

TODAYS

Animal News



Man's best friend. Or his worst enemy? See the "big bite" inside.

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TODAYS ANIMAL NEWS

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The big bite . . .

By Judson Snyder

Ouch! A million or more americans will be bitten this year. One of them may be you.

Dogs will be the prime offenders accounting for about 80 percent of the reported injuries. Although cats only get the credit for 10 percent of the bites, that is still 100,000 bites annually. The remaining 10 percent will be composed mostly of exotic animals and a very few farm animals.

What's happening to man's best friend? Animal bites are increasing every year. For nearly a decade, dog bites have topped the one million mark every year, and that's just the bites reported to police or health authorities. Experts theorize that another million or two go unreported.

What's the cause of this disgraceful and alarming number of pet attacks on humans every year? As

usual the pet cannot be blamed. It's misconduct and negligence on the part of the owner that must be faulted.

An informal survey conducted by Today's Animal News among veterinarians, humane society leaders and professional dog trainers came up with some reasons for the disturbing growth in dog bite cases. Not listed in any particular order, they include:

CLOSER QUARTERS: Open spaces in urban and rural areas are diminishing; housing costs are forcing more and more families to rent apartments or live in less expensive homes such as condos and townhouses. Yet, the family dog or cat goes with them no matter how cramped the living space must be. This means pets have a lot more contact with humans other than their family members, and less space to run away from unwanted

people. It also means larger breeds of dogs have less space to get rid of pent-up energy. All these factors add up to potential neurotic problems on the part of both dogs and their owners.

LOOSE DOGS: With less space, many dog owners simply open the door and let their dog out for a "little exercise" in the neighborhood. Quite often they become unwanted visitors to neighboring homes and gardens where they come in contact with hostile humans. A defensive reaction in such a situation often means another dog bite case. Or they are teased by neighborhood children which can easily mean another dog bite statistic. Also, loose dogs have a habit of forming in packs. Normally timid dogs can be emboldened with canine reinforcements at their side and can take on a more aggressive attitude than usual.

WRONG CHOICE OF BREEDS: All too often people buy dogs on impulse or sudden whim. They're captivated by the appearance of a blue ribbon show winner or the heroics of one dog on a television show or movie. Little concern is voiced for the temperament of the dog or whether it will get along with children and other family members. Often, a saluki or collie or St. Bernard winds up in a small apartment. The acquisition looks nice on a leash when taken for a walk in the neighborhood, but this ego gratification on the owner's side is not always matched with the compatibility on the canine's side. High-strung, nervous dogs contribute a lot to the dog bite totals if they are not obedience trained, or if confined in cramped quarters.

CRIME RATE: The boom in guard dogs is perhaps the most obvious reason for the rise in dog bites. Only a few of these aggressive animals are thoroughly enough trained to do their job properly. They tend to be over-protective and, under private ownership in homes or urban apartments, cause more trouble than they're worth. As one veterinarian put it, "the wrong people are buying the wrong dogs for the wrong reasons."

Naturally, the solution to reducing the number of dog bite cases is relatively simple. First of all, make sure the dog you want is suitable for the environment and family which it will be entering. You can get plenty of advice on this from professional kennels, dog trainers, dog club members and veterinarians.

Proper selection of a breed, or mixed breed, is merely a matter of checking the size of the dog, temperament and inherited characteristics to make sure it will be compatible with its new home.

The second important step is obedience classes. A well-trained dog will cause much less stress and strain in the home. A well-trained dog is under control. And since the dog is a follow-the-pack-leader (it's owner) by instinct, it will be a well-adjusted family member with obedience training. And, besides, you should find classes both rewarding and fun for you and your pet.

Dogs get "bad press"

Those "villain" dogs

"Pit bull mauls child!" This could be a lead story in almost any newspaper in the country. Dog bite stories have moved from the back page to page one importance as the public becomes increasingly aware of the dog as a problem in our society.

"The dog as a house pet is an endangered species," said Mildred Hamilton in a San Francisco Examiner article.

"Man has betrayed his best friend - now dogs will have their day," is part of the ad copy for a novel.

