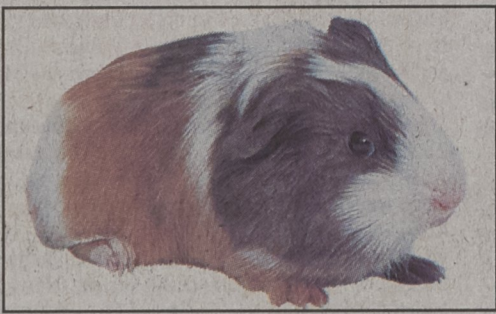




# Critters

## Our Pets

They fill our lives with unconditional love and wonder and whimsy and devotion. All they ask in return is... Nothing.



## Last minute Christmas critter really a good idea?

By KYRA A. TURNER

That puppy in the window may look cute now, but think of the long-term commitment.

According to Tripp Bowling, director of the Cleveland County Animal Shelter, many pets are adopted around this time of year (3 to 4 young to middle age pets a week) as last minute Christmas gifts. But, he added that most of them end up back in the shelter because the families are not prepared.

"We don't like to encourage pets as Christmas presents," Bowling said. "We want families to be physically and financially prepared before adopting. It takes commitment."

The shelter also asks adopters to sign a

contract saying they will take the newly adopted pet to the vet right after they purchase them and also have them spayed or neutered as soon as possible.

"We have over 7,000 animals coming into our facility every year. That means all kinds of diseases that might make their way into your home," Bowling explained.

Pet adopters also need to be mindful of possible allergies and the costs of adoption, which can run from \$50 to \$100.

So before you see that sweet face and make an impulse buy, remember a pet is a lifetime commitment. Make sure you are physically, mentally and financially ready to take home that bundle of joy. The pets need that commitment too.



Petie - Boxer/Dalmatian Mix



Angelica - Tabby, Grey

The shelter currently houses dozens of cats and dogs wishing for a home and a family to love them this Christmas.

For more information on adopting call the Cleveland County Animal Shelter at 704-481-9884.

## What a grand Gift!! Getting a Puppy for Christmas?

Christmas is fast approaching and we are all starting to consider the perfect gift for our loved ones. Parents with children often want to get them a puppy. They know the joy and pleasure a companion will be to grow up with and share those wonderful years.

### Best breed for the family

One of the most important considerations is the breed of dog. The folks at the shelter are pretty knowl-

edgeable about dogs and can more than likely tell you what bred or mix of bred each dog is. A purebred can be found but don't carry the guarantee of a perfect pet. You can go online or in the papers look for breeds that appeal to you and narrow down what would be acceptable for the age of your children and your lifestyle. Along with a picture of each breed you can find the maximum weight, maximum

height, grooming and shedding, good with children and temperament. Having a list of the breeds you desire will make the choice much easier.

### Long term benefits

The benefits are countless! Dogs are loyal non-judgmental friends. There will be someone to share joys and sorrows with. Children will always have a suitable playmate. There will be a greeter with a wagging tail

and all the time in the world for your family. And cuddling in bed is remarkably comforting. It is however not so outrageous that it will put you in the poorhouse. You will have the ongoing expense of feeding and keeping them healthy. As a family, you can plan trip and adventures can be totally planning where pets are welcome because they become a big part of family. The benefits by far outweigh the burdens con-

sidering the reward your family will receive. I believe there is no greater gift than a pet. It will help teach your child responsibility, commitment and how to love.

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Lindsay Tallent  
Pawsitive Touch Grooming

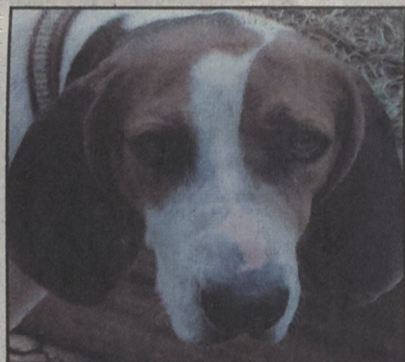
For information on adopting one of the pets shown on this page, and more, visit the Cleveland County Humane Society at [www.clevelandcountyhumesociety.petfinder.com](http://www.clevelandcountyhumesociety.petfinder.com)

## Would you like to see your pet as our Pet of the Month?

Just send us a picture of you and your pet. Tell us why your pet is special or how you & your pet found each other, etc.

Each month we will choose one pet and its person to be featured on our **Critters** page. All entries will be included in a drawing at the end of the year for a prize for your pet.

It's easy: Stop by our office, mail it to 700 E. Gold St., Kings Mountain NC 28086 or Email your photo and info to us at [pets.kmherald@gmail.com](mailto:pets.kmherald@gmail.com). Please include your name and phone number so we may contact you.



Arnie - Treeing Walker Coonhound Mix



Frannie - Calico Mix



Willie: Labrador Retriever

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