

Hunters Creek Newsletter (Reprinted with permission) Cheryl Silver

Dog Talk: It **Really** can happen!

I just learned that a colleague in basenji rescue was in a horrible car accident along with her husband just last night. He was injured, but is now home. She is unconscious and in intensive care. It is a very serious situation. She is the one who has always provided the “hands-on” care for their beloved dogs. Her husband is supportive of her involvement with the dogs, but he does not know the nuts and bolts of their daily care. There was no one at home with the dogs when this happened so they were totally on their own.

In many households with pets there is one person who provides the majority of their care. If you asked another adult in the household about them, the second person would direct you to the first saying, “I don’t really deal with that stuff. Ask my husband/wife, she handles all those things.”

At a time of crisis, everyone will be stressed, including the pets, especially if their primary caretaker is unable to provide for them. By preparing ahead of time, you can help the pets and those who will be providing their care. The following is a suggestion for information you can provide and have available in a variety of locations.

Basics: Make a folder for each pet and include a picture of the pet on her folder along with the pet’s name. Include the name of your veterinarian and the office phone number. Include the name and contact information for anyone with whom you have already made an arrangement for the care of your pets - it is critical that this information be kept current.

Medical: List any allergies to medications. List each health condition experienced by each pet. Be sure and make note of which pets are deaf and/or losing vision. List each medication taken by each pet including the amount the pet takes and the frequency. Note where you purchase the medication and include phone numbers. Of course, make a note as to where the medications are kept and how you medicate the pet, e.g., how you hide the pills. Make a note of the date on which you give monthly preventatives.

Feeding: List any food allergies for each pet. Specify the type/brand of food each pet is fed and include the amount fed and the frequency – some of us feed twice a day. Very important is to specify the feeding routine, e.g., are dogs fed in separate spaces to avoid squabbles – if so, where is each dog fed. If the pet is fed a prescription diet, make note of where it is purchased since the prescription will be on file there.

Skills: Make a list of the skills each pet has including the command words you use and what that command means. Describe the signal the dog gives to let you know he needs to potty.

Where do you put this information? Let numerous people know you have compiled this information. Give them copies; go over it with them and answer any questions they may

have. Put a card in your wallet and your glove compartment noting that you have pets at your address and they need care if you are disabled. Include phone numbers for emergency personnel to call so your pets can get care. These numbers can include your vet's contact information and at least one more contact so someone can tend to them if your vet is not available.

This is so important. Once you have done it, you can pat yourself on the back knowing you have prepared for your pets' well – being in an emergency.