PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Caring for and meeting the needs of our companion animals requires a great deal of individual attention, which ranges from the daily feeding to walking our dogs or playing with our cats. Our animals need human companionship. Pets certainly do not do well over the long-term in isolation or in institutionalized settings such as commercial kennels or animal shelters.

Therefore, each of us who has pets and is concerned about what will happen to them when we die must face the fact that we have a very predictable obligation after we are gone. This obligation is to see that our pets are taken care of properly. We die and must face the fact that we will not be there to do the right thing for the animal we love and cherish.

1. While you are still healthy and well, line up a friend or relative whose personality and circumstances are compatible with your pet and who is willing to make a commitment to take care of the animal for the rest of its natural life. If such a person does not readily come to mind, for the sake of your pet, make a special effort to locate and develop a relationship with such a person.

2. Do not resort to trusts, conditional gifts or other more sophisticated legalistic devices when an animal is the beneficiary. There are scores of cases, particularly when large sums of money or property are diverted by relatives through a challenge of you, will be used to take care of the animal. Each of us who has pets should have a very clear understanding which you have with the pet and who will take care of your animal.

3. Do not leave your animals in the care of an organization or institution unless you have carefully investigated that organization and the organization is committed to and has demonstrated an ability to find and maintain a non-institutionalized home for your animal within a very short time after your death and can guarantee alternative care immediately after your death, so that not even a day will pass between your death and the animal's death. These solutions tend to be the most humane alternative. In such a clear case, forcing an animal to adjust to a new person or circumstances can compound its suffering, particularly when it has just lost its own cherished human companions.

Advance personal arrangements with a friend or neighbor and a reliable veterinarian, to be confirmed by clear directions in your will, are also called for here.

The Law Notes are compiled by HSUS General Counsel Mar- daugh Stuart Madden and Associate Counsel Roger Kindler.

LAW NOTES

We are pleased to offer HSUS members two winter scenes to carry their 1989 season's greetings. The Chickadees perch on a mailbox decorated with holiday greenery, while the Kittens with Wreath seem to find themselves in the midst of a predictably feline bit of holiday mischief. Each card is 7" x 5" and in full color. Both contain the message "Peace and Goodwill to All Creatures.

Each package of twenty five cards and envelopes costs $7.86 each if you order four or more packages of any assortment. Supplies are limited, so make your selection early!