

WEBSITE www.wittykitties.org

Witty Kitties, Inc. Newsletter

A Special-Needs Shelter for Cats & Critters * Volume VI, Issue 3 * Fall 2009

















Third Annual WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER!

SAVE THE DATE! -- <u>Saturday</u>, <u>September 26</u>, 5 — 8 p.m. Witty Kitties' 3rd Annual Wine Tasting Fundraiser. lowa supporters: see insert in this issue for more details.

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.

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RECONSTRUCTIONIST THEORY: MAGGIE AND MORGAN, TWO CASE HISTORIES

By Jenni Doll, DVM

It's a funny thing — in the past couple of weeks, I've been working on two cases that are very similar, but are having totally different outcomes.

Maggie is a Basenji mix, about a year old, who suffered a close-range shotgun injury a month ago. She was a stray dog, very timid, and difficult to catch. Thanks to good Samaritans, she was finally lassoed and taken in to a local shelter. Poor dog was missing literally inches of muscle from over her shoulders. The "spinous process" of one of her vertebrae was gone, and the splinters of bone just sprawled around. So were splinters from the edge of one of her scapulae. The gunk they sat in was a combination of serum, purulent discharge ("puss"), and maggots (not the tiny ones either).

Cleaning it out under anesthesia is on my top five most gross things I've ever had to do.

That is what I did with my second patient, a cat named Morgan, as well. He too was a stray, who was finally captured by a kindhearted person after much difficulty. He was missing 75% of the skin from the circumference of his neck, a band over 2 inches wide wound around from below one ear, down, and over to the other. Unlike Maggie though, the wound was weeks old, but his wild temperament made him difficult to catch earlier. It was such a chronic wound, that once I got all the dried(fill in blank with grossness)... off the edges, I saw that the skin had a smooth, healed connection with the exposed tissue. His body was essentially deciding it was OK with how it had healed itself. If it hadn't been for the fact that the poor cat was losing a large amount of fluids and protein from the thing I would have thought he was doing OK without my help. So, he too got the debriding treatment, and I pretty much told the skin edges they needed to resume closing the hole that was exposed, at least enough for me to be able to close it surgically later on.

Maggie, the dog, wouldn't eat her antibiotics, so had to have a nice

pricey little injection that was hopefully going to cover what bugs were living in her wound.

Morgan, the cat, also got the same shot, as he wouldn't take all his meds consistently in his food, and was too wild to be pilled.

A week later, I knocked Maggie out and brought the wound edges together, made some relief sutures, and got the whole thing sutured and staple closed, though I was really paranoid about it just opening up a few days later. I held my breath.

Meanwhile, my first attempt at Morgan's neck repair was not a well-planned-out process, unfortunately, so I had to put him out another time, after spending the evening reviewing reconstruction/skin flaps in one of my books. Having to bite the bullet, I cut enormous patches of skin from each side of his shoulder/chest area, and swung them around, making for a nice bunch of skin to cover the defects without tension. The donor sites close easily (hey, just like the book said they would!). I felt really good about how it went.

Almost two weeks later, Maggie's shoulder injury site is lovely, and almost ready to have the staples and sutures removed. Now that she is medically sound, we can work harder on her socialization, making her a good future pet for some lucky people. Looking at her I can't imagine the area being as bad as I remember it was.

Not so for Morgan. Unfortunately his neck area was still remaining infected, thus preventing healing, and his incisions all opened up this weekend. He was more of a mess than before now.

I had a dilemma. Half measures weren't going to take care of Morgan's injury. If I wanted to have a happy ending I would need to culture the area and send it out to find what antibiotic was going to take care of the problem, then figure out how to get it into him without traumatizing him on a daily basis, as he was only now letting me clean his cage and feed him without smacking my hand with his paw. I really wanted to be able to call this a success, and thought of how darned proud I'd be of myself.

That word "proud". That is a problem. My pride.

Whenever I find myself thinking like this, I get really hard to live with. I spent all day sulking, not necessarily about the fact that I may not be able to heal this cat, but because I wasn't sure of my motivation at this stage. The thought of relieving his discomfort after so long, and maybe even making him appreciate being cared for is all I wanted when I first met him, as well as with Maggie. But now I didn't know if one more attempt was in his best interest. After the flaps, he was in a lot of pain. My gut was telling me he had much less than a

of pain. My gut was telling me he had much less than a 50:50 chance of doing OK. So, if that were the case, my going ahead was more for me, than for him. After giving him his treat of canned food, which became an expected pleasure for him (he even allowed me to watch him eat), I snuck my hand into his cage and gave him a heavy sedative. Still eating, he slowly went down. A closer look at his wounds and all the dried discharge that had accumulated, told me what I did next was the right decision. I then euthanized him.

