

Surviving the Holidays: What You Should Know

By Dr. Jasmine Streeter
Special to The Skanner

Boyz II Men's "Let it Snow" has been playing on repeat in my head with intermittent interruptions of Nat King Cole's "The Christmas Song" and Eartha Kitt's "Santa Baby" since Thanksgiving evening. Yes, I'm a sucker for the holidays and consequently, so are my pets. Many families include their fur babies into their holiday traditions. Here are my personal tips to survive and thrive this season.

According to the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center's 2013 report, Oregon is the No. 1 ranked Christmas tree farm grower in the USA. In that year alone, production of trees exceeded 4.9 million. This means there is a likely chance your pet may come in contact with a Christmas tree or two. Making sure trees, artificial or real, are

correctly mounted is imperative for preventing pets from knocking them over. Choosing softer varieties like fir or cedar should be considered for vision impaired or curious pets that may accidentally brush or explore under them.

“Consider creating a quiet relaxing ‘down time’ space for your little ones

Decorations such as lights, small ornaments, tinsel and garlands should never be left in spaces with unattended pets. Young animals, indiscriminate eaters and bored pets are the most at risk for strangulation, choking, or electrocution.

Screens should be placed in front of active fireplaces to prevent burns or accidental fires.

Plants such as poinsettia and mistletoe are toxic to pets and should be

avoided or kept out of reach. If ingestion of these plants does occur, contact your veterinarian as soon as possible to determine the best treatment. A wonderful

alternative for foliage lovers is artificial plants. This will keep poisonous plant ingestion to a minimum and still provide beautiful décor for any season.

If your Muhdea will be throwing down in the kitchen, keep high fat foods or raw meats, fish or egg products out of reach, which can produce fatal disease like Salmonella poisoning or pancreatitis.



Dr. Jasmine's cat Soleil and dog Sheba in front of their Christmas tree

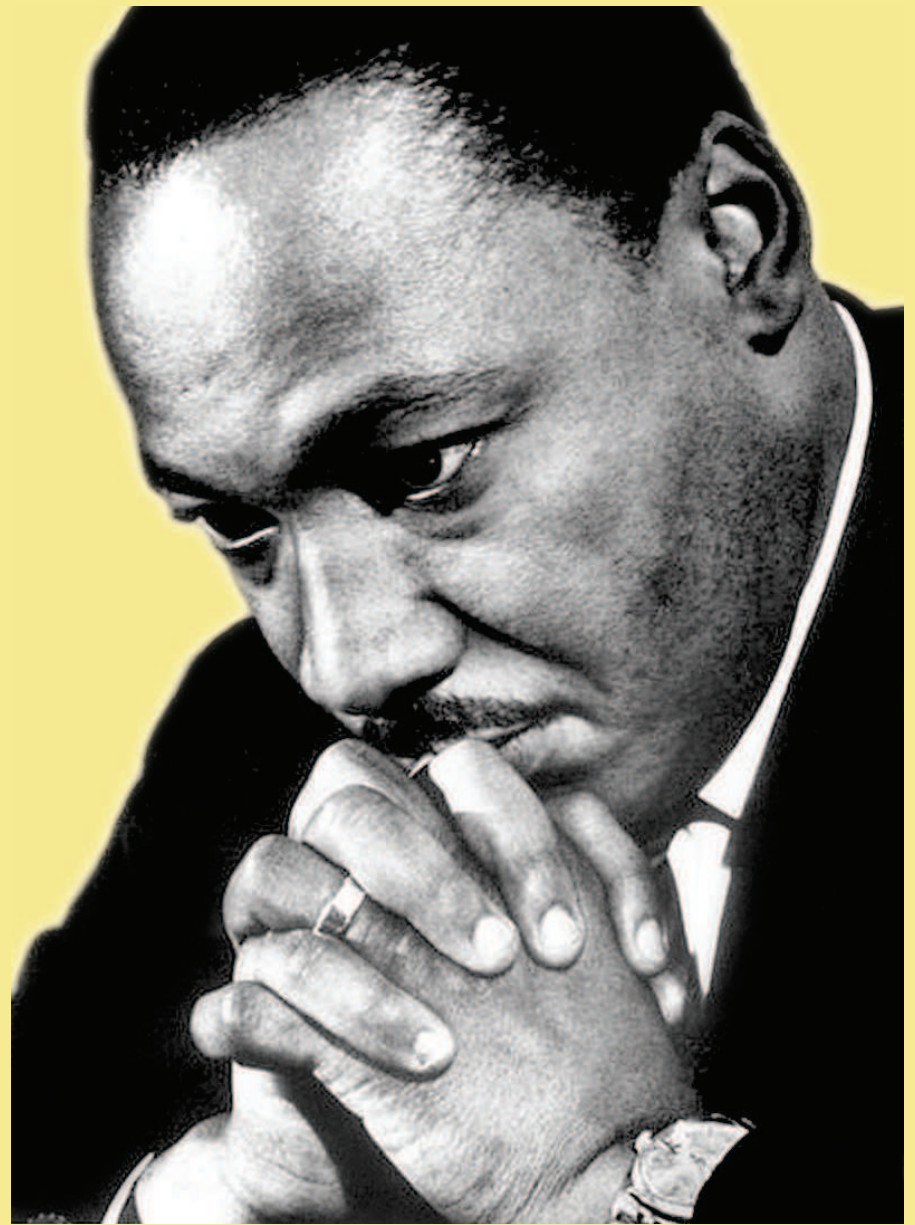
Visiting relatives should be informed prior to their arrival of the number and species of your pets to avoid surprises. Discourage visiting family and friends from bringing unvaccinated, sick, immunocompromised, or aggressive pets into your home to prevent exposure

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