



An inflatable Nativity scene shows the birth of Christ in front of a home on Kurtz Street in Enterprise.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain  
**Tree of Giving:** From left, Randy Morgan and Chad Stangel look over some of the 93 food baskets packed as volunteers get ready to distribute them along with bags of presents to area families Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, at the Enterprise Elks Lodge.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain  
**Longtime local concert pianist Gail Swart, left, joins Rebecca Lenahan for a duet Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, at Enterprise Christian Church while Lenahan's violin students wait to perform their first-ever Christmas concert held in a church.**

## Tips for giving a pet as a gift this Christmas

By ANN BLOOM  
For the Wallowa County  
Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — If you have children in your home, or you reared children, you may have experienced the following conversation, or one like it, at some point in your life:

Child: “Mom? Dad? Can I have a puppy for Christmas?”

Parent: “A puppy? Uh...”

Perhaps you’ve even experienced it this year. If so, and you’re wondering what to do, take heart. The Wallowa County Humane Society can help you navigate the tricky waters of holiday pet giving so everyone has a safe and happy pet giving and gifting experience.

“Realistically, (a pet) is a gift for the whole family,” said Carol Vencill, president of the Wallowa County Humane Society.

She said it’s best if you know the person really wants a pet, if it’s another person or a relative, other than children.

“It’s a very personal choice. How can we choose for someone else?” she said.

She said the Humane Society feels gifting a pet to someone is an important decision.

The Humane Society takes each case individually, said Vencill. A friend may have good intentions, but “if their friend isn’t where they need to be” when it comes to getting or receiving a pet, then it may not be a good idea.

“It’s important to have a plan. To think beyond the excitement, and be prepared,” she said.

She mentioned going on walks and teaching the pet the rules of the household and what will happen to the

pet when people must work eight hours a day and the pet will be alone. All things to consider before bringing a pet into someone’s life.

“There’s a way to do things if you really want it,” she said. “What we recommend is buy the toys, the treats, a bed — items the pet will need. Wrap them up and give that to the person for Christmas.”

Then tell the person they can pick out their pet after Christmas when there is not so much commotion, and it will be less stressful for the pet. This will build up the

pet, they (the children) can take on responsibilities.”

With all the parties going on, and people on vacation, the Humane Society will keep a pet for someone, in foster care, and allow the family to pick it up after the holidays. This helps make the transition to a new home as smooth as possible for the pet, she explained. She stressed the importance of teaching the pet the rules of the family.

“If you don’t give it time, it’s hard on the pet,” she said.

If supervision is not

“is just another hazard,” she said.

She added that people are also baking more and there are more sugary treats and chocolate around. Chocolate is poisonous to pets, as are raisins, all things that can go into holiday baked goods. It goes without saying that alcohol is a big no-no for animals. Pets can suffer from alcohol poisoning, just as people can, stated Vencill.

“Dogs like carrots. Carrots are great for dogs — not raisins or grapes,” she said.

The Humane Society is happy to help with any questions a person or family has regarding how to safeguard their pet during this holiday time or how to give a pet as a gift. The Humane Society number is 541-263-0336.

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— Carol Vencill, president of the Wallowa County Humane Society

anticipation of getting the pet.

“It’s part of the fun — the anticipation after the holidays — we get to go look for the pet. Prepare for that puppy before you ever bring it home,” she said.

Another idea, she said, is to take a picture of the pet and put it in a gift basket, or a stocking, with the treats and toys, and give the basket, to the person/child and say, “Here’s your kitty!” The Humane Society currently has a waiting list for dogs, but has many kittens available for adoption.

As to when is an appropriate age to give a pet to a child, Vencill says it depends on the supervision and the parent. There are different stages of a child and a dog, she explained.

“Pets are a wonderful thing,” she said, but stressed that a baby and a toddler appear different to a dog, than an adult or a child. “When you take on a

new pet can be placed in a crate in a quiet place with food, water and toys, to wait for quieter moments, if the pet seems stressed, by all the busy goings on of a new household. Or the pet’s crate can be placed in a corner of a room so it can still see the activities, and be part of the family, but have its own space.

The holidays can be a joyous and fun-filled time, but also full of a lot of activity, which can be stressful for a new pet. The holidays are also full of things that are not normally available and can pose a danger to pets. Things such as decorations. Vencill said lights pose a hazard because “a puppy or cat can chew through a light cord.

Ornaments can break. Garland — popcorn and cranberries — pose a choking hazard. Tinsel, which is now plastic-coated, is long and can be swallowed and

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**Happy Holidays Wallowa County!**

Wallowa County CHIEFTAIN

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