

STATE AND LOCAL

Pets help college students adjust to unfamiliar lifestyle

By TAMARA BELL
Staff Writer

For the college student away from home, adopting a pet can stabilize an unfamiliar environment, says a Texas A&M veterinarian.

Dr. William McCulloch, professor of veterinary public health who has researched animal and human relationships for 15 years, says students make adjustments when they arrive at college and a pet can help them over initial rough periods.

"Although this is only speculation, it is believed that pets provide a companionship that is loving, uncritical, and nonthreatening," he says. "Pets represent the stability of home which many students are looking for."

For students who have grown up in a home environment that included pets, continuing the association into college is a natural transition.

Tony Cornett, a junior, has owned an assortment of animals and believes that being at school shouldn't change that.

"Smedley and Leroy, my gerbils, live up my apartment," Cornett says. "I've always had a pet. They are something that I can come home to."

"I believe that animals are better than a plant because they don't turn yellow around the edges."

Not only are pets a stabilizing factor, they also provide physical advantages. Through research, McCulloch found that petting an animal can lower the blood pressure.

"An animal also provides a sense of protection and safety for its owner," he says.

Students with animals have found that a sense of protection isn't the only reason for owning a pet.

Kim Greenough, a freshman, says, "I've had my ferret, Farrah, and my cat, Tabitha, since I went to school in North Carolina. When I get tired from studying I



Photo by ROBERT W. RIZZO

Freya Wood, a sophomore agriculture economics major, shares a friendly kiss with her pet cockatiel, Daisy.

will take a break and play with my cat or ferret. After 15 minutes, I'm more relaxed and ready to begin studying again."

When a student goes on vacation or graduates from college, the question of what happens to the pet is of major concern to local agencies.

Kathy Ricker, director of the Brazos Animal Shelter, says the number of animals abandoned doubles in May and June, the time most students go home.

"There are no facts to implement students as the culprits for this increase of abandoned animals," Ricker says, "because in a town such as College Station with its transient population, abandoned animals are always a problem."

McCulloch says, "Sometimes animals are an impulse buy. Stu-

dents don't realize the responsibility involved with taking care of animals. Common sense combined with a thorough investigation into the care of that animal can help solve this problem."

Despite the increase of abandoned animals, many students who own pets wouldn't consider leaving their pets, even if it means moving from one apartment into another apartment that allows animals.

Jesse Knight, a senior, says, "I've had my dog Nikki for almost two years. She's part of my family now and I intend to take her with me after I graduate. She fills my spare time and although sometimes it's a stress to keep her because she chews on shoes or reports due the next day, she makes the house I live in more of a home."

Merchants feel effects of recent border checks

Associated Press

BROWNSVILLE — The crackdown on U.S. borders has hurt American businesses by discouraging Mexican customers disgruntled about four-hour waits to get to the other side, say U.S. officials.

"It has stopped some people from Mexico from coming over here," says David Tumlinson of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce's convention and tourism bureau. "It definitely has hurt."

U.S. Customs agents are inspecting every car from top to bottom, inside and out for clues to the disappearance of a U.S. Drug Enforcement agent.

Enrique Camarena Salazar was last seen Feb. 7 being thrown into a car by four men in Guadalajara, Mexico.

The inspections began Friday and tied up traffic along the border up to five hours in some places from San Ysidro, Calif., to Brownsville.

Rene Ramirez, manager of C.R. Anthony's Department Store in downtown Brownsville, says business has been down the last two days.

"There's been very few people coming over here. Yesterday and today has been really slow," he says.

Merchants on both sides of the border say they worry that shoppers from the interior of Mexico who normally shop during the weekend will stay home.

Blanca Gonzales, an employee at Charles' Department Store next to the international bridge, says pedestrians have sustained his business. Pedestrians flowed through the border checkpoint faster than motorists. "It hasn't effected us at all," he says.

The crackdown has forced St. Joseph's Academy of Brownsville to help some of its students from Matamoros. The children are taken by their parents as near to checkpoint as possible.

From there, they walk across the checkpoint and are picked up on the U.S. side by a school bus, saving the parents time.

U.S. Customs spokesman Fernando Macias in Brownsville says the wait is now about an hour at Brownsville-Matamoros bridge and about 45 minutes at the Gateway bridge.

"It looks like it's improving. We added another line at each bridge and that has seemed to help," he says Tuesday.

He says pedestrian traffic from both sides of the border is normal and increases in the afternoon.

In Matamoros, Mexico, merchants says the bridge tie-up has hurt business, especially during the weekend.

"People don't want to come over here and bring their cars because it takes too long to get back," says an employee of Garcia's, a combination restaurant, bar and gift shop.

Texas vies for Saturn plant

GM denies 2 sites picked

Associated Press

DETROIT — General Motors Corp. Tuesday denied a published report that it had narrowed the list of states vying for its new Saturn plant to two: Michigan and Texas.

"The story simply is not true," GM said in its statement. "We're still looking at a number of states and locations as possible sites for Saturn and no decision has been made."

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram Tuesday quoted economic development officials as saying GM probably would place the coveted Saturn auto assembly plant in either Texas or Michigan.

The newspaper attributed its account to both Harden Wiedemann, director of the Texas Economic Development Commission, and an un-

named official in Michigan's state office of economic development. "We've been hearing from the folks in Michigan that it's down to us and them," Wiedemann said. Saturn spokesman Stan Hall said no narrowing of the list had been done, and in fact the list was still expanding.

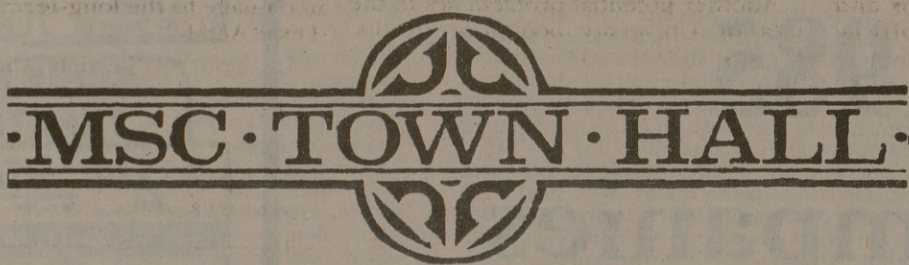
"We're still seeing governors," he said.

Competition among states and cities has been intense since GM announced plans to build a state-of-the-art automated plant where 6,000 people will make a new line of cars. About 75 cities in Texas alone have submitted applications.

Wiedemann said GM will chose a state first, then a city. And he cautioned Texans against overconfidence.

"Our information out of Detroit is that we are still a dark-horse candidate," Wiedemann said.

GM has said it is looking for a host city with access to interstate highways and railroads, with ample water and power and with plenty of jobs for the spouses of auto workers.



Presents

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