

Students turn unwanted pets into lifelong friends

By MANISHA PAREKH
Staff writer

Each animal is different from the rest. There is a large Dalmatian who was abandoned days ago, a round black rabbit sitting alone, a tiny kitten who was a stray and countless others. As they poke their noses out of the cages, their faces all seem to ask the same question: "Will you take me home?"

Welcome to the Brazos Animal Shelter, where each year thousands of animals are brought in after being abandoned, lost or put up for adoption by their owners.

Mary Haislett, human education coordinator for the shelter, said more than just dogs and cats come through the shelter's doors.

"We get everything from rare chickens to zebras to emus," Haislett said. "We get all kinds of animals."

The shelter, which opened in 1983, has a mission to help people and animals through a variety of services, including education, pet adoption, dog/cat licensing, stray animal and livestock impoundment, and field work. Much of the support the shelter receives comes from donations and tax dollars.

"We are a non-profit organization," Haislett said. "While most shelters or 'pounds' are barely getting by, we are doing quite well."

"Quite well" might be an understatement. The Brazos Animal Shelter has a pet adoption rate of around 75-percent, while the national average is 25-percent.

Haislett attributes the high rate of pet adoptions to the high number of college students who live in

Bryan and College Station.

"[Most animals] are adopted by families, but we do have a number of students adopting animals," Haislett said.

Josh Brenner, a sophomore general studies major, adopted a puppy from the shelter in January.

"I walked up to the door [of the cage] and he looked really sad and pitiful," Brenner said. "But when I opened the door, he ran up to me and wanted to play, so I picked him."

Even though Brenner eventually gave the dog to a friend, he is very positive about the whole experience.

"The staff was really friendly and helpful," he said. "They really care about the animals."

Prospective adopters can choose from cats, dogs, rabbits and the occasional exotic bird or pot-bellied pig to take home with them.

Haislett said the shelter's policies state that prospective adopters must fill out an adoption application and meet several guidelines. If the adopter lives in an apartment and is interested in adopting a dog, it must weigh 25 pounds or less after it fully matures. Dogs that will grow over 25 pounds and live in the Bryan-College Station city limits require a fenced yard.

All pet deposits must be paid and landlord approval of the pet must be verified before the animal goes home. Also, dogs and cats living with the adopting family must be vaccinated.

Adopters must also pay a \$65 adoption fee. The fee includes the first shot, worming medication, bordatella vaccination and coupons for veterinary and grooming services. It

also includes a coupon for a free spay or neuter.

According to Haislett, having pets spayed or neutered would effectively cut down on the number of stray animals that are brought in to the shelter.

"On a slow day, we get at least 10 animals. That number can easily become 75 on a busy day," Haislett said. "A lot of litters end up here."

Andrea Spence, a marketing major at Blinn College, brought a German shepherd into the shelter last year after finding it alone on Texas Avenue.

"We took in the animal because we were concerned," Spence said. "I was really surprised at how nice everyone there was. They called us back to tell us it was adopted by a good family."

"They really went out of their way, and a lot of shelters don't do that," she said.

Unfortunately, many of the animals that are brought in are not as lucky. Of the approximately 9,000 animals that are brought in to the shelter each year, 50- to 60-percent of them are unadoptable and have to be put down.

Haislett urges pet owners to have their animals spayed or neutered. "They don't realize that their kittens are producing more kittens," she said.

The Brazos Animal Shelter is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The shelter is located at 2207 Finfeather Road in Bryan.

The Brazos Animal Shelter just might be the one place money can buy love.

they call it puppy love

Photos by Mike Fuentes

'The Heiress' showcases love, pain and the romance of life at Stage Center

By MARIUM MOHIUDDIN
Staff Writer

Far off in the overcrowded city of New York lives Catherine Sloper, the daughter of a wealthy doctor and a member of the elite high society. However, that society does not allow room for a girl to fall in love with a poor man, especially a gold digger. But through their relationship, Catherine is able to grow as a person and finally experience love.

It may sound like a romance novel, but the similarities stop when the name of Henry James appears below the headline.

"The Heiress" is an adaptation of a James short story brought to life at Bryan's Stage Center by Rick Landmann and company.

Landmann, the director of "The Heiress," said the play is a timeless tale of love and revenge.

"The play was redone for a film starring Jennifer Jason Leigh, but they left out many of the characters little nuances," Landmann said. "I brought these back in the play because it is interesting to know why characters act a certain way and what makes them behave."

Landmann said it would have been easy to make the play into a melodrama but he wanted to make it realistic and show how people really act.

"This is a classic play and a classic story," he said. "The characters are tremendous and present a story that people have faced. The theater allows you to analyze the situation. Is this how you would have handled it? Would it be similar or different?"

