



Mewsletter

For the friends of the Independent Cat Society, a no-kill cat shelter

Fall/Winter 2003

Azura: What's behind those pools of blue?

by Paulette Gonzalez (with contributing remarks from Sandy Robelia and Sue O'Leary)

Blue eyes
Baby's got blue eyes
Like a deep blue sea
On a blue, blue day.
- Elton John



Azura and her pools of blue.

When you work with cats for many years, certain ones touch your heart. Elderly cats, in their “ninth life,” have lost the sparkle in their eyes and jump in their step, but they’re happy with just a little love and attention. Kittens, with their boundless energy and kitten antics, keep us in stitches. We see cats who were traumatized, in one way or another, with the look of fear in their eyes, and wish they could tell us what happened. If only they could speak to us! But, they do, as any animal lover knows.

I love all cats of every shape, color and size. But I’ve always been fascinated with calicos, each with their own pattern, as if painted with an artists brush, no two are alike.

One day, I noticed a very different calico at the shelter. She was almost all white with only a few faint patches of orange and black. She had eyes like I have never seen — the biggest, saddest, azure blue eyes. Those beautiful blue eyes seemed to go right through me as if she was pleading to me or looking into my soul.

Azura seemed confused and scared when she first came to us. At first, she didn’t utter a sound or make a move. We all worried about her. She wouldn’t eat or come out of the kitty play tube in her room. And when she did, she seemed confused and disoriented. It seemed like she couldn’t focus her eyes very well.

We knew that at least part of the problem was that she was grieving the loss of her home. We all began to spend extra time with her — talking to her, brushing and petting her, and comforting her, trying to help her overcome her grief and sense of loss. Volunteers visited in the evenings to give her some extra TLC.

When Azura began having seizures, we knew something else was wrong. Our vet discovered that Azura may

have an infection that can cause lethargy, loss of appetite, vision problems and seizures. We are treating her with antibiotics, and of course, love.

Slowly but surely, Azura is coming around. She enjoys having some freedom in the hallway when our cleaners and medicators are there, and she enjoys sharing my turkey sandwich for lunch.

I may never know what magic is in the blue eyes that mesmerize me so, but I hope Azura knows we love her and we’re glad she’s home.

Inside . . .

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Mewsletter

Published for the friends of the
Independent Cat Society, Inc.
PO Box 735, Westville, IN 46391
(219) 785-4936
www.catsociety.org

The Independent Cat Society, Inc.,
founded in 1977, is a nonprofit,
no-kill cat shelter on US Rt 6
at the Porter/La Porte County
Line Rd in Westville, Indiana.

The Independent Cat Society
mission is to promote the welfare
of all animals, especially cats,
through the reduction
of pet overpopulation,
the education of the public,
the prevention
of cruelties to animals,
promotion of responsible
pet ownership and by working
for more humane legislation.

Adoption hours:

Saturdays, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sundays, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Others by appointment.
Please call (219) 785-4936.

Adoption fee: \$65

Includes: Spay/neuter, vet exam,
feline leukemia test and
vaccination, FIV test, FVRCP
vaccination, parasite treatment,
tattoo ID and cardboard cat carrier.



Board of Directors

Susan O'Leary, President
Paulette Gonzalez, Vice President
Sandra Robelia, Recording
Secretary
Rebecca Bolton, Corresponding
Secretary
Carol Tomerlin, Treasurer
Board members:
Brenda Mikolajczak, Susan Ogg,
James Granzow, Carol Albrecht

The Board of Directors meets
the fourth Monday of every month.
Please call the shelter
for meeting location.

Calendar of Events

ADOPTION SPECIAL:

For a limited time, adopt a kitten or adult cat for \$65, adopt a companion
at no charge. Visit the shelter for details.

Bake Sale at Brandt's Old Fashioned Feed, Pet and Wildlife Emporium

Saturday, December 6, 10am - 4pm

Brandt's will donate 10% of the day's cat item sales (excluding food) to the
Independent Cat Society. 309 W. US 12 at Wabash St., Michigan City, north of
Lighthouse Place Premium Outlet Mall.

Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 13, 10am - 4pm; Sunday, December 14, 1pm - 4pm

Cat crafts, gifts, baked goods, adoptions of cats and kittens. Adopters will receive a
free "starter kit" (food, litter, cat toy, kitty greens) courtesy of Brandt's Old
Fashioned Feed, Pet and Wildlife Emporium.

Jewel-Osco Shop-N-Share

Monday, December 15; Tuesday, December 16; Wednesday, December 17

Use coupon on page 7.

Photo Contest

Entries postmarked by: January 31, 2004

Judging: Saturday, February 14, 2004

Categories: Cutest, Funniest, Most Original. \$5 per entry. See page 6 for details.

Open Your Hearts Open House

Saturday, February 14, 2004, 10 am - 5 pm

Adoptions, crafts, gifts, baked goods, Odgen Dunes Firehouse, Odgen Dunes,
Indiana.

Give your cat the gift of health this holiday season!

Eagle Pack

dry cat food

For sale at the Independent Cat Society!

16.5 lb bag -- \$22.50

6.6 lb bag -- \$11.25

- **All-natural, high meat protein food**
- **Contains no by-products or artificial preservatives**
- **Rated a "Top Pick" by *The Whole Cat Journal!***

***Buy this wholesome, healthy food for your cats
and support the shelter at the same time!***

**Available Saturdays, 10 am - 4 pm, Sundays, 1 pm - 4 pm at the
shelter, Rt. 6 and Co Line Rd, Westville.**

President's Message

The Pleasure and the Pain

When I was little, I used to ask my mom, "Does it hurt to have a baby?"

Her answer was always the same. "Yes, but when you see that precious baby, you forget the pain."

Ah, yes. The pleasure — and the pain. I've never had a baby, but I think having foster kittens in the house might be a pretty similar experience.

When I'm scraping do-do off the wall around the litter box because someone got a little too vigorous burying it, or I'm picking my 20-pound marble lamp off the floor, I feel the pain.

But when nothing goes right in the world and no one loves me, I can open the door to my foster "kitten room" and instantly be transformed. When those five golden, furry bodies run toward me with glee, as if I am the Next Coming, the worries of the day melt away. I'm on a mini-vacation, a kitty retreat, a feline day spa. Better than a bubble bath, a pedicure, a roaring fire on a snowy night.

At the shelter, we're always looking for good foster homes. Not just for kittens, but also for cats with special needs — like those who don't adjust well to the shelter, or cats on a special diet. And our foster moms and dads don't have to worry about the cost — the Independent Cat Society pays all veterinary and food costs.

Some of you may know Rusty, an orange tabby who is going blind. Rusty was a cat who lived in the hall. He was fearful of other cats, so couldn't live in a room. He couldn't see them very well. Rusty was always on the defensive, and rightly so.

Well, Rusty lucked out. A volunteer recommended his friend as a foster mom. She understood Rusty's fears. You see, Joan has a blind dog!

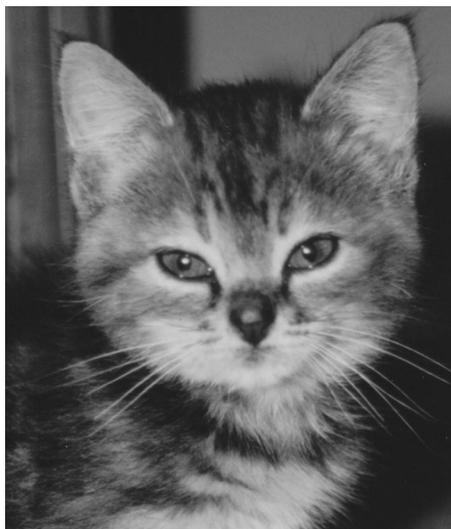
Now, Rusty lives in Portage with Joan and her dog and cat. He's very happy and he finds his way around the house just fine.

Preston's blood doesn't clot as fast as it should. So living at the shelter, as Pres had done since 1996, was kind of risky, especially if he happened upon some bloodthirsty thugs in his room.

Pres got lucky, too. One of our long-time supporters called us, saying she wanted to foster one of our neediest cats. And, as they say, the rest is history.

