



The Wag

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Put a pet on your Christmas wish list

By JODY SPRENG

Christmas is coming...and along with snow and Santa Claus and all things sparkly and bright will come talk show hosts and newspaper articles dashing children's dreams about asking Jolly Old St. Nick for a puppy or kitten for Christmas.

Reports will say that the holidays are the worst time to adopt pets—too much confusion, dangerous lights and poisonous poinsettias. Then there is always the horror of having a kitten shimmying up the center of the Christmas tree.

Well, haven't most cat owners lived through the cat in the tree drama and needless to say everyone survived.

Actually, asking for a new pet at Christmastime really isn't a bad idea. According to Heidi Anderson, veterinary technician at WVC, "It's not that getting a pet at Christmastime is a bad idea, it is when people make impulse decisions about adopting a pet that can lead to problems."

Heidi suggested that those considering a holiday pet should rationally think about potty training in the wintertime (some dogs don't like the cold or snow), how large will that little puppy grow to be, the personalities of the various breeds of both dogs and cats and what kind of expenses will be incurred raising a puppy or kitten. Don't forget, in addition to food and litter there are the costs of vaccinations, spaying or neutering, monthly flea and heartworm prevention and sometimes unexpected illnesses.

Heidi is so okay with adopting a pet at Christmastime, that after losing a beloved dog earlier this year, a new puppy might be sitting right under the Andersons' Christmas tree on the morning of Dec. 25.

"If I definitely make the decision to get a new puppy, it will be a yellow lab because they are my favorite dogs. They are loveable and very obedient, good with children and trustworthy," said Heidi.

A new puppy for the Andersons would be a surprise for their three children and would join their dog Grady, 3, and two house cats.

For other members of the clinic, when it was time for a new pet...it didn't matter what time of year.

Three months after business manager Lynn Youngblood lost her beloved Australian Shepherd, Aussie, she and her husband Craig knew it was time to get another dog. After seeing a newspaper ad featuring Australian Shepherd puppies in a location near where they got Aussie, the Youngbloods thought maybe the puppies might be related to her.

"When I went to see the puppies there were two left and they were living in filth and squalor. One of the puppies was already spoken for and I wasn't going to leave the other puppy there," said Lynn. Although Lynn's intention was to get a purebred dog she has had no regrets of adopting Panda... a 28-pound mix of Australian Shepherd and happiness whose special panda bear markings made her name an easy choice for the Youngbloods.

"I have always loved Australian Shepherds. They are so smart you can see them think," Lynn said.

Shortly after their adoption of Panda, Craig and Lynn added Grizlee to their family.

"Craig wanted a real dog," laughingly said Lynn. "Panda is only 28 pounds. She also began running away and we thought maybe if we got another dog she would stop going to the neighbors to bark at their cats."

Lynn said that Grizlee has not only met the needs of Craig but Panda as well, "He is very, very smart and he really likes to play. Grizlee carries a toy with him everywhere and even though he is a lot bigger than Panda they love to play together. Grizlee and Panda also love to go to doggie play care at the clinic. Because they are high-energy dogs they need to play. When they both come home tired, I know they have had a good day."

Dr. Matt Klingman vividly remembers the day he was at a farm ultrasounding horses when one little orange tabby cat just wouldn't leave him alone. "That kitten was crawling all over me and the ultrasound



machine and just wouldn't stop," told Dr. Matt adding, "The owner of the farm told me I could take the kitten home with me but I said no... at first."

"The kitten was only a pound or a pound and a half and it was my daughter's birthday, so I put him in my scrub top pocket and took him home. I can still see her smile and her chubby cheeks when she saw what I had," said Dr. Matt. "Oliver has been an excellent cat."

Last month the Klingmans adopted another pet when a client asked if he was interested in a stray she found. "I texted my wife and asked her if she wanted a cute, free Beagle and the answer I got back was 'yes.'" But the yes answer was actually to a text I had sent her earlier," he told.

Regardless of the technical error, the Klingmans' adopted "Lilly" a two-to three-year-old beagle who is now enjoying life with Oliver the cat and Peaches the Klingmans' four-year-old Beagle.

It could have been a tough road finding a new home for Lilly since the odds were not in her favor. Lilly was older, she had a slight medical problem (that has been corrected) and she had no medical history.

All of that didn't matter to the Klingmans.

"I like big dog attitude," said Dr. Matt. "Beagles are laid back and easy going. They are not heavy barkers or land shark sort of dogs. Lilly is the style of Beagle we have always wanted. She is about 15-pounds and is a playmate for Peaches."

To have household harmony when adopting an older dog, Dr. Matt suggested that potential pet owners should look for the right attitude. Select a laid back dog but not one that is so timid that it immediately, out of fear, lies on its back with its belly up. "They can be fear biters," he said.

"Everything has to do with behavior testing. Just look at their appearance. Are they dominant or shy—look for one in the middle. When considering an older dog don't feel remorse or pressure from feeling like you have to rescue the dog—you might bite off more than you can chew... literally."

According to Dr. Matt, "Lilly is a great dog. She has had some potty training issues since she is older and just now being trained. Lilly was everything we wanted in a dog and that is how you should select a dog...all based on what you are looking for or what you want. There are a variety of dogs available for you."

Veterinary technician Erin Millhorn has also found older pets to be an outstanding option.

