

## Cats and the Fourth of July

Contributed by Max Goar

The 4th of July, Independence Day in the United States, is the most traumatic day of the year for cats. This can be devastating to human nerves, to say nothing of the poor cats.

### Prepare a Sanctuary

Frightened cats will seek shelter, immediately. Many cats will run and hide under a bed or in a closet when the doorbell rings. Imagine what they will do when a bottle rocket goes off nearby. It will help your kitty if you prepare a sanctuary in advance, perhaps a bed inside a closet in an interior room. Rub a towel or small blanket with her scent and put it in the bed. Show her where it is well in advance of the 4th, so she will know it's her own "safe place." We usually spend the evening of the 4th in our bedroom with our cats on the bed, so we can pet them and soothe them when the fireworks start. It doesn't totally take away their fear of loud noise, but it does help a lot.

If your cat is normally an indoor-outdoor cat, keep her indoors for the day. Unfortunately, there are still sadistic sub-humans around who think it's great fun to tie a string of firecrackers to a cat's tail. Don't let your cat become a statistic, and forever ruin your enjoyment of the holiday.

### Having a Party?

Unless it's a quiet family get-together, you might want to consider boarding your cat at your veterinarians if they will have staff on duty during the holiday. Otherwise, it's best if you keep Fluffy locked in your room during the festivities, with her food, water, and litter-box handy.

### Consider Tranquilizers

If your favorite feline is normally the skitterish type, you might want to ask your veterinarian about a mild sedative or tranquilizer, just to get the cat through the day. If you're not fond of drugs for cats, there are some herbal concoctions that have a calming effect. Rescue Remedy, available at health food stores, is recommended for shock, both physical and emotional. It is a mixture of several Bach Flower Remedies: impatiens, star of Bethlehem, cherry plum, rock rose, and clematis. Many veterinarians routinely prescribe it.

Try to take time out from the activities of the holiday to spend a few minutes with your cat, every couple of hours, petting her and talking to her. She needs to know you haven't abandoned her during these stressful hours, and the respite will be good for you, too.

Happy Independence day, and I hope it will be a safe and sane one for both you and your cats.