

Paw Prints

Fall 2001

The Newsletter of Los Gatos Dog and Cat Hospital

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"We cherish the human-animal bond. Our goal is to provide our patients the highest quality medical care available. We strive to deliver the best possible service to our clients. Our team will work hard to treat you and your pet in an open, caring and compassionate manner."

DISASTER PLANNING AND SUPPORT FOR OUR PETS

Disasters are always unexpected and although we cannot predict when or where they will occur, we can take steps to prepare ourselves should the circumstance arise. An important part of planning for disasters includes the safety of our dependent pets. Pets are often lost in the mayhem of the aftermath and knowing how to care for an injured pet or locate a lost furry friend is imperative to surviving the disaster. The California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) have put forth some helpful guidelines for pet owners that we would like to share with you, as well as providing some tips of our own.

CVMA: (916) 649-0599 or (800) 655-2862 www.cvma.net

Preparation

- 1. Proper Identification:** Each pet should have permanent identification if possible - a microchip or tattoo is ideal. A collar with a current ID tag is advised *even if* your pet has permanent identification. Collars should also have current rabies and license tags. Keep a recent photograph of your pets with you at all times; be sure markings are clearly visible. You will need proof of ownership to claim your pet at a shelter if he or she should become lost.
- 2. Health History:** Keep a record of your pet's most recent vaccinations and health history. Include the name and phone number of your veterinarian. Be sure to make notes of any required medications or important feeding instructions.
- 3. Transportation:** Familiarize your pet with a carrying cage or kennel –the more comfortable your pet is in its carrier, the less stress he or she will experience during an emergency. Each pet should have its own carrier. Birds should be kept in their cages. Snakes may be transported in a pillowcase. Be sure horses will load easily into a trailer and keep the trailer well maintained and full of gas.
- 4. Emergency Shelters:** Know where you will take your pet (remember, human emergency shelters may not allow pets). Be familiar with at least two routes to this location; the location may differ for different types of disasters.

Disaster Preparedness Kit (dogs and cats):

- ?? Your veterinarian's information
- ?? Portable radio and extra batteries
- ?? Pet carrier or cage for each pet
- ?? Medications and dosing instructions
- ?? Pet first-aid kit
- ?? Vaccination and Medical records (in waterproof bag)
- ?? A current photograph of each pet (in waterproof bag)
- ?? Dry food in waterproof containers
- ?? Water in sealed, non-breakable containers
- ?? Non-spill food and water bowls
- ?? Cat litter box and litter
- ?? Newspaper
- ?? Plastic bags for waste disposal
- ?? Paper towels
- ?? Leashes / Collars
- ?? Blanket / Towel

*You can purchase pre-made Pet Emergency Kits from CVMA – call to order.

**Bring enough supplies to last at least 2-3 days; if possible, bring enough for 1-2 weeks.

Continued on next page, column two

Scotty Confer

THE SCOTTISH FOLD

A mere forty years ago, the first known Scottish Fold cat was discovered on the McRae farm in Scotland's Tayside Region. This white barn cat named "Susie" had the distinctive feature of ears that folded forward and downward on her head. This folding of ear cartilages is the result of an incomplete dominant gene and becomes apparent as kittens age. Generally at 3 to 4 weeks old, a kitten's ears will fold if it possesses the trait. Scottish Fold cats are bred to normal eared cats (American and British Shorthairs) to avoid cartilage or bone malformations in the ears as well as the tendency to develop inflexible, foreshortened tails. This emphasis on keeping the Scottish Fold strong and hardy like its barnyard ancestor has prevented the loss of the breed to the short-term goal of "looks" for the show ring.

The Scottish Fold is a medium size cat with a rounded, well-padded body. Its coat is dense and resilient. The length may be short or long and of any color. The breed has large, round eyes and a short nose, which combined with its folded ears give the Scottish Fold the appearance of a little owl or teddy bear. As with any purebred cat congenital problems are somewhat common, most notably hip dysplasia and patellar (kneecap) problems. The problems may range in severity from mild to severe. Most affected cats do well, but occasionally surgery or pain management is required.

