



# Mewsletter

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

Winter 2006

## Happy Tails: Spencer

Ever wonder what happened to Spencer, the blind cat described in last year's appeal letter? Read on for a really Happy Tail!

by Beverly Overmyer

Cat owners admire their pets for their independence, loyalty, and unique personalities. Sandy and Art Robelia love their orange tabby for all these reasons. But most of all, they admire Spencer for his bravery.

When Spencer came to ICS in September 2004, the cat care committee soon discovered he was scared, starving, and totally blind. Sandy took Spencer home, expecting he would spend his life in a bathroom where he could find his food, bed, and litter box safely.

To Sandy's surprise, in a few days Spencer had ventured beyond the bathroom, exploring every inch of the main floor, memorizing the entire house, even climbing the furniture and walking along the back of the couch.

His favorite toy is a rattle mouse. He bats it up and down the hall, following the sound. He's the most playful cat in the house, she says.

Spencer and Jessica, Robelia's indescribably beautiful, long-haired, aqua-eyed cat, sleep during the day on the cushioned kitchen chairs. Even though "no one else" is allowed on the table, Spencer sometimes jumps up, explores, and when he's ready to get down, walks along the edge of the table, reaching down every few seconds until he finds a chair and then hops off.

"He's an inspiration to Art and me," Sandy says. "He's brave, curious, and a problem solver. Cats are so incredible, not complaining, just accepting their fate."



Spencer

## Special Needs Cats Give Special Love

by Linda Moore

At ICS, we love all cats, even those that have "special challenges." Some are "Special Needs" simply because they are older and need a quiet environment. Others are Special Needs due to chronic conditions like allergies, or a sensitive stomach. A few have physical problems like missing limbs or being blind or deaf.

As my own cats aged, I could see the difference this extra TLC made for them, and I felt that I could share what I learned from these experiences by helping other cats.

In late 1999, at an ICS Open House, I offered to help, saying that I would be willing to foster a Special Needs cat. In March of 2000, ICS called me to ask if I would foster one for a week or two.

"Shawn" was a nine year old who had been at the shelter since he was a very frightened stray kitten in 1991. He was always very shy and timid around the other cats at the shelter. Through the years, he had some severe dental issues that resulted in having all his teeth removed.

In the summer of 1999, Shawn developed some odd circling behaviors. This led to many vet appointments, and finally a referral to Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine. Purdue determined that Shawn had a brain tumor. Purdue was not able to operate, but emailed other vet schools to locate one that could help. In the meantime, ICS needed a foster home for Shawn so that he could stay as healthy as possible in preparation for whatever

treatment could be performed to remove the brain tumor.

See *Special Love* on page 4...

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# Mewsletter

Published for the friends of the **Independent Cat Society, Inc.**

PO Box 735,  
Westville, IN 46391  
(219) 785-4936

**web:**

www.catsociety.org

**email:**

mewsletter@hotmail.com

The **Independent Cat Society, Inc.**, founded in 1977, is a non-profit, no-kill cat shelter on US Rt 6 at the Porter/LaPorte County Line Road in Westville, Indiana.

The **Independent Cat Society's** mission is to promote the welfare of all animals, especially cats, by reducing pet overpopulation, educating the public, preventing cruelties to animals, promoting responsible pet ownership and working for more humane legislation.

**Adoption hours:**

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

**Adoption fee: \$75**

Includes: Spay/neuter, vet exam, feline leukemia and FIV test; age-appropriate vaccinations; parasite treatment; tattoo ID; and cardboard cat carrier.

**Board of Directors:**

**President:**

Cate Amador

**Vice-President:**

Sue Ogg

**Recording Secretary:**

Linda Moore

**Corresponding Secretary:**

Beverly Overmyer

**Treasurer:**

Carol Albrecht

**Board Members:**

Diana Vollmer

Kerry Wolfus

Gale Carmona

Joan Hildebrand

# Calendar of Events

## February

### Open Your Hearts Open House

Saturday, February 11, 2006 — 10 am to 4 pm  
Ogden Dunes Fire Station

## March

### Dunes Cat Fanciers Cat Show

Saturday, March 11, 2006 — 10 am to 4 pm  
Sunday, March 12, 2006 — 1 to 4 pm  
Independent Cat Society Booth  
Woodland Park in Portage

# Spay & Neuter Task Force

Toddles here again. I'm excited to tell you about our new **SPAYING NOT SLAYING** bracelet, now available!

Kitten season is fast approaching, and the volunteers at ICS are trying very hard to get the word out that **people need to spay and neuter their pets**. ICS also wants to build a fund to help people who can't afford to do it on their own.

