

PRESS RELEASE

How to Leave Some of Your Estate to Your Pet

Fat Cats & Lucky Dogs

TORONTO - Prism Publishing Inc. will shortly release a new book *Fat Cats and Lucky Dogs*, distributed by Galye-Yam Inc., that explains how pet owners can make sure their pets are properly taken care of, if circumstances prevent their owners from being able to do so themselves.

The book outlines strategies for including pets in wills, setting up trusts to take care of companion animals, and less formal arrangements.

Though the book is deadly serious, it is peppered with interesting factoids and information such as:

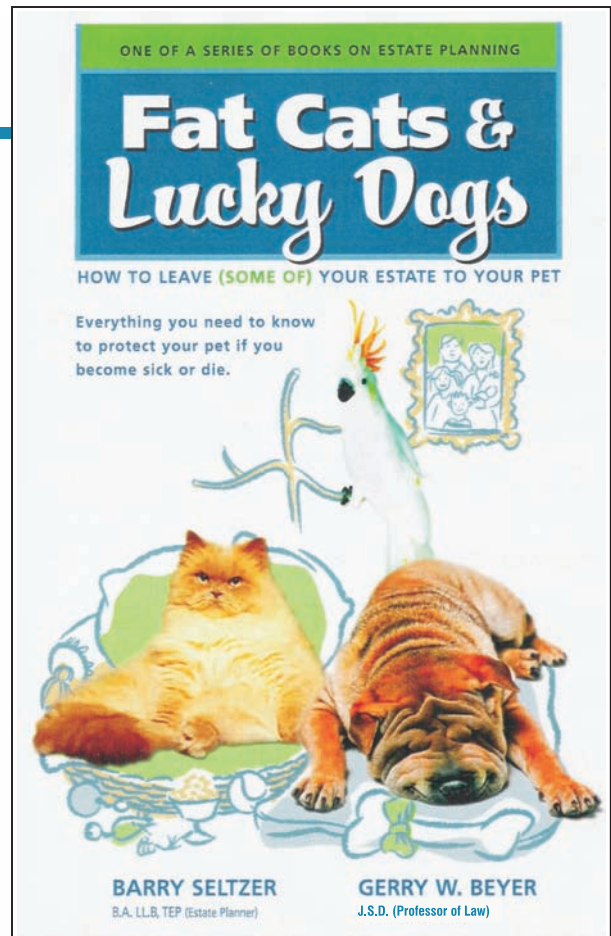
FACTOID

In Canada, an Alberta truck driver was ordered to pay his ex-wife \$200 a month in dog support starting in 2004 - plus a \$2,000 retroactive payment. Under the ruling, the truck driver was ordered to reimburse his ex-wife for the food, health bills and general caregiving for their St. Bernard, **Crunchy**. It was believed to be the first court order of its kind in Canada, and perhaps North America. Visitation rights were not included.

In the United States, bitter custody disputes over pets are becoming more common and are often costly. A California couple's fight in 2000 over Gigi, their pointer-greyhound adopted from a shelter, cost more than \$100,000 in legal fees. The three-day trial included testimony from animal experts, who were called on to determine which home would better suit **Gigi**. Eventually, the wife was granted full custody after a day in the life video of the dog was played in court.

"The sad fact is that many pet owners either die or go into long-term care without having made any provisions for their pets" says co-author Barry Seltzer, a lawyer who practices in estate law. "In many cases these animals fall through the cracks and come to a bad end. Most pet owners would be horrified to find out that with a little planning they could have prevented their beloved dog or cat from spending its last days in a concrete compound at a shelter, unwanted and unloved."

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The book points out that in most jurisdictions pets are considered just another type of property and cannot directly benefit from a will or trust.

You can't leave a set of dishes to a table, and you can't leave money to a cat" says Seltzer. "So, if you want to leave money for your pet's care after you die, you have to find ways acceptable to the court."

Professor Gerry W. Beyer of the Texas Tech University School of Law in Lubbock, Texas, is an acknowledged specialist in the area of estate planning for pets. He points out that legal, enforceable pet trusts are becoming more common and estate lawyers everywhere in the United States are increasingly being asked to set up some type of arrangement for the ongoing care of pets.

In addition to the legal issues, the book also includes an extensive set of supplementary material that covers pets throughout history, including many of the rich and/or famous, expected lifespan of various types of pets, problems affecting exotic animals and a variety of surprising facts about pets.