

Think Before Giving A Pet

NEW YORK — Pets are among America's most ill-advised Christmas gifts. Soft-eyed puppies, and frolicsome kittens, gleefully tumble in pet shop windows. Their appeal is tremendous. The sales are high.

A month later, many of those same delightful animals will be covering miserably in the cages of the local animal pound. Others will already be dead—unwanted and abandoned to a bleak winter.

The simple point here is that although many people find great happiness in giving a young animal as a Christmas gift, not everybody is so happy about receiving one. And it takes exceptional courage to reject the gift of a helpless, ribbon-festooned kitten on Christmas morning.

Usually, the animal is received with gracious thanks and then somehow disappears in a few weeks. Responsible people burdened with an animal they don't really want take it to a responsible shelter. And shelters all over America have experienced a great population explosion during the weeks immediately after Christmas for many decades now.

Humane jurisdictions require that animals in shelters be either adopted by new owners, or humanely euthanized. Other jurisdictions also force animals to be funneled off to experiment labs and other cruel ends.

Anyone considering a gift of a living creature should also consider the following points:

1. Make absolutely sure the animal is wanted. If this means losing the joy of surprise, so be it. Better no surprise than risking tragedy with an animal's life.
2. Make absolutely sure the receiver is capable of giving the animal all the care and attention it deserves. Too often, kittens and puppies are given to children who are wildly infatuated about the pet, but are not mature enough to insure that the animal is properly tended. Also, "companion" animals are now frequently given to older people who have neither the strength, nor the resources, to provide basic care for those pets.
3. If somebody you love really wants an animal, and is mature enough to provide it with good care and attention, why not agree between you to wait a few days, or weeks, after Christmas. Go shopping around the animal shelters in early January, and it's likely you'll find many appealing

animals—some purebred, some sprightly mongrels. Your gift of joy will also become an errand of mercy.

4. If the shleter does not have its own requirements for spaying the animal, contact Friends of Animals, 11 West 60th Street, New York, NY 10023 for information on low-cost spaying. Spayed animals make better pets—they're better tempered, more reliable and easier to train. (It's no accident that more than 90 percent of all the seeing-eye dogs in the world are spayed females). Spaying your pets will also protect you from having to deal with an unwanted litter later in the year—a litter which could put you in the position of having to give away a half-dozen puppies or kittens, knowing that some of the recipients don't really want them. These are the creatures which keep the pounds and shelters full the other eleven months of the year.

Gifts From Heart

by Joan Gosper
N.C. State University
If your budget cannot possibly be stretched to buy as many gifts as you would like, consider some no-cost gifts from the heart. If a little thought is given the selection, they will be greatly appreciated.

Give an "I Promise You Certificate," good for some chore or service, suggests Dr. Thelma Hinson, extension specialist-in-charge of family resource management at North Carolina State University.

This is especially appropriate for an elderly or housebound person who will appreciate the visit as much as the chore. You might want to offer to go shopping, drive the person to church or to the doctor's office or to do household chores or make home repairs.

Parents will also welcome a promise certificate good for free babysitting.

Another gift possibility is the offer of special lessons. If gardening, bread baking, crafts or any other skills are among your talents, there are probably people on your shopping list who would appreciate lessons, Dr. Hinson suggests.

Gifts can also be made of items around the home which are no longer being used. An older person on a fixed income may find that the perfect gift for his or her child is an item of sentimental value.

— "Year Of The Public Schools" —

Governor James B. Hunt has proclaimed 1982-83 as the "Year of the Public Schools" in North Carolina. Public education has come a long way since the state's first public schools were established in 1766, and, according to the governor, deserve recognition for their many accomplishments.

Today, some 2,030 elementary and secondary public schools serve more than a million students. North Carolina's public school curriculum has grown from instruction in the "3 R's" to numerous courses concerning English, reading, math, science, social studies, foreign languages, cultural arts, physical education and vocational education. While still emphasizing the basics, today's public schools teach students to drive a car, man the latest communications equipment, build a house, program computers, etc. And, today's classrooms are open to everyone—the disadvantaged, the minority, the handicapped.

A look at the past shows that most of the progress in public education has come during the Twentieth Century. Although the beginnings of our public education

system date back to 1766, the War Between the States in 1860 did much to destroy one of the best educational systems in the South. During the period following the War until about 1900, the school system had to be reconstructed.

During the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, education progressed rapidly. Many new buildings were constructed and old ones better equipped. The Legislature authorized counties to issue local bonds for school construction and also authorized rural high schools. In 1919, the minimum constitutional school term increased from four to six months. Legislation strengthened child labor laws and mandated compulsory school attendance for children ages eight through twelve. Interest was raised for increasing educational opportunities for Negroes. Because of concern for teachers' qualifications, legislation was passed to strengthen the state's teacher training institutions. Teachers' salaries increased and school administration improved.

During the 1930's, vocational education was introduced in the state's high

schools. Legislation extended the school system's complete support. More and more children came to school on buses supported by public monies. During the Depression years, teachers' salaries and other educational expenses were reduced out of the need to cut state expenditures; however, educational progress continued. In 1935, a plan established state textbook rental and, the following year, provided free textbooks for elementary grades. Improvements continued into the 1940s and further changes occurred in the school system. Legislation provided a retirement plan for state employees, including all public school personnel. Further changes increased the compulsory attendance age from 14 to 16, added the twelfth grade, extended the school term to nine months, and created the school lunch program. The State Board was authorized to use public funds for special education programs.

During the second half of

this century, the Civil Rights Movement affected North Carolina's school system. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against separation of races in public schools in Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka. The following year, the NC General Assembly passed the Pearsall Plan, a bill transferring the complete authority over enrollment and assignment of children in public schools and buses from the State Board of Education to county and city boards. In 1964, the national Civil Rights Act was passed prohibiting discrimination in public education.

In the 1960's, North Carolina implemented an experimental statewide program termed the Comprehensive School Improvement Project aimed at improving instruction at the primary level, with particular emphasis on language arts and arithmetic. The state included high schools in the free textbook program. Beginning in 1965 with the Elementary

Continued On Page 6-B

Holly, which was first hung in the windows of English homes at Yuletide, has long been a symbol of well-being.

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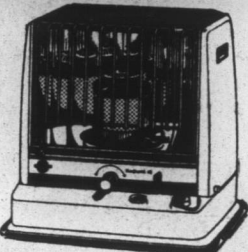
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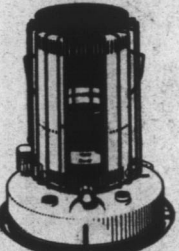
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