With each bracelet, you will get a fact sheet to help you help ME. The bracelets are \$3.00 each, and are available at fundraisers, the shelter, or on the website.

**Remember:** We may be smitten with kittens, but enough is enough.

### Check these facts:

- **In seven years, one female cat and her offspring can theoretically produce 420,000 cats**
- Number of cats and dogs entering shelters each year: **6-8 million**
- Number of cats and dogs euthanized by shelters each year: **3-4 million**



Spay and Neuter bracelets available for \$3 each.



# President's Message

This issue of the Newsletter offers the chance to get to know a little more about cats with special needs. I was personally amazed at what I discovered while putting this together. For example, while visiting the Humane Society Calumet Area in Munster, a group of us met a beautiful cat who was deaf and actually understands and responds to certain signs. We have many cats who are considered special needs by reason of disabilities, health problems, or just age. They are the ones least likely to be adopted, yet they are often the cats with special places in our hearts due to their courage and sweetness.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your support throughout 2005. We are hoping 2006 will be a year filled with progress, especially in finding permanent loving homes for our cats. See you at the shelter!

*Cate Amador*

## *A New Stage for the Independent Cat Society* **Starting an Endowment Fund 2006**

*by Carol Albrecht, Treasurer*

The Board of Governors believes the time to build a permanent fund is now and that it is the key to our future. Our goal is to serve the community as we have done since 1977 and to establish a predictable source of income. Never has this been more necessary than this year when the number of disasters has called upon people to donate again and again.

We hope to accomplish a source of income with an endowment fund because it is money raised and never spent. Only the earnings from the fund are used. More non-profits are adding endowment funds as part of their basic financial strategies to stabilize their incomes. An endowment fund is neither a "rainy day fund" nor a "capital projects fund" since those are spent down as projects require. Endowment earnings, however, may be spent on anything relating to the shelter's mission.

Since we are in La Porte County, we researched the capabilities of the Unity Foundation of LaPorte County, Inc., which provides endowment services for non-profits and donors. We believe they can provide what we need: a good track record, professional management, donor support, marketing help, and more. They do all this for a small fee that comes out of earnings. Each dollar to the new ICS fund goes directly to principal. For more information on Unity you can visit [www.ufic.net](http://www.ufic.net) or call them directly at 219/879-0327.

### **How will ICS benefit from the endowment?**

We will receive a check annually to do whatever we need with it. The size of the check will depend upon the size of our fund and market performance. If our fund is worth \$100,000, then our annual check could be somewhere between \$4,000 and \$5,000. We would also benefit from the Unity Foundation in many other ways. In the past two years, they have given us \$5,000 in program grants allowing us to do things we couldn't otherwise do.

If the ICS should no longer exist in the future, the Unity Foundation's job is to make sure the funds go on forever. Donors can be assured that if they make a gift to the ICS endowment, it will always be used to help animals in Northwest Indiana.

However, to start the endowment fund, we need \$5,000. So, we're asking for your help in raising this money. If you would like to enable us to become more self-sufficient, please consider a donation earmarked for the fund. Simply make out your check to the Unity Foundation of LaPorte County, Inc., **mention ICS fund in the memo section (this is very important)**, and mail it to **Independent Cat Society, Inc.**, PO Box 735, Westville, IN 46391.

We will forward checks to Unity Foundation, who will send your tax receipt to you promptly and notify ICS of your donation.

Please consider helping the Independent Cat Society build our endowment for the lives that follow. Thank you!

## Wish List

*Please note: We do not use litter pan liners, hooded litter pans, newspapers, or pine cleaners like Pine Sol. THANK YOU!*

### **Office Supplies**

Stamps  
Copy paper  
Pens  
Sticky notes  
File folders  
Scotch tape  
Scissors  
Highlighter pens

### **Cleaning Supplies**

Bleach  
Laundry soap  
Dish soap  
Paper towels  
Toilet paper  
Paper plates  
30 gallon trash bags  
Kleenex

### **Medical Supplies**

Cotton balls  
Cotton swabs  
Bandages

### **Building and Grounds**

Gravel for the parking lot  
Tub and enclosure  
16 x20 1 inch fiberglass furnace filters  
Aire Bear furnace filters  
Morton rust remover water softener pellets (green bag)

### **Other**

Tall cat trees  
Deep litter boxes  
Litter scoops  
Microwaveable heating disks  
Scrip (gift cards) for Home Depot, Menards, or Lowes  
Plastic bags that seal (such as Ziploc)

