Dear Editor:

Over the past couple of months I have noticed what I believe to be an increase in dogs that have been abandoned in Aurora. They are quite easy to identify -- they are the animals that are usually found walking in the middle of the road, not knowing any better, scared, not sure what to do when an oncoming vehicle approaches. They head for the ditch and watch you pass by. You can see they are confused. They usually are a large breed.

If you are lucky, you may be able to contain the dog or at least keep an eye on their whereabouts as you contact the police on your cell phone and they are picked up and taken tot he animal shelter. Or they can end up in your yard, scared but so friendly. Collars have either been removed or tags ripped off. These are the fortunate ones, the ones that happen to be found. God help those who are too scared to hang around until help can be contacted. How heartbreaking to see a domestic animal run in fear and you never know what happened to that animal.

In the last two weeks, two domestic dogs -- both large breeds, have wandered into our yard. Yesterday it was a beautiful collie that, upon closer inspection, had been abused. We put the dog on a chain in our yard, called the police and gave the poor animal water while waiting. He literally fell to the ground and lapped up the water as we waited. Such a gentle animal that obviously had experienced neglect and eventually was purposely thrown away as a bag of garbage.

I looked up the statistics for the State of Nebraska, as it pertains to the number of dogs that were taken to the animal shelters in 2011. Keep in mind, these were the lucky ones who were not dropped off in the country to fend for themselves or in town when someone moved or just did not care: 8,672 dogs in one year.

It boggles my mind and breaks my heart because this is completely avoidable.

It seems that some people don’t consider the fact that the cute little puppy junior begs for will eventually grow up into an adult animal that may not be a good match for the home. They are loved and coddled for about five months or so, and then junior is bored, the parents don’t care and the poor animal is tossed away.

Very simple steps can be taken to ensure that a breed is a good fit for your home, and it seems that few prospective owners in this town take this time (it's about five minutes, by the way) or make a simple phone call to the vet clinic.

Is it going to be a large breed? Do you have a fenced-in yard where the dog can be played with and be safe? Will junior or mom and dad remember to feed it and water it? Can you give it the attention it needs and afford the vet care it will need, small or large breed? Do you want the dog to have puppies? Will you take steps to ensure the animal is spayed or neutered if you do not want the dog to have puppies?

Honestly, I feel disgusted that these simple steps I have mentioned even have to be written in this letter. How many dogs have wandered onto my property when I have not been here? How many dogs have wandered onto your property and you did not pick up the phone, called the police and ensured the safety of the animal?

But more importantly, why do people continue to purchase little junior a puppy without thinking first of what comes along with that decision. Toys are quite convenient and a much better option, especially when it is no longer wanted. Toys don't grow up, need care and when no longer wanted can easily be donated to a child who can use it.

In the grand scheme of things, with all that is going on in the world, this may sound petty. There are things going on that we cannot control, but this is one situation we can control. If you cannot handle an animal, get a bike.

As I finish this letter, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the animal shelter we are so fortunate to have in Aurora. I want to thank the police department for taking the time to come load these dogs into their cars and simply drive them to the facility where they are at least safe, taken care of and eventually adopted out to families who truly have done their homework and have the animal for all the right reasons... to love and be loved by these wonderful animals.

Cindy Brosman
Aurora