



## Winter Blues Banished!

Not being a psychologist, I have to admit that I made up 'Pet Intervention Therapy'. Although, I don't believe that reduces its amazing affects in the least!

Many studies have shown the **benefits of the human-animal bond**. Everything from lowering our blood pressure and cholesterol to enhancing your mood, avoiding depression, loneliness and stress. **A great jump start for our self-esteem...** and those amazing machines - our minds and bodies!

(See our next issue for an inside look at **Health Healers (<http://www.healthhealers.com>)**- a service offering the **healing properties** of animal companionship and therapy to hospitals, Senior Day Care and hospice facilities with volunteers and their **Certified Therapy Dogs!**)

So, if you are one of the lucky people who share their home with a pet, you are the fortunate recipient of unlimited amounts of unconditional love. And daily doses of focused play or quiet time provide both you and your pet with all the benefits.

**Stress can be just as harmful to your pet as it is to you.** So, don't forget - if you are stressed and grumpy or blue, your pet will pick up on this and absorb your emotions, often as though they were their own. So, don't just dump your bad day or your stress on them and **expect them to deal** with it. They will need that play or quiet time from you to reward them for being your best friend. Let them decompress, too!

Daily doses of 'P.I.T.' might include giving your cat a full body massage or your pup a 5- minute belly rub. **Enjoy some healthy laughter** by throwing the ball for your dog (or cat) to retrieve. Spend 10 minutes marveling at the incredible agility of your cat as she chases the cat dancer or laser light. Just gentle brushing and massage calms you both and brings you closer together.

Expensive toys are sold to impress us- the human. My dogs have rarely enjoyed the pricey toys from the store. A tennis ball, a rope to tug on and chew, a nice big knuckle bone from the soup pot- all were more interesting than the basket of untouched store-bought toys.

**One of my cat's favorite toys** is the ring off of the milk bottle cap. She carries them around for a while and then when the 'time is right' (whatever that is...) drops them and plays hockey for a while. Or sometimes it's La Crosse- where the object of the game seems to be keeping the ring in the air as long as possible batting it with her paws. Just the fact that we are there telling her how pretty and athletic and agile she is, seems to please her to no end.

And of course, **petting, brushing and hugs are just the best!**

**You and your pet's benefits...**

- 1) **This provides you each some much needed warmth and mutual affection**
- 2) **One of the most perfect stress relievers (for you and your pet!)**
- 3) **Temporary amnesia if you have had a particularly challenging day or-**
- 4) **A non-judgmental therapy session with your fur person, who in their eyes, you can do no wrong.**
- 5) **In times of sickness (you or your pet) can reduce your "down time" and get your spirits up**

Nothing else gives us quite the same **sense of connection and accomplishment** as a few minutes of **nothing but 'me time' with our best furry friends**. It is one of the most perfect stress relievers – see our Feature Article for more ideas!

If you have recently had a cold or the flu you probably already also know the benefits of having a 'fur nurse' in residence. When my new husband Scott, caught the flu, it was quite an event.

Typically, he doesn't get sick- with anything. So, we all got to see a new side of 'Dad'. 'We' being myself and the 5 kitties. Ok- that sounds like a lot of cats even to me! But **we are a blended family**, so really, that is only 2 and a half cats per person in fuzzy math.

Once the kitties discovered that Dad wasn't leaving bed, they turned into furry magnets, and each staked out a piece of ground, **surrounding him with an affectionate net of warmth and good will**- even shy little Willow.

Of course, they could have just been being little heat vampires, but they weren't talking and we weren't asking. (See our next newsletter which will feature an article on [Animal Communication!](#))

Usually, we only allow 1 or 2 of the cat herd in for snuggling at night. Otherwise, around 3 or 4 a.m. chaos ensues. Bed bouncing, plant crashing, door scratching, sibling rivalry or any number of other cat related events can turn a good night's sleep into well- again- chaos. So, to see all five of the babies...uh kitties, on the bed in a **cooperative snuggle**, was quite heartwarming.

And Scott, who had been restless and grumpy, was now sleeping, rolling over occasionally and murmuring to his bedmates what good kitties they were.

And there they stayed, taking shifts or all of them together for 3 days. Scott was **feeling much better** by then, which they seemed to sense, because one by one they left.

As we learned later, most of Scott's coworkers who apparently had this same strain of the flu were off of work for at least 2 days longer than he was. Coincidence? Maybe. But once again the kitties aren't talking.

(Although, our family is temporarily dogless, I have had first hand experience that the canine version of this therapy is **just as effective!**)

Even the inhabitants of our little 1 ½ gallon fish tank offer amusement. Seeing our little **algae eater (fish) snuggling up to the aquatic frog** in their little love nest under the filter gives new meaning to the term '**odd couple**'. And watching the froggy 'capture' his previously frozen prey is just a hoot!

