

LA' GIFT...



LA' STANZA
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I wanna puppy

Choosing pets for Christmas

When children start making their "wish lists" for Christmas gifts, the lists often read like television advertisements. The child will request all the latest toys and may change his list daily depending on which commercials attract his attention.

Included on these ever-changing lists, however, are likely to be a few traditional gifts that make most lists, day in and out, year after year. One such gift — a pet.

But just because a gift has been requested again and again doesn't make it easy for a parent to purchase that gift, especially one like a pet, which requires a commitment from both child and parent.

But that commitment and the responsibilities of pet ownership are not without reward. According to Brian Kilcommons, animal trainer, author, pet expert and lecturer, pets are a wonderful source of companionship, love, security and leisure-time fun for people of all ages.

THE GREATEST joy of pet ownership is the long-lasting relationship that develops between pet and owner. Kilcommons said. For the care and attention a person gives his four-legged companion, he will receive years of unconditional love and loyalty in return.

Following are some considerations for selecting a pet provided by the Pets Are

Wonderful Council in Chicago.

Be certain the animal you choose is healthy. Look for an alert disposition, a shiny coat, skin free of sores, clear nostrils and clear eyes. Avoid an animal that is withdrawn and hides from people — it may require specialized attention as it grows older.

One of the most basic issues in selecting a pet is your lifestyle. What can you afford to give your pet in terms of shelter, exercise, grooming and attention? If you can provide only minimally in these areas, the best pet for you may be a cat, according to the council.

Cats are comfortable in small apartments, don't need to go outdoors, are usually adept at handling their own grooming needs and are relatively independent.

INDIVIDUAL CATS differ in the degree to which they will groom themselves. As a rule, however, the shorter the cat's hair, the less grooming assistance from you it will require.

However, don't make your decision on appearance alone. Cats have very different personalities and you will want to be certain you are compatible with the one you choose.

Full-grown cats frequently have been neutered and usually are calmer than

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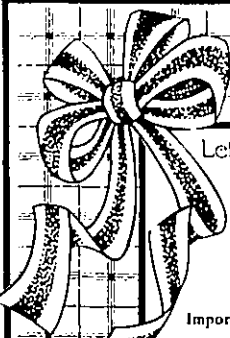
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