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**Thank You to Our Awesome Employees and Volunteers!**

TYFBA

(Thank you for being awesome.)

One of the most heartfelt gestures that one can make is saying “Thank You” to those who go above and beyond each and every day to make a difference in life! Saying thank you doesn’t cost anything and no matter how big or small the help, expressing our gratitude is paramount.

So with that in mind...to our **Valued Employees** we simply couldn't do all that is needed to help provide a safe haven for our furry friends without YOU!

To our **Volunteers** we want to say thank you for doing an outstanding job and for all you do to help our four-legged friends!

And from our Four-legged friends to **YOU...**Your acts of kindness and the impact it leaves on our world is huge. Without all of your help we simply wouldn't be!

**Wags, Purrs, and Yappy Pawlidays to You and Yours and Your Awesomeness!**



## Other Secular Celebrations This Holiday Season

When you think of winter holidays, Christmas is most likely to be the first one that comes to mind. Celebrated around the world, Christmas is considered both a religious holiday, honoring the birth of Jesus, and a cultural one, with a history and tradition that combines Christian beliefs with ancient folklore and rituals.

In 1870, Christmas was declared a federal holiday and is now one of the most popular holidays in the United States, as well as being widely celebrated in other countries.

However, Christmas isn't the only holiday celebrated during the winter season. There are a plethora of other holidays that are culturally significant to their countries of origin, some of which have festivities that far exceed even the most ostentatious Christmas celebration. Here is just a sampling of other winter holidays celebrated all over the world.

### Diwali

Otherwise known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali is a holiday of Hindu origin and is widely celebrated throughout India. The five-day event takes place on the 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu calendar, which falls in October or November. Celebrants light clay lamps, said to represent the destruction of anything negative in one's life, and celebrate the goddess Lakshmi, who is purported to bring wealth and good fortune.

### Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa, which is observed from December 26 to January 1, is a holiday that celebrates African culture and community. With activities focused around what is called the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles) celebrating traits such as collective work, creativity, and purpose, communities join together with feasts, music, dance, and a continued commitment to cultural values.

### Hanukkah

The Jewish festival of Hanukkah is an eight-night celebration that commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem during the Maccabean Revolt. It begins on the 25th of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar, which usually occurs in November or

December. Celebrations include meals with traditional foods, the lighting of the menorah, and eight nights of games and gifts.

### **Las Posadas**

Las Posadas, a Mexican holiday that takes place between December 16 and December 24, honors the journey of Joseph and Mary as they made their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The festival includes a small child dressed as an angel, leading a procession of children through town as they go to various homes, seeking lodging for Joseph and Mary. Each stop includes songs and scripture readings and ends with a Mass service and the children breaking open piñatas full of candy and toys.

### **St. Nicholas Day**

Celebrating the Christian saint who sold everything he owned to give money to the poor, St. Nicholas Day, also known as the Feast of St. Nicholas, is observed on December 6 and is celebrated throughout much of northern Europe. Traditions include leaving small gifts and treats in shoes. While still considered a different entity than our modern-day Santa Claus, many of the traditions of Santa originated with the legends of St. Nicholas.

### **Omisoka**

Omisoka is the Japanese New Year, and like the western version of New Year's is celebrated on December 31. It is considered one of the most important holidays in Japanese culture, second only to January 1, known as Shogatsu or Japanese New Year's Day. Celebrating the close of the old year and ushering in the new one, Japanese people host Bonenkai parties, intended to help forget about the past year, write cards to friends and family, and send gifts. Many families make rice cakes as part of the celebration, and homes are decorated with a sacred Shinto straw rope.

### **Boxing Day**

Celebrated primarily in the U.K. and other European countries, Boxing Day takes place on December 26. Traditionally a day off for servants and the day when their employers would give them a "Christmas box" or monetary gift, modern Boxing Day customs include sporting events such as full programs of top-tier international football leagues, shopping, and a holiday from work. In some countries, .

From religious festivals and ceremonies honoring the change of seasons, to secular events that take place in many different countries, these are just a few of the winter holidays celebrated all over the world on a national and local level, religious days, and long-standing cultural traditions.



