



Forever FRIENDS

DEDICATED TO THOSE SUFFERING THE LOSS OF A PET

Vol. 1 Issue 4

MY PET IS A MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY *by Paula Lecker*

Having previously worked in a funeral home setting and now working with pet death, I see a strong resemblance in the way families grieve. I understand the similarity, as I am a pet owner also. I know how strong our love we share and feelings are toward our pets and why we consider them "Members of our Family". However, I hear often that some people don't think or feel the same, when someone loses a pet. This is the reason for my story.

90% of Americans consider their pets to be members of the family. Over half spend more time taking their pets to the vet than taking care of themselves by seeing their own physicians. Pets are becoming more valued in our society than they were in past decades. Statistics indicate that more people in the United States, whether they be married, single, divorced, widowed, childless, or never married have a pet as a companion and a member of their immediate family. That is why, when you lose a member of your family, either human or animal, it affects so deeply.

Many may question why they feel such a deep loss when their pet passes away. They wonder why they didn't have the same feelings when their Grandmother or Uncle passed away. The reason being, your pet may reflect the ideal partner, parent, child or friend. Your pet is a never ending faithful, patient, devoted, and loving companion whom we talk to, laugh with and play with. One who provides a source of acceptance, unwavering love and affection. It may be a surprise to you that you feel so deeply about your pet. You may have been

aware, but not mindful of the many wonderful gifts your pet brought to your life. They are there for us when we need "a shoulder to cry on", they do not judge us by the way we look or act, they are always there to greet us at the door and snuggle with us when we rest; and they expect little in return. Since we reflect our pet as a "human" we grieve the same as though we have lost a dear family member, friend or neighbor. For many, the loss of a pet is the loss of a trusted companion and friend. Though the bond between you and your pet is as valuable as any of your human relationships, the importance of your pet's loss may not be appreciated by other people.

After the loss of your pet, relatives, friends, co-workers, or acquaintances may ask, "What's the big deal? It was just a dog" or "It was 'only a cat'". This may hurt very deeply because for



many pet owners, their pet is their partner, their child or their best friend. **They ARE Members Of Our Family.**

It may be a surprise to you that you feel so deeply about your pet.

Realize that you do not need anyone's approval to mourn the loss of your pet, nor do you have to justify your feelings to anyone. They don't know how you are feeling as they did

not share the same bond you had with your pet, nor did they spend the quality and valuable time you shared with your pet. Your pet played an important role in your life. Allow yourself time to grieve, reflecting on all the wonderful times you had as "a family". Remember how you picked out your pet's name, the times you played and the many reasons your pet was so special to you. These wonderful memories can never be taken from you and will remain within your heart forever. As long as the memories are still within your heart, Your "Family Member" Will Always Be Alive Within You! 🐾



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Forever FRIENDS
PET CREMATION SERVICES

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PET BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

🐾 **The Association for
Pet Loss and Bereavement**
(718) 382-0690
www.aplb.org

🐾 **Petloss.com**
For pet lovers grieving the
death of a pet or an ill pet
www.petloss.com

🐾 **Books available for checkout
from *Forever Friends Grief
Support Library***

Charlotte's Web
by E.B. White

Pet Loss by Herbert A.
Nieburg, Ph.D.
and Arlene Fischer

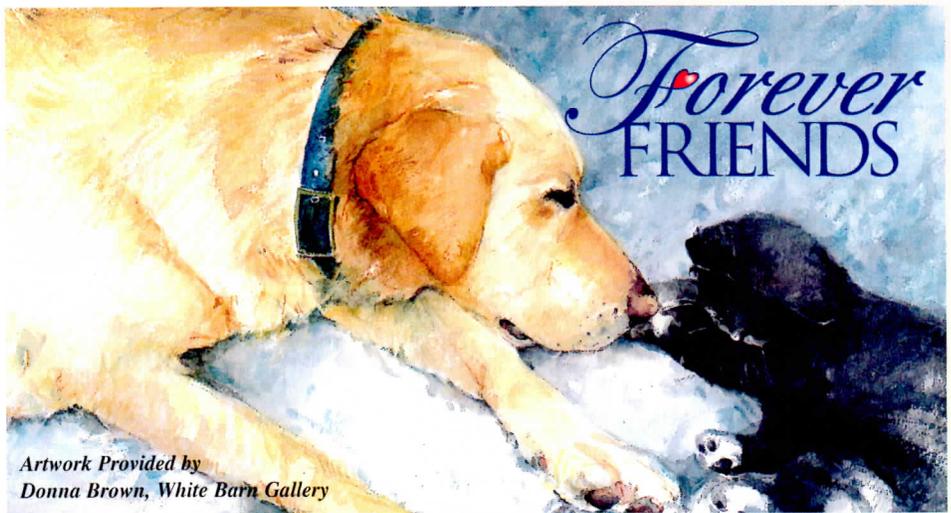
The Fall of Freddie the Leaf
by Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.

I'll Always Love You
by Hans Wilhelm

When A Pet Dies
by Fred Rogers

Lifetimes by Bryan Mellonie
and Robert Ingpen

*The Tenth Good Thing
About Barney*
by Judith Viorst



Artwork Provided by
Donna Brown, White Barn Gallery

Rainbow Bridge Poem Author Unknown

Just this side of Heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor. Those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again—just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing: they each miss someone very special, someone who was left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body begins to quiver. Suddenly he breaks from the group, flying over the green grass, faster and faster. You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into those trusting eyes—so long gone, but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together... 🐾