

## **LOVIN' YOUR PET - AND SOME HOLIDAY TIPS!**

Some people talk about how much they love their pet and at the same time are neglecting or even abusing the pet. Do these two things go together? Even a small child is capable of feeling love. Maturely loving a pet or a child entails so much more. No one would expect a small child who has affection for their pet to take care of it. They want to kiss and hug and snuggle with the pet because it feels good.

A higher level of loving your pet entails providing necessary care. A pet needs quality food in appropriate amounts and fresh water. We get cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Your pets do too. Do not leave your pets outside in the cold unprotected from the elements. They belong in a warm house with you. They are part of the family. I wouldn't want to sleep, and probably couldn't, if I was shivering cold; neither can your pet. I wouldn't want to be under the beating sun when it is suffocatingly hot. Neither does your pet.

Your pet needs to be current on vaccinations and consistently provided heartworm prevention medication. An annual veterinary check up is needed to ensure your pet's health. We receive so many animals at the shelter with mouths full of hideously rotten teeth. With regular dental attention your pet would not have to suffer with dental disease. I have not had a toothache in about 40 years, but it was so miserable I still remember it. Your cat or dog suffers when they have a rotten and aching tooth. Many are stoic about it but that doesn't mean it doesn't hurt.

During the holidays you must attend to your pet. Many pets are subjected to too much, too rich human food which can induce pancreatitis or gastritis that results in much discomfort for your pet or even death in extreme cases. If you are having guests it might be best to provide your pet with a safe place to be away from the crowd. If you have an especially social dog or cat they might enjoy some mingling with guests, but even then watch for signs of distress. Be especially cognizant of exchanges between small children and dogs and cats, who are not used to children. Unless, you have a bomb proof pet and a well mannered child coming together it just might be best to keep your pets separate for the duration of the visit. Why risk having the liability of having a small child bitten in the face, because the child got in the dog's face. A dog that wouldn't bite under normal circumstances just might under stressful conditions. We receive numerous calls from people wanting to put their poor dog down because it bit someone, after being taxed to the limit. So sad.

Many foods that are prevalent around the holidays are toxic to your pet, (i.e. grapes, chocolate, olives, raisins, nuts, onions, garlic). As well poinsettias and mistletoe are poisonous to your pet.

Everyone at Sammie's Friends wishes you all (two and four legged) a safe and

**blessed holiday season.**

*Cheryl Wicks is the Co-Founder and President of Sammie's Friends*