## **A Special THANK YOU!**

\$25 Restaurant certificates to THANK our clients for 2009 REFERRALS to Critter Sitters

With Valentine's Day approaching quickly, we're offering our clients a "sweetheart" deal that rewards you for referring new clients to Critter Sitters!

From now until the middle of March enjoy a little mid-Winter pampering from your friends at Critter Sitters! We love to pamper your pets-Now it's your turn!

With a good part of the winter behind us, it still seems that Spring and warmth are too far away. In addition, the economy being what it is- it almost seems wrong to reward our Northern hardiness with a nice dinner out.

But darn it – you deserve it! ... and we'd like to help.

As a loyal client we would like to offer you a 'Sweetheart Special'. For every client that you refer to us, you earn one of the Restaurant Rewards listed below! How sweet is that?!

*As you can see we have a great assortment of dining certificates to choose from.*

(Mmmm...I can almost taste the Sushi now...)

For now, we only have what's listed below, so start talking up Critter Sitters and pick out your favorite restaurants before someone else gets them! Limited to only 3 per family please. Tell your friends, family, coworkers and neighbors about your pet's best friend... next to you, of course- Critter Sitters!

Have your referral look through our website so they can learn all about us. Once they sign up as a client you get your gift card- it's that easy!

**LIMITED  
SUPPLY!**

*First Come, First Served*  
**Restaurant Certificates**  
 Critter Sitters Rewards for new  
**REFERRALS**

<u>Restaurant</u>	<u>Cert.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Zip</u>
Asiana - Asian	\$25	1198 George Towne	Pewaukee	53072
Astor Bar & Grill	\$25	920 E. Juneau	Milw.	53202
Bayou	\$25	2060 N. Humboldt Ave	Milw.	53202
Bigg's Roadhouse	\$25	1900 N. Mayfair Rd.	Wauwat'sa	53226
Café at the Plaza	\$10	1007 N. Cass St.	Milw.	53202
Centennial Bar & Grill	\$25	10352 N. Port Wash.	Mequon	53092
Chez Jacques	\$10 or \$25	1022 S. 1st St.	Milw.	53204
Edelweiss Cruise Line	\$25	205 W. Highland Ave.	Milw.	53203
Edgar's Calypso	\$25	628 N. Water St;	Milw.	53202
Fiesta Garibaldi	\$25	821 W. Lincoln	Milw.	53215
Howard's Bar & Grill	\$25	5208 W. County Line	Mequon	53092
Izumi's	\$25	2150 N. Prospect	Milw.	53202
John Hawk's Pub	\$10 or \$25	100 E. Wisconsin Ave.	Milw.	53202
Leonardos Pizza	\$25	1105 N. Port Wash.	Mequon	53097
Libiamo	\$25	221 W. Pleasant	Milw.	53202
Mayura Indian	\$25	1958 N. Farwell Ave.	Milw.	53202
North Star Amer. Bistro	\$25	4515 N. Oakland Ave	Shorew'd	53211
Pepe's Rockin' Taco	\$25	2014 N. Farwell	Milw.	53202
Riptide	\$10 or \$25	649 E. Erie St.	Milw.	53202
Samurai Japanese	\$25	6969 N. Port Wash.	Glendale	53217
Triskele's	\$25	1801 S. 3rd St.	Milw.	53204
Tulip	\$25	360 E. Erie St.	Milw.	53202

## Featured Article

In our Arctic Wisconsin Winters, it is easy to feel so drained that just getting through each short day is a challenge. Just **cuddling up on the couch with our loved ones** seems like the only thing we have energy left to do. Yet, we push ourselves to keep up nearly the same pace we do in Summer. Any wonder people feel drained, tired and blue?

Just when you would think we have time to attend to our 'batteries', we just keep pushing through, stressing our minds, spirits and bodies. Taking even the time to make a home-made pot of soup to **nurture ourselves and our families**- and maybe a little treat of that savory soup meat for our pet friends- seems like a huge task.

Our pets, although maybe not as stressed as we are, still have their challenges this time of the year. With less exercise they may become bored and overweight. I can certainly suggest an extra walk or two with your pet's

favorite Critter Sitter or maybe a good romp in the basement while you are at work or recovering from a cold, if the weather is too harsh outside.

But **what else can we do for ourselves and our pets?** Especially at this time of year, we could be thinking about holistic alternatives, as well. It seems that it may not be pampering, but a necessity to **look to more nurturing, calming therapies**. Many studies show the **positive effects of massage**, meditation, aroma therapy and the like.

Many salons, spas and groomers offer massage for people and pets. Even the types of massage can vary widely from one establishment to another. Some folks find acupuncture or acupressure healing for their nervous system.

