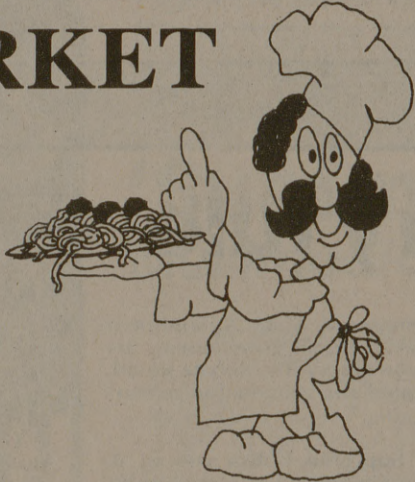


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## Professor says many students not responsible pet owners

By KATHY MCHUGH  
Reporter

Although students at Texas A&M are working on educations in their desired field, many of them lack education in the area of responsible pet ownership, says Dr. William McCulloch, director of the Center for Comparative Medicine and professor of veterinary public health.

"Most of the pets are bought on impulse, eventually leading to irresponsible ownership by the student," McCulloch says.

A student will walk into a pet store and buy a cute, cuddly kitten, and around Christmas the cat will be dumped, he says.

"I think a lot of the students who do buy on impulse don't take into consideration the amount of money, adequate housing and love that a pet really needs," McCulloch says.

This will eventually lead to a growing stray population which results in an increase in the number of animals put to death in shelters, he says.

Twenty to 40 dogs and cats are put to sleep every day in the Brazos Animal Shelter, McCulloch says.

Even worse, he says, is the fact that 10 tons of dogs and cats are put to death in a week in Houston.

"However, people do need pets, and, as far as students go, pets serve a vital role in making their lives more satisfying," McCulloch says.

Pets give students something to care for, something to touch and give affection to, something to keep one busy, something to soothe one's focus of attention and companionship, according to a pamphlet on pet ownership and its psychological status.

"If people can have these kinds of feelings toward their pets, why can't they see that animals have certain feelings too?" asks Celeste Treadway, an assistant to McCulloch who is conducting research on the bond between human and animal relationships.

"Some students think that if they dump their pets in front of the veterinary school someone will pick them up."

Instead, most abandoned animals get run over or die of starvation, she adds.



Photo by KYLE HAWKINS

Assistant professor of Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Dr. Alice M. Wolf D.V.M. and fourth year veterinary medicine student Kay Dahms examine a dog with heartworms

By conducting a survey, Treadway says she will find out if students don't realize the responsibilities of having a pet or if they know what is going on and just don't care.

The survey (for the Center for Comparative Medicine) will ask questions on the student's attitudes toward his pet. The survey also will help to reveal the student's true field of responsibility, Treadway says.

"If we get good results, then our next step is to try and get something published to educate people on how to take care of their pets," she says.

Pamphlets on the subject hopefully will be placed in the off-campus housing office, pet shops and various other places around town, Treadway says.

"We also might set up a program on the responsibility of pet ownership in the elementary schools," she says.

Treadway says she believes this survey will help decrease the problem of animal abandonment, but will not get rid of it completely.

"People need pets and they should be aware that their pets really do need them too," Treadway says.

# The TEXAS RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

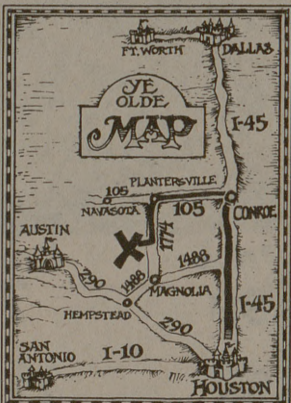
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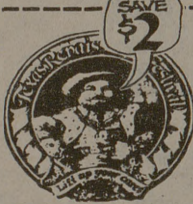


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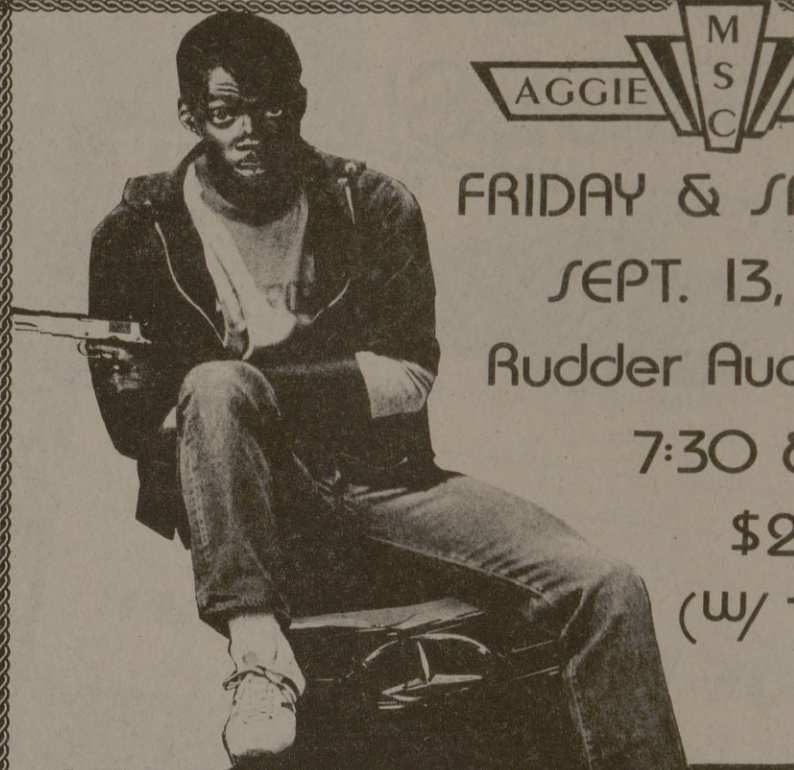
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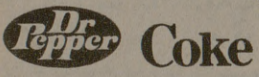
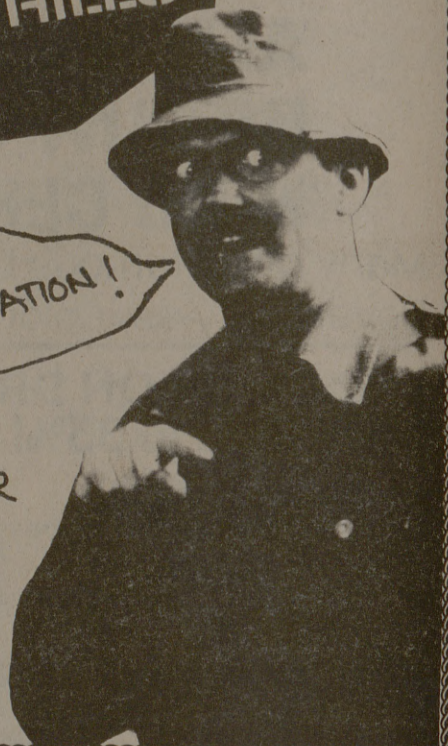
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