

Avoid surprises when giving animals as gifts

Christmas puppies with big red bows around their necks can engender less than affectionate glances if the new owner is displeased with the household's new addition.

Unplanned pet ownership can lead to problems for master and animal, according to Farmington area experts.

Common sense should govern the acquisition of a pet for a holiday gift. "There's nothing wrong with giving a pet for the holidays," said Andrew Dworik, a veterinarian with the Oakland Orchard Veterinary Clinic, Farmington. "But there should be a conscious decision to have a pet."

"People should put as much thought into getting a new pet as they would when they're getting a stove or a refrigerator," suggested Ron Blauet of the Michigan Humane Society.

The size of the new owner's residence, the cost to take care of the animal and the size of the pet should be considered before buying, according to Blauet.

Children in the household should be taken into consideration when deciding upon a dog, he added. Beagles make good pets around children.

Pets can help the elderly and mentally disturbed youngsters, according to Dworik.

"They're beneficial to everyone," he said.

But they should be given sufficient and appropriate living quarters. Working persons ought to choose cats rather than dogs, he said.

Dogs require about four to five months of housebreaking. They need someone around during meals. They need attention for a good upbringing, he said.

"Apartment dwellers can get away with a cat, easily," he said.

Persons who are about to present an animal to an apartment dwelling friend ought to make sure that the landlord allows pets before springing a surprise.

The size of the pet is important in relation to its new surroundings. Apartment dwellers who purchase a German Shepherd puppy ought to be prepared for it to attain its adult size in about nine months, according to Blauet.

"When it's mature and there's no room for the pet, it's brought to the humane society," Blauet said.

"Think before you get a dog."

BRINGING A PET into the family can be likened to having a new child in the family circle, according to Blauet. Food, shelter, extra attention and cost are part of owning a new pet.

"Check first. A pet isn't a surprise gift," he said.

Once the decision is made to shop for a pet, care should be taken to select a healthy animal.

Prospective Santas and owners should be careful to assess the cleanliness of the pet shop, according to Dworik.

Look at the animals. Make sure they have clean, full coats without scabs or bald spots, Dworik suggests.

Run a hand down the back of the dog. If the animal's bones can be felt through the fur, it's probably poorly nourished.

Dogs' eyes should be bright and their noses should be free of discharge, according to Blauet.

Pet stores can offer some advantages over private breeders, such as a larger selection and easier payments, he added.

These advantages are balanced by the private breeder's ability to give personalized service and more intimate knowledge of the animal's past history and family.

THAT'S IMPORTANT if the customer is in the market for a pedigreed animal.

Before making the final selection, ask about the type of guarantee that will be attached to the pet. Blauet suggests.

The Michigan Humane Society offers a 10-day guarantee on its animals. If the pet becomes ill within that time or if the family decides against keeping it, the society will exchange or take back the animal.

Have the pet examined by a vet before bringing it home, suggests Dworik. Once the pet has been brought home, the family veterinarian should be consulted about the appropriate program of shots. The first year's shots should cost about \$50, Dworik said.

Kittens should receive shots too. They're subject to the same diseases as dogs. Parasites are a particular worry with cats, according to Dworik.

Commercial pet food is recommended over table scraps for the new pet, according to Dworik. Products sold on the shelf contain the correct nutrition.

That's important with guinea pigs and hamsters raised in laboratory conditions.

SLIGHT variations in diet can throw off the hamsters' 105 degree body temperature, according to Dworik, and result in disease.

He also recommends purchasing a book on pet care.

After Christmas, persons who have second thoughts should visit the Humane Society with the pet rather than let it walk out of the door and become a stray.

Society shelters are located at 37255 Marquette, near Newburg in Westland, at 1700 Brown Road, between M-24 and Joylin, Pontiac and at 7401 Chrysler Drive, north of East Grand Boulevard, Detroit.

In Farmington, unwanted animals can be brought to the Oakland-Orchard Veterinary Clinic's Animal Exchange.

Sharing credit

A change in the way Social Security affects housewives may be coming soon. Congress is mulling a proposed law that would split retirement credits between husband and wife, regardless of how long they have been married.

Currently, if a couple breaks up prior to 20 years of marriage, the wife does not share her former husband's Social Security credits.



Dogs are often portrayed as cute Christmas surprises for youngsters and adult friends. Problems develop when there is insufficient space, time and money to keep the animal properly.

Sports jockey for slot in gift giving

With the exception of tennis balls, most sports-type gifts are expensive, but Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation personnel have come up with a low-cost gift for the sports lover in others or yourself.