Wouldn't you like the reward of helping a special needs cat who needs a home? Some of our neediest cats feel the pain of loneliness. Give them the pleasure of being loved. Be a foster parent.

This column is dedicated to the memory of Topaz:



***Your star burned brightly while you were here with me
Too soon, you were taken away.
Now, in the night sky, I will see you shining again, just like the little jewel that you are.***

Wish List

Our "Wish List" always changes.



Please help us make the cats wishes come true!

Thank you for your donations. Please note: We do not use litter pan liners, hooded litter pans, newspapers, or Pine Sol and other pine cleaners.

Special needs:

- Small fire extinguishers
- Pet Temp ear thermometer for pets (from Revival Animal Health: 1-800-786-4751)
- Copy machine
- Utility trailer
- Two-drawer locking file cabinet

Supplies:

- Cat litter
- Paper towels
- 6" & 9" paper plates
- Bleach
- Laundry detergent
- Large and x-large trash bags

Food:

- Fancy Feast: ground variety, not chunks or sliced

Office:

- Postage stamps
- 35mm color film
- 3-hole clear report covers
- 9x12 envelopes

. . . and loving, responsible homes for our cats!

Thank you for your gifts to us!
All donations are tax-deductible.

Christmas is coming: Easy ways to donate

Donate while you shop!

When you register with the iGive site (www.igive.com) and choose the Independent Cat Society as your charity, a percentage of every purchase from the 250+ web retailers -- like Amazon.com and J.C. Penney -- will be donated to the shelter. There's even a downloadable window so that you can save all your favorite iGive retailers!

Charge it, and donate!

By applying for and using an Action for Animals or Morris MasterCard, you'll earn additional income for the Independent Cat Society at no extra cost to you.

Designate the Independent Cat Society (#0147) as your charity when you apply for this credit card and a

percentage of every purchase is donated to the shelter. To request an application, call 1-800-545-5885, or log on to www.animalsafe.org.

Recycle, and donate!

Metro Metals is accepting donations of recyclable materials for the shelter, including aluminum, brass, copper, auto parts, radiators, stainless steel, alloys, paper, glass, plastic, computers, circuit boards, electric motors, scrap iron and steel.

Mention that you are recycling on behalf of the Independent Cat Society and we will receive 3 cents more per pound. Metro Metals is at 2155 W. Lincolnway, Valparaiso, 465-1459, and 1501 E. Main Street, Griffith, 922-1830. Hours are Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Looking for a unique Christmas gift? Sponsor-A-Cat for your loved one!



Sponsor-A-Cat is a great holiday gift for the guy or gal who has everything!

**Choose from two payment options:
\$120 now for a gift of one full year
of Sponsor-A-Cat
OR \$10 (or more) per month**

YES! I want to give the gift of Sponsor-a-Cat from the Independent Cat Society.

I have enclosed a check for:

_____ \$120 for one year of Sponsor-A-Cat for the person below.

_____ \$ 10 or _____ for the first month of Sponsor-A-Cat gift. I pledge to send \$10 or more each month to the ICS for Sponsor-A-Cat for the person listed below.

Your Sponsor-A-Cat gift recipient will receive a photo and biography of his or her Sponsor-A-Cat.

Name of recipient _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____

Month of recipient's birthday _____ email address _____

Mail to: Sponsor-A-Cat, Independent Cat Society, P.O. Box 735, Westville, IN 46391

Whose point of view?

Notebook in hand, I visited the Independent Cat Society on an adoption day one Saturday in late September. I am currently enrolled in an English composition class at Purdue North Central, in Westville, Indiana, and my assignment was to observe a scene, then describe it from two perspectives.

“The shelter has 125 adorable cats to choose from. The facility is well-maintained. Helpful shelter volunteers are available to assist potential adopters. The largest impact on the outcome of the adoption is the positive attitude of the potential adopter.”

So begins my compare/contrast essay. As a volunteer at the Independent Cat Society for three and a half years, I tend to see the positive aspects of the shelter. I love the curious cats I’ve come to know. I appreciate the dedicated volunteers who donate their time to be advocates for the cats as adoption counselors. How could anyone see it differently?

