



# The Pet Advocate

Spring 2011

## Are you staying together for the sake of the pets?



Peggy Hoyt & Leiden Olivia

Our pets are like children. For some of us, our pets are our children. Today I heard a story of a couple who sought marital counseling for the purpose of keeping their marriage intact. They had worked hard over the years to keep their marriage vital. One morning, they came into the counselor's office and announced they had decided to end their long-term marriage. When the counselor inquired as to the thought process leading to this decision, they announced their cat had died over the weekend. Upon the loss of their cat they realized they had been staying together so they would not have to deal with the issue of who would get the cat, whom they both loved.

Approximately 50% of all marriages end in divorce. Pets can become the subject of marital settlement discussions regarding custody, visitation and even "support" payments. I know one couple who met at their veterinarian's office to facilitate a visitation schedule. If a dispute arises, couples can spend hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars fighting over the right to their pets. One woman spent her entire retirement savings to try and prevent her former spouse from seeing their dog. She felt the dog was not being cared for properly and wasn't going to tolerate any perceived mistreatment.

Planning for your pet may include not only making sure of what will happen in the event of a disaster, your disability or death—it should also include what happens if you and your spouse are no longer a family. At the time of my divorce, I had two cats and a dog. One cat stayed with my husband and the other pets came with me. Even though we disagreed about the division of our assets, we were able to amicably agree about the pets. Family law courts are not well-equipped to deal with issues related to pets, probably because most state statutes still view pets as personal property and not family members. As a result, it is incumbent upon us—the pet lovers of the world—to make sure our pets will have a safe, happy and loving home, regardless of our marital status.

## Upcoming Workshops Planning for Your Pets

Thursday, May 19, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.

Animal companions... your pets... "your children." Whatever you call them, they are dearly loved family members. Our pets come in all shapes and sizes — from horses to hamsters, from ferrets to felines — they inhabit our hearts with their own unique personalities. They share day-to-day struggles, adventures, and special moments with us. We share our homes, our beds and our hearts with our pets. We worry about our pets. They leave us with a legacy of happy memories after they're gone. Our pets love us unconditionally, help reduce stress and even enhance longevity. For all these reasons and so many more, you should explore all the alternatives for planning.

*All public workshops are complimentary and are held in our Learning Center. Please call 407-977-8080 or visit [www.HoytBryan.com](http://www.HoytBryan.com) to RSVP.*

## LEND A HELPING PAW...

Please help Candy's Cats a local 501C(3)non-profit cat rescue organization. They provide healthcare and a safe, loving environment for rescued cats & kittens until they can be adopted into loving families.

Our pet of the month:

### Fluffy

Color: Gray  
 Size: Medium  
 Age: Adult  
 Gender: Male  
 Declawed: No  
 Houstrained: Yes  
 ID: C1000245



Fluffy came from a feral cat community back in February 2010. He has been socialized and is quite happy to be an inside kitty. He would prefer to be an only kitty but is currently living with two other cats.

If you are interested in adopting Fluffy or to make a donation please contact:

**Candy's Cats**  
 P.O. Box 608444  
 Orlando, FL 32860  
 (407) 760-2052  
[www.Candycats.org](http://www.Candycats.org)