself.

No. 1: I'm making a whole day's experiences from a couple of years ago my #1 because I remember in the morning we neutered Pasado (the donkey) and I took several hard blows to the groin area while trying to hold him down. Jenni used all of her anesthetic on him also, so there was none left for yours truly when I let a caiman rip my arm open in the afternoon. I'll never forget Jenni looking at the exposed muscle and bone with a glint in her eye and saying, "I can sew that up!" At least I had a bottle

of vodka to sip (ok, gulp) from while she put the 14 stitches in my arm. Now I know what you're thinking: Jenni, your own wife, has got bitten worse than that, and you're right, the rattlesnake bite was much worse. However, nobody likes to see Jenni get hurt, and everybody seems to get enjoyment from my pain and misery, so there you go.

Anyway, other than the occasional mishap, things have been going pretty well so far this winter (knock on wood). All of us here in the Exotic Corner, of course, can't wait for Spring when we can get out in that natural sunshine. As always, thank you to our all our supporters and volunteers.

Torben

WITTY KITTIES PARTICIPATES IN IOWA HUMANE ALLIANCE SPAY/NEUTER DAY

by Trish Wasek

Witty Kitties held a one-day spay-neuter effort on Friday, January 28, 2011 in partnership with the Iowa Humane Alliance (IHA). IHA organized the event and identified pet owners through its Spay Iowa program. Jenni Doll performed the surgeries and administered rabies vaccines. Witty Kitties volunteers Kathleen Schoon, Amy Holcomb, Maggy Tomova, John McLaughlin, and Trish Wasek assisted with the other services, including FVRCP vaccinations, cleaning ears, trimming nails, and monitoring recovery. A total of 14 female and 16 male cats were cared for during one very busy day!

Spay Iowa is a network and referral service for affordable spay/neuter services in Iowa. The program is modeled after SPAY/USA, a program of North Shore Animal League America (www.spayusa.org). Spay Iowa provides a statewide toll-free number (888-9-SPAY-IA) that people can call when seeking information on spay/neuter services. When clients call the hot line number, the phone counselor accesses a database of programs in Iowa, and refers the caller to a program that will best meet their needs.

IHA is also involved in a major fundraising campaign to open a regional high-volume, low-cost, spay/neuter clinic in the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids corridor. The Iowa Humane Alliance Community Spay/Neuter Clinic will serve 41 Iowa counties within a 90-mile radius of the clinic location, and will offer free transport services to and from the clinic for animals in remote areas. It will be capable of sterilizing between 8,000 and 9,000 cats, dogs, and rabbits a year. The clinic is expected to open later this year at a to-be-determined location.

For more information on Spay Iowa and the Clinic Campaign, please go to www.iowahumanealliance.org.



Amy Holcomb (l) and Kathleen Schoon (r) prepare a vaccination following surgery while the kitty is still sedated.



Jenni Doll performs a side spay on a calico kitty – the healing process is easier to monitor and is less painful for the kitty.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

by Melissa Ceynar



BACK: Kraig, Melissa & Zoe

FRONT: Lizzie & Zane

MIDDLE: Tango, a stray kitty rescued by Witty Kitties' supporter Judy Witherell-

Morningstar of Cedar Rapids.

(Editor's note: Tango quickly captured the hearts of the Ceynars, and went home with them shortly before Christmas.

Thanks for everything, you guys.

You're awesome!)

We are the Ceynar family (Kraig, Melissa, Zoe, Lizzie, and Zane), and our destined relationship with Witty Kitties began when we moved in across the street. My kids were entranced by the zoo-like atmosphere and with Jenni's passion for animals. Relatives would come to see our new home, and my children would end up pulling them across the street and showing off the property like we owned the place! At Jenni's invitation, my kids were able to witness and participate in all sorts of animal interaction and I, as a homeschooling mom, appreciated the experience and exposure to new things.

It wasn't long before my children began campaigning for our family to volunteer at Witty Kitties. I am what you would call commitment-phobic, and volunteering sounded an awful lot like a pledge to set aside a specific time each week and have others depend on you being there. I hedged, I dragged my feet, and finally, pushed by the pleading of my children, I agreed to at least go and tour Witty Kitties.

I remember seeing Casper for the first time that day. He was outside in the enclosure enjoying the sunshine. I thought he was beautiful. Little did I know how I was going to come to love that sweet boy, and how I would cry when he died. And I also remember meeting Sterling -- yes, stinky Sterling -- and how my heart melted as he climbed my pants and pressed his slobbery mouth against my shoulder. I was defenseless against the pull of all those charming faces and was amazed at their individuality. So it was that the kids and I decided to volunteer one morning a week.

As it turns out, we can't stay away. With the convenience of being next door, we find ourselves filling spare time with a quick walk over to visit the cats. I must admit, when we first started out, my mindset was that this was a nice thing for my kids and me to do for the cats and those who run Witty Kitties. The truth quickly revealed itself, which is that those loveable souls have given us so much more than we have given them. The lessons we have learned are invaluable, and I am thankful that we have had this awesome opportunity to be a part of such a devoted organization.

