Letter to the Editor

Just suppose:

Suppose you are waiting at a bus stop, all alone for awhile. Then a stranger walks up, hair a little long, clothes a little different. Then you see the bus approaching. Since you was there first you can get on first. The bus stops in front of you and the opens. The driver says, last bus to heaven, room for one. You start to get on, but you step aside and tell the stranger he can go. He gets on and the door closes, but the bus just sets there and the door opens again. The stranger is standing there with an outstretched, scared hand saying, you can sit by me

D.Bullock
Ellston, IA

Write a Letter to the Editor...

We welcome letters to the editor. All letters should be kept to 200 words or less, and must be signed and include a contact phone number for verification.

Please email your letter to:
news@mtayrnews.com
or mail it to:
PO Box 346, Mount Ayr, IA 50854

Pets as a gift? Think first

stock photo

By JEFF SNYDER

MOUNT AYR, Iowa — It's that time of year again. A time for giving as well a receiving. One item frequently found on the Christmas list of children and even adults is a new puppy or kitten. It's important to make sure that this gift decision is well thought out and decided upon as a family or at least with the full understanding as to what goes into this decision.

Generally, the purchase of a pet is a happy time but it's important to think of the long-term implications of acquiring a new family member.

Is the child old enough to take on this new responsibility? Does everyone understand the commitment it takes to bring a new being into your home, even if the recipient is physically capable of handling the rigors of a new pet? These are the questions that need to be addressed prior to picking up your new friend.

Here are a few ideas that may suffice as a stand in to an actual puppy with a bow tied around its neck.

Consider scheduling a visit to a local rescue group which can introduce your child to professional companion animal care givers. These experts can share with your child the important things to consider when picking out a new pet.

A gift basket with toys or grooming supplies that could represent the gift that is coming. If a pet does not appear to be feasible for one reason or another you could also offer to help sponsor a dog or cat that are specially trained as support animals frequently used in hospitals or long-term care facilities which always need financial help.

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year but it can be hectic and scary for a new animal. Perhaps major decisions such as these can be delayed until such time the family has time to fashion a working plan for both them and their new family addition.

Companion animal experts encourage everyone to consider the pet adoption route.

Every year thousands of dogs and cats end up in shelters as a result of owners who were not fully informed or prepared for the large responsibility that comes with pet ownership.

New owners can quickly become overwhelmed and eventually end up surrendering the animal to a shelter thereby increasing the problems facing rescue groups and shelters all over the country.

Adoption solves a bunch of these problems. New owners get to meet their pet up close and personal and get a chance to test the chemistry that is almost always presents in these meeting. The dog or cat wins, the shelter wins and promises are fulfilled.

Responsible ownership contributes to less stress on adopting families, reduced pressure on shelters and a diminished population of unadopted pets.

It's Friday! RICK FRIDAY

The Peak of Winter

I don't remember too many mild winters when I was a kid. We had summer chores and winter chores, but it seemed to me we had a lot more chores in the winter. My parents wanted me to be a kid, but only after my chores were done. We raised a lot of hogs on the farm and in the winter we had chores every morning, noon and night. Keeping water from freezing in the winter was by far the biggest chore, but we had a large red barn where most of the hogs were raised and in the winter my job was to bed them down with straw.

Extra bedding was to help reduce the hogs from piling up on each other to stay warm and suffocating the pigs on the bottom of the pile. I had to slowly enter the barn without spooking them or they would stampede and all run through the doorway at the same time, hurting them, hurting me and making the doorway much wider. Dad was very strict about being quiet when entering the barn because hundreds of fat hogs running through a doorway less than four feet wide could be a real disaster.

One winter the snow was so high it reached the eves of that red barn. I always had one of those little devils standing on one of my shoulders daring me to do crazy stunts. On the other shoulder was an angel double dog daring the little devil to convince me to do those stupid stunts.

After I completed my chores I went to the garage and grabbed a wooden toboggan and pulled it back to the big red barn. I walked up the snow drift to the eve of the barn then clinched the toboggan rope in my teeth and used the braided lightning rod cable to pull myself and the toboggan to the peak of that very large barn.

It was a bit of a challenge, but I managed to get the toboggan pointed in the right direction while maintaining my balance on the peak of the barn. There was little thought to the consequences when I straddled that toboggan and took the ride of my life. I was traveling at the speed of sound when I flew off the eve of the barn and across the hog lot and into the fence. The sound of a high speed wooden toboggan sliding off the grit on asphalt shingles sent hundreds of frightened fat hogs through the side of the big red barn and opened it up like the red sea. My father was a gentle man, but that day he was angry everywhere. Looking back at my childhood I kind of understand why he and mom only had two kids.

Rick Friday

...Just Sayin JEFF SNYDER

The Pen is mightier than the sword

Are words that important? I would say they are critical.

Throughout history, words have embedded themselves into the fabric of our lives and subsequently changed the way societies act.

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" Franklin Delano Roosevelt

"Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." John F. Kennedy

"One small step for man...one giant leap for mankind" Niel Armstrong.

"Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Ronald Regan "

These are just a few examples of words that have endured through time.

It's easy to pick out words that are uttered in the public forum by famous people, but words spoken by regular people are no less impactful.

The compassionate and assuring words spoken to a losing high school basketball team by a coach that lives by the motto "It's only one game, and I'm proud of every single one of you"

The softly delivered eulogy spoken to a grieving family reeling from the loss of a loved one. Or the comforting embrace of a close friend followed by the words..."I'm here for you."

These are examples of the healing power of words when delivered with love and caring.

Unfortunately, words can have a more sinister impact when delivered in anger or with hate.

Social media has created an environment whereby unfettered and reckless speech has sadly taken root. People are emboldened by the relative safety of these electronic hideouts, which subsequently fuels more and more remote attacks.

The first amendment is amongst the most misunderstood of the freedoms granted us as Americans by the Constitution . While we all find refuge under these protections, we still must maintain our responsibility for guarded speech.

Besmirching ones employer over the airwaves is one easy example of the potential consequences that await the reckless. Even professional athletes must abide by the "rules" outlined in their contracts or risk the forfeiture of vast fortunes they have attained.

As we come into the holiday season it's a great time to turn over a new leaf. It's an opportunity to extend kindness rather than hate. It is a time for all to unite and enjoy the harmony that outreach creates.

So, stand under the mistletoe and say something nice. You may be surprised by the results.

If you still want to abuse words, wait until New Years when you lie for the tenth year in a row about your intended weight loss.

Just Sayin