One therapy that you may have heard of, but are not exactly sure what it is, is Reiki.

*As Sue Jones, a practitioner of Reiki explains:*

Reiki is a light-touch noninvasive relaxation technique that can promote healing by using *chi*, the life force energy that all living things possess, to balance the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels of the body.

Animals and people alike love the warm, soothing sensations they feel as the Reiki begins to affect positive change. In addition to wonderful relaxation, benefits can include:

- The **reduction of stress**- very few of us have not been affected by the economy-and our pets know when we are tense...
- **Pain management**- not only injury, but stress and depression can cause physical discomfort for both people and pets
- **Improvement in confidence and ability**- by **managing and balancing** our mental and spiritual bodies
- **Release of the emotional and physical** blockages in re-homed pets- that have now found a wonderful new life with you- may still carry. Emotional scars from previous neglect or abuse can be eased and Reiki may **help build trust and decrease shyness**.
- **Accelerated healing** of illnesses and injury, especially in stressed and elderly pets and humans
- **Balance** an increase or decrease in appetite, especially **in times of stress**
- **Assistance with life-stage transitioning** such as changing or losing jobs, homes or partners

*Sue Jones, of I Care Petcare, is pleased to offer the holistic service of Reiki to all pets and the people who love them. For more information or to reserve Reiki session(s) for yourself or your animals, please visit <http://icarepetcare.com/HolisticReserveReiki.htm>.*

*Be sure to let Sue know you were referred by Critter Sitters.*

In our next newsletter read about Animal Communicators. If you have had an experience you would like to share call or email Jane.

## **This Edition's Pet Safety Tips:**

Almost every Holiday provides the same equation, including Valentine's Day. For us; yummy things to eat, pretty packages with ribbons, and flowers. For our pets; foods that can make them ill, ribbons to ingest and pretty (sometimes) poisonous flowers.

1) If you receive **chocolates** from your sweetheart, remember to **keep them out of reach** of your pets. Certain types of dark chocolate can kill a dog. Some pets over-indulge on an unexpected banquet of goodies and get quite ill, vomiting up the excesses. Even some kitties have a sweet tooth. So make sure to **have plenty of healthy treats** for them on hand. Don't be tempted to share your treats.

2) Ribbon (warning- some of this one you may find gross...) A lot of pets, cats especially, find the curly type of ribbon irresistible. (After spying their prey, two of my cats would climb up or over anything to get to the package

it was attached to.) Crunching and biting they are finally able to chew off a sizeable piece and swallow it. In the past, before we realized the problem, for several days it would appear in their vomit, hairballs and the litter box.

Occasionally, you may see a little end in the corner of their mouth. If they have not swallowed it entirely, you may be able to *gently* pull the length out. The same may happen at the other end. Again, *gently* pull the material. If it comes out with no resistance, continue. If not, get your cat or dog to their **veterinarian immediately**.

(A special note: Due to the narrowness of a cat's esophagus, vomiting is very hard on them. Even hairballs are not easily expelled. Do your kitty a favor and brush him or her **at least once a week**- even short haired breeds. This will help them reduce the number of hairballs they need to purge.)

3) Although there are a lot of plants and flowers that are poisonous to pets, (see list in our Spring issue) **fortunately**, most pets are not very interested. I have always had house plants and my furry family seems more interested in digging the dirt out of the pots.

One of **the exceptions** I have found, though, is the sprigs of little dried flowers most florists add to fill out a bouquet. The flowers vary, but apparently the chemical they spray them with doesn't. It is **irresistible to my cats**, and even the dog nibbled once when he was able to reach them. Now, I either **remove them** or bring out the bouquet only when I can **supervise and guard** it.

Pets will greedily wolf them down and just as quickly barf them back up. Which, I guess is in some way preferable. If they are that toxic, I would hate to see what would happen if they were thoroughly digested.

## For our Valued Long-Term Clients:

For those of you who have been our clients for a while but have not yet **visited our website**, please read through our services and packages we have to offer.

You might find a personalized service you didn't realize we offer to keep you and your beloved pet **Healthier and Happier!**

As a special bonus for your **loyalty and trust** in us, your **current pricing will remain in effect until April 1, 2009**.

**\*Don't forget! Critter Sitters Gift Certificates are a great value!** For each \$100 certificate **you pay only \$85!** What a great gift for those '**Pet People**' you know!  
(Think **Valentine's Day, Weddings and Honeymoons, Birthdays and Anniversary get-aways, or ?**)

### Upcoming issues:

Animal Communication

Certified Therapy Dogs

Birthday Greetings

Product Reviews

Your Stories

Poisonous Plants and Yard Hazards

Testimonials