

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS... WITH A DOG!

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a little puppy underneath the tree.

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me, the cost of two cans of quality dog food a day or a \$25.00 weekly food bill for the next 15 years.

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me, three walks a day or an average of two hours out of every day for the next decade and a half.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, four paws that need regular nail trims at \$15 a pop for the next 15+ years.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, five piles of poop!

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, six chewed shoes, one broken ornament and a \$100 fee just to walk into the 24 hour emergency veterinary clinic.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a scavenger hunt that lasted 7 hours when someone accidentally left the door open and my puppy ran away... at night... when it was raining and 35 degrees.

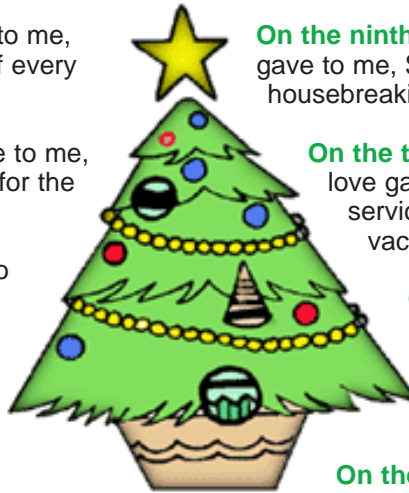
On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, \$800 to cover surgical spaying, annual heartworm medication, flea & tick prevention, 2 annual vet visits and just enough left to pay for gasoline to get me to and from the vet's office.

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, \$900 to install new carpet after housebreaking accidents ruined the rug.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, ten days of pet sitting service (or \$500) so I could go on vacation and know my puppy is safe.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, 11 trips to the dog park so my fenceless dog could finally run free.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a nudge to wake up from a dream that I had been given a puppy under the tree who clearly needs more than just love to be healthy and happy.



Puppies aren't presents - they're living, breathing creatures that require constant attention for the first two years and thoughtful attention after that for the rest of their lives.

Puppies - especially those purchased at a pet shop - are NOT returnable and come from kennels that breed specifically for profit, versus the health and welfare of the dogs. Most commercial breeding kennels (or puppy mills) are prisons for female dogs forced to produce litter after litter sometimes in horrific conditions. Most female breeder dogs only live to 5 or 6 years of age (if they're lucky) and are usually euthanized at this early age once they can no longer produce a litter that may be sold.

Many puppies sold at pet shops carry genetic and hereditary defects and some are so sick that vet bills quickly run into the thousands of dollars. In Pennsylvania, the maximum amount a consumer may recover from a pet shop for a sick puppy purchase is the price of the dog.

If you're struggling in today's tough economic times, please don't acquire a puppy unless you're capable of providing at least \$1,500 a year for quality food, veterinary care and a suitable environment that includes daily walks, toys to avoid the destruction of property, training and your personal time to give affection.

Ask yourself... "How will this puppy fit into my life in ...5 years, ...10 years, ...even 15 years!!"
Dogs shouldn't be discarded when you ... have a baby, ... move to a new home, ... begin a new lifestyle! Plan Ahead and make sure a dog fits into those plans.
It's nothing less than a lifetime commitment (your dog's lifetime), as they become a PERMANENT family member!



Finally, the holiday is the worst time to bring a puppy into the home: it's too hectic, there are too many dangerous items lying about and most people are usually too busy to take the puppy out every two hours during the housebreaking phase. It's just not fair to the puppy.

Bringing a companion animal into the home should never be done on impulse. Instead, take the time to investigate which breed might be best for you, your family and the lifestyle you're comfortable with and then do the right thing: find a shelter or rescue that can provide (for a fraction of the price of a pet shop) the dog that fits into your family!