Kelli Overton, lead actress and a senior marketing major, said this has been the most challenging character she has played.

"Catherine leads a very lonely life," she said. "She does not experience love from her father so this causes her to be shy and withdrawn. When she meets Morris (her love) she finally grows as a person."

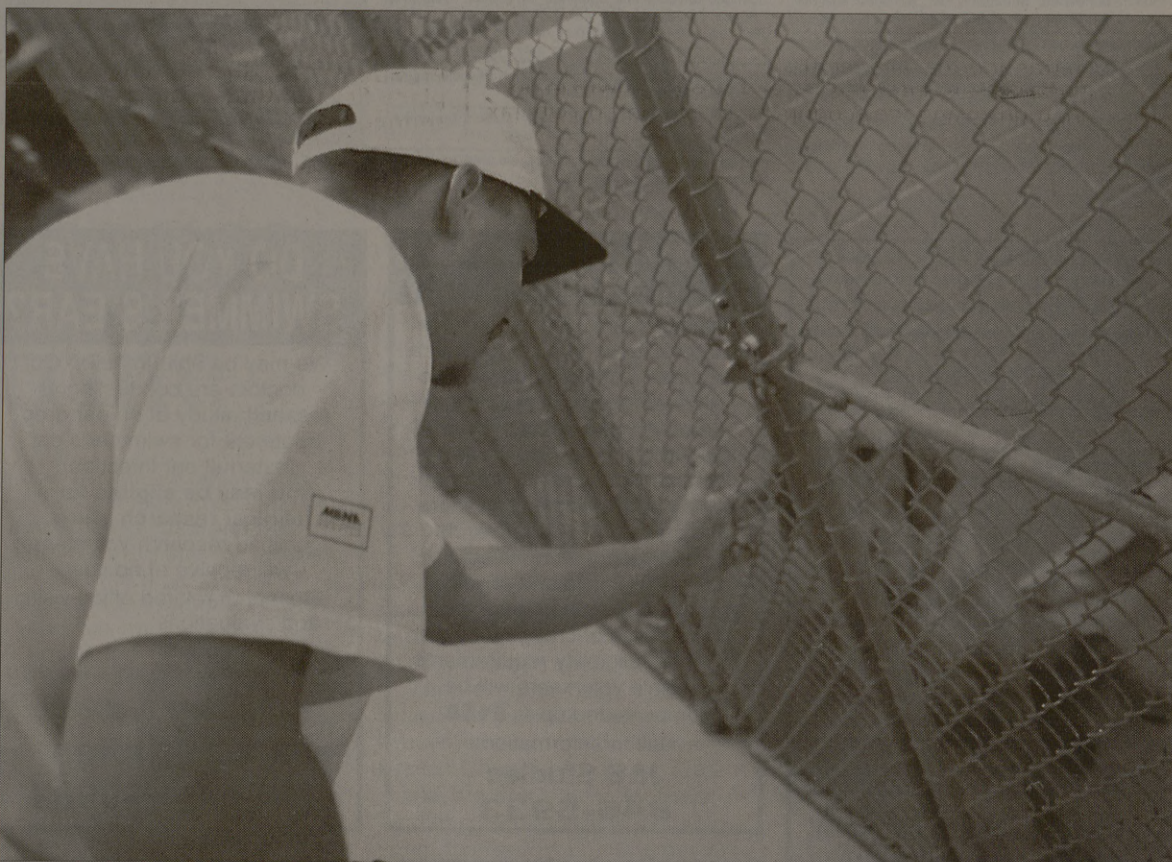
"It was hard playing her because it was like having two different characters," Overton said. "She changes from shy and awkward to strong and dominating."

Overton said there were many times she would sit with the director and talk about how her character Catherine would behave.

"While we were rehearsing, my acting coach would walk behind and constantly put my head down or push my shoulders down because I had to act like a shy person," she said. "There are also numerous love scenes and it was difficult to act like a shy person doing those. That is what was hard for me because I am a very outgoing person."

Overton said the greatest thing about "The Heiress" which sets it apart from others is the strong, if not surprising, ending.

"The play has a dramatic ending and things change," she said. "The play turns around 360 degrees. It was fun playing her from a shy little girl to someone who is able to pick herself up and be graceful and strong. It is very emotional and dramatic. It is a very beautiful play."



Bryan resident Carl Perry makes friends with one of the residents of the Brazos Valley Animal Shelter. Perry is considering getting his sister a dog for her birthday.

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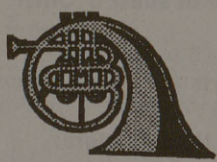
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