By the end of my essay assignment, I am sad to say that I learned that someone else could. Would someone else view the cats as curious or restless? Would he or she be more concerned with the cats’ sad legacy of homelessness, or the cats’ bad habits? Would he or she view the adoption counselors as advocates, or adversaries?

From kittens still being weaned in foster homes, to senior citizens hoping for a warm lap to snuggle away their remaining years, all kinds of cats can be found at the Independent Cat Society. On adoption days, many people will visit the shelter. Many people will quickly go from room to room and say, “There’s nothing here.”

Other people will enter the same cat shelter, the same day. They will quietly and thoughtfully walk from room to room. Petting this cat, talking to that cat. Finally they will exclaim, “There are too many, it’s hard to pick just one!”

In the future, I hope you’ll take into consideration the cats’ point-of-view. An otherwise playful, lively cat may just be resting when you’re visiting the shelter. If you’re interested in a particular cat, ask the adoption counselor about the cat, or return at another time to get a more

Mewsings

By Becky Zurawski



accurate picture of the cat’s personality.

Too many cats have been returned to the Independent Cat Society due to avoidable reasons. When a cat is returned, especially after several returns that are not the cat’s fault, the shelter is receiving a very different cat than was originally adopted. Cats get depressed! The adoption counselors take seriously their responsibility to find each cat a suitable home. Please respect their dedication and help the adoption counselors help you find a cat at the Independent Cat Society, or another reputable shelter, who will be a good addition to your household.

This assignment taught me something far greater than the format for writing essays. I learned something about people and how perspective affects everything in a person’s life, including a trip to the Independent Cat Society on a sunny Saturday to adopt a cat.

Join the Grooming Group

Can't have a cat because you rent? Looking for indoor activities to take the place of the gardening you've done all summer? Want to be involved with a committed organization? Then the Grooming Group at the Independent Cat Society is the place for you! In the past few months, several of our caring "groomers" have moved. Others have taken on more responsibility at work or are taking courses at area colleges. Now is a great time for you to become a part of the Grooming Group. If you can devote a few hours a month, consider joining our group. Call the Independent Cat Society at (219) 785-4936 and leave a message for me.

No previous training is necessary -- just a loving heart and willing hands! This really is a worthwhile group that does more than brush fur. We help the cats become more adoptable and adjust to the stress of shelter life with kind interaction.

Of course, many other opportunities to get involved exist. We need homes to foster cats and kittens. The cats need transportation to their veterinary appointments. We need donated baked goods and craft items to sell at our many fundraising activities. Leave a message at the Independent Cat Society for more information about these volunteer opportunities.

Check out PurrfectPlay.com

Based in Chesterton, Indiana, this company makes safe, recycled, eco-friendly cat toys. PurrfectPlay donates 5 percent of its sales to no kill shelters in honor of their customers and their pet companions.

Thank you

by Glenn Thompson

It was a beautiful day
I thought I'd go for a walk
And take in the wonders of nature
I came upon a gorgeous tree
But all I could think of was the pain in my legs
The birds singing from the branches
Became silent
The colors of the leaves
Faded
Several feet further was a beautiful flower
But all I could think of was the trouble my car
has been giving me
The fragrance of the flower
dissipated
The beauty of its design
Became blurred
I turned and behind me was the lake I swam in as a kid,
fished in as a teenager,
and enjoyed with that special someone
But all I could think of was the pile of unpaid bills
sitting on my desk at home
The serenity of the lake
vanished.
My heartfelt memories
became lost
Suddenly movement in the nearby grass caught my eye
A kitten was playing with a leaf
Batting it around
Flipping it in the air
Rolling on its back
And jumping right side up to run in circles only to do it again
I couldn't help but chuckle in amusement as she continued to play
It became obvious after a while this cute little kitten
was a stray without a home
I began to think
Here's this tiny life
not knowing when she will ever eat again
and playing