# **Yappy Pawlidays**

There's still time to help support the HSOTC's Yappy Pawlidays holiday gift fundraiser with a variety of items available at our eBay store! From hand crafted ornaments and cozy animal-themed apparel, you're sure to find that very special item whether it adds to your own collection or is planned to give as a gift.

So come and join in the fun as you preview a variety of items ranging from elegant to whimsical.

Let the shopping begin and support a wonderful cause by clicking the link below!



## Are Cats Smarter Than Dogs? Here's What Science Says

Ever since humans split into cat people and dog people, the world has never been the same. And we might go to war someday because we can't agree on what animal is smarter.

Cat people point to feline independence and self-reliance as the most compelling sign that they are more intelligent than dogs. Unlike dogs, cats can hunt for themselves without being bred for it or being trained to.

What's more, you do not need to potty-train a cat as you have to with a dog. Moreover, a cat can keep itself clean while a dog needs your help.

On the other hand, dog people point to canines' trainability as being the most telling sign of intelligence. Dogs can learn complex tasks such as working as service dogs and cracking cases with the police, making them invaluable to us. Team dog also posits that cats are not aloof; they are simply unable to learn complex tasks.

As you can imagine, neither group is willing to budge from their stance. Fortunately, we can rely on good old science to shed some light on this topic.

### Measuring Intelligence

According to a study published in the *Frontiers Journal*, one of the best ways of measuring cognitive ability in animals is by counting the number of neurons they possess.

Neurons are the units responsible for information processing in the brain. They gather information from all over the body for the cerebral cortex to process. Different brain sections specialize in processing a specific type of information. The cerebral cortex acts as the coordinating unit to facilitate functions such as decision-making and problem-solving.

According to Suzana Herculano-Houzel, a neuroscientist involved in this study, counting the number of neurons in an animal's cerebral cortex is one of the most accurate tools to judge an animal's capacity for complex thought, despite its difficulty.

So, which pet reigns supreme?

The study found that the dog has 530 million neurons in its cerebral cortex compared to the cat's 250 million neurons. This means that dogs have twice as many neurons in their cerebral cortices as cats.

Does this finding imply that dogs are more intelligent than cats?

### Dissecting the Study

If you are a cat person, chances are you are not happy with the turn of events. After all, dogs are larger than cats, meaning they should have larger brains and more neurons.

However, it is not that straightforward.

In addition to cats and dogs, the study also examined several other animals' brains, which included an African lion, a brown bear, a striped hyena, a banded mongoose, a domestic ferret, and a banded raccoon.

The findings were nothing short of fascinating. For starters, the brown bear has almost the same neuron count as the cat despite its brain being about 10 times larger than that of the cat. This implies that there is no correlation between brain size and neuron count, with findings from the raccoon's brain acting as evidence of this hypothesis.

A raccoon's brain is roughly the same size as that of a cat. However, this masked bandit has about the same number of neurons as a dog. This means that an animal does not need to have a larger brain to have more neurons.

If that were the case, humans would need a whale-sized head to house all of the 16 billion neurons we have in our cerebral cortices.

### Counter Arguments

According to Jessica Hekman, a veterinary geneticist at MIT, one should be cautious when interpreting results from this study. For starters, she said, there is no established link between intelligence and neuron number.

Therefore, the measure of intelligence should be determined by an animal's ability to solve its niche problems. For example, while both dolphins and chimpanzees are considered geniuses in their habitats, either animal would look silly in the other's habitat.

Similarly, cats and dogs excel in different areas. As such, comparing a cat's intelligence with that of a dog's is akin to comparing a screwdriver with a hammer.

### Conclusion

While findings from the study suggest that dogs might be smarter than cats, the study has many flaws. It does not consider that cats and dogs are intelligent in different ways. For example, the average dog is not as adept at hunting as the average cat.



**Why do cats hate water?** There are many types and breeds of cats that are comfortable around or in water as many will fish for food. The Turkish Van and Maine Coon seem to like water...sometimes even immersed in it. For those that don't, it may be related to the way their fur is constructed. It isn't made for drenching and can become quite heavy when it is.

