

# Shelter suggests housebreaking techniques

The Brazos Animal Shelter, the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association and *The Battalion* are combining their efforts to promote responsible pet ownership.

This is the time of the year when new puppies come to share our lives. Often the relationship turns out to be a rewarding one. Sometimes it does not. The fluffy puppy soon takes on a personality

of its own, and the novelty gives way to the day-to-day routine. One such routine is cleaning up the pet's urine and feces.

Training a puppy to eliminate outside is a lesson in good manners. Using a few simple techniques, the owner can soon enjoy the benefits of not having to do a lot of spot cleaning. The basis for housebreaking relies on the instincts of dogs to eliminate in a group area. By continually taking the puppy to the same area, the accumulated smells help stimulate elimination. This way the youngster learns that elimination is the appropriate behavior in this location, and play is restricted to somewhere else.

There are four basic techniques useful for housetraining. The first is **patience**. Although most puppies cannot consistently learn until eight weeks of age, some owners expect a six-week-old puppy to master the skills immediately. Each dog is an individual and learns at a different rate. While some puppies are 100 percent trained in a few days, others may take a week or two, a few months or several months. Mistakes will happen even for older dogs, so take it in stride and do not blame the dog for the occasional accident.

**Praise** is the second major factor in housebreaking. Take the puppy outside and stay with it until it is completely finished urinating and defecating. Praise should be given generously while the puppy is eliminating so that it learns that the behavior is acceptable. This means you and the puppy need to stay out even in bad weather, and you may need to plan some extra time for this activity. A puppy shoved out may simply wait by the door until it is allowed back inside. Then the full bladder or colon becomes so distended that it must be emptied while the puppy is alone in the house. When you find the mess, you blame the puppy when you should be blaming yourself for not making sure urination

and defecation occurred at the appropriate time and place.

**Confinement** is the third component to successful housetraining. A puppy that is confined is generally less active, and a less active puppy is not as likely to eliminate. Since accidents will happen, confinement to an area where the little messes do not matter means the owner will be happier, and the relationship will not degrade. The area of confinement

are gone to work. In all cases it is important to remember that the bladder capacity of a small dog may not be great enough for 10 hours or more. Shorter periods are helpful to get the proper lessons appropriately learned.

The fourth successful housebreaking technique is **timing**. Puppies are most likely to eliminate after waking, after eating, when physically active and before resting. These are the times a puppy should be taken outside. Remember,

young dogs eat and sleep several times a day, so taking them outside is not limited to four trips a day.

Punishment is not necessary for successful housebreaking. In fact, it is often counterproductive. Since elimination is a normal behavior, a puppy does not understand punishment. This is complicated by the fact that the punishment is often applied at the wrong time. Light punishment is only successful if it is applied at the time of the inappropriate behavior, not after the fact. Timing also is

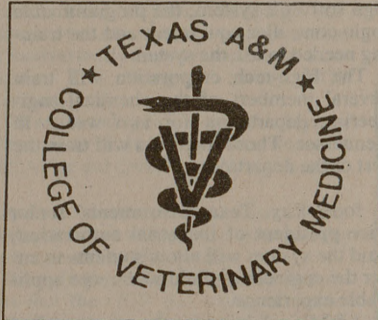
important for praise, but by taking the puppy outside, the owner will be in the right spot at the right time.

For puppies that are expected to eliminate outside as adults, it is best to train them to this behavior initially. Many dogs have trouble making a transition from paper usage to the outdoor and end up not doing either well.

A housetrained dog is a pleasant addition to a family. Although it can take a lot of time and effort, the end product is well worth the work.



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## A&M volunteers relieved that election work payed off

By Kelly S. Brown  
Staff Writer

Tuesday evening — after months pounding the pavement, knocking on doors, registering students to vote and working at phone banks — sighs of relief could be heard at GOP headquarters.

Their job was over. Students, who had volunteered endless hours, could finally

thwart their energy back to their studies knowing their efforts paid off with a landslide presidential win.

Along with the sighs at Cow Hop Junction came whoops and applause around the room. As the election results were announced, some of the student workers spoke of their mixed emotions about the past months of campaigning.

