

Pet sitters provide care during holidays

For students traveling with pets or leaving them in Eugene, local businesses offer numerous services

Danielle Gillespie

Safety/Crime/Transportation Reporter

Frankie, a 14-year-old former alley cat, now resides in the home of graduate student Georgia Bellingsley, and for winter break she will be heading with Bellingsley to Sacramento, Calif., to visit family.

But Frankie doesn't like to travel. "She is very vocally expressive that she's ticked off," Bellingsley said. "She meows loudly, scratches on her carrier cage and gives me dirty looks."

Bellingsley visited with her local veterinarian and has decided to give Frankie a sedative to make the seven-hour drive easier on her.

"It doesn't put her to sleep; it just mellows her," she said.

Many University students will have to decide whether to travel with their pets for the holidays or find someone to care for them while they're away.

Eugene Animal Hospital Veterinarian Assistant Dave Rataj said some animals don't mind confined spaces, while it makes others act neurotic. Rataj suggested that students give their dogs and cats a sedative called Acepromazine before taking them in an automobile or airplane. Acepromazine relaxes pets for about six to eight hours.

The sedative can be picked up at most veterinarian clinics, he said.

If students plan to take their pets in an automobile, Rataj said they should also stop frequently at rest areas and let their pet out to walk around. And if they are planning to take their pet on an airplane, they should make sure to give their pet plenty of blankets because they are often stored in the cargo area.

"A lot of animals have separation anxiety and might need to be relaxed," he said.

Students should also check with the airline to make sure the animal has all of the necessary vaccinations to make the trip, Rataj added.

For those students who decide not to travel with their pets, the Eugene area has several pet-sitting businesses. The sitters will come into the owner's home and care for their pets while they're away.

"This way, the pets get to stay in their own homes, and it's not so unnerving for them," The Critter Care Company owner Carla Cochrane said. "It's hard enough for them when their owners are gone."

The Critter Care Company looks after many types of pets, including snakes, lizards, hedgehogs, chickens, cats and dogs. Sitters' responsibilities can include anything from changing litter boxes to bringing in the mail, taking out the trash and giving animals their

medications, Cochrane said.

The price range varies depending on how many animals and the location of the owner's home, Cochrane said. Prices can be anywhere between \$12 and \$15 per day.

"Students should call as soon as possible," Cochrane said. "It's a very busy time of year, and probably most of the kennels are already booked."

Cochrane also advised that students leave their heat on at least 65 degrees while they are away be-

cause animals can get cold during the winter months.

"They have a fur coat, but they still get cold," she said.

Chambers Pet Sitting also takes care of a variety of animals, including hamsters, fish, birds, cats and dogs, Chambers Pet Sitting owner Debi Chambers said. The sitter will visit the home for about 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the number of pets.

The company does a lot of the same services as The Critter Care

Company, including watering the plants and giving animals walks, food and medicine.

The price range varies per animal. For a dog requiring three daily visits, it costs \$30 per day, and for a cat needing one daily visit, it costs \$12.50 per day.

"We are booking up really fast for winter break, so if students want a spot, they should call soon," Chambers said.

Contact the reporter at daniellegillespie@dailyemerald.com.

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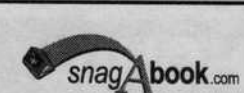
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