For the second year, the recreation division is offering holiday gift certificates for upcoming events beginning in January and February, including bowling, racquetball, ice skating, and downhill and cross country ski lessons, plus certificates for recreational swimming and outdoor adventure classes.

Between \$15-18 can buy some winter adventure for Farmington and Farmington Hills residents.

Although Parks and Recreation may have to cancel classes if registration isn't sufficient, they hope to top last year's total of about 50 certificates sold.

Youth instructional bowling will be offered at Bel-Aire Lanes, Country Lanes, Drakeshire Lanes and Nor-West Lanes. Qualified instructors will teach correct lane approach, ball delivery and scoring, and shoes will be provided.

Registrations will be accepted until Jan. 20 for 4th-8th grade and 7th-12th

grade students. The fee is \$10 for two week instructions from 4-6 p.m.

Racquetball lessons will be offered on Wednesdays and Thursdays for \$21 and on Saturdays for \$25, beginning Jan. 4, 5, and 7 at the racquetball courts of Farmington, 34200 West Nine Mile Road. There is a maximum of four persons per class, and racquets and balls are furnished for those who need them. Child care also is available upon advance request.

Skating classes for the beginner and more advanced will be conducted at the Ice Skating Arena on Beech Road south of Nine Mile. Classes meet for 45 minutes each week for six weeks. Sessions begin Jan. 2 and Feb. 13 and prices range from \$15 to \$18. Check with the parks and recreation department at 474-6115 for further time information.

DOWNHILL SKI lessons includes three nights of skiing, lessons and transportation and the deadline for registration is Dec. 19. For 4th, 8th, and 8th grade students the sessions will be held on Friday evenings beginning Jan. 6 for a \$22 fee and \$4 extra each trip for ski rental. Fourth graders must have their own equipment.

Junior and senior high student lessons will be conducted on Tuesday evenings beginning Jan. 3 for \$22 and \$4 extra each trip for ski rental.

Beginning and intermediate classes in cross-country skiing will be conducted on any weekend from Christmas through February at San Marino Golf Club, located on Halstead Road between eleven and Twelve Mile.

The \$7 fee includes ski rental, a one-hour lesson, and two hours of skiing.

For basically summer people, recreational swimming at Farmington school pools is offered on Mondays and Wednesdays beginning Jan. 4 through March 22.

This year, discount swim cards being offered will allow swim enthusiasts to pay half price. From 7-9:15 p.m. on Monday nights at Farmington High School and on Wednesday nights at North Farmington High School, adults can swim for 75 cents at regular price. Those under 18 years of age must vacate the pools prior to 8:30 p.m.

The discount cards, priced at \$3 for children and \$5 for adults, save half the price for 12 visits at the pools.

OUTDOOR classes in winter camping include 12 hours of classroom training on specialized winter camping techniques, including how to stay warm in cold climates and a weekend field experience in a nearby wilderness preserve.

The classes will be conducted at Farmington Hills City Hall from 7-10 p.m., Jan. 3, 10, 17, and 24 for a \$39 fee. There is a 14-year-old minimum age restriction.

A wilderness survival course will teach students how to cope with adverse weather conditions, equipment failure, and other emergency situations, plus basic information on fire building, shelter construction and the proper use of natural resources. The classes will be conducted from 7-10 p.m., Feb. 2, 9, 16 and 23 with a week-end outing scheduled for Feb. 25 and 26. The class fee is \$39 and the minimum age for students is 14.

Also conducted at city hall will be an outdoor photography class from 7-10 p.m., Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 22 for a \$29 fee. The course covers the basic use of adjustable cameras with special emphasis on shooting outdoors.

HOLIDAY GIFT MAIL-IN REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE
Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation
31555 Eleven Mile Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48018

NAME _____ Phone _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

___ Bowling ___ Outdoor Adventure
___ Racquetball ___ Downhill Skiing
___ Ice Skating ___ Cross-Country Skiing
___ Recreational Swim Card

SESSION: _____ DAY: _____ TIME: _____ FEE: \$ _____

Date Class Begins: _____ Location: _____

Age (if under 18): _____ Parent's Signature _____

Your facsimile of this form is acceptable.

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The robe is a blend of softest mohair, colored blush. With a double ruffle of schiffli embroidery and venetian lace. Lined in nylon tricot. \$130. The gown, a slim taper of candlelight satin Remarque®, nylon/acetate/polyester. Trimmed as the robe, \$60. Imagine her in both. Misses' sizes in Sleepwear. Northland and Oakland only.



Hudson's the Christmas Store