John Alvis, a senior political science major and director of voter registration for Victory 88, said he's happy it's all over and their hard work paid off, but he's disappointed with the negative element of the presidential campaign.

"I think the media exploited the campaign," he said. "The press gets what the press wants. They never got to the main issues at hand. Television news programs are a perfect example of this — they had thirty minutes to give the facts, but instead chose to show parts of a speech that made the candidate look bad."

Greg Gorman, a senior economics major and co-chairman of Victory 88, said he agrees with Alvis.

"It went completely overboard and had a snowball effect — after all, who was going to stop it?" Gorman said.

One thing Alvis didn't want to stop was students registering to vote.

"We had 17,000 students registered at Texas A&M — that's more than any other University in Texas had registered," Alvis said.

Anne Duncan, a junior marketing major and a deputy registrar, said, "It's great to see students so involved not only

in voting, but working behind the scenes registering people to vote and doing other leg work that really makes a difference in the end."

James Cecil, a senior economics major, said there was student apathy toward local elections.

"Students spend at least nine months out of their year here, and they are also spending a lot of their money," Cecil said. "I don't think the average student realizes that they fund the budget in this city. They aren't educating themselves on the issues and they typically have a general lack of interest."

Cecil said he thinks too many students focus on the federal races because they think it has more to do with their lives. "And that reasoning could be attributed to a lack of understanding and confusion," he said.

Larrie Wiedenfeld, a sophomore journalism major, commented on the presidency.

"I knew George Bush would be the next president — I never had a doubt," she said.

Andy Keetch, a sophomore business major, said Bush's victory showed he was mainstream America.

"He has the values, morals and ideals that will continue to bring America forward."

As the evening wound down and the feeling of victory set in, the student workers left the red, white and blue decorated room with a little more knowledge of the political system and the hopes that they had made a difference.

## Are media predictions out of control?

By Stephen Masters  
Senior Staff Writer

At 7:17 p.m., I walked into the Cow Hop Junction. At 7:18 p.m., 18 minutes after polls closed in Texas and with only Bryan absentee votes listed on "The Big Board," Dan

### Analysis

Rather informed me that Bush already had won Texas and had collected 256 electoral votes, only 14 short of victory.

We had barely arrived at Republican party headquarters and it was clear that Bush would be our next president. But it wasn't so bad.

What I get confused about is how in the world they can predict who will win what so quickly and so accurately.

I wasn't the only one who was surprised. State Rep. Richard Smith, who worked as campaign chairman for Bush in Brazos County, said he was watching the returns at 7:03 p.m. when they had already given Texas to Bush. He said he didn't know how it was done, but he didn't complain. Neither would I.

Given, Texas is Bush's official "home state." He voted in Houston and held his victory party there. It's not inconceivable that he would win his home state early and by a wide margin. But three minutes after the

polls closed?

I took Statistics 303. I understand that the reports are based on exit polls. I understand that they take a representative sample of the population from several crucial districts.

We just seem to be getting too ad-

vanced too quickly. It used to take weeks to count votes, but we built a better transportation system and put information together more quickly. Then it took days. Computers got involved and moved it to hours. Now the computers are better, stronger and faster, and they predict election results as soon as the polls are closed.

And with the information the networks have and the way they gather it, they can predict the election before the polls close. The media, exercising its now-and-then ethics, did not release the information on the states' winners before the polls closed.

We're reaching a point where we won't even have to vote. Computers will read information on each candidate, the political climate of the country and other data on weather and voter turnout. We will have a completely simulated election, and the

candidates can be notified in advance with computer-prepared acceptance speeches.

Of course, no one wants to go back to the old way of counting votes. Speed is king in today's society. We're constantly looking for ways to do everything better and faster, from laundry detergent to computer software.

But we're also at a dangerous point. We need to be careful not to become too automated. Machines should not become so time saving that we just turn them on and roll over. Those science fiction movies where computers have more power than their human creators may become documentaries.

The question is old: How much sophistication is too much? Maybe we should get a computer to figure that out, too.

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