ADOPTING AN ADULT DOG

THANK YOU FOR CARING ABOUT LIFE

It's easy for anyone to fall in love with a puppy or kitten. But it takes a special person or family to adopt an adult pet. You'll find there are many advantages in acquiring a mature dog. The love and companionship you'll share are only the beginning.

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

With a puppy you are taking a chance, not knowing how large it will be, or what sort of disposition it will have. With a grown- or nearly grown-pet, what you see is what you get! However, what you do not see is your new pet's past. It's important to remember this. The dog may or may not have been housebroken or trained. He has certainly learned to live in different patterns. Be patient, and give him time to become accustomed to your pattern.

HOME AT LAST

On his first day home, show him where he is to sleep. Where fresh water is always available, when and where he is to be fed. If he is an indoor dog take him outside at frequent intervals (every hour or two) so that he may relieve himself. Until he learns the new housebreaking routine you will have to be very watchful. Mistakes will happen-especially during the first few days when the dog feels strange in his new environment.

If the dog makes a mistake in the house firmly and loudly say "NO!" And take him outside instantly. You MUST catch the dog in the act if the correction is to be effective. A few minutes later is too late. Praise him every time he eliminates outside.

PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

During the first week expect an occasional problem. Your new pet doesn't know you, doesn't know why he has come here or what is expected of him. He needs to be treated with watchful kindness. Anticipate problems before they occur. Don't leave tempting items such as shoes, clothing, handbags or dinner plates within reach of the dog. Having a new pet can have quite a tidying effect on a family!

MY TIME IS YOUR TIME

Plan to spend time with your new family member. He will appreciate it and respond warmly. Long walks, periods of play, or just being together will make him feel happy and secure. Many families find that the best time to acquire a new pet is during vacation, when they have ample time to spend with him.

EASY DOES IT

Children are always excited about a new pet. Don't allow them to overwhelm him with attention and handling. They should be taught to play gently with him, and never to disturb him when he is sleeping or eating. Parental supervision is important.

CALL ME BY MY RIGHTFUL NAME

You've probably given your dog a new name. Use it frequently and try always to associate it with good things: affection, approval, fun.

YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND

Be consistent. Decide on the rules and stick to them. For example, be sure you and your children understand whether or not the dog is allowed on the furniture. Does that mean all the furniture or just some of it? If you change the rules the dog will be confused. Don't allow him to do something one time and forbid it the next.

BASIC TRAINING

Obedience training can be very helpful to the adult dog and to you. However, it is not the same as training a puppy who is a blank slate. Your dog may have learned commands other than the ones you use. It will take awhile for him to adjust to yours. You can train the dog yourself or take him to an obedience class with a qualified trainer. Wait until after the first week to start formal training. The training period can be a good way to create a strong bond between you and your dog. In addition the dog learns what you expect of him and how to please you. Both of these things are very important to him.

MEMBER OF THE FAMILY

Most dogs adjust quickly to their new families within a week or two, some take longer. Very few are unable to adjust at all. In most cases the dog will be a well adjusted member of the family within a month. In fact-you may find it difficult to remember a time when he wasn't one of you.

HERE'S TO A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE TOGETHER!!!

**NOTE: Most of the above also applies to puppies, with the additional caution that puppies are babies and need their quiet time and rest just like human babies.