

State and Local

Brazos shelter turning adopters away

Official: Pets not best holiday gifts

By Carolyn Garcia
Reporter



If you're planning on giving little Johnny or Suzie a pet for Christmas, don't. An official at the Brazos Animal Shelter said that agency is turning potential adoptive parents away daily.

Patty Arreola, a humane educator with the shelter, says Christmas is not the time to introduce a new pet to the family, whether you have children or not.

"When a pet is introduced into the household, it needs love and attention and time to adjust," Arreola said. "There is just too much excitement during the holidays."

Arreola recommends that anyone wishing to give a puppy should get a box and fill it with pet needs such as a leash, a bowl and maybe even a dog-care book, and wrap the box up for opening on Christmas day.

Then, she says, go a week after Christmas and pick out a pet.

Arreola said that too often pets are subjected to stress and often unintentional abuse when given as gifts on Christmas.

"If adoptive parents have chil-

dren, we strongly suggest that they don't get pets as gifts," she said. "Children are too active and excited and this might stress out the pet."

Arreola points out the dangers that puppies can get themselves into during the holiday season, such as eating tinsel and ribbon or chewing electric cords.

Arreola said the Brazos Animal

Shelter prefers no gift-giving at all unless the individual receiving the gift can come pick out his own pet.

"A lot of times people bring us pets that were given to them as a gift," she said. "They tell us that the particular pet is not right for them. They are usually embarrassed and sometimes feel resentment toward the people who gave them the gift."

Arreola said the animal shelter will let people pick out pets a week before Christmas and will hold pets for them for a few weeks after Christmas when things are usually less hectic around the house.

She said that before a pet can be adopted, certain guidelines must be met.

Everyone wishing to adopt a pet must fill out an application and attend a personal interview.

Anyone who lives in an apartment may be asked to bring in a copy of the lease and may even be given a letter for the landlord to sign, Arreola said.

"Too many times people get pets and either don't know they are not allowed to have a pet or try to sneak them in, only to find themselves between a rock and a hard place when

the landlord finds out," Arreola said. "And it is the puppy that loses."

The adoption fee, Arreola said, is \$40 for a cat and \$45 for a dog. This includes a rabies shot, a physical, and a free or discounted neutering, she said.

She said people who are getting a pet should stop to consider their schedules and ask themselves if they really have time to properly care for a pet.

"People are very surprised and sometimes don't understand when they are denied an adoption," Arreola said. "When this happens, and if there has been a misunderstanding, they may appeal the decision in writing. . . ."

"These animals have already had a hard life. When they leave here, we want to be sure they are going to a loving home."

Arreola said it's important that every family member comes to visit the pet before the adoption to assure that the transition for the pet is as smooth as possible.

Animals have personalities just as people do, and it is important that each family member get along with the pet, she said.

Texans remember Pearl Harbor raid on its anniversary

(AP)—JoAnn Nelson remembers the shaky voice of a radio announcer; John Grady recalls taking cover in a drainage ditch; and Dallas city councilman John Evans remembers losing 1,777 shipmates.

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These are the memories of Texans who recalled the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Eighteen ships were sunk or damaged, 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed and 159 others were damaged in the 7:55 a.m. attack.

The United States lost 2,403 servicemen, while 1,178 others were wounded.

Some of those killed were shipmates of Evans, who was a 19-year-old gunner aboard the USS Arizona. A 1,760-pound bomb dropped by a Japanese aircraft penetrated the decks of the Arizona and exploded, lifting the entire bow of the vessel from the water, Evans said.

Nineteen of the dead were Evans' friends. Evans, 64, said he has avoided returning to Pearl Harbor since then.

But after 45 years, he decided to make peace with the tragic memories. He planned to join 300 other survivors of the Arizona and their families Sunday for a private memorial to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack.

"I couldn't go back," Evans said. "You can be a hard, tough guy all your life, but 45 years later you still feel it. I still dream about it. I keep thinking about all those boys I went through boot camp with. I wonder why I didn't die there, too."

John Grady of Austin also said he is grateful to be alive.

Grady was an airplane mechanic stationed at Hickam Field when the Japanese attacked. He was ordered to move three planes during the attack. He moved two safely, but had to jump out of the third when the plane's hydraulics were shot out.

The 69-year-old retired painter said he jumped in a drainage ditch where he and several other soldiers stayed until the attack was over.

"To put it mildly, it was mass confusion," Grady said. "It sounded like everything in the world was exploding," he said. "It was unreal."

JoAnn Nelson of Wichita Falls, the wife of a state district judge, also remembers thinking the attack was not real. She lived in a Honolulu suburb at the base of Diamond Head on Oahu.

"It was like being in a movie," said Nelson, who was 13 years old when Pearl Harbor was attacked. "It isn't really real. It never entered my mind I could be killed."

"My mother woke me up. I didn't really understand what she was telling me, but I could hear the radio. (The announcer's) voice was shaking, but he said to 'keep calm, everybody.'"

"We all rushed outside. We were all looking up. We saw six airplanes and we couldn't see who was who. We saw one go down in flames."