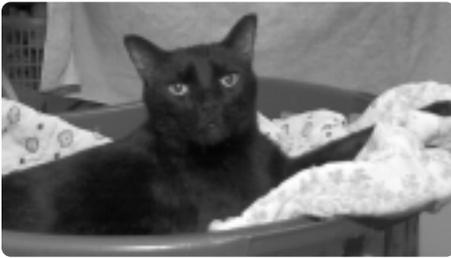
### **Special Services**

Plumber  
Carpenter  
Handyperson  
Electrician

*The cats thank you!  
Ask us for a receipt for tax-deductible donations.*

# Update: Sponsor-A-Cat!

from your Spokescat, Lucky



Lucky, the Sponsor-A-Cat spokescat

**H**appy New Year from me, Lucky, the SAC spokescat. Thanks to that young punk Toddles, who thinks he's all that and a bag of Eagle Pack just because he's got his own byline plus picture now, I've got to make this short.

All the cats want to say a sincere "thank you" to all of the sponsors. Their monthly donation is something we all count on to keep our home open.

One more thing: Toddles may be selling bracelets (I have to admit they DO look pretty good; black is my favorite color), but I have some very impressive gift certificates available for the perfect gift for a cat lover. Check them out at the **Open Your Heart Open House**.

Well, time to go back to supervising the laundry.

## Special Love from page 1...

So, Shawn came to stay with me. I kept him isolated in my bathroom, away from my other cats and spent whatever free time I had just talking softly to him and trying to make him as comfortable as possible. Less than two weeks later, Shawn had surgery at the University of Illinois to remove the brain tumor that was  $\frac{1}{4}$  the size of his brain. The vet started calling him Zoobie, since in Russian, Zoobie means teeth. Zoobie liked this new name, and responded well to it, so "Shawn" became "Zoobie."

During this time, I fell in love with Zoobie, and spoke to ICS about the possibility of adopting him. When he recuperated enough to come home from the U of I vet school, I continued to foster him. He was still timid, but gradually became less afraid of me as we began playing with a Cat Dancer toy. After his recheck, Zoobie officially joined my family when I adopted him in July 2000.

Today he is a 15-year-old healthy, happy guy, who is no longer afraid of people. He is a real cuddler and loves a good back scratch and massage. He loves chasing a laser light toy and still likes chasing that pesky Cat Dancer toy. He is a real conversationalist and even says "Ma-Ma."

Although the surgery restored his life, "TLC" helped him find his soul.

The challenges Special Needs cats face are, very similar to the ones which we humans face as we age or are in stressful situations. We know **those individuals who have a strong support network of family and friends recover more quickly and have greater long-term survival rates than those who do not.**

**Likewise, having a close, loving bond with a special person can help an animal cope better with their special challenges. We need your help to do this with our Special Needs cats. The personal rewards of helping these brave, loving creatures are so great.** Cats adjust extremely well to what we humans view as disabilities, and just get on with their lives. **More than anything, they need the extra TLC of a home environment and someone to love them just the way they are.**

**Won't you please consider fostering or adopting one of our Special Needs cats?**

**Q. What does it cost me if I foster a Special Needs cat?**

**A. ICS pays for special foods and vet appointments.**

## Looking for a unique gift? — Sponsor-A-Cat!

Sponsor-A-Cat is a great gift for the cat lover 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

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 or \_\_\_\_\_ for the first month of Sponsor-A-Cat. I pledge to send \$10 each month to Sponsor-A-Cat.

The sponsor will receive a photo and biography of his or her Sponsor-A-Cat.

Name of sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Month of sponsor's birthday \_\_\_\_\_ email address \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to: **Independent Cat Society, Inc., PO Box 735, Westville, IN 46391**



## Volunteer Focus

*Interview* with Paulette Gonzalez, a volunteer of 16 years.

### What she does:

Paulette is an adoption counselor, picks up donated items, and organizes the Summer Open House, the Yard Sale, and the Christmas Open House, as well as other things too numerous to mention.

### Why she volunteers at ICS:

"Ever since I was little, I knew I would work with animals some day. I think we're doing something good, taking the cats and giving them a chance at a better life. The unwanted ones."

### Her favorite part:

"When you come in the door, and the cats recognize you and want attention."

### The most unusual thing Gonzalez has done for the cats:



*Need we say more?*

## Update: Regis

### *the Therapy Cat*



*Dr. Regis, the Therapy Cat*

The following is an update on "Dr." Regis in his role as therapy cat. Regis, who is FIV+ is a living and loving example of what a special needs cat can give. Interview with Julia Unger, his favorite patient.

*Why do you come see Regis?* I like to.

*What do you do with Regis?* Brush him.

