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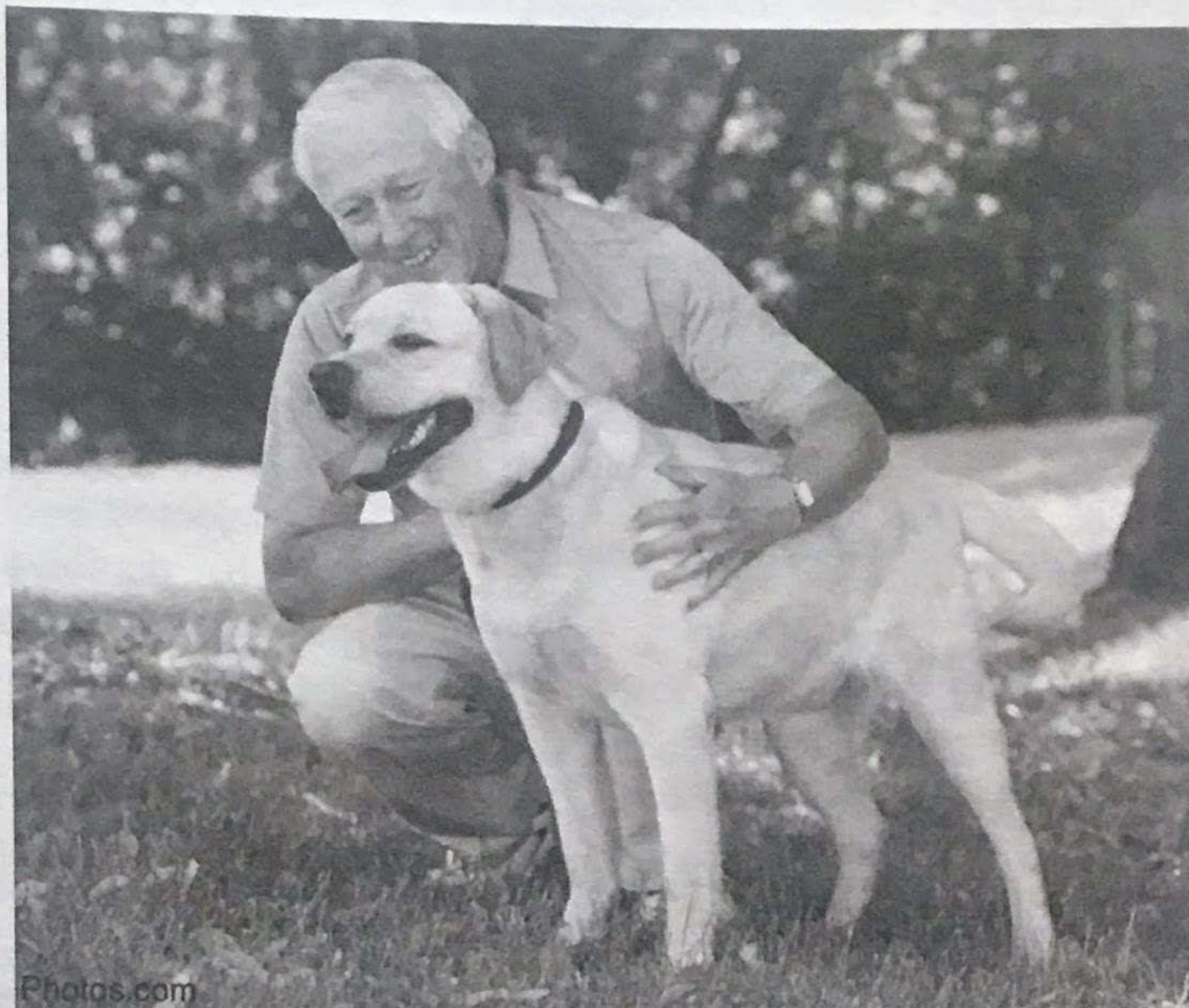
Both Parties Benefit When You Adopt A Pet

By Kathleen Harte Simone

The benefits of pet ownership, according to Kimberley Bonanni, Humane Educator at the Montgomery County SPCA, far exceed the companionship and loyalty that furry friends most often bring. In fact, studies have shown that pets actually aid in their owners' well being. New pet owners often see a reduction in blood pressure and decreased visits to the doctor's office. In addition, shares Bonanni, "having a pet forces you to be well. You have to take care of your pet, and so you need to be mobile and healthy."

Seniors interested in pet ownership enjoy discounts at the Bucks and Montgomery County SPCAs. In Montgomery County, residents 65+ receive 50% off adoption fees; kittens and cats are \$21.20, puppies and dogs are \$23.85; and small critters including rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters are \$2.65. In conjunction with the county's Social Service Department, the Montgomery County SPCA will also cover the cost of pet food for financially qualifying residents.

The Bucks County SPCA now offers a "Seniors for Seniors" program, which matches older cats (5 years or more) with senior citizens. All eligible cats are spayed or neutered, tested for feline leukemia, and given distemper



shots. They have also been microchipped for identification purposes. Normally adoption fees at the Bucks County SPCA for a cat are \$50.00, but seniors may adopt for \$25.00.

There are additional benefits to adopting a senior pet. "First of all, their personalities are well established. In other words, you know what you are getting and there are very few surprises," Bonanni said, "Older pets are typically not as active. You don't have to worry about a puppy tearing through your home. And, they are house trained by then."

Bonanni stresses that seniors should take

their physical limitations into consideration when adopting. Be wary of adopting a large dog if you can't lift him to bathe. Don't choose a cat that sheds a lot if vacuuming is difficult. And if your balance is not perfect, be sure to find a pet that does not jump.

By adopting a pet you are not only providing a loving home to an otherwise lonely animal, but you will also be the adoring recipient of many hugs and (wet) kisses!

To find out more about the SPCA near you, visit the counties' websites at www.montgomerycountyspca.org or www.bcspca.org or

call: 610-825-0111 (*Conshohocken*), 215-886-8802 (*Abington*), 610-489-7510 (*Perkiomenville*), and 215-794-7425 (*Lahaska*).

Adoptions are limited to specific times at each location.

The Montgomery and Bucks County SPCAs offer varied programs and services including adoption, shelter for lost animals, foster care, education, and volunteer and donor opportunities. Contact the offices for details.