

## A NEW YEAR FOR OUR PETS & US

For so many of us, the New Year begins with the promise of dreams, goals and aspirations to be achieved. We resolve to make our lives healthier, more prosperous and fulfilling, to benefit from our prior experiences and to learn lessons from our past “mistakes”. We may make plans to simplify our lives and to take more time to reflect and contemplate the meaning and purposefulness of our lives. We may wish to expand our spiritual awareness and relationship with the natural world from which we have all evolved and yet which has received little of our attention or significance in light of our frenetic, technologically oriented daily lives. We may finally have recognized that to maintain our overall health and well-being we require more time to relax and bask in the beauty of nature and with her creatures from whom we derive comfort, solace and support.

Some of us have pets who are simply household fixtures and to whom we have paid little attention. Others of us have pets who are “our children” and are regarded as dearly loved family members with whom we share our daily lives and routines. For those of us blessed to have the companionship of a beloved pet, we can, in this New Year, decide to view his or her role in our lives with a new, and perhaps, heightened awareness and perspective. We can attempt to more effectively understand, appreciate, “communicate” and empathize with our finned, furry and feathered companions. We can further enjoy the link and connection they provide us with the natural world. We can admire their beauty, grace, purity, vulnerability cleverness, resourcefulness and ingenuity. We can further appreciate and enjoy their spontaneity and childlike simplicity. We can enjoy their playfulness and joie de vivre. We can recognize and appreciate the feelings and emotions they share with us. After all, don’t we share the planet – aren’t we on this journey of life on earth together?

Our animal companions have much to teach us – we can learn so much about life and death and the aging process from them. We can learn much about compassion and responsibility as we act as their nurturers and caregivers. After all, they depend upon us – their lives are in our hands.

In this New Year, take time, make time to experience those around you – and, in particular your loyal, trusting, forgiving, empathetic and unconditionally loving animal companions. Take nothing –and no one for granted. It is time to recognize and celebrate the beauty of our world and those with whom we share it!