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Welcome to the fourth issue of PAWPRINTS. I am grateful to our sponsor, Merial, and also to the American Veterinary Medical Association for the ongoing determined commitment to reach people who have pets. I hope you find PAWPRINTS interesting and informative.

Our PAWPRINTS guarantee: *Love your pets, and they will love you back*

About the Editors

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Santa Delivers to Pets



By Steve Dale

When Santa hears about this one, he'll really chuckle “Ho - Ho - Ho.” Shaped like a bone, this special trinket is covered with 21 one-inch thick, round cut Pave diamonds, and sells for \$995. This bauble isn't available at jewelry stores because it's an ID tag for dogs. From www.cosettescloset.com (call 877-267-3883)

According to a survey by the internet search engine Yahoo, 29% of adults say they plan to buy something for a four-legged or feathered friend this holiday season. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, holiday pet gifts will add \$5 billion to the economy.

Here's a sampling of new gifts for pets:

Kitty-Go-Krazy, \$32.95 at pet stores, gives cats a chance to stay busy by boxing with a moving puff ball connected to a wand that spins around unpredictably. Cats also will poke at a little plastic ball on the base of the toy. Kitty-Go-Krazy is

also available at www.panicmouse.com and www.qvc.com.

Even crazier is a 10-inch replica of a dog's tongue, appropriately called the Humunga Tongue. It's a hard rubber toy. When your dog pulls on one end, you can pull on the other and play, “Tug O' Tongue.” It's a great gag gift. \$12 at pet stores or www.moodypet.com.

For pets who must be appropriately garbed for all those holiday parties, the latest in pet fashions includes luxurious faux fur coats, lined with imported silk and finished with Italian buttons. While various colors are available, pet fashion experts concur the in-color this season for desperate house dogs is pink. For dude dogs, tones of gray are the most stylish. From Phoebe's Inc., \$98 - \$100 at www.allboutpheobe.com (call 310-740-2919).

For pets who just must be totally rad, Poochtee & Fitch, Poochtee Republic and Hard Rock Poochtee are among the many available Poochtee t-shirts, tank tops and sweat shirts. Logos and styles are

patterned after such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Banana Republic and Hard Rock Café. Prices range \$28 to \$34. A dollar from each purchase also benefits the Poochtee Love Foundation, which will pay for diagnostic testing when owners can't afford to. For a nearby retailer, click on www.poochtee.com, (call 310-




Cosette wonders what Santa is bringing her.

801-5117).

You never know when bowser or kitty might be riding on the sidecar of a motorcycle, bicycle or even a shopping cart at the pet store. If bicycle helmets are good enough for people, they're also good enough for your pet. These look more like Snoopy's helmet when he fought the Red Baron. Helmets for dogs are \$29.95 from www.zoomergear.com (call 804-288-8226).

Jewish dogs deserve toys too. Plush toys include Baaf-Mitzvah, a little lamb toy; a little pair of plush scissor called Moyal, and a pink and black ostrich toy with long flirty eyelashes and long legs called



Visit with Benji!
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MERIAL MUSINGS

Home is Where the Heart Is



Can you imagine being lost and unable to find your family? Sadly, pets are lost more often than you might expect; many with tragic consequences. Unexpected events can separate even the most faithful dogs and most home-loving cats.

Have you noticed how the "lost" column is so much larger than the "found" column? So many families are torn apart by this stressful and scary situation. These people were once like you and me, thinking "My pet will NEVER get lost!" But now, they face the reality and a very dangerous and uncertain future for their lost pet.

In my veterinary practice, I hear it all too often. "We lost our dog, but this was the first time. He never left home before!" Don't let this happen to you. Through good sense and the magic of technology, you may be able to prevent this tragedy.

Here are some tips for keeping your pet safe and at home:

1. **Good Fences:** There is no substitute for a good fence, but don't be naïve enough to believe your pet won't try it at some point just because you

spent a lot of money. Forget about cats and fences! They look at a fence as a "bridge" to the great unknown. Cats can roam which exposes them to danger. You can prevent that by keeping them indoors.

2. **Electronic Fences:** Invisible-type fences which emit a small shock to your dog's neck can be a last resort if your neighborhood does not allow fences or if your dog is determined to beat the fence. You must properly train your dog to ensure he learns to stay in your yard.

3. **Spay and Neuter:** The number one cause of roaming is "looking for love in all the wrong places." When pets enter their reproductive cycles, they emit odors that we can't smell but other dogs can. If your male dog or cat decides he wants to investigate, there's no stopping him even with a fence.

4. **GetMehome.com:** This is a free service offered by Merial, the manufacturer of pet products like FRONTLINE® and HEARTGARD® Ivermectin. Once you receive a tag with a unique ID number in your FRONTLINE/HEARTGARD puppy or

kitten kit, you can go to the website and enter your contact information. If you move or change phone numbers, you can go back to the website and update the information. The tag instructs the good Samaritan, shelter, or veterinary hospital who finds your pet to go to www.getmehome.com. By entering the ID code on the tag, the information about the owner of the animal can be found.

5. **Identification Tag:** It's easy and cheap, and identifica-

are a must.

