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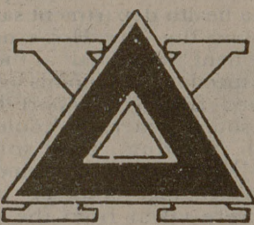
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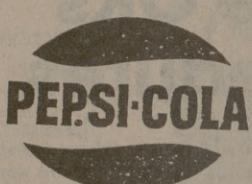
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Pet adoption program seeking homes for pets

By Patricia Lowry
Reporter

Every year, 7.6 million dogs and cats are destroyed because they are unwanted.

The Brazos Animal Shelter is trying to shorten the list of unwanted animals through a pet adoption program.

The program was created to help provide a temporary home for the 8,000 to 10,000 animals brought to the local shelter each year.

"The pet you adopt deserves a lifetime commitment from you," said Patty Arreola, humane educator for the Brazos Animal Shelter.

"We like to encourage people to think ahead about getting a pet — it is not something you jump into on impulse," she said.

An adoption committee reviews all applications for pet adoption. Its decision is based on the type of environment to be provided for the animal, the family's previous pet history and the ability to financially provide for the animal.

"While we would love to find homes for all of our animals, it is the quality, not quantity of homes," Arreola said.

"We do not want a pet to go out



and be an animal control problem," she said.

If the applicant is a renter, a completed property owner's form must be submitted with the application, Arreola said.

"I don't want to discourage students from coming down," she said, "I want to encourage people to think about what they're doing before they do it."

"We cannot evaluate how much time a student has to spend caring for a pet. We try to have students consider this before an application is filed."

If the adoption committee approves an application, the owner must pay an adoption fee of \$45 for a dog or \$40 for a cat.

The adoption fee includes a physical exam, rabies vaccination, county

license and a discount on neutering.

All adopted pets must be neutered.

"Pets bring a lot of joy to us and they are totally dependent on us," Arreola said. "If an adopter cannot be kept, we encourage people to bring the pet back to the shelter."

"We don't want pets to be done just because someone is harassed to bring them in, then they are back, no matter what."

Approximately 2,000 cats are born each hour in the United States compared to one dog born per hour. This is a major control a major problem, Arreola said.

"There just aren't enough people to take care of all the dogs and cats," she said.

Students are encouraged to adopt pets but should consider the responsibility involved in owning a pet, Arreola said.

"We receive calls at the end of each semester about students donating pets," she said. "Pets are cute and adorable, but the minute they become an inconvenience, they are easy to discard."

Pets, owners get 'insured' by shelter

Shelter establishes new licensing program

By Nancy D. Wilkins
Reporter

The Brazos Animal Shelter has established a countywide pet licensing program that serves as a "life insurance policy" for animals by helping to reunite lost pets with their owners, a shelter official said.

The new system, which began last October, makes the rabies vaccination/license tag required by law for any dog or cat more than 4 months old available from local veterinarians for a \$5 fee, making it easier to get one, said Kathy Ricker, executive director of the animal shelter.

Ricker said all local veterinarians are participating in the new program, charging \$7 to \$12 for the rabies vaccination itself.

Before last October, veterinarians

would administer the rabies vaccination and then issue a rabies tag, Ricker said, and owners also were required to register their pets with the animal control office in Bryan or College Station, where they received a registration tag.

Ricker said owners now need only a single county tag that registers the pet, shows proof of vaccination and serves as identification for the pet.

"Without the tag, only 10 percent to 20 percent of the untagged animals lost are returned to their owners," Ricker said. "About 99 percent of the tagged animals found are returned."

The shelter is an impoundment facility for Brazos County. It provides care and shelter for unwanted

animals, she said, and is supported by donations and proceeds from registration fees.

In return, Ricker said, the shelter provides a 24-hour phone service for lost and found animals, a veterinary care for pets, extended impoundment for tagged pets and annual renewal of the tag.

"It's like an insurance policy for the animals," Ricker said.

The shelter has a record of licenses issued and can match a license number with the name and telephone number of the owner.

If owners can't be reached by phone, a certified letter is mailed to them, Ricker said.

The Battalion

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