He calms me down. He plays. He gives me kisses. He likes it when I brush him. His favorite spot for me to brush him is right under his chin. I love Regis. And he loves me too. He can't wait for me to come. He came to Opportunity Enterprises and I helped my friend pet him. My friend was scared. I held his hand and helped him.

## Health Highlights *for Cats*

*by Kristie Hill*

**J**ust like humans, cats can have dental conditions and diseases, such as tartar build up and painful cavities. They can develop gingivitis (gums) or stomatitis (mouth) both of which are very painful.

Cats can suffer in silence if these dental conditions are not detected. Symptoms include: poor appetite, pain while eating, loss of appetite, weight loss, inflammation, and bleeding gums. This infection can get so severe that it can spread to the surrounding tissues of the mouth, causing redness and inflammation that can be seen in the top and back of the mouth. Gingivitis or stomatitis, like any other infection, can get into the cat's blood stream and spread throughout the body.

Steroids may be prescribed to help slow the cat's body's reaction to inflammation, along with antibiotics to help fight the infection. Gingivitis and stomatitis may be a life-long disease. To help prevent these conditions, it is very important to take your cat to the vet yearly. The vet can examine the condition of the mouth, diagnose any infection, clean the teeth, and pull any bad ones.

You can also help prevent this disease at home. Feeding your cats dry food helps reduce the amount of tartar build up on their teeth. It also helps to wash their food and water bowls often with warm soapy water, so that germs don't build up. Some owners brush their cat's teeth with special toothpaste, or use a product called Nolvadent, which is similar to a mouthwash, to help kill bacteria. Your vet can help determine if your cat needs this kind of at home care.

# Sweetheart ♥ Contest

We're very proud to introduce the second annual ICS Sweethearts! Please vote for the cat you feel is sweetest by sending in a donation in any amount in their name via PayPal or by dropping it off at the shelter, or at the **Open Your Heart Open House** at Ogden Dunes.

Voting will continue through February, and the winner announced the first week in March on our website and in the shelter, and will appear in the spring Mewsletter. Winner will receive an official certificate and a turkey and catnip party for their room. Or, if the winner is an alumnus, an official certificate, a bag of catnip, and a toy. The competition is intense, so let the sweetest cat win!



*Bully*

No, this sweetie is no bruiser. His name is short for Bullion, for his lovely golden fur. VOTE FOR BULLY, the King of Bling, our genuine 14 karat guy!



*Hunny*

Hunny is so sweet, she purred for entire photo shoot. For a dose of sugar even a dieter can enjoy, VOTE FOR HUNNY, she's a sweetheart of a girl, a real pearl that Hunny!



*Scruf*

Look at this beautiful face! There's nothing scruffy about this gorgeous guy. It's not tough to VOTE FOR SCRUF!



*Jessabell*

This dainty, little beauty loves attention and knows how to command it. She's a diva who wants to be alone with YOU! VOTE FOR JESSABELL, and she'll shower you with her devoted attention!



*Luka*

Dashing and handsome are words that describe this striking fellow. He's young and restless and ready for love. Do you like moustaches? VOTE FOR LUKA!



*Fuzzy*

Just look at this furry bundle of love! So soft, so warm, so ready for love, can't you just hear him singing: "I'm too sexy for my fur, too sexy for my fur, So sexy, I purr." VOTE FOR FUZZY!



*Domino*

A man in a tux is always debonair, but Domino has that special flair. It's as simple as black and white, he's the most sophisticated fella in town. VOTE FOR DOMINO, and he'll put on the Ritz just for you!



# A Christmas Play, *starring Diva*



How nice of them to bring me a tree!



Hey...what's that way at the top?!



Whatever it is, I think it has my name on it!



It's coming down!



You won't get away now!



Buddy, you are sooooo mine!

## Memorials *from 10-2-05 to 12-31-05 In Memory of...*

**Marvin and Violet Forsythe; William O'Leary; Binky, Oreo, Pooky and Azura Gonzalez** from *Paulette, Nate and Emily Gonzalez*

**Savannah and Lance** from *Renata Bergunder*

**My wife Irene** from *Donald Deatherage*

**Marvin Forsythe** from *Edward and Joan Schmitt*

**Andrea Knish** from *Joanne Broderick*

**Marcia Rhodes' cat** from *Louise Vale*

**Sassy** from *Bonnie Gruchalski*

**Eileen Burket**

**My wife Julie** from *Gerald Grott*

**Julie Grott** from *her daughter Laura Mellen*

**Krisan and Heather who are in Kitty Heaven and whom we miss so much** from *Kathy and Tom Heath*

**Bimbleman, my most precious gift of 17 years who I lost on July 7th** from *Michelle Hayes*

**Minka-Su, our beloved little Birman girl gave us 19 years of love, devotion and companionship. She left this world on 9/3/05 for the "Rainbow Bridge" where she will be with her "brother" Mickey and "Uncle" Sam-Yin. Someday we will all be together again.** From *Mom and Dad (Trudy and Bob Smith)*

