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Man's New Best Friends

A&M students keep more than 'Fido' and 'Mr. Whiskers' for pets

By STEPHEN WELLS

Staff writer

ibodeaux owned three well-trained dogs anot who could whistle catcalls to passersna construction worker. For a change thineday, he decided to buy an iguana. Alomias not as disciplined as his dogs or as comeas his parrot, it quickly became his faun whe point the dogs wanted it dead out of

mals. Factors ranging from restrictions ce to needs for experimentation drive stut dwpets ranging from tropical spiders to 7-foot

wn, a junior business major, had his own hoosing to buy a boa constrictor instead

ved in my apartment unless they're nsaid. "I really want a dog. I just don't have

ot discouraged by his landlord's rules. In ssnake, he owns a gecko lizard and a ferfascination with wildlife comes from his

in a pet store, and

nd they're per-

et unusual.

aid society's fear of snakes

ut they want to touch them.

shock factor of having a snake," Brown body's interested in them because people

nge fascination with them. They're scared

common pets are actually cheaper than

tht, an employee of Post Oak Pets, said the

ence makes some people choose one ani-

ice would range from \$475 to \$150, but a be from \$50 to \$100 depending on size,

lguanas are about \$40 for a six- or seven-

Knight cautions students about some of the risks of owning an unusual pet.

"I was told that 90 percent of lizards have salmonella, so I always have to wash my hands after handling them," Knight said. "Just like some other animals are carriers for viruses or bacteria. You just have to know what you're getting into.'

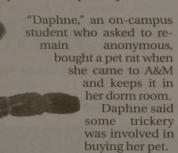
Buying a small animal involves more than purchasing it and buying it food.

"It really helps to buy an aquarium (if buying a rep-tile or small animal)," Knight said. "We recommend that they get the size of aquarium that the animal will grow into. If they can't afford it, they should get a smaller aquarium and trade up.

"I wanted to buy a lizard in Dallas and they wanted me to buy a sixty- or seventy-gallon tank right away because the lizard would grow so large.

The pet choices available to students who live on campus are greatly narrowed by University regulations. The student rules book for 1997-98 allows only seeingeye dogs, fish and Reveille VI in the residence halls.

Some students, however, are not interested in fish as pets and break University rules to keep their pets in the



at the pet store couldn't sell it to me because I live in a dorm room, Daphne said. "Instead of my A&M address, I gave her my permanent address

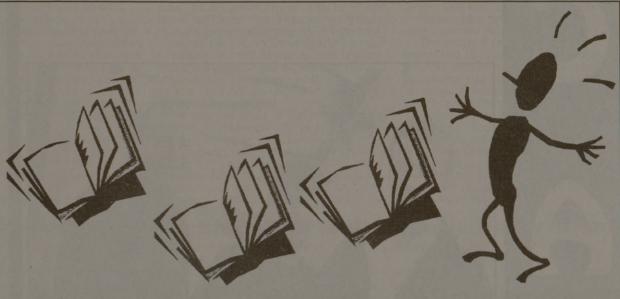
'The woman

Daphne said a fish was not an option when selecting her pet. "Fish are pretty, but they

just swim around, and that gets pretty boring," Daphne said. "Our (rat) you can pet and play with. It will actually run around and chase things.

"We were walking around the pet store and looking for a mouse, but the pet store clerk told us that they make lousy pets.

The fascination with uncommon pets still has its hold on the animal lovers of the world. Whether out of a need to comply with the rules of a landlord or the need for a little rebellion on the part of students, many Aggies are finding a reptile or a rat can be man's best friend too, even if it can't catch a frisbee or play dead.



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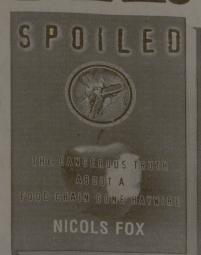
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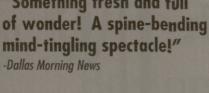
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-Robin Cook, author of Chromosome Six

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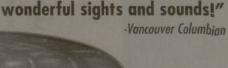


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