6. **Microchip.** A small electronic chip the size of a grain of rice is injected under the skin at a veterinary clinic. When a pet is found, the animal is scanned at a shelter or vet clinic. The scanner reads a code which is traced to the owner. Microchips are great and lifelong, but not all the various manufacturers' chips are standardized yet so that all the scanners can read them.

— Scott Vande Griend DVM



GetMeHome.com is a high-tech way of having your best friend find his way

tion tags are available at many vet hospitals, animal control offices and pet stores. Put your name, address, phone number, email, and your pet's name on the tag. Not as high tech as www.getmehome.com, but tags



Watch for the AKC/ Eukanuba National Championship Dog Show January 15 and 16, 8:00 pm EST (7:00 pm CST).

SANTA DELIVERS TO PETS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

dog knows who he's playing with. Apparently Jewish dogs can read. Oy vey. For a retailer near you, email customerservice@copajudaica.com (call 305-251-5859). A plush white dog toy wearing a red and green scarf barks "We Wish You A Merry Christmas." \$13.50 from www.barkerandmeowsky.com (call 773-868-0200).

"Canine Lullabies" is marketed as therapy music to calm anxious puppies. Each track on the CD is a classic lullaby with an audible heartbeat pounding in the background. According to the press material, the background heartbeat has been proven to relax babies in hospitals, anxious chimpanzees in zoos and dogs in shelters. CD's are \$15.95; www.caninelullabies.com (call 800-537-7748).

"Acquiring a dog may be the only opportunity a human ever has to choose a relative," -- Mordecai Siegal.

"Cats invented self esteem," -- Erma Bombeck.

FROM THE AVMA

Better Watch Out! Holiday Hazards



Twinkling lights, seasonal plants, tinsel, ornaments, foil-covered chocolate Santas and dreidels are all part of the holiday season's magic. They also pose a potentially deadly threat to dogs, cats and birds.

Intrigued by the glistening colors, curious kitties have toppled more than one poorly secured Christmas tree. Rover stepping on broken ornaments has precipitated many emergency visits to the veterinarian. Don't spoil your holiday with a medical emergency. The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends that you keep pet safety in mind during all of your festivities.

Ornament fragments can perforate the stomach. String, ribbon, and tinsel can cause painful intestinal problems. Frayed light cords can cause shock or burns. As you hang Fido and Fluffy's stockings by the chimney, take care to keep holiday hazards out of their reach.

Home for the Holidays?

Holiday celebrations may include an onslaught of visitors. Bonnie Beaver, DVM, MS, Dipl. ACVB, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association and a board certified specialist in animal behavior, advises owners to keep your pet's needs in mind.

"Respect your pet's temperament," says Beaver. "If they (the pets) are not accustomed to children in the house or the general hustle and bustle, don't force them to be part of the gathering. Provide a quiet place for your pets to retreat when the festivities become overwhelming."

Furthermore, make sure your pets have identification (microchip or collar with tags)



Jazmin thinks the holidays are definitely a hazard — Photo by Monissa Whiteley

so that if they slip out as visitors come and go, they can be returned safely home.

Celebrating the Holidays with your Pets

Many pets are included in family celebra-

tions. A survey by the American Animal Hospital Association revealed that nearly 60 per cent of pet owners include their companion animals on their holiday gift list. About an equal number include their pets' pictures and/or paw prints on their holiday cards.

Take a break from the hustle and bustle by taking a long walk with your pooch or playing with an interactive toy with kitty. They're stress busters for you and your pets. Of course, there's nothing wrong with cuddling up next to the roaring fire with a friend who won't ever judge you, and will never remind you that the tree is crooked, gifts still need wrapping or that cookies need baking.

AVMA Holiday Safety Tips

- Be vigilant. Dispose of ribbons, wrapping paper, broken ornaments and turkey or ham bones immediately.
- Place candles, breakable ornaments, and plants out of your pet's reach. Fumes from some aromatic candles may be dangerous to birds.
- Resist the temptation to share holiday goodies that can cause stomach upset.

BEYONCE WINS BEST OF THE BEST

Houston, TX, Budmar's Beyonce of Inthewind, a Persian cat, was awarded the most beautiful cat in the world at the Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show, November 19 through 21 in the George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX.

"I knew from about the time she was born just how incredibly beautiful she is," says her owner Linda Fisher of Kansas City, MO. "That's why we named her Beyonce. It was clear, this is a cat with a special something."

At the International Cat Show, three judges choose one cat as the Best of the Best. They consider cats which the other judges had all ranked high over the course of the show. Best of the Best judge Darrell Newkirk from Fairview Heights, IL says, "So flashy, so beautiful. And I'm not even a fan of that group (Destiny's Child), or her (Beyonce's)

music. But I'm sure a fan of that cat."

At home, Budmar's Beyonce of Inthewind, who is only 11-months old, is simply called



Princess, and apparently, she has a royal attitude to match. "She spends a lot of time in the sun room, just looking outside at the birds and surveying her kingdom," Fisher says.