Not really sure why I ended up crying afterwards. It may have been just knowing this feline had suffered so long, and didn't have a chance to live a normal life. Or it was because I had failed him. Or it could have been the fact that I was actually in a mindset earlier that was putting my pride ahead of the animal. After a heck of a lot of work, my efforts were in vain.

Regardless, after making sure he was gone, and covering him up with his blankets so I could deal with him in the morning, I decided to walk outside. I took a deep breath, and went to the back of the shelter where Maggie is kept most of the time. And I sat with her a while, and smiled.

How Far?

by Trish Wasek

How far would you travel to find just the right companion for one of your cats? Twenty miles? Fifty? How 'bout 300 (one way)?! That's how far Janelle Frederick, of Mayer, Minnesota, came when she visited Witty Kitties at the end of August.

Janelle had recently taken in Andy, a stray rescued by a friend of



Tommy & Janelle

hers. She thought Andy would join her other two indoor cats, but when he tested positive for feline leukemia, she decided that a change in plans was in order. So Andy got his own special digs in an outdoor shed on her 10 acre property, and Janelle decided he needed more company than she, her husband, and their two dogs could provide.

Although many of our kitties vied for her attention, Tommy picked Janelle out almost immediately. Tommy had been with us only a couple of weeks, and was already one of our favorites for his sweet and gentle personality. He curled up in Janelle's arms like a baby, and let her stroke his tummy forever. Janelle decided he'd be the perfect companion for Andy. She was spending

2 (continued. . .)

the night in Cedar Rapids, and would pick up Tommy in the morning.

What we didn't know was that there was another Witty Kitty tugging at Janelle's heartstrings. When she returned the next morning, she gave us the good news. She had spoken to her husband, and they had decided to adopt A Boy Named Sue also!! A Boy Named Sue still needs to have his useless right eye removed to prevent recurrent infections, so he didn't go home along with Tommy. But after Jenni performs his surgery, we'll arrange to take him up to Minnesota to join Tommy and Andy.

Thank you so much, Janelle, for giving these two boys a loving home and family!



A Boy Named Sue

EXOTIC CORNER

by Torben Platt

Since my last column was dedicated to describing the events surrounding Jenni's rattlesnake bite, it's been awhile since I've updated our readers about Witty Kitty's resident exotic animals, so I'd like to do that in this newsletter.

First of all, the dangerously venomous snakes (including the timber rattlesnakes) ended up at an antivenin producing facility in Texas, where I have been assured they will be well taken care of. We still have our fair share of



other snakes, of course, and those currently consist of 4 ball Pythons (of different phases), 4 King Snakes (again of different phases), 2 Sand Boas, 2 Carpet Pythons, 1 African Rock Python, 1 Boa Constrictor, 1 Reticulated Python, 1 Burmese Python, 2 Copperheads, and 1 Corn Snake. We also are taking care of a venemoid (venom ducts removed) albino Monocled Cobra for some friends/volunteers of ours.

Sticking with reptiles we still have 1 alligator (good ol' Lex), 2 Caimans, 1 African spur thighed tortoise (who is probably tipping the scales at close to a 100 pounds by now), 1 red legged tortoise, 1 soft-shelled turtle, 1 red-eared slider, 3 iguanas, 1 savannah monitor lizard, 1 plated lizard, 2 bearded lizards, and a blue-tongued skink. Several of these animals spent the summer outside (the tortoises, alligator, caimans, iguanas, turtles, and some of the other lizards), but soon every one of them will be moved into the nice warm garage for the colder months. Other than reptiles, some of our residents that might be considered "exotic" include our 8 pot-bellied pigs, 2 ferrets, 2 emus, and 2 llamas. The "farm" animals now number 2 ponies (Buddy and Sonny), 1 disgruntled donkey (Posado), 4 goats and a seemingly vast and varying number of ducks, geese, pigeons, chickens, and doves.

All of these animals (including the cats) have one thing in common; At some point in their life they were unwanted. The reasons they were unwanted vary; maybe they got too big, or their owners had to move, or they were confiscated, etc. It may not have been their previous owner's fault, but it certainly wasn't the animal's fault. The fact that Jenni and I decided to open a nonprofit animal shelter starting with a few homeless cats, and less than 10 years later, have all the critters listed above, demonstrates that the homeless pet problem is still an issue in this area. We didn't buy any of them, we aren't breeding anything, and it's not a hobby. If someone had a living creature they didn't want or couldn't take care of anymore, all we did was say, "Yes, we'll take it." It has truly been a labor of love, and for the most part we enjoy it, but nothing would make us happier than to be put 'out of business' by the fact that there are no more homeless pets.

