



Paws & Tails Newsletter

For Kids and Teachers in English and Spanish



Protect Your Pets During the Holidays

Holidays can be a happy time of the year for most members of the family, but can be dangerous time for the family pet. Here are some DOs and DON'Ts to remember this holiday season.

Don't give pets as holiday gifts. In the busy holiday rush there is often not enough time to devote to the proper care of a new pet. A new home and family can be frightening to a cat or dog, no matter how large or old it is.

Do keep Christmas plants out of the way of animals. Mistletoe, holly berries, poinsettia flowers and leaves are poisonous.

Don't feed your pets too many leftovers. Pets can get sick when they do not adhere to their regular diet. Seasonal cookies and candies should not be given to pets. Remember, chocolate can be lethal to animals.

Do provide your pet with a quiet spot in the house where it can relax and be out of the mainstream of traffic. This will prevent your pet from escaping while guests are coming and going.

Don't leave animals unattended around your Christmas tree. The water in the tree stand could be harmful if swallowed. Tinsel, ribbon, bulbs and ornament hooks can also be harmful if swallowed. Pets can be electrocuted if they chew on electric wires or light sets.

Do leave a plate of cookies and a glass of milk for Santa where pets can't reach it.



2008 New Year's Schedule

Mark your 2008 calendar for these upcoming animal-related events:

December 31, January 2-4 Winter Break Critter Camp at the YMCA in Palm Springs.

March 24-28 Spring Break Critter Camp at the YMCA in Palm Springs.

April is Prevention of Animal Cruelty Month

April 5 Walk With the Animals at Palm Desert Civic Center Park

April 11-13 California Desert Nature Festival at the Living Desert

April 22 Earth Day

May 6-12 National Pet Week

June is Adopt a Shelter Cat Month

June 19 Dog First Aid and CPR Class at Animal Samaritans

Gifts You Can Make For Pets

Your cat will be delighted if you stuff a cotton sock with fabric scraps or absorbent cotton and some catnip. Cut the top of the sock off and tie the end tightly with string. Or make a pom-pom with yarn and tie a long piece of matching yarn to it so you can drag it across the floor or bounce it up and down for your kitty.

Dogs will love a chew toy made by stuffing a bunch of old socks into a cotton sock and tying the end tightly.

Neighborhood birds will be most grateful for seasonal treats made by tying a string around a pine cone and filling the spaces in the cone with peanut butter. Tie it up in a tree branch by a window so you can watch the birds enjoy their treats.



Elvira loves her job in AAT.

TEACHER'S CORNER

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is an all-volunteer program of Animal Samaritans SPCA, serving residents in assisted living centers, convalescent homes, hospitals, and juvenile hall facilities here in the Coachella Valley. These volunteers and their companion animals visit the residents and patients of these facilities, offering the experience of touching, petting, playing with and experiencing the unconditional affection of a pet.

For the past year AAT volunteers have also visited classrooms for students with special needs in several PSUSD schools. This new program has been highly rewarding to the children, teachers, the dogs and the pet owners. Previously non-responsive children are now excited to see Elvira the standard poodle enter the classroom. Animal Samaritans SPCA would like to broaden our AAT in the classroom program. If you are a special education teacher or administrator, please contact us at 760-343-4326 to see about having this no-cost, enriching program at your school.



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