This breed is praised for its affectionate temperament and ability to adapt well to a variety of environments. However, if you are considering a Scottish Fold for a companion be sure to do your research. As with the addition of any new family member, it is important that everyone is happy and comfortable with the arrangement!

Sources Consulted

"Scottish Fold." 2001. Cat Fanciers Association. Online. 7 October 2001.

Disaster Planning, continued from front page

If you are not sure where to take your pet, you can contact the CVMA for helpful advice. If you cannot take your pet(s) with you, find a place in your home that will house them safely (see below).

5. **What if I'm not home?** Arrange for a neighbor to help you in case you are not at home when the disaster strikes. They should be comfortable handling your pets, know of any special concerns, and have written permission allowing emergency veterinary treatment if needed.
6. **Emergency Supplies:** Make a Pet Emergency Kit with enough supplies to last 2-3 days. (See box on front page for items to include for dogs & cats).

During the Disaster

1. **Stay calm...** Try your best to stay calm and follow your emergency plan. Listen to the Emergency Alert System on the radio or TV for special instructions.
2. **Take your pets with you** if you leave your home. Evacuate early when taking a pet. Take your Pet Emergency Kit with you. Keep birds caged.
3. **If you cannot take your pets with you:** DO NOT tie them up to keep them at home - they will be unable to escape if the need arises and may seriously injure themselves in an escape attempt. Bring them indoors in a room without windows (which may break) and with adequate ventilation. A bathroom, garage, or utility room may suffice. Once again, do not tie them up. Leave fresh water and dry food (only) in containers that won't spill. House different species separately, even if they normally get along. Cover birdcages with a light cloth or sheet.

After the Disaster

1. **If you have lost your pet:** Contact CVMA immediately and alert your veterinary office. Visit local shelters at least every other day; bring a current photograph of your pet with you. Put up flyers with a photo, description, and your contact information.
2. **If you have found a pet:** Contact CVMA immediately and alert your veterinary office. Isolate it from your own pets until it is returned to its owner or is examined by a veterinarian.
3. **Animals may behave differently and be unpredictable after an emergency:** Once you have found a lost pet, be sure to examine it closely for injuries. Monitor your pet closely for several days and take it to your veterinarian if you have any concerns. Remember that stress can cause illness that may not be immediately evident. Keep your pet on a leash or in secure surroundings; your pet's normal environment may have changed enough to allow him to become confused or lost. Approach all animals calmly and carefully.
Do not attempt to rescue wildlife!

We hope that the above information will help you and your loved ones make it through a disaster safely, and improve the likelihood of a positive outcome for all. If you have questions, please feel free to call us, or contact CVMA or CDFA for more information on disaster preparedness.

QUIET DOGS MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

One way for dogs to relieve boredom and anxiety is through barking. In a recent telephone call to the Humane Society we discovered there must be a lot of bored and anxious dogs in our backyards, as the first menu option on their voicemail is for "nuisance barking." This highlights the fact that too few dogs are given appropriate outlets to prevent or relieve boredom and that many have not been taught to be comfortable away from their owners. It is always best to *prevent* problems, rather than letting something become a problem and having the challenging task of *correcting* it. To prevent boredom and anxiety while you are away, there are several things you can do:

