

## PERSPECTIVE

Headline: Those Dalmatians

In 1996, Disney came out with the movie, *101 Dalmatians*, and it was a box-office success. Many viewers fell in love with the cute, spotted puppies on the big screen and decided to get one for themselves.

When they brought those adorable little puppies home, however, they found that living with a Dalmatian is an entirely different experience from watching one on the movie screen. Soon, according to the Associated Press, all over the United States, dog shelters saw a dramatic increase in the number of Dalmatians being abandoned by their owners. A Florida organization called Dalmatian Rescue took in 130 Dalmatians in the first nine months of 1997. Usually, they get that many dogs in two and a half years.

Dalmatians can be a challenge to own for several reasons. They grow to be big dogs, weighing as much as 70 pounds. They are rambunctious and require a lot of exercise. They can be moody, becoming restless and even destructive if they don't get enough activity. They shed year-round, and 10 percent of Dalmatians are born deaf.

Tracey Carson, a spokeswoman for the Wisconsin Humane Society, says: "Although Dalmatians are beautiful puppies, and can be wonderful dogs, you have to know what you are getting into."

Whether with pets or with people, infatuation with someone's appearance is a poor foundation for a relationship.

Conversely, the associates of Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home encounter people daily with a variety of physical challenges and setbacks, who show the effects of aging, and yet they see the inner beauty of an accumulation of years of experiences leading to wisdom and understanding.

--Beecher Hunter