Cookie, a 16-year-old Dalmatian mix, came to live with Erin and husband Chris at the end of Erin's technician training 14-years-ago. Cookie and other dogs were rescued from a shelter's death row and served as the technician program's practice animals. "Cookie is an excellent dog. She is so good and so patient. When dogs go through the many events that Cookie has you can tell their true character," said Erin.

Cookie would adjust several more times over the years as the Millhorns' would adopt a Beagle named Molly and Julio the Chihuahua. "They are like three peas in a pod and they all do very well with the kids. They go with the flow. We are very busy and sometimes gone a lot. They are great with the routine and always have each other," said Erin. Cookie has also welcomed the birth of each of the Millhorns' three daughters and welcomed Simba the cat who thinks he is a dog, too. "We were on a bike trail and this gray tiger cat jumped into my daughter's stroller and laid down beside her. My older daughter wasn't going to let him go. She looked at me and said, 'He picked us mommy.'"

Pets come into the lives of their owners in so many ways and thankfully bring a gift that keeps on giving.

A pet for Christmas... why not?

Keep pets safe during holidays

By JENNIFER D. OROSZ, DVM

Holidays are great times of the year for getting together with family and friends to celebrate our many blessings and joys, but for the pet owner there can be a few holiday related hazards as well.

The foods, desserts and indulgences we enjoy can be particularly harmful to our pets. Here are a few tips to keep in mind, not only for this Christmas season, but for special occasions celebrated year round.

*Avoid table scraps. Feeding table scraps to your pet is never a good idea. Pets just do not tolerate fatty foods as well as we do.

*Ensure proper disposal of turkey carcass, ham remains, bones and the like. Make sure all trash is bagged and placed securely in covered cans. Pets that make a feast of this leftover trash could set themselves up for a painful and serious condition called pancreatitis. Even a piece of turkey skin eaten by a pet that can't handle it can result in this condition. Furthermore, eating the bones could result in a tear in the bowel.

*Don't forget about securely disposing of the strings and wrappings that come with the turkey or ham. These items can be particularly enticing to pets and could also lead to obstruction or damage to the bowel.

*Desserts, particularly those made with baking chocolate or xylitol, can be toxic to pets. Xylitol can be found in artificial sweeteners and sugar free gum.

We all enjoy giving our pets something special. Please stick with healthy treats made specifically for pets or maybe a new toy to celebrate the holiday. You could even splurge for a gourmet dog or cat treat for the occasion.

Several signs that your pet may be ill from holiday indulgence or toxicity include: Depression, pain, vomiting and diarrhea.

If you are concerned that your pet may have eaten something hazardous and is showing these symptoms please contact our office immediately at (440) 647-4100. You can also call the ASPCA poison hotline at (888) 426-4435. A quick response could save your pet's life. The Wellington Veterinary Clinic offers emergency care 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

We wish you all a safe and merry Christmas.

Please 'like us' on Facebook

Everybody is doing it and now we are, too!

Come visit the Wellington Veterinary Clinic on Facebook and "like us." Our page is devoted to providing you with current animal related issues that will not only update you but include opinions from our medical staff. The page will also include fun things like our "Cutest Holiday Pet Photo Contest" that is now underway. A prize will be given to the winners. Special events and cost saving tips will be included on our page along with questions like... what is the strangest thing your pet has ever eaten? So far an entire necktie is topping the list.

We want our page to be highly interactive with you so your input is very important to us.

Be sure to "like us" at the Wellington Veterinary Clinic, Inc. of Wellington, Ohio on Facebook.



Happy Holidays!

Fund raiser held for former employee

Wellington Veterinary Clinic Inc. and its staff will be hosting a fund raiser on Monday, Dec. 19 from 5-7 p.m. to benefit the family of Brian and Casey Hurst of LaGrange.

Casey Hurst was a member of the clinic's support staff until earlier this year when she gave birth to twin sons, Bryce and Baen. The newborns join two big brothers at home.

Since their birth Bryce and Baen have been diagnosed with Hurler's Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that is requiring extensive medical treatment.

The clinic's fund raiser is open to the public and will include pet pictures with Santa Claus for a \$5 donation and the procedures of nail trims, anal gland expressions and ear cleanings at a cost of \$10 each. In addition, gift baskets will be raffled. Two of the baskets will feature pet related items with others including fun fillings from food to bubble baths. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or \$6 for five tickets. All monies generated from the fund raiser will be given to the Hurst family.

Wellington Veterinary Clinic Inc. is located at 45015 State Route #18 just a few miles east of downtown Wellington.

For more information contact the clinic at 440-647-4100. To read more about the Hurst family please visit the clinic's page on Facebook.



Put your dog in our bath tub, not your's

Rub a dub, dub...don't want your dog in your tub?

How about giving the clinic's self bathing feature a try. Just in time for the holidays you can have a fluffy soft, sweet smelling dog with no mess in your home.

All you have to do is bring your dog and some elbow grease to the clinic and we'll provide the rest. For \$12 for your first dog and \$10 for each additional dog, you can use our special bathing tub, water, shampoo and towels. We'll even clean up the mess. Our cage dryer can be used for a small fee of \$4 per animal.

Please call the clinic at 440-647-4100 to let us know that you are on your way.



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Hours of operations:

Monday - Thursday 7:30 am 7:30 pm
Friday 7:30 am 5:00 pm
Saturday 7:30 am Noon