Okay, I'll step off my soap box for now and take this opportunity to say thank you to all our loyal supporters, and a special thank you to our wonderful newsletter editor, Dona. She has volunteered her time and expertise to Witty Kitties for 5 years now, despite some very tough times personally, and we all owe her our gratitude and sincere condolences on the loss of her husband of 40 years, Jon. We love you, Dona.

Torben

New Arrivals at Witty Kitties

by Trish Wasek

Harry

After the 2008 Cedar Rapids' flood, a kind neighborhood woman began feeding the abandoned cats in the Time Check area. Harry was the only really friendly cat she fed. She could not afford to take any more cats into her own home, but she kept feeding the flood victims, including Harry. Over a year later, she saw a newspaper article about an lowa Humane Alliance (iowahumanealliance.org) spay/neuter day for stray flood cats. By now Harry was quite the sight – his white fur was tan-colored from dirt and mud, and his back and face were covered with scars from fights and bite wounds. Not surprisingly, Harry tested positive for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). FIV is commonly spread by fighting tom cats via deep bite wounds. Harry was neutered, and is now healing nicely at Witty Kitties. He has a huge head, and a heart to match. He loves people and is sweet



to the other cats in his room. He's had a tough year, and would love to find his very own indoor home. FIV cannot be spread by mutual grooming, or by sharing food, water, or litter, so even if you have other cats, Harry would not be a threat. Won't you please consider him?

Ryan

Ryan is our newest arrival. He came with Tommy from the good folks at Waverly Pet Rescue (http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/IA143.html), in Waverly, Iowa. One morning, Ryan walked into a Plainfield, Iowa vet clinic as it was opening, meowing for help. About a week later, Waverly Pet Rescue took him in. WPR fosters all its rescued cats in private homes. When Ryan and Tommy tested positive for feline leukemia, their foster parents needed to find another place for both of them, and fortunately, we had room. Tommy was recently adopted, and now we need to find that forever home for Ryan. Ryan is still a kitten (about 9 months), and behaves like one too! He loves playing with all the toys in his room, and races from one end to the other, full speed ahead. He's a beautiful, solid gray boy with just a few white hairs on his throat. He loves being held for awhile, but then he's ready to jump down and start playing again. We hope Ryan's stay here will be nearly as short as Tommy's was!



Day-Tipper

At first we thought Day-Tipper had cerebellar hypoplasia because she was so wobbly, but it turns out she had such a bad inner ear infection that her balance has been permanently affected. The infection has cleared up, her eardrums have healed, but she'll never walk normally -- her head tips to the left pretty much all the time. She can jump up short distances, but she can also lose her balance and tip over pretty easily. She is also quite hard of hearing — but that means the vacuum cleaner won't scare her a bit!! She's very small-boned and light as a feather -- her fur makes her look bigger than she is. Day-Tipper adores being held, and will latch on to you like Velcro and let you hold her for the longest time. She would be the best lap cat ever!



To meet any of these cuties, or to see any of the other cats residing at Witty Kitties, stop by any Saturday morning, or call (319) 848-3238 or email staff@wittykitties.org to set up an appointment.

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In honor of Jenni Doll, DVM, by Kathleen Janz

In honor of Sheryl Garrett, by Mark Brown, North Liberty, IA

In honor of my mother, **Rose Mauter**, on her 93rd birthday, by Betty Stewart, Cedar Rapids, IA

Witty Kitties received an honorarium for **Linda Skvor**.

The donors wish to remain anonymous, but want to honor Linda.

In honor of our beloved cats, **Kitty and Benny**, by Mark and Diana Russo, Iowa City, IA

In honor of witty kitties **Apollo, Bud, Highland, and Tater Tot**, by Safe Haven of Iowa County (www.wesavepets.com),
their original rescue organization

In honor of **Cooper**, splendid cat of Cyndy Danielson, who regrew his own fur, by Liz Koffron-Eisen

In memory of **Michele La Rue Herzberger**, by the Skvor family

In memory of **Jon Pearce**, beloved husband of Dona & father of Rob, by his neighbors at King's Court Condos

In memory of **Sasha**, wonderful dog of Bruce & Marilyn Fehn, by Joan Force

In memory of our most beautiful **Sasha**, who graced our lives with love and her joy of life for 14 years, by Bruce & Marilyn Fehn

