

We're A Society Of Too Many Pets

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of four articles on how a "throw-away" society deals with a soaring population of pet animals. The writer, a homemaker who attended Wayne State University and is in graduate school, served a journalism internship with Observer Newspapers.

By **JOAN WEAVER**
Special Writer

She is pregnant and her time is now.

Stretched uncomfortably in the cardboard box, her tiger-striped fur moves out of her control with the contractions. The otherwise slender cat senses the urgency that is upon her, gives one sharp mew, one huge contraction and with the grace instinctive to the feline world, gives birth to a kitten.

She cleans the small creature with long, sure laps of her tongue and the kitten, still dark and wet, settles in close to nurse. Soon the dark wet becomes dry and fluffy, and you can see it is a gray kitten.

The scene is repeated three times and altogether there are four - the gray, two tiger stripes and one pure white kitten.

The odds are that one kitten in this litter will be among the 18,000 animals that end up in animal shelters throughout Observerland.

The total animal population in Farmington, Garden City, Livonia, Plymouth, Redford, Southfield and Westland (along with Dearborn Heights) is an estimated 56,000. The 18,000 animals in shelters yearly represent one-third of all the animals in these areas.

It was necessary to calculate the total animal population because cats are not licensed and there is no way to get a precise count. The figure is based on adding up dog licenses issued in Observerland and using a study made in Denver on the ratio of dogs to cats.

Of the 18,000 animals who were in animal shelters in our area during 1972, approximately 12,400, or two-thirds of them died. You can call it being "put to sleep" (PTS), being euthanized, or gassed. They still end up dead.

The death list breaks down by area to approximately 75 dogs, cats and an occasional squirrel or raccoon in Farmington, 500 in Garden City, 1,234 in Livonia, 350 in Plymouth, 487 in Redford, 250 in Southfield and 10,500 in Westland.

The PTS rate for Westland is so high because its animal shelter is a major branch of the Michigan Humane Society, which will take in any and every animal brought to it.

In Farmington, however, where the PTS figure is low, animals that must be put to sleep are taken care of by a local veterinarian and the city is billed for it. They deal only with animals that are picked up by the police. Those persons who wish to dispose of an animal or are trying to get rid of the left-

overs of a litter must either pay a fee or go to one of the major animal shelters, like Westland.

Of every four animals you see in your daily rounds, driving the freeways to work, keeping a dental appointment, shopping at the local

centers or in your own homes and on your own street, one of them will be "put to sleep" in the course of a year.

Why are more than 12,000 animals, or one-fourth of the total animal population in Observerland, "wasted"?

Perhaps it is a reflection of the throw-away society created by humans that tosses "things" in the trash as soon as the glitter goes and the novelty no longer appeals to whatever senses need to be stimulated today.

A Redford couple took a 13-month-old, handsome, blond cocker spaniel to a local vet and asked to have him put to sleep because he had eaten their marijuana crop. The vet refused, but found the vivacious dog a home in Livonia.

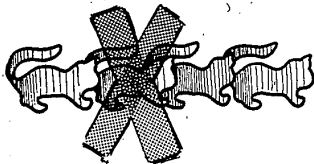
People simply do not know, for instance, that on a national level, 60,000 animals must be put to sleep each day to maintain any kind of a stable animal population; or that during the 1960s the pet population increased 40 per cent while the human population increased only 10 per cent.

The well known street-walking characteristics of

the canine and feline worlds make the overpopulation of animals an escalating problem, says John H. Richardson, DVM, of Farmington. "This is not due to the pruriscuity of animals as much as the irresponsibility of pet owners."

Some people think that having a litter of kittens or puppies is the next best thing to heaven, but it is estimated that the progeny of one unsprayed bitch over a seven year period can range from 72 (controlled conditions) to nearly 4,400 offspring under uncontrolled, optimal conditions.

(Next: A trip to a death room and a crematorium.)



CAREER OPPORTUNITY
Can You Imagine making two families happy on the same day, and getting paid for it? That's what Real Estate is like, and we would like to tell you more about it. Attend our next Career Seminar on Thurs. Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. at 1125 S. Main, Plymouth. Call 455-7000 for your complimentary reservation.

Real Estate One.

WORLD'S BIGGEST TOY SELECTION

TOYS "R" US!
the CHILDREN'S Bargain Town

NOTHING EVER SOLD AT LIST PRICE

PLYMOUTH 10-SPEED RACING BIKE
Shimano Lark 10-speed derailleur with steel derailleur guard. Center pull caliper hand brakes with safety levers. Taped racing handlebars. Racing saddle. 27-inch gumwall tires.
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE 69⁸²

PLYMOUTH 3-SPEED LIGHTWEIGHT BIKE
Front and rear caliper hand brakes. 3-speed rear hub. 26-inch tires. Lightweight and easy to ride.
47⁸³ EVERYDAY LOW PRICE

EXECUTIVE GIRLS 20-INCH HI-RISER WITH BASKET
Banana saddle. With hi-riser handlebars. Safety rear coaster brake. Woven basket. Full chain guard and kickstand.
41⁹³ EVERYDAY LOW PRICE

EXECUTIVE BOYS/GIRLS 20-INCH HI-RISE BIKE
Hi-Rise handlebars. Banana saddle. Safety rear coaster brake. Chain guard and kickstand.
37⁷⁴ EVERYDAY LOW PRICE

EXECUTIVE 3-SPEED 20-INCH HI-RISE BIKE
Banana saddle. With Hi-Rise handlebars. Front and rear caliper hand brakes. Full chain guard and kickstand.
48⁸⁷ EVERYDAY LOW PRICE

10-INCH TRIKE
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE **7⁹⁷**
Sturdy steel adjustable seat and handlebars.

FLYER WAGON
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE **11⁹⁷**
Big 36-inch long steel body, 10-inch easy rolling nylon bearing wheels.

PEDAL DRIVE DUNE BUGGY
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE **11⁹⁷**
Adjustable pedals, wide rear slicks, 32 inch long poly body fun indoors or out.

GARTON DELUXE TRIKE
EVERYDAY LOW PRICE **7⁹⁷**
Heavy duty sturdy frame. Hand grips and comfortable saddle. Chrome handle bars.

OUR PRICES WILL BE NO HIGHER THROUGH DEC 25

LIVONIA
29150 W. 7 MILE RD.
ONE BLOCK EAST OF LIVONIA MALL
GROOVY 7-3000

SOUTHGATE
14333 EUREKA RD.
THREE MILES EAST OF SOUTHLAND MALL
CUDDLE 5-7100

MADISON HTS.
32700 JOHN R. RD.
ONE BLOCK SOUTHEAST OF OAKLAND MALL
LUCKY 5-5700

SOUTHFIELD
27000 TELEGRAPH RD.
1/4 MILE SOUTH OF TEL-TWELVE MALL
ELEPHANT 4-6300

AUDETTES SPECIAL OF THE MONTH
FILE CABINET

Reg. 179⁰⁰
44⁵⁰

RENTAL SERVICE
• TYPEWRITERS
• ADDING MACHINES
• CALCULATORS
• ELECTRONIC CALCULATORS
• DRAFTING SUPPLIES
• XEROX COPIES

AUDETTES OFFICE EQUIPMENT
44510 AUBURN ROAD
PLYMOUTH MICHIGAN 48170
PLYMOUTH • 455-4800
21828 MICHIGAN AVE. DEARTRON • 565-4811
EVERYTHING FOR THE OFFICE