IT'S A BLACK AND WHITE INVASION! by Trish Wasek

Wow! Four of the last five cats admitted to Witty Kitties have been black and white -- we'd love to have a statistician tell us what the odds of that are! Here's the scoop on these cutie-pies:

Lavern and Shirley are siblings who have lived together their entire lives. Their mom developed Alzheimer's Disease and needed to go into a nursing home. Although they are not special needs cats, we agreed to take them in temporarily while we either found them a new home or transferred them to another shelter as space permits. They are extremely sweet girls -- very docile and quiet. They're 13 years old (you'd never guess it to look at them!) and in good health, with the exception of needing some dental work, which Jenni will take care of. Both are declawed, so they need to be totally indoor cats. We'd really love to see them go to the same home and spend their remaining years together.



Lavern & Shirley



Lillian: Our jaws dropped when we first saw Lillian, because she is nearly a perfect mirror image of Charlie Kangaroo Butt, our original FIV cat. And Charlie was the first kitty to greet her when she arrived! Lillian is about three years old and adapted immediately to her new surroundings. She loves people and gets along fine with all the other cats in her room. She could stand to lose a pound or two, so a playmate in her new home would be ideal. Remember, FIV cannot be transmitted to other cats unless the infected cat inflicts a serious, deep bite wound. Lillian's too sweet to ever do that!

Hyde: Hyde got his name because he would hide all the time in his foster home. So we were very surprised when he first ventured out of his haven. He did a tour of the entire perimeter of his room, including jumping up on the window sill and on the bunk beds! True, he later crawled under one of the carpeted play ramps that is so low to the ground we wondered how he fit! He definitely does not hide from people, though -- he lets us pick him up and cuddle all we want. While we think Hyde would probably do best in a quiet household, he could end up surprising us by becoming a little adventurer -- you never know!



WITTY KITTIES RECEIVES GREG BIFFLE FOUNDATION GRANT

by Trish Wasek

For the third year in a row, Witty Kitties has been awarded a grant by the Greg Biffle Foundation. Greg Biffle, a two-time NASCAR champion, and his wife Nicole, founded the Greg Biffle Foundation for Animals in 2005. The Foundation's mission is to improve the well-being of animals by engaging the power and passion of the motorsports industry. Financial support for the Foundation comes from a variety of sources, including individual contributions and the sale of NASCAR Pets calendars and other racing memorabilia. The Foundation donates to humane societies, no-kill animal shelters, and spay/neuter clinics throughout the United States.



Nicole & Greg Biffle with their dogs

We have used the Biffle Foundation awards for a variety of improvements in the shelter. With the first grant, we purchased a metal storage building (which we call the Biffle Building) for storing our supply of dry cat food and other items that the raccoons were fond of breaking into or ruining over the winter months. We also added industrial-grade gutters and a drainage system which solved the annual spring flooding inside the shelter. Last year we created an infirmary/isolation area for sick kitties, and a veterinary work area for Jenni Doll. Now she doesn't have to crate sick kitties and carry them up to her house to work on them – so much better for the kitties! We also finished adding vinyl flooring throughout the shelter, so our wobbly and 3-legged kitties no longer slip and slide on the sweating concrete floors during the humid summer months. This year we plan to use the funds to microchip every cat at Witty Kitties, add a couple more air conditioners, and update the outdoor kitty enclosures.

We need to send out a special thank you to an extraordinary volunteer, Nancy Fultz of Surprise, Arizona, who wrote all three of these grants. Those of you who are long-time supporters know what a difference these improvements have made to the welfare of our kitties and to shelter operations in general. You're awesome, Nancy!

Finally, we are extremely grateful to the Greg Biffle Foundation for all it does for shelters and humane societies across the US. For more information, and to see a complete list of grant recipients, go to www.gregbifflefoundation.com.

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In memory of my husband, **Tom Charlton**, who rescued every stray kitty who crossed his path, by Cindi Charlton of Wellman

In memory of **Tucker**, Aunt Hope & Uncle Dick's beloved cat, by Deb Peterson of Cedar Rapids

In memory of **Chloe**, beloved cat of Kathy Rash, by Ronnye & Dennis Wieland of North Liberty

In memory of **Elmo "Bud" Ruby**, father of Peggy Kubczak, by Dennis & Marilyn Schipper of Cedar Rapids

In memory of my son, **Jon Witherell**, by Judy Witherell-Morningstar of Cedar Rapids

In memory of all the "**buff boys**," especially **Digger**, and all the other Witty Kitties who have passed on, and in celebration of those who have found their forever homes, by Gary and Karen Schroeder of Brooklyn, IA

In memory of Witty Kitty **Casper**, by Kraig, Melissa, Zoe, Lizzie, and Zane Ceynar of Solon