Not having any shelter that she can call her own
yet happy
No money or insurance to go to a doctor when she's sick
yet enjoying her life to her fullest
I began to think about all the problems this little creature had
before her and how she was enjoying every moment without all
these concerns hindering her happiness.
She jumped in the air trying to catch a small moth hovering above
her head and came down on all fours looking bewildered and
searching once again for the teasing little intruder, not finding it,
she batted another leaf on the ground and the circus of play
was on again.
I began to cry as I watched my little friend
have such a profound effect on the way I was feeling.
The kitten suddenly stopped playing and gave me a curious look.
I covered my face trying to hide my tears
as if embarrassed to be crying in front of this proud little creature.
She began to walk cautiously towards me
I extended my hand carefully so as not to frighten her.
She gave a sniff, then kissed my hand
and began rubbing against it
It was as if she was saying to me,
"its all right, don't be sad, everything will be all right."
It made me smile
I gently picked her up and held her up to get a better look at her.
She looked at me and gave a meow,
her way of saying hello I guess
I held her against my chest and began petting her
and she began to purr
Her eyes closed as she relaxed in my arms
and began to fall asleep
"You're right my little friend," I said to her. "Everything is going
to be alright, you have just found a home."
As I headed back to my house, I took another look at her.
"I've got to think of a name for you."
I thought about it for a second.
"I know, I'll name you 'Thank You,' for the wonderful lesson
you've taught me, I'll be forever grateful."

Independent Cat Society Photo Contest

Judging: Saturday, February 14, 2004

Three categories: Funniest, Cutest, Most Original
Each entry is \$5, and must be postmarked
by January 31, 2004.



Write your name, address, phone number, and name of the cat on the back of each entry.

Send a check or money order for total entries, to:

Independent Cat Society Photo Contest, PO Box 735, Westville, IN 46391.

If you would like your photos returned,
please include a self-addressed envelope with adequate postage affixed.

Thank you . . .

Thank you all for your donations, letters, visits and volunteer time. Each of you is special, and we are grateful for your loyal support.

Bernice Barbour Foundation, for a \$1,000 grant for extraordinary medical expenses.

Unity Foundation of LaPorte County, for a \$1,000 grant for spay and neuter.

Roy Krizek and Jim Ruge, of Schoolhouse Shop, Furnessville, for graciously hosting our fundraiser at their beautiful shop, in October.

Diana Vollmer, for purchasing new cages for us.

Carol Albrecht, for our new telephone system.

Wal-Mart, Michigan City, for donating \$80 of mums to the shelter.

Eugene and Elaine Bruszewski, for donating a truckload of supplies, received at Eugene's retirement party in lieu of personal gifts.

Joan Palko and Water's Edge Girls Scouts of Whiting, for supplies.

Jean Gerometta, Sandy Robelia and Becky Bolton, for proofreading the newsletter.

Forrest and Molly Connolly, for taking our cans to be recycled.

Amy Feign, Director Baxter-Biolife Plasma Services, Gary, for our beautiful "new" office furniture, and medical and office supplies. Your generosity gave us an early Christmas this year!"

In Loving Memory of . . .

Imogene Barger -- Patricia Massette

Joan Bolen -- Ann Sampson, Nancy Dering, Jill Wirth

Dudley Cardwell -- Olack Family

Tom Dering -- Wallie Habela; Steve/Maxine Michaels; Lynette Peppas; Megan/Beverly Stanko; Paula Kimmet; Jill Wirth; Jean Gerometta; Leah Balsham; Marjory Zatkoff; Ira Sam Houston; Marilyn/Russ Logue; Debi/Vicki Logue; William Sherman

Marilee Dieterich -- Arlouse Lammering

Dr. Guider, Bee Lavedas -- Joanne Lohmeyer

Dean Johnson, Puddy Johnson -- Tamara Johnson

Richard Keane -- Patricia Keane

Elizabeth Meyer -- Frances/William Meyer; Catherine Meyer; Jean

All items were received 5/18/03 - 9/30/03. Kindly limit your memorials/honorariums to 20 words or less. If we have inadvertently omitted your thank you, memorial or honorarium, please call us, (219) 785-4936, so that we may correct our error.