In memory of **Big Wally**, the cat, beloved pet of Valerie & Barry Lamont, by Ronnye Wieland

In memory of Wally, the barn cat turned house cat, beloved pet of Valerie & Barry Lamont, by Lois James

In memory of **Boca**, beloved Witty Kitty, by her sponsors Judee & Randy Albert

In memory of **Onji**, my beloved 18-year-old cat, by Brett Smith

In memory of **Bart**, my beloved 9-year-old dog, by Brett Smith

In memory of **Sage**, 'best damned cat in the whole wide world,' & best buddy to Darren, Alice & Christopher Pittman, by Dona Pearce

In memory of Witty Kitty **Rusty**, by his rescuer, Stacia Boots, Cedar Rapids, IA In loving memory of our cat **Squirt**, 1993-2009, by Mike and Sarah Larson, Iowa City, IA

In memory of Katell, a beloved pet, by Jim Jacobson

In memory of **Scamper**, beloved cat of Betty Pittman, by her daughter, Dona Pearce

In memory of our beloved pets **Pepper, Ted and Tim**, by Joanne & Roger Rayborn

In memory of my beloved dog, **Teddy**, and my beloved kitty, **Timmy**, by Agnes Hembera

In memory of **Oreo**, and in honor of the **Kohl family**, by Jeff and Diane Kohl, Solon, IA

In memory of Witty Kitty **Big Guy**, whose life guided Judy Akers, his rescuer, into the fold of Witty Kitties' volunteers, by Trish Wasek and John McLaughlin, Swisher, IA

In memory of **Sebastian**, Betty Pittman's dear Maltese, by her daughter, Dona Pearce

In memory of **Patty**, the most wonderful dog of Rabbi Jeff Portman and Gail Standig-Portman, by Robert, Sue, Biskit, Xena, Lucy, and Izzy Weinberg, Hills, IA

In memory of **Boots and Spook**, beloved cats of Marge McGowan, by Ronnye Wieland, North Liberty, IA

In memory of **Spook**, beloved cat of Marge McGowan, by Lois James, Iowa City, IA

Love using eBay? Want to help Witty Kitties raise funds? Then go to www.missionfish.org. eBay sellers who designate a portion of their sales proceeds to a charity get more bids, are more likely to sell their items, and get higher final prices than regular eBay listings. The eBay Giving Works ribbon makes your listing stand out, plus your listing shows up in the 'Giving Works' category and on Witty Kitties' Mission Fish page. It's like getting 3 categories for the price of one! You can give 10% - 100% of the final value (\$5 minimum) to Witty Kitties, and a percentage of your eBay fees are refunded back to your account. When listing an item, choose Witty Kitties as the charity to benefit.



ANOTHER HAPPY ADOPTION TALE by Trish Wasek

In past years, most of our Witty Kitties' adoptions happened via word of mouth, or when a soft-hearted volunteer just couldn't resist. But we've now had several adoptions, thanks to Petfinder (www.petfinder.com), and it's still a pleasant surprise when someone tells us that is how they discovered Witty Kitties!

Last June, Tyler Kent of West Branch, contacted us by email after seeing some of our kitties on Petfinder. Tyler spent the last four years in the service in Japan, and had two wonderful kitties there who he loved dearly. But, due to travel restrictions, he had to leave them behind when he recently returned to the states. He missed them terribly, and found that living in a home without cats was not an option! He had always adopted shelter cats, and decided he was now ready for the next big step, a special-needs shelter cat. And we had about forty eligible contenders!

After his first visit to Witty Kitties, Tyler wondered how he was ever going to make up his mind. He had dozens of cats crawling all over him! So he visited us a couple more times and, slowly but surely, his soul mates made themselves known. After considering the pros and cons of adopting two cats, each with a different retrovirus, he picked his two favorites. And that's how Wallace (FIV+) and Rex (FeLV+) were adopted together by one pretty great guy!

Here's a recent update from Tyler:

Wallace and Rex have been doing very well, indeed. Wallace was at the food dish within a few minutes of getting home. Rex followed shortly after (later that evening). Rex didn't initially care for the food, and had a day or two of leaving it on my carpet after testing it. All is well now, though, and he is eating just fine. They took a little while to get used to their water fountain, but they drink like fish now.