### **Canis Major and Canis Minor are constellations that represent two of the dogs following what great hunter of Greek Mythology?**

Orion. Canis Major, meaning "greater dog" in Latin contains Sirius, the Dog Star. The brightest star in the night sky, Sirius is recognized as Canis Major's nose.

**Purrfect:** Cats spend 30% of their waking hours grooming themselves. They are only awake six to eight hours a day, if that, so 30% would be about two hours, leaving around four hours. They eat, do their business, watch nature for about three which leaves about one hour spend with you, their human.





## Harry Potter Inspired Names: Ideas for Magical & Intriguing Names for our Furry Friends

There is a sense of wonder and excitement that goes into naming a new pet. For those of you who are passionate about the magical world of Harry Potter, there may be a lot to consider when choosing the right name for your little wizard. Rowling captured the hearts of fantasy lovers after the release of the book series, leading into a massively successful film franchise that took the world by storm.

Harry Potter is now easily one of the most popular stories shared worldwide and has some of the most recognizable household names. Though Ravenclaw may appear to be the most obvious choice, there are many enchanting names inspired by the imagination and marvel of J.K. Rowling.

Below we have compiled a list of the most admirable, influential, and even evil characters. From the bravest of Gryffindors to the slimiest of Slytherins, there is sure to be something suitable for everyone.

### Female Harry Potter Character Names

Strong and elegant, with names just as beautiful as the characters themselves, here is our top female character list.

- Ginny
- Sybill
- Nymphadora
- Tonks
- Bellatrix
- Padma
- Lily
- Fortescue
- Narcissa
- Perpetua
- Luna
- Rowena
- Lavender
- Hazel
- Merula
- Millicent
- Hermione
- Pomona
- Cedrella
- Arabella
- Fleur
- Myrtle
- Callidora

### Male Harry Potter Character Names

Toting wands and casting spells, always on the hunt of the truth, or lurking in the shadows of dark secrets, here are some of the most defined and prominent male characters from the series:

- Corvinus
- Dudley
- Pettigrew
- Uric the Oddball
- Seamus
- Potter
- Lestrage
- Longbottom
- Neville

- Moody
- Floo
- Salazar
- Fat Friar
- Horcrux
- Winikus
- Weasley
- Albus
- Crouch
- Hagrid
- Lupin
- Hortense
- Ron
- Silvanus
- Kettleburn
- Alas
- Cedric
- Harry
- Merlin
- Godric
- Riddle
- Remus
- Dumbledore
- Black
- Ludo
- Nimbus
- Porpington
- Sirius
- Fergus
- Filius Flitwick
- Horace
- Malfoy
- Severus
- Aberforth
- Tuttle
- Tom
- Diggory
- Filch
- Reubus
- Quidditch
- Viktor
- Snape
- Gilderoy
- Hogwart
- Draco

### Harry Potter Character Names

Despite there being only a few memorable kitties littered throughout the franchise, we know they offer up some of the greatest and most recognizable names.

- Crookshanks
- Snowy
- Fuzzclaw
- Mrs. Norris
- Tufty
- Mr. Tibbles

### Harry Potter Mythical Creature Names

There always a chance your little wizard possesses a wonderful combination of magical traits and only a name so unique as the ones below would be fitting. Here are our favorite mythical creatures and the names they were given by their wondrous keepers:

- Malaclaw
- Nagini
- Caipora
- Ramora
- Fluffy
- Firenze
- Pixie
- Bane
- Doxy
- Winky
- Scabbers
- Ronan
- Fawkes
- Merror
- Aragog
- Niffler
- Hedwig
- Occamy
- Boggart
- Marmite
- Plimpy
- Dobby
- Hokey
- Hydra
- Dragon
- Phoenix
- Mooncalf
- Errol
- Kneazle
- Fang
- Padfoot
- Limax
- Prongs

### Finding the Right Harry Potter Inspired Name for Your BFF

While we don't have a magic wand, the infamous Sorting Hat, or a wizardly spell to help you decide, we hope our list of Harry Potter Inspired names has provided you with a perfectly magical fit for new best furry friend and paw-sitive they will be swept away by your choice!