- 1. Give your dog plenty of exercise:** A tired dog is a quiet dog. The energy otherwise spent on barking is redirected on a good ball chase or vigorous walk one or more times a day. Consider hiring a dog walker to come by several times a week while you're at work.
- 2. Provide an appropriate outlet for his energy:** A busy dog is a quiet dog. So give him something to do while you're gone. Spread the inside of a Kong® with a thin layer of cheese or peanut butter and stuff it with a few cookies, or fill it with canned food and freeze it. On a different day fill a Buster Cube® with his kibble for breakfast. Give him a special toy that he gets only when you are away. Hide some of his other toys around the yard so he discovers them throughout the day. Rotate toys so he doesn't become bored with them.
- 3. Teach your dog to become comfortable spending time with himself:** Do not give him your undivided attention while you are home - if you do, this will only make things worse for him while you're gone. Several times a day, act as though he isn't there. This is not a punishment. Rather, it is a lesson in becoming comfortable being alone. We don't want our dogs to be completely lost without us when we are away. A dog that is comfortable in his own "fur" is a quiet dog.
- 4. Institute the "buffer zone":** Ignore your dog ten minutes before you leave for the day and ten minutes after you return. This means no eye contact, no touching or talking to him. The message to him by these actions is that it is "no big deal" that you're leaving. For all he knows, you could be leaving or have been gone for five minutes or 8 hours.
- 5. Downplay greetings:** Dogs that become anxious about your departure are most destructive (barking, digging, chewing, etc.) just after you've left for work. Making a fuss over leaving him can increase his stress level, causing him to bark. For the sake of your dog downplay your departure with a simple "see ya later Fido."

Continued in next column

Likewise, in anticipation of your return he may become agitated and begin barking. Downplay your initial greeting when you return so that you do not inadvertently reward anxious behavior. Save your lavish attention for when you have been home for some time. All of these efforts are aimed at getting your dog to accept you coming and going with little or no anxiety. A relaxed dog is a quiet dog.

These are ways you can teach your dog to be a good neighbor. No one likes listening to a frustrated dog bark all day or night. Consider the dog's point of view. Constant barking is a sign of anxiety and boredom - your job is to prevent him from becoming bored or anxious.

TRIVIA CHALLENGE

"Fall Coat Colors"

1. I am a member of the sporting group and have a long, silky coat that ranges in color from mahogany to chestnut. My name originated from the way I "set" for game.
2. My coat color is part of my name. I am very social and will "retrieve" a toy for you anytime!
3. Sometimes I am referred to as the Hungarian pointer. My short, smooth coat is a striking russet gold color.
4. I am one of the most popular breeds in the United States. I love the water and like number two above, will play fetch for as long as I can. Hint: My short coat comes in three colors, one of which fits with the theme of our "challenge."
5. A member of the terrier group and one of the oldest terrier breeds, my wiry coat can be bright red, golden red or red wheaten.
6. My ancestors include Red Irish Foxhounds that came to the United States before the Civil War. My short, smooth coat is solid red in color and I have the natural instinct for "treeing."

TRIVIA CHALLENGE ANSWERS

1. Irish Setter
2. Golden Retriever
3. Vizsla
4. Yellow Labrador Retriever
5. Irish Terrier
6. Redbone Coonhound

STAFF NEWS

Dr. Kaspar and her husband Brian welcomed their little baby girl Cameron Gail into the world this September. **Laura's** sweet little girl Nyah just celebrated her six month birthday. Several staff members including **Marie, Sue, Laine, Penny** and **Dr. Condrey** gathered for a fall getaway to Yosemite. **Dr. Frandle** saw his middle son off to his first year of college at Northwestern University. **Shilo** spent a fun-in-the-sun week on Maui with her mom! **Tom** celebrated his 40th birthday during his annual trek to watch the U.S. Tennis Open in New York. Welcome to our newest team member, **Candice**. She will be fulfilling dual roles as receptionist and nurse-in-training. And a big thank you to **Lorrie** for her smile and contributions to LGDC as a receptionist - we will miss her.

Laura, Nyah, Cameron and Kathy

This issue is dedicated to the families and friends of victims of the World Trade Center bombings. Everyone's lives have been touched by this tragedy.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

HOURS BY APPOINTMENT

8 AM TO 8 PM MONDAY -
FRIDAY

8 AM TO 5 PM SATURDAY

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