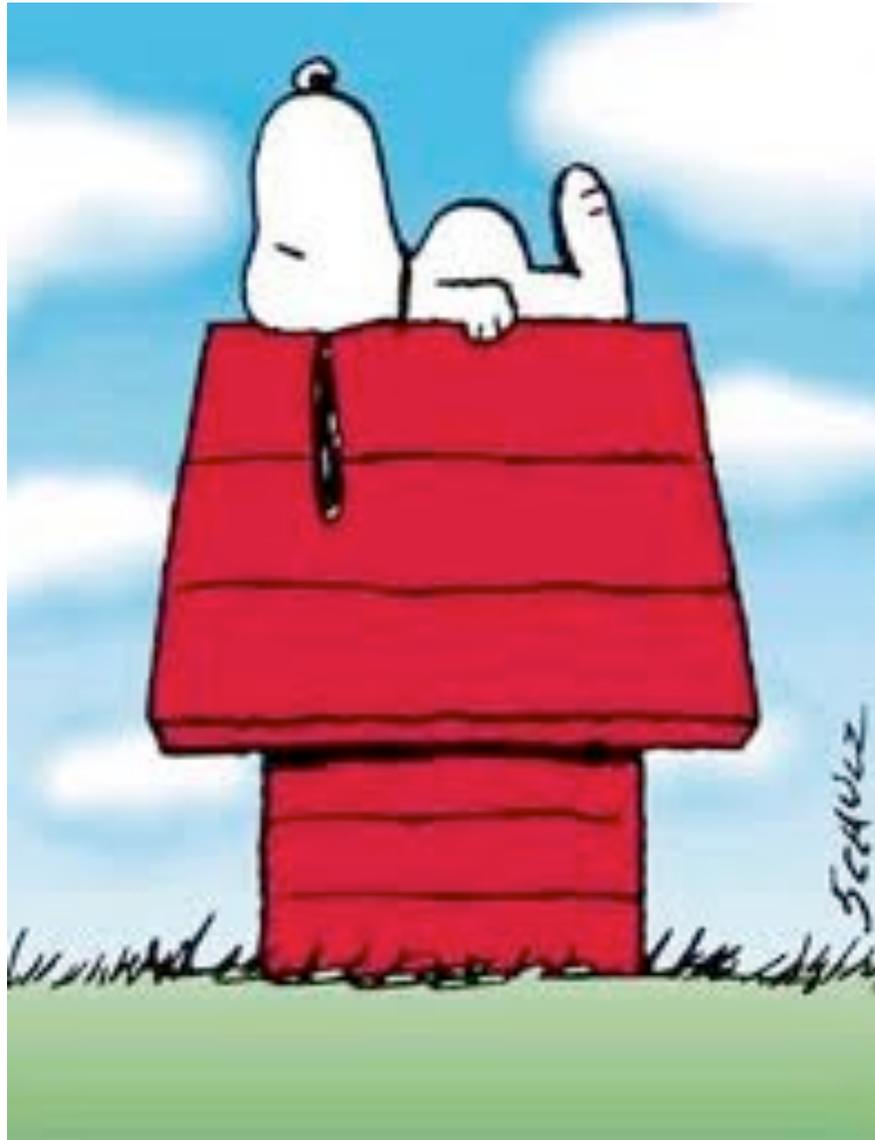


Too Much Pampering!



By Melina Asteriadis



It costs money to own a dog. People know that when they first buy or adopt one. But for some people, it doesn't have to cost as much as it does. Why? Because sometimes dog owners spend money on things that are not necessary. For example, buying a fancy dog house for \$900 when instead, you can buy a simple bed and keep it in the house. It's these things that make the cost of owning a dog even higher.



One of the biggest responsibilities of owning a dog is walking it. Dogs need their daily exercise, and they also need a time and place to use the bathroom. For some people, walking their dog is a good thing, because it's nice to get outside and have some fresh air. But for some people, it's difficult to find the time to walk their dog. Whether it's because of work, or because of school, it can be a challenge. This is why some people hire a person to walk their dogs for them. It's usually about \$5 to \$10 per walk, but what it really is, is an extra expense.



One cost of owning a dog is grooming. There are many different grooming stores around the city, and some are more expensive than others. But there are some things that make the cost of dog grooming more expensive, or less expensive. For example, the bigger the dog is, the higher the price. A small dog can cost \$75 to groom, while an extra-large dog can cost \$135! Another thing that can change the cost is the type of dog. It costs more money to groom a long-haired dog than a short-haired dog. There are also mini-grooms and full-grooms. Full-grooms cost \$10-\$20 more. When pets are being groomed, they get a lot of attention. The professional groomers shampoo/bathe them, blow-dry them, brush them, clean their ears, clip their nails, and even give them some cologne to wear. The washes usually last about an hour. People can also groom their pets, but they have to have the right supplies. A grooming table can cost \$100 to \$150. As you can see, grooming is a big part of the cost of owning a dog.