**Interested in Becoming an Integral part of the Humane Society of Tuolumne County (HSOTC)?**

You can by applying for a Board of

## Director position!

The HSOTC is seeking applications for Board members who understand and support the mission and core values of the HSOTC; can play an active role on the HSOTC Board; support the HSOTC's fundraising efforts and individual giving campaign; accept the HSOTC's standards of excellence, and have demonstrated a commitment to improving the effectiveness of our nonprofit organization.

Additionally, Board candidates must be cognizant of the unique yet complementary roles each Board member plays in serving the needs of our shelter animals. Board candidates must be committed to attend and participate in Board meetings, policy setting, fundraising efforts, membership recruitment, and other work as deemed necessary.

We're looking for Board members with strong strategic thinking, futuristic vision, and problem-solving capabilities. In evaluating candidates for Board positions, the following criteria are considered (although candidates are not expected to meet all the criteria). This criteria along with Board diversity are given considerable weight in the overall selection process.

### Functional Expertise

- Past experience in an animal-related field
- General understanding of nonprofit structure and management
- Prior nonprofit or Board experience

### Governance/Management Expertise

- Demonstrated interest in advancing the HSOTC's mission, programs, and membership
- Values are consistent with the HSOTC's core principles
- Recognition of fiduciary responsibility of the HSOTC
- Availability and flexibility to participate and commit time
- Authority to make decisions and act on behalf of the HSOTC

### Personal Qualities

- Results oriented
- Visionary scholar
- Strategic planning ability
- Strong problem-solving/decision-making skills
- Open-minded/creative thinker
- Team player
- Ethics and integrity

The Board of Director role is to serve a two-year term by leading, advising, and supporting the activities of the HSOTC. Each Board of Director participates by:

- Attending all Board meetings, prepared to further the success of the HSOTC, and to support the HSOTC's mission statement and goals
- Monitoring and mentoring standing committees as assigned and on an as needed basis providing advice, encouragement, and voice for the committee to the Board
- Responsible for identifying and nominating candidates to the Board for vacant board positions
- Accepting special assignments designated by the committee chairs
- Remaining current on the activities of the HSOTC by following industry publications (includes electronic, print, and virtual), issues, and interests
- Being cognizant of current issues affecting the nonprofit sector as it relates to the mission of the HSOTC, its members or community at large
- Informing the Board and staying proactive in helping position the HSOTC to support its members or to enhance its funding sources.
- Acting as a role model, change agent, and professional exemplar

This is an exceptional opportunity to help foster the growth and development of the HSOTC while aiding in facilitating and promoting our efforts - the adoption of companion animals and ensuring food, shelter, exercise, medical care, vaccinations, and love until our residents find their forever homes.

If you're interested in applying for a position, please complete the information on the [Board Application Form](#) and email your application to [shelter@hsotc.org](mailto:shelter@hsotc.org). Or you can mail it to HSOTC, PO Box 830, Jamestown, CA 95327 or simple drop it off at our shelter located at 10440 Victoria Way, Jamestown, CA 95370

Thank YOU for your consideration!

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## HSOTC Visitations - Continue By Appointment Only



While the Humane Society of Tuolumne County (HSOTC) shelter remains closed to the public, we are continuing to provide for the viewing and adoption of our animals by appointment as we remain committed to the health and well-being of our staff, our animals, and the community we serve.

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment, please call 209-984-5489 anytime Tuesday - Friday from 9:00AM - 1:30PM.

To help protect one another, HSOTC staff members are required to wear face coverings and practice social distancing. If you have a scheduled appointment we ask that you wear a face covering and if you do not have a face covering we will provide you with one for your usage upon arrival even if you are fully vaccinated. Once again, we appreciate your understanding as we all continue to stay safe and healthy this holiday season and beyond!

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## Dear Santa...

Our wish is for a home and a family to love us unconditionally.

P.S. We've been very good this year!

*Please consider making a difference in a shelter animal's life this holiday season.*

♥ DONATE