"It will be a long time before I want to see a dog again," is the Library Journal quote used to promote David Fisher's novel "The Pack." And after reading this shocking novel of wild dogs turning against humans, many people may not want to see a dog again.

If this "flesh-crawling thriller" isn't enough for you, move down the bookshelf to the Dell-Quicksilver book called "The Dogs." This one is well-written by Robert Calder, and it's billed as a novel of "pure, snarling terror." The New York Times sums it up with "human nature colliding with canine nature . . . the culmination of a 10,000 year misunderstanding."

The new role of the dog as a villain in books and movies is bad news for purebred dog fanciers. A flood of "bad press" can do much damage to the image of the dog in our society. And that "bad press" is growing as readers get a new perspective of "Fido."

The recent fad of exploiting man's fear-fascination of the morbid has run through such natural disasters as "Earthquake", and "Crack In The World" to man-made disasters like "Towering Inferno." The cycle has moved to animals with Jaws, "and "Dogs" could be next.

Sharks didn't have a lot of friends to lose from bad publicity but dog fanciers and breeders can suffer greatly. The television drama that portrayed dogs killing and turning on their masters led by a diabolical

Rottweiler gives potential dog buyers something to ponder.

And all the "bad press" isn't coming from fictionalized thrillers. Such conservative publications as the Wall Street Journal and National Wildlife carry stories on the problems of wild dogs.

"Anti-dog voices are getting shriller," says author Robert Calder. "owning an attack dog is like having a hand grenade on the coffee table," says Calder. "Sooner or later someone will come along and detonate it."

The highly respected animal authority Roger Caras, a friend of responsible purebred dog people, talking about the growing dangers of packs of feral dogs in National Wildlife, cites an increase in the "coy-dog" or "brush wolf". These results of domestic dogs breeding with coyotes are the cause of growing concern to ranchers and stockmen. Georgia conservationists estimate their state alone is with a half million feral dogs which are responsible for 5,000 cattle deaths a year. In Pennsylvania deer kills by dogs tripled in just one year.

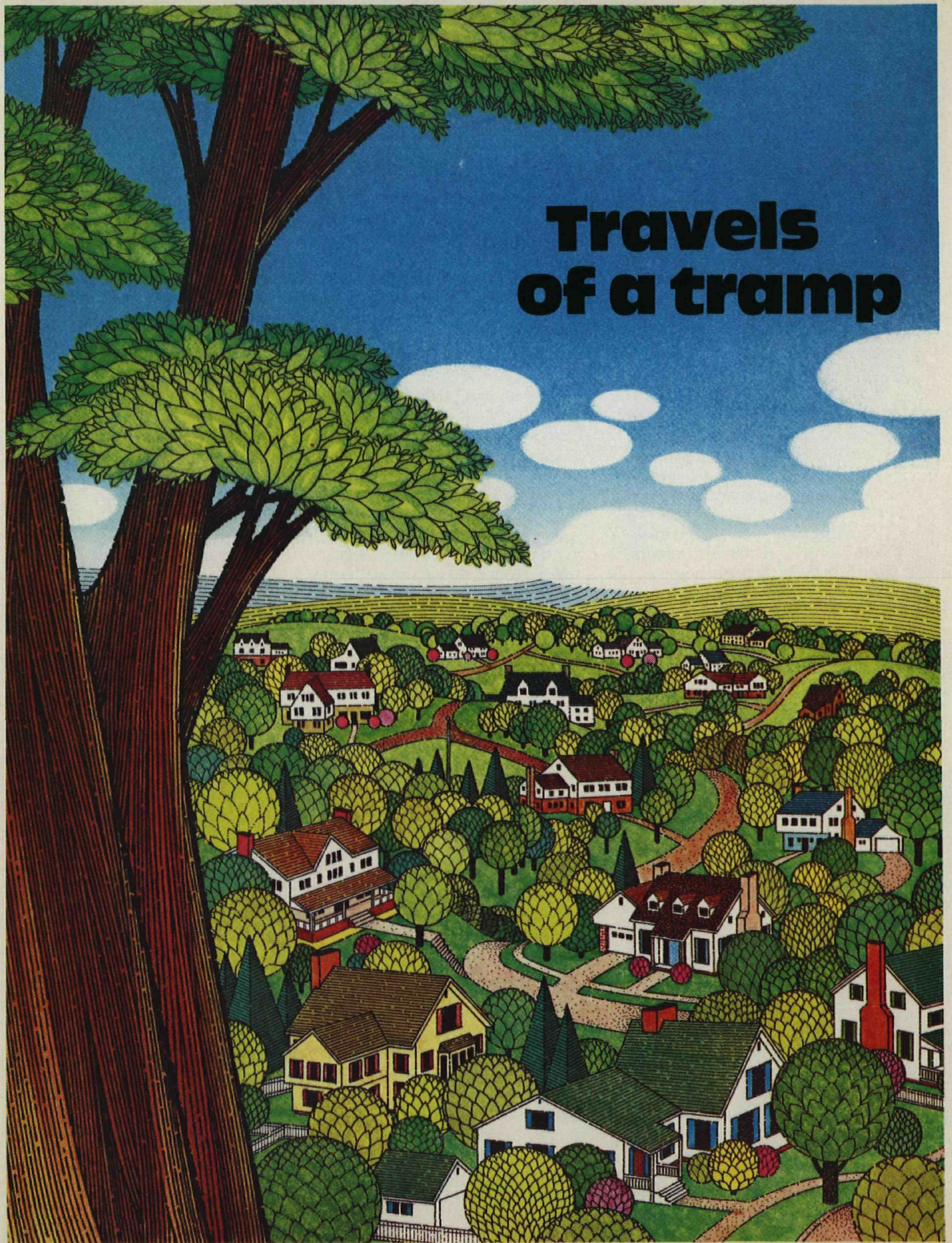
Caras forecasts the possibility that anti-dog sentiment could become strong enough to "limit the rights of citizens to own pets."