I think we made the right choice in pairing the two of them together. They are fast friends, to say the least, as is evidenced by the picture of them on the bed sleeping. They have turned out to be rather lazy and tend to spend most of the day — and evening, for that matter — sleeping on the bed. Wallace is certainly more laid back than Rex, as I only see him get up to eat, drink, use the litter box, or sleep in the bathroom sink or some other spot in the house. He still demands attention, though, and doesn't seem to understand why, whenever there are people in the house, they are not petting him at all times.

Rex is the playful one. He likes to attack feet under the



Wallace and Rex making themselves right at home!

bed covers and stray shoelaces on occasion. He also is a pretty good soccer player with some of the toys I have gotten for them. He is a riot to watch play and run around the house. He and Wallace often chase each other from room to room. They also seem to take turns being the alpha male. Rex has been known to walk over and smack Wallace on the head for no reason whatsoever, and then go back and do whatever he was doing. Wallace doesn't really seem to notice or care. The only exception is if Rex tries to lick Wallace's butt; Wallace gets a little upset and kicks Rex off of the bed for this heinous act. Rex tends to stay gone for a little while after this, likely sulking.

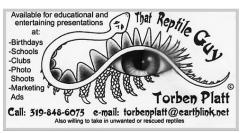
Rex is a little mean to Wallace in one regard. He has an interesting habit of doing the rattle-snake tail thing. He does this most obviously and frequently when he is around Wallace. It seems that he is saying, "Hey, look what I can do! Why don't you try it, too?"

All in all, they are both hilarious and wonderful to have in the house. They seem to be perfectly healthy, with no issues adjusting to a new house. They get along great and are always good for solid entertainment. Thank you so much for what you do. Sorry, but they will <u>not</u> be coming back to Witty Kitties. I love them and they will have to stay here until the end of time.

Tyler

REMEMBER...

Torben and Jenni would be glad to present an educational and informative program for your club, school, birthday party — in fact, just about any presentation that you can think of. Call or email Torben, and he'll put you on his calendar!



SPECIAL THANKS

by Trish Wasek

Special thanks to Mount Vernon Community High School for four custom-made, insulated, dog (ahem, CAT) houses, which were donated to Witty Kitties this summer. Scott White's Building Construction class made the dog houses last year as a project to learn about hip-roof construction. Le Mans and his outdoor pals think they're going to be just purrrrrrrrrrfect for keeping warm this winter!!



LeMans is making sure one of the new cat houses is comfy for his fellow feline friends!

A Thank You and a Reminder

Witty Kitties is always in need of supplies, help, adopters — you name it, we probably need it! If you can't be a hands-on volunteer, you can still make a difference by making a donation to our shelter. Email staff@wittykitties.org for more information. And THANKS to those of you who are loyal supporters. We couldn't do it without **YOU**!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

(Editor's Note: Witty Kitties has an amazing core group of dedicated volunteers, so the board thought it would be nice to recognize them in future issues, and let them tell you about their connection to Witty Kitties in their own words. Katie Fasselius is the author of our first Volunteer Corner).

Jon and Katie stumbled upon Witty Kitties in March of 2009 when we were looking for a short-term place to volunteer for the 10,000 Hours Show. We only needed to volunteer 10 hours for the event, but we loved it so much we thought we'd make it a regular thing and have

been volunteering weekly ever since.

We are the proud parents of two kitties--Luna and Marzipan--who we rescued from the lowa City Animal Shelter. They are tuxedowearing sisters. Luna must be the big sister, because she's the boss. They are both very sweet and like to



cuddle, though Marzipan keeps more to herself and has more than a little klutz in her. After a lifetime of desperately begging her parents for kittens and having a roommate who was allergic to them, Jon helped pick these two out the very first day Katie could bring them home.

Not long after, we moved into a condo where only two cats are allowed, which is a good thing since we would have a whole Witty Kitties room in our house by now without this. We still almost broke this rule for the lovable Leroy, who we miss dearly.

Jon works as an electrician in Cedar Rapids and Katie is a database manager for a small nonprofit that is part of the University. We also are real estate investors on the side, so if you know of any homes for sale in the lowa City area, let us know!

STILL LOOKING FOR A HOME

by Jenni Doll, DVM

Rip, the wonderful cat mentioned in the Winter 2009 newsletter, is still at the Muscatine Humane Society. He's a young orange and white DSH who is incredibly loveable. If your memory needs refreshing, Rip walked into a person's yard last winter 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. Jenni amputated the toes of his bad paw, and he's now an adorable guy who is hoping his forever home is just around the corner. If you've been thinking of adopting a young orange and white domestic shorthair cat, who is incredibly loveable, Rip just may be the one for you! Why not visit the Muscatine Humane Society and see?

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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