Cat show judge Kitty Angell was assisting the three judges ranking the Best of the Best and she took Beyonce out of her carrier to bring her over to them. Angell was wearing an outfit accessorized with feathers. To Beyonce, Angell was a giant cat toy, and she was batting her paws at Angell's outfit.

"She's a very expressive cat," says Newkirk. "And we like to see cats enjoying themselves as they're being judged. This cat has a wonderful future ahead of her."

— Steve Dale

PAWPRINTS

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American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine —
www.acvim.org

AKC Animal Recovery —
www.akccar.org

American Veterinary Medical Association — www.avma.org

Animal Planet Radio —
www.animal.discovery.com

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals — www.aspc.org

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center — www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagenam=apcc

Benji’s Website —
www.benji.info

Cat Fancier’s Association —
www.cfa.org

Good News for Pets —
www.goodnewsforpets.com

Maggie Bonham —
www.shadowhelm.net

PetFinder.com —
www.petfinder.com

SILLY GAMES FOR WINTER FUN

The weather outside isn’t frightful, to your dog, it’s downright delightful! You can have fun with your dog when the temperatures dip and the snow flies. Try these fun games to play with your dog:

— Snow Angels – yes, your dog will enjoy snow angels as much as you will. Really! Find a nice, cushy pile of snow and jump into it (be careful what is underneath) and start doing the snow angel thing. Your dog might think you’re crazy but may give it a try. Give him praises and treats for the best snow angel.

— Scavenger Hunt – hide treats in strategically placed

spots under the snow and start your dog off on a fun and exciting version of scavenger hunts.

— Fetch, maybe? -- loosely pack some snowballs to play fetch with. (Don’t pack them too tight or you could hurt your dog’s teeth!). Toss them and watch the fun as your dog tries to find the “ball” in a sea of white. You can also hide treats in the snowballs and make them easier to find.

— Snow maze – this takes a bit of work on your part, but if you’ve got a shovel and a lot of snow, you can dig out a pretty extensive snow maze and hide a pile of treats at the

end. Help your dog get started and watch the fun!

— Snow fort – like the snow forts you built as a kid, make one for your dog as part of a doggie obstacle course where he can go through, in, and around. Great fun especially while playing tag with your dog.

Try these games and make up some new ones when the snow flies. You can have a lot of fun in wintertime which will make that couch and cup of hot cocoa that much more inviting.

— *Margaret H. Bonham,*
www.shadowhelm.net,
www.havingfunwithagility.com

Benji’s Sleep Over

It was 10 p.m. when I received a call from Joe Camp’s wife, Kathleen. She had explained that Joe and Benji had come to the Chicago earlier that same day to consider further surgery on Benji’s eye.

Veterinary ophthalmologist Dr. Sam Vainisi had previously operated on the pup’s eye. The good news was that further surgery wasn’t required after all. The bad news was that Joe and Benji’s flight back to the West coast was turned back to Chicago late at night. There wasn’t a single hotel room to be found.

Naturally, we were thrilled with the prospect of having a movie star stay with us. Benji’s arrival wasn’t exactly the Hollywood glamour as I expected it would be. I frantically searched for a red carpet and Klieg lights (couldn’t find either) and I waited for Benji’s entourage, and his stretch Limo.

Instead, there was Joe lugging luggage in one hand and a leash and plastic bag in the other. Well, even celebrities have to squat. He used the plastic bag.

After all these years of marriage, it was the only time I’ve ever been disappointed in my wife. You’d figure she’d be wearing an evening gown to greet the matinee idol. Instead, she grabbed a bathrobe to put over her PJ’s.

Chaser’s attitude was most disappointing. Our 13-year old Brittany had to be coaxed out of bed to say ‘hi.’ I suppose Lassie was more her generation. Lucy, our second dog, did a few tricks from her repertoire, but even clever Lucy wasn’t smart enough to challenge Benji to a “trick off.” Even exhausted after a day of travel, Benji did everything but wash and dry the dishes while performing in our kitchen.

The next morning all the dogs took a walk. As we returned to our building, our neighbor’s Tibetan Terrier, Boots Montgomery, was leaving with her owner, Joan. Benji and Boots Montgomery met briefly just outside the elevator. They had a big time disagreement. Boots began with “Grrrr. Ruff! Grrrr.” Benji responded in kind. “You’re not very welcoming to

Benji,” I told Boots. She and Joan went on their way.

Later, after Joe and Benji caught their flight, I phoned Joan. “Boots Montgomery argued with Benji,” I said.

“Yes, you said that,” she said.

“No, I mean *the* Benji,” I repeated. “Benji. Movie star Benji.”

I didn’t hear a response for the longest time; then I heard what people aren’t suppose to hear when the other person puts a hand over the phone to block the sound. But, of course, I heard every word – albeit, a bit muffled, “Boots Montgomery, you were a bad girl today! That was Benji. Boots Montgomery, shame on you.”

Two days later, I received a lovely letter of apology via email from Boots Montgomery to forward to Benji. Off course, the apology was accepted. Like the Benji movie, “Benji Off the Leash,” (available on DVD after Christmas), this story had a happy ending.

— *Steve Dale*