

## Compliments of Your Professional Pet Sitter



## A howlin' good time for you and your pets

Halloween can be a traumatic and even dangerous time for pets. The following tips will help ensure that there are no scaredy cats, or other pets, at risk this Halloween.

**Don't leave pets out in the yard on Halloween.** We've all heard the real-life horror stories of malicious people who steal, tease, injure, torture and even kill pets on Halloween. If you don't already bring your pets inside at dark, do so on this night.

**Know when to say "No!"** Dogs and cats may beg for Halloween candy, but Trick-or-Treat goodies are not for pets. Most of us know that chocolate is poisonous to pets, but candies made with the sugar substitute xylitol are also dangerous. Candy wrappers can also pose a problem. Be sure to keep candy and wrappers out of paw's reach.

**Look out for those flaming pumpkins!** A Jack-O-Lantern with a real candle adds a wonderful, authentic touch to Halloween celebrations, but pets don't know the danger of the small fire inside. Dogs, par-

ticularly enthusiastic tail-waggers, can easily knock over a pumpkin and cause a fire. Curious kittens run the risk of getting burned. Place Jack-O-Lanterns where they can't be knocked over by a swinging tail or a curious cat.

**Costumes – Yes or No?** Think things through before putting your pet in a Halloween costume. Unless the dog or cat is extremely receptive to this kind of thing, you could be causing discomfort and stress. If you do dress up your pet, make sure the costume doesn't obstruct your pet's vision and isn't uncomfortable or unsafe.

**Make it Safe Inside.** If you're having an indoor party, make sure that you put your pets in a room where they won't be disturbed. Be sure to check on them and reassure them that everything is all right. They may not be prepared to take part in the Halloween fun, but they don't want to be isolated and ignored, either.

**Are you having an adult party?** Never feed alcoholic beverages to dogs, cats, birds and other ani-

mals. Keep a watchful eye on party guests; some may think it's funny to give an animal alcohol, but it can kill a pet.

**Prevent "The Great Escape."** Be careful that cats or dogs don't dart outside through an open door. Even if a pet enjoys visitors and is having a great time greeting guests and little hobgoblins, a leash is a good idea. Once a pet is out the door, its familiar neighborhood can become unfamiliar and scary territory on Halloween. House and yard decorations, Trick-or-Treaters and increased traffic can panic an escaped pet. A panicked pet will often run too far from home to find its way back.

**Best wishes for a safe and happy Halloween!**