

Let's make it a great Valentine's Day for everyone!

It's getting to be that time of year, close to Valentine's. Love and romance are in the air. Well, not so much if you're an unspayed/ unneutered dog or cat. Now is the time to get your pets spayed/ neutered. Mating season kicks into high gear in February. There will be kittens galore and puppies, too. The best way for this county to avoid an ordinance requiring spaying/neutering is to have voluntary compliance.

Between Sammie's Friends Animal Shelter, the Grass Valley City Shelter and AnimalSave, approximately 400 kittens are turned in. If you can't take care of the kittens, don't allow your cat to have them or your dog to have puppies. There are two low-cost clinics; the Animal Spay/Neuter Clinic in Auburn and AnimalSave in Grass Valley. Pound Puppy Rescue will pay to have any pitbull or chihuahua spayed/,neutered. Sammie's Friends gives out vouchers for cats and all other breeds of dogs to be spayed/neutered. Having no- or low-income is simply not an adequate excuse for allowing these breedings, causing so much misery for the poor animals.

Some people say the mamas need to have that one litter. Nonsense. In the human world, we have babies, and hopefully, they remain in our lives for our lifetime. In the doggie and kitty world, one or several males impregnate the female and then disappear. This is not Valentine stuff. Then the mother gives birth and the babies suckle her until the life has nearly been sucked out of her. At the moment, we have a mama pitbull nursing 11 puppies. She gets fed eight cups of dry food a day and two cans of wet food and she can't put any weight on her bones. Doesn't this sound fun? Then the babies are taken away and given to homes to go live their life. That's the end of any mama-baby relationship.

The most stressful part of running an animal shelter is the over breeding of pitbulls. Every year 900,000 pitbulls are euthanized in the United States, and yet people think they need to keep breeding them. There is no shelter that you will go to that doesn't have an abundance

of pitbulls.

Don't jump to the conclusion that they are bad dogs. Go to the conclusion that there are too many of them for the number of people who want that breed. I need to clarify — I like pitbulls — my favorite breed. This is not a manifesto against them. If you like this loyal and dedicated breed of dog, stop breeding them. Out of a litter of 12 maybe two of them end up in a decent home being well-cared for. These are the loyalist of dogs and yet they are the most maligned and poorly treated. It's a disgrace.

If I had a magic wand, I would ask the Fairy Godmother to spay/neuter all pitbulls and kittens and end the suffering and misery that is caused by this reckless phenomenon of unspayed/unneutered pets. It takes so little effort to stop the suffering. Please do this for your animals. They will love you for it. You'll have a more devoted pet and more respect for yourself for doing such a good deed.

Cheryl Wicks is the director of Sammie's Friends at the Nevada County Animal Shelter.