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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center Launches Interactive Web Experience To Educate Pet Owners About Common Household Poisons

“Make Your Pet’s Home Poison Safe” Launched In Honor of National Poison Prevention Week

(NEW YORK, NY) March 3, 2003 – In observation of National Poison Prevention Week (March 16 –22), the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center is launching an engaging, fun and educational feature on their website (www.apcc.asPCA.org) titled "Make Your Pet's Home Poison Safe" to educate pet owners about common household toxins and guidelines to prevent accidental pet poisonings in the home. The online experience will enable users to walk through an animated model of a house with poisonous items in four room types: bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and garage. Each room will feature five to six toxic items frequently found in the home (medications, cleaning products, foods, plants, etc.). The user can mouse over the item and click to safely store or remove it from the room. Simultaneously, a text box describing the danger will pop-up. The user will have the ability to clean up the scene in each room while they learn about the dangers posed to their pets. “Visitors of any age can appreciate and benefit from the “Make Your Pet’s Home Poison Safe’ experience,” comments Garth Moore, ASPCA Web Producer. “We wanted to create an online tool to show pet owners how to identify everyday household toxins that can be dangerous and even deadly to pets.”

“Cooper the Careful Canine,” an animated character, will appear throughout the interactive experience in the top left corner of the screen. She will provide users with important poison prevention tips as they work their way through each room. Cooper will use expressive behaviors such as barking, nodding and panting as visitors click on the various toxic items. When the home is free of toxins a reward screen will pop-up and ask the user if they would like to play again or offer additional information on household toxins.

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During National Poison Prevention Week, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, the premier animal poison control center in North America, alerts pet owners to the following guidelines on how to protect pets from being poisoned in and around the home:

- Read all of the information on the label before using a product on your pet or in your home. If a product is for use only on dogs, it should never be used on cats; if a product is for use only on cats, it should never be used on dogs.
- Mothballs, potpourri oils, coffee grounds, grapes and raisins, homemade play dough, fabric softener sheets, dishwashing detergent, batteries, cigarettes, alcoholic drinks, pennies and hand and foot warmers are just some of the many household items and foods that can be dangerous to your pet.
- Be aware of the plants in your home and yard. The ingestion of azalea, oleander, sago palm or yew plant material by your pet can be fatal. Easter lily, daylily, tiger lily and some other lily species can cause kidney failure in cats.
- Make sure your pets do not go on lawns or in gardens that are treated with fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides until the product has completely dried. Always read the label for proper usage and storage instructions. It is important to store such products in areas that are inaccessible to your pets. If you are uncertain about the usage of any product, ask the manufacturer and/or your veterinarian for instructions.
- Be alert for antifreeze/coolant leaking from your vehicle. Animals are attracted to the sweet taste and ingesting just a small amount can cause an animal's death. Consider using animal-friendly products that use propylene glycol rather than those containing ethylene glycol.
- When using rat, mouse, snail or slug baits, or ant or roach traps, place the products in areas that are inaccessible to your pet. Some bait contains sweet smelling inert ingredients such as jelly, peanut butter or sugar that can attract your pets.
- Keep a pet safety kit on hand for emergencies. The kit should contain:
 - A fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide 3% (USP)
 - Can of soft dog or cat food, as appropriate
 - Turkey baster, bulb syringe or large medicine syringe (for administering medications)
 - Saline eye solution to flush out eye contaminants
 - Artificial tear gel to lubricate eyes after flushing
 - Mild grease-cutting dishwashing liquid (for bathing)
 - Rubber gloves (for bathing)
 - Forceps to remove stingers
 - Muzzle to keep the animal from hurting you while it is excited or in pain
 - Pet carrier to help carry the animal to your local veterinarian
- Call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 if you suspect that your pet has ingested something poisonous.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: E-mail website@aspca.org for camera-ready artwork of the “Make Your Pet’s Home Poison Safe” logo with Cooper the Careful Canine.