Gerometta; Suzanne Gustafson; Ruth McNitt; Susan Squires; Heiny Family; Rose Schubert; Marge Beville; Jane Kingma

Peter Palla -- Dennis/Brenda Palla

Mary Toole -- Karen Appleby, Hank Weber

Andy/Barney -- Ralphy and Lorraine Heavilin

Autumn -- Lorraine Klosinski

Buster, Ziggy, Eden, Punkin and Carlos, foster kittens -- You were too young to leave us -- Shelter foster moms.

Buttons -- Kathy Krum

Chynna Kerr, beloved cat of Jeanne Kerr -- Marti Rukavina, Nancy Witt.

Cheerio, Farmer Ted, Hobo and Lacey, Independent Cat Society shelter cats -- You may not have had a real home, but you had a family. We will never forget you -- Shelter volunteers and employees.

Cole -- Always loved and remembered -- Kristie Hill and family.

Cynthia -- Elaine Krauss

Frisbush -- June Tompkins

Honey -- Nathalie Pennington

Mr. T. -- Always loved, forever missed -- Sandy & Art Robelia.

Pilly (Pilgrim) -- Gayle Holdash

Ping -- Jerry and Jan Shaw

Spot -- Charlene Kirschsieper

Zack -- Patricia Gault

Boo Two -- You gave the best backrubs a kitty even could. Boo Boo went to kitty haven April 2, 2003. Joanie Sommer and feline family.

Trudie -- You left with your kitty paw prints on my heart. Trudie went to kitty heaven May 25, 2003. Joanie Sommer and feline family.



Trudie Sommer



Boo Too Sommer

In Honor of . . .

Al and Diana Villarreal's wedding anniversary -- Karen Snodgrass

Allene Kenney and cat Lili -- Robert and Barbara Thompson

Use this coupon for your holiday shopping at Jewel-Osco!

The Independent Cat Society will receive 5% of your total purchases on the dates listed on the coupon. Thank you for your generosity!



SHOP & SHARE IDENTIFICATION SLIP

AMOUNT OF PURCHASE

1131664

GROUP NUMBER

--	--	--	--	--	--

STORE NUMBER

--	--	--	--	--	--

DOLLARS

CENTS

GROUP: **Independent Cat Society, Inc.**

YOUR SHOP & SHARE DAYS: **12/15/2003, 12/16/2003, 12/17/2003**

SIGNATURE _____

PLEASE SIGN THIS SLIP AND TURN IT IN TO YOUR CHECKER WHEN YOU SHOP.
PARTICIPANTS CAN MAKE PURCHASES AT ANY JEWEL-OSCO ON THE DATE ABOVE.
IDENTIFICATION SLIPS ARE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN FRONT OF ANY JEWEL-OSCO.

Jewel-Osco.

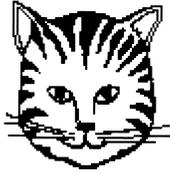
INDEPENDENT CAT SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 735
WESTVILLE, IN 46391

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Valparaiso, IN
Permit No. 134

**DON'T MISS
THESE EVENTS:**

**Holiday Bake Sale
at Brandt's
December 6**



**Holiday Open House
December 13-14, at the shelter**

**Photo Contest
Entries due January 31, 2004**

**Open Your Hearts Open House
February 14, Odgen Dunes**

**Visit us on the Web
at www.catsociety.org**

Will you help the Independent Cat Society cats?



Become a Member!

Annual Dues:

- \$500 Sustaining
- \$100 Life
- \$50 Gold Star

- \$ 25 Family
- \$ 15 Single
- \$ 5 Student
- \$ 5 Senior

Donate or Volunteer!

- I am donating \$_____ for the care of the cats and kittens.
- I am donating \$_____ to the Building Fund.
- I will help groom cats at the shelter.
- I will help give cats their medications.
- I will help at fundraising events.
- I will be a foster parent.
- I will donate my cat-themed artwork or crafts for fundraising events.
- I will bake for fundraising events.
- I will make adoption follow-up telephone calls
- I will help cats get good homes by becoming an adoption counselor.
- I will help take care of the grounds and maintain the shelter.
- I will distribute flyers for fundraisers.

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

This is a new address. Do not send a "thank you" note. Telephone _____ email _____

Clip and send to: Independent Cat Society, Inc., P.O. Box 735, Westville, IN 46391