

Happy New Year! It's a new year, a new beginning! Christmas is over, and the new year has started! I'm so excited, and I don't know why, but I watched the ball come down and all these people were happy and cheering, so it must be good!

All the lights are put away, the tree taken down, The Christmas Village packed away for another full year. All the packages are opened, and the biscuits are eaten. No more cookies, though. Mom says no cookies until next year...I've had all I can have. Bummer.

But...but the fox is back! Well, mom has pictures of him, the daddy fox. We THINK the Mrs. fox is back, but we haven't seen her yet. Just him, sitting on top of the den, keeping watch. I whined to mom not to get too close. She wouldn't want to scare him away and leave her all alone, right? She wouldn't want to make him MAD, right? Please, Mom, not too close....

So, we are just watching. You can see pictures of him in all his cuteness and redness on Facebook if you like. Mom says he's looking old, but that may be just the angle of the camera. I think Mom looks old, but I don't say it. That's rude! And besides, I've always believed I should be kind to the person who has opposable thumbs and holds the food.

I'm rambling! That's because it's JANUARY and everything is NEW. Not much to bark about when all that's new is TWO FEET OF SNOW! May I remind you that I am just a little more than two feet at the shoulder? If I'm standing at my tallest, that is. Bark!

Well, to the news. Mom is arguing with herself, again. Who else is she going to argue with? Sweetie? I don't think so. His general reply to everything is "chirp," "tweet", or "peek-a-boo!" Blossom would never cross Mom because she is fond of mom's lap, and as for me, well, there's the opposable thumb thing I already mentioned.

So, as I was saying, Mom was arguing with herself, and I am stepping up to help her make the decision.

As much as she dislikes doing this, she is forced to raise her rates again. She knows prices are going up all over. EVERYTHING costs more – From the grocery store, the gas pump, and the energy to heat our homes. She figured she could

manage that, and she tried. She really tried, until the FluffyPaw's Pet Luv insurance bill came, and it made her gasp! It was 60% higher! That's right, folks, 60%!!! Their explanation is that New York is one of the 3 states that have the highest number of dog bite claims so they are raising the premiums for all the policies in just those 3 states. Mom says she feels that this decision is wrong on so many levels but it comes down to there is no way she can continue to serve our FluffyPaw buddies unless she raises the rates again this year.

So starting February 1<sup>st</sup>, everything is going up \$1.00 per visit. She's sorry, she says, arguing to herself, but she hopes you understand. She really has no choice.

See? Easy for ME to bark it. NOT so easy for Mom to say. Breathe easy, Mom. I've got your back!

Maybe you could rethink that "no cookies until next Christmas" thing?

Before I go, I got to remind you – if you are going to leave your pets outside overnight, please be sure to stay with them. IT'S COLD OUT THERE! And if they are little, shovel them a path and a place to do their business because it the safe and kind thing to do.

Remember that Anti-Freeze is wonderful for your car but poisonous to people and animals alike. Keep it safely out of reach of children and pets! Just a small lick of that sweet taste will kill them!

Use pet-safe salt on your walkways, which will not only be safer for your pets and kids, but better for your lawn and garden, too!

And for goodness' sake, be careful out there! Wear you mask where it's wise to do so, and don't fall on the ice. We want you to be around for a long time to come!

Thanks for reading,

Samson and the FluffyPaw Gang