When Nelson returned to the continental United States, she volunteered as an air spotter and Red Cross worker.

Grady fought in the Pacific Theater and was on the island of Guam when the war ended.

Evans was shipped out of Pearl Harbor and served through the end of the war, when he left the Navy and moved to Texas. But he refused to return to Dallas for years and lost track of the other men from his hometown who survived the attack.

"I couldn't go home for a long time and face the mothers of my friends," Evans said. "I couldn't look into their eyes, them wondering why I lived and their sons died. I wondered for a long time why I didn't die there, too."

Artists on death row create Christmas cards

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — The Christmas cards are not unlike many others that speak of good will toward men and put forth the holiday ideals of hope and love.

But the six artists who drew frisky stallions, snowy scenes, lute-playing angels and fat Santas are not typical. They're death row inmates.

"They were drawn by guys who were condemned to die and are considered worthless . . . by society," said Lisa Haberman of Houston, a volunteer organizer of the "Holiday Notes" project. "But they are beautiful works of art and show that they have something to offer."

The cards are being sold by Lois and Ken Robison of Burleson whose son, Larry, 29, is one of the death row artists. The couple organized the project and had the cards printed.

Ken Robison said almost all of the 1,200 cards that were produced in an initial printing have been sold and another batch will be printed if the orders keep coming in.

Proceeds from the cards sales go to fund HOPE, an anti-death penalty group started by the Robisons. Some of the money is sent back to the artists, but they get more out of the project than money, Robison said.

"The margin of profit on the cards is not much," he said. "One of the main things is that it gives the guys an outlet for their creativity, something they can be proud of and see in print."

The cards, printed on standard heavy card paper in black-and-white, carry a picture and message on the front with the artist's name and prison number on the back.

One best-seller is the card, "Notes of Hope," by Joseph Starvaggi, featuring a Christmas angel playing a lute. Starvaggi, 34, was convicted of killing a Montgomery County deputy sheriff in his home during a 1976 robbery.

Another is Larry Robison's drawing of two white doves. The younger Robison is awaiting a new trial on a capital murder charge filed in the

1982 slayings of five people near Fort Worth.

Robison's father said the card tells something about his son.

"Actually, this may sound a little strange, seeing what he's convicted of, but he's always been a gentle person and it (the card project) helps to portray his own personality," Robison said.

The artwork gave the condemned men a break from their boring routine, said Billy G. Hughes, 34, whose card featured a stallion tugging open a Christmas package with his teeth. Hughes was convicted in the 1976 shooting of a state trooper.

Haberman also commented on the contrast between the crimes of the inmates and the art on the cards.

"You see a lot of art, poetry and writing coming off the row from guys you wouldn't think of as sensitive, artistic types," she said.

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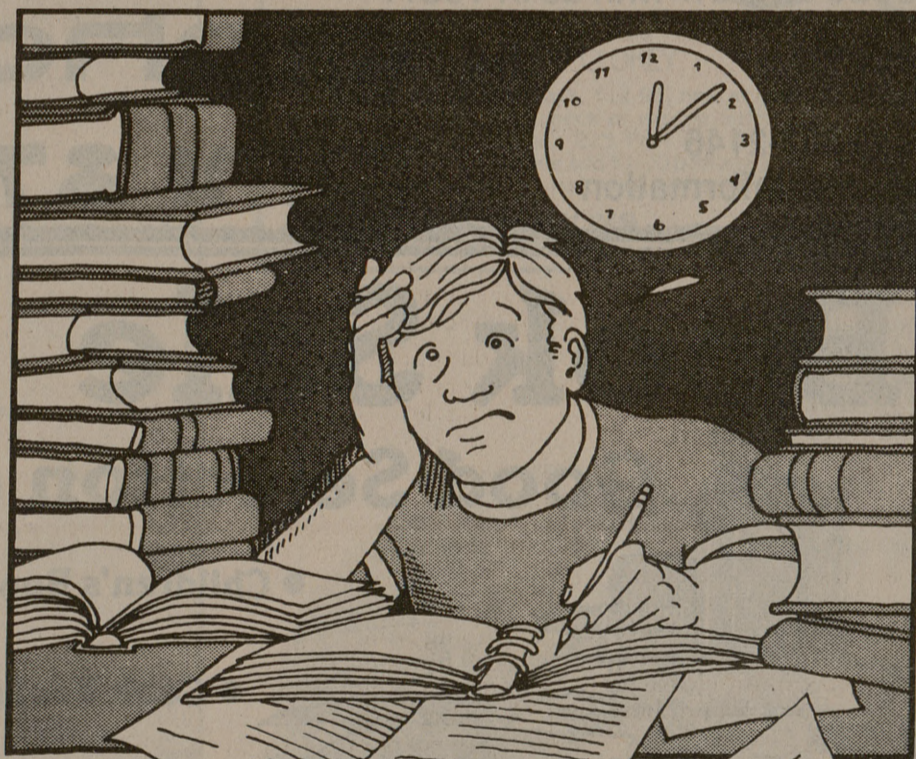
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