**Cynthia Law** from *Jean E. Law*

**Calvin, adopted in 1992 from ICS** from *Bob and Terri Maryonovich*

**My son, Mark Bevil, who lost his life in an accident on 5/11/05. He left in my care his very special little Calico cat named "So-So"** from *Joe, Lau and "So-So" Bevil*

**Mrs. Iris Martinsen** from *Marjorie R. Elam*

**Hazel Gragido** from *Charlene Kirschsieper*

**My dear husband Melvin T. Tracht. One of our friends had rescued a stray which she could not keep. He went to "look" the cat over and I wasn't too sure. But, my dear said "Let's give her a chance." That was 6 happy years ago with our "Suki"** from *Mildred J. Tracht*

**Sister Natalie Runfola's cat Pepper** from *Anne Marie Runfola*

**Pixie Rose and Pippy, in kitty heaven now** from *Genevieve Novak*

**Misty, a very loving and beautiful grey Siamese** from *Eleanor Jordan*

**Sadie** from *Nancy Machura*

**Sammy** from *Sharon Bullard*

**Cynthia and Homeless** from *Marvin and Elaine Krauss*

**Abigail, beloved cat of Carol and Wes Kessler** from *Ruth Ann Russell*

**Gotcha, my cat that was put to sleep on 12/15/05. He was 12 years old.** From *Ruth Kelly*.

**In honor/memory of Sylvia Shugar, a great lady and supporter of ICS from "Day One"** from *Jean Gerometta*

**Sylvia Shuger** from *Romona Hay*

**My grandma, Teresa Wyller, who was a true cat lover** from *Mary Williams*

**Beatrice Esola** from *Donald and Maryjean Reid*

**Maui** from *Maria Boehringer*

**Kasey, who was 17 years old,** from *Michael and Janet Petyo*

**Spicy** from *Joe and Tara Piscatore*

**Andy and Barney** from *Ralph and Lorraine Heavilin*

**Megan** from *Scott and Laura Rosenberg*

**Michael Minard** from *Matti Minard*

**In memory of Miriam S. Buhman** from *Daniel A Dresner*.

## Tributes *from 10-2-05 to 12-31-05*

**Happy Birthday to Kirk Whittington** from *Karen Jo Appleby and Hannelore Weber*

**In honor of Brenda Warner Rotzall** from *Jack Simmerling*

**In honor of Jean Reed** from *Katherine Olack*

**In honor of Melinda and Jim Emerson** from *Christa and Jason Borlich*

**In honor of Kay Ziegler** from *Alice B. Krum*

**In honor of Don and Kathleen Hoover's anniversary** from *Dean and Kathy Cunningham, Alan Wise, and friends*

**Merry Christmas to my niece, Kimberly Dull** from *Josephine Arnold*

**Merry Christmas to Michele Bridges** from *Carol Albrecht*

*If we have inadvertently omitted anyone, please write or call us so we can include them in the next newsletter.*

## Thank you...

The Unity Foundation for \$2000 and PETCO for \$500 for spay/neuter expenses for our cats.

John W. Anderson Foundation for \$2000 for veterinary bills.

All our other angels who have helped so much with veterinary expenses, and the vets who give us discounts.

And as usual, all of our faithful volunteers and generous donors.





Independent Cat Society  
 PO Box 735  
 Westville, IN 46391

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

*Don't miss  
 these events!*

- **Open Your Hearts Open House**  
 Saturday, February 11, 2006  
 10 am to 4 pm  
 Ogden Dunes Firehouse
- **Dunes Cat Fanciers Cat Show**  
 Saturday, March 11, 2006 — 10 am to 4 pm  
 Sunday, March 12, 2006 — 1 pm to 4 pm  
 Woodland Park in Portage

Visit us on the web at  
**[www.catsociety.org](http://www.catsociety.org)**

## **Can you help the Independent Cat Society cats?**

### **Become a Member!**

**Annual Dues:**

- \$1000 Corporation
- \$500 Life
- \$100 Gold Star
- \$50 Family
- \$25 Individual
- \$10 Student
- \$10 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. Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and send to:

**Independent Cat Society, Inc., ATTN: Membership Committee, PO Box 735, Westville, IN 46391**