There are dog stores on almost every block, because dog owners visit pet supply stores almost every week. Whether it's to buy dog food, treats, leashes, or toys, dog owners go to supply stores a lot. These stores have everything from food bowls to collars, from sweaters to litter boxes. As you can tell, the supply stores have all the things that you may need to own a dog or cat or parrot or fish.



People also have to spend money on treats and dog food. Dog food is key to a long and healthy dog life. Dog treats are sold in all kinds of different shapes and sizes, different tastes and flavors. There are many different flavors of dog food. Beef, chicken, fish, pork, are just a couple of the variety of dog food flavors to choose from. The price of dog food depends on the brand, flavor, and quantity. Dog treats are usually used on walks. When a dog goes to the bathroom, it is given a dog treat. Dogs are also given treats after finishing their dinner, as a kind of dessert.



Vets are expensive, but very necessary. When your dog is sick, the vet is the place to go. The vet will help make your dog better, but it costs a lot of money. Surgeries, checkups, neutering/spraying, are just some of the things that send the monthly bill sky high. The vet checks your dog's ears, teeth, feels the internal organs, listens to the heart, and much more. Annual checkups to the vet cost around \$40. Neutering costs \$50-\$85, and spraying costs \$50-\$100, depending on which vet you go to. Surgeries can cost up to \$500. Although the vet is helpful, it's another big cost.



Now it's time for the things that people buy for their pets that they don't really need. For example, a birthday party for your dog. This includes music, cake, a freshwater bar, a professional photographer to take photos, gift bags, and decorations. The overall cost is about \$100. It makes sense to want to celebrate your dog's birthday, but spending that much money is not a smart thing. Another example is doggy bags, to carry a small dog in. Why not just walk your dog on a normal leash? Why spend an extra \$25 on a thing that is not necessary? In my opinion, dog owners need to start thinking about the right choice to make.



I was walking on the street one day, when I saw a woman walking a dog. I thought this to be absolutely normal. I see people walking their dogs all the time. But then I got a closer look at the dog. It was a small Chihuahua, prancing down the street in quick little steps. It had a diamond collar on, and a miniature hat and coat. To top it all of, it had little tiny shoes on its paws. I had never seen such a stylish dog! Walking down the street some more, I noticed more examples of awesomely-dressed dogs. This amazed me. I had never thought about or seen dogs with so many fancy clothes and accessories, and seeing so many all of a sudden, made me wonder: Why do people want their dogs to look so chic? What do they gain from it? After researching online, I realized that not only do people buy expensive clothes for their dogs, but they also buy other things that they don't really need.

Interview with Bill Hubner

Melina Asteriadis: Do you ever take your dogs to grooming stores?

Bill Hubner: We only take them once a month to cut their nails.

MA: How many times a day do you walk them?

BH: At least 3 times a day. The first walk is early in the morning, so that they can do their business, and this one only lasts for about 15 minutes. The second is longer, about 1 hour, and it's so that they can exercise. The third walk is also short, and it's another time to use the bathroom before bedtime.

MA: How often do you have to buy dog food?

BH: Well, the bag I buy is 30 pounds, so the food supplies last about a month.

MA: Do you agree that people pamper their pets a lot?

BH: Yes. And they also spend a lot of money on accessories, like bags for their dogs. The vet is very expensive, and my dogs have health insurance, so that is an extra monthly cost. I would say that I spend about \$4,000 a year on my pets.



Why do people spend so much money on things for their pets? To keep them happy and healthy. But why do people spend extra money on things for their pets that they don't really need? Sometimes, it seems to me that people put their pet's needs ahead of their own. Owners love their dogs very much, which must probably explain why they buy so many things for them. I think it's sweet that people care so much about their pets and feel the need to pamper them every day, but I don't think it's a good idea to spend about \$100 on a birthday party for your dog. This brings me back to why people buy fancy clothes and accessories for their dogs. I can't think of anything that they gain from having a fancily dressed dog, I can only think of the things that they lose: money. Do they feel proud when their dog has something special? I think that people should continue to give their pets the things that are the key to a happy and healthy lifestyle, but I also think that they should tone down the spending on other irrelevant things.

