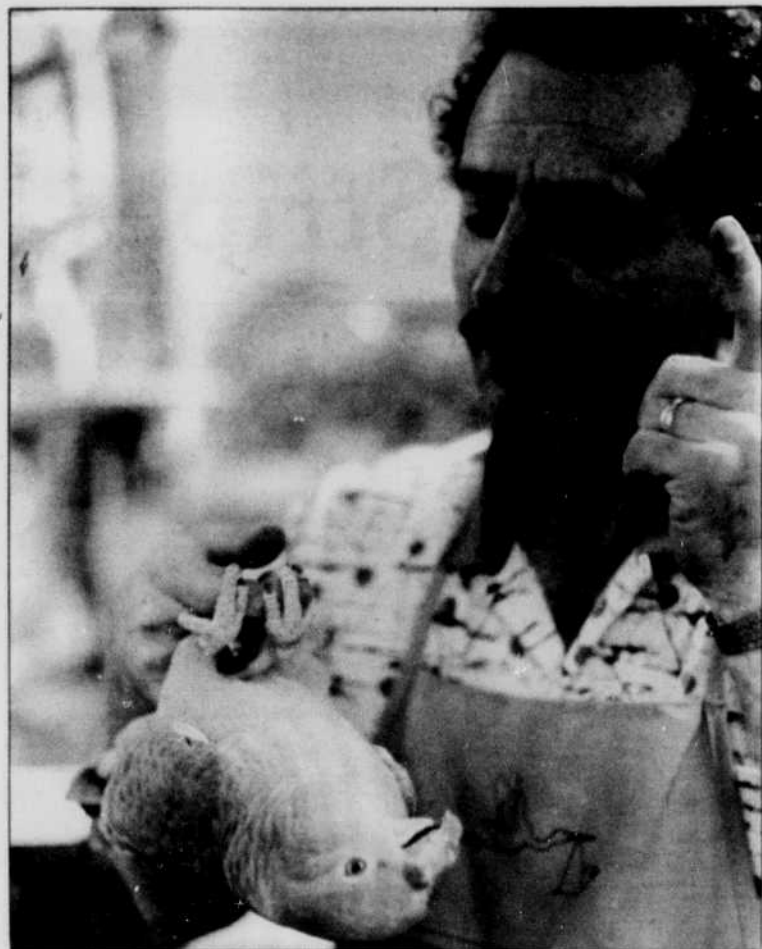


## Photos By Elizabeth Asher



(Clockwise from top left) Dillon is a yellow-nape Amazon parrot who likes to mimic humans and play games. Here he plays dead after being "shot" by his owner, Jeff Olson, co-owner of The Dog House in Springfield. Melissa Schwartz says her seven-month-old ferret, Nikolai, has a habit of burrowing under her bedspread and stealing her roommates' socks. Tsu is five weeks old, but will be worth up to \$3,000 as a Chinese shar-pei show dog. His full name, Tsu fu te fu mu, means "the wealthy son of one's father." Even the bottom of his feet are wrinkled.

pets. "Ten to 15 years ago you used to see a lot of big cats and monkeys and chimps as pets. Now there are mostly ferrets, and a few people have snakes.

"I'm glad to see people aren't keeping these other animals anymore just because I think they can be dangerous. Wild animals are wild animals, and they will always be," Danelski says. He remembers that many people kept raccoons for pets in the past. "They all had to be let go or put to sleep," he said.

"There used to be an elder woman who had a chimpanzee, but as it got older it just got too strong. I think she ended up giving it to a circus."

One of Danelski's unusual patients is a mountain lion that occupies the back seat of its owner's black corvette. The cat is the seventh-generation in its family that has lived in captivity. Danelski speculates that this is why the animal is so docile.

Exotic birds and fish are indeed exotic-looking; however, the word exotic means only that the species are not native to the United States, according to Jeff Olson, co-owner of The Dog House.

And then there are the domestic dogs whose breed sets them apart from the normal household variety. Phyllis Hastie is the proud owner of three Chinese Shar-Peis, otherwise known as the "wrinkled dogs." She has two near-adult dogs, Tien Kung Te, 11 months, and Mocha Ming Yun, a chocolate shar-pei with a \$2,000 stud fee.

Her pride and joy though is Tsu, a five-week shar-pei puppy with wrinkles from head to toe — even the bottoms of his feet are wrinkled. Of her shar-pei she says, "They're really just big marshmallows."

— LUCINDA DILLON

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