In memory of our cats, **Boon & Sweetie**, who passed away last May & June, by Joe & Kristen Wilford of Swisher

In memory of **Rascal Portman**, a great cat. Hugs and purrs from Biskit, Izzy, Lucy and Xena (with a little help from Sue and Robert Weinberg of Hills)

In honor of **Virginia Sorensen**, by Sue Hartung of Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Maggie**, Tammy McKenna's dog, by Lori Peterson of Shellsburg

In honor of **Moxie**, a former Witty Kitty who was adopted by my daughter Mallory, by Janet Engle of Marion

In honor of **Harry**, a former Witty Kitty who was adopted by Wendy Kadner, by Sherry Myhlhousen of Cedar Rapids

In honor of **Prudence and Pearl**, my cats from a shelter, by John Brandon of Iowa City

HAPPY ADOPTIONS

by Trish Wasek

Two of our very favorite cats, Vince and Mooch, and another whom we barely got to know, Pearl, have been adopted! Here are their happy endings...



Pearl

Last December, Janet Wilson, of Iowa City, rescued a feline leukemia positive cat and asked whether we could take her in. We were so full at the time that we offered to take Biscuit if Janet would be willing to adopt a Witty Kitty in exchange. And that's how Pearl found her new home after only a couple weeks at Witty Kitties (Pearl's former owners had to go into assisted living, and could take only two of their four housecats with them, so Pearl and her sister Swisher Sweet came to Witty Kitties even though they have no special needs.) As a 10-year-old, Pearl's odds for adoption were not good, so we were absolutely delighted when Janet chose her! Janet tells us that Pearl is having no problems adjusting to her new home and loves playing with her new cat siblings and toys. Besides adopting Pearl, Janet is sponsoring Swisher Sweet while she waits for her very own forever home. Thank you so much, Janet, for helping both of these sweet girls!

Vince

Everyone who met Vince fell in love with him, including eight-year-old Margo Brinegar. Margo lives across the road from Witty Kitties and visits so often she knows all of our 45 cats by name. But she especially loved Vince, and after introducing him to her mom and dad, Julie and Mike, she got the best Christmas gift ever – Vince! Here's how he's doing:

Vince is having a wonderful time in his new home. He likes to spend his time taking naps, eating, and lying around in front of the fireplace! The first couple of days were a little tough, but once we figured out that Vince doesn't like having his litter box next to the three deer heads in our basement, his transition was much smoother. Apparently he is very, very scared of deer! We have been having a great time with him. He has actually started to play a little with a catnip mouse he received for Christmas, although after about 15 seconds of that he needs a rest! Thank you so much for bringing Vince into our lives!! Mike, Julie, and Margo



Mooch

We don't get very many kittens at Witty Kitties, so Mooch was special from the get-go. He came to us as part of a farm rescue and had such a severe upper respiratory infection we weren't sure he would make it. But after a couple months of TLC, he was ready to go to his new home with Kim O'Meara, of Cedar Rapids. Here's an update:

S(mooch)ie is getting used to things in his new home. He was given a supervised tour of the entire house tonight. He is a really fast runner and showed off his sprinting skills tearing across the great room at a high speed. His jumping skills aren't too bad, either! His new housemates are still a little unsure of him, but they are slowly warming up. His new best friend and protector is my Golden Retriever, Harley. Harley follows Smoochie around, making sure everything is OK. Smoochie went right up to him and sniffed his nose the first time they met. Fearless! He is a sweet and funny kitten, and he has a very strong will. He is perfecting his purring and cooing technique – he sounds just like a pigeon! My son is even coming home from college this weekend to meet him in person. Thank you for letting him become part of my family! Kim

SCOUT SERVICE PROJECT BENEFITS WITTY KITTIES

by Trish Wasek

Junior Girl Scout troop 8345 decided to save their change last fall to donate to an animal shelter, and Witty Kitties was the lucky recipient! The girls, fourth graders at Prairie Ridge Elementary in Cedar Rapids, saved nearly \$100 and learned financial skills by shopping themselves for the items on Witty Kitties' wish list. We also arranged a field trip to Witty Kitties so the girls could drop off their donations (cleaning supplies and cat food galore!) in person. The kitties, especially baby Mooch, were a big hit, and most of the girls even held one of our Ball Pythons! Thanks for thinking of us, troop 8345 – we couldn't do what we do without your support!

L to R: Hannah Allpress, Rachel Petersen, Willow Weber (holding Mooch), Holly Huston, Emma McMenemy, Hannah Lowry, & Abby Boone



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

To find Witty Kitties. . .

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

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



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Gifts, Memorials and Honorariums

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

Gift: \$ _____

Memorial for: (name) _____
 Person Pet

Honorarium for: (name) _____
 Person Pet

Send notification to: (name) _____

_____ (please provide city, state and zip)



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Want to get your newsletter electronically? Give us your email: _____