Fans of Rin-tin-tin, Bullet, and Lassie will hardly recognize the dog is his new guise as a bone-crushing, throat-ripping savage. Dog haters, however, may say, "I told you so all along."

And anti-dog groups are making the most of dogs being portrayed in this new and unflattering light.



Travels of a tramp



Dear Diary...

A typical day. My owners put me out to go for a walk. "Don't go far", they always say. What a laugh. Just strolling along I can easily do four to five miles in an hour, and at a dog-trot I can do eight to ten. And when I'm really in a hurry---well!

First order of the day is to chase the Thompson's old cat up a tree. After all, he really does need the exercise.

Then it's off across the pasture to see if I can find a rabbit. No rabbits today, but the livestock at the McDonald ranch are always fun. Boy, you ought to hear those chickens squawk when I chase them! Close call today, though. McDonald took a couple of shots at me, and I think I caught some buckshot in my backside.

Next stop is the Baxter place to visit old Brownie. Poor old dog has been pretty sick the last couple of days. I sure hope I don't catch what he has. They say it's some new kind of virus called parvo.

All of this running around really gave me an appetite, so I hiked over to the Jensen place and knocked over their garbage can. What a feast! Maybe I shouldn't have eaten those sharp steak bones, though. My stomach doesn't really feel too good. I sure don't understand why they get so upset about my spreading their garbage around. They were throwing it out anyway!

Down to Brancombs next, minding my own business, digging some new holes in their garden, when these kids come by. Well, it looked like they wanted to play so I joined them in a game of fetch and keep away. Well, when that redheaded kid tried to take my stick away I bit him, and bit him good! Serves him right. But when they all started screaming and hollering I took off. And a good thing, too.

'Cause just about then the men from animal control (they don't like to be called dog catchers anymore) showed up. And, I'll tell you, when that guy gets you it's "go to jail, go directly to jail, do not pass go!" And me with out a dog tag.

Well, I gave him the slip again and decided it was about time to head for home.

And that's when I met this nut in a car. I had to cross the road and it wasn't my fault that he couldn't get out of the way, driving his dumb car in the ditch! I've got as much right on the road as he has, so I don't know why he got so excited about it!

Well, by now I figure I had better get home before my folks worry that I might have gotten into trouble. Besides, my stomach is starting to really feel bad. And that buckshot doesn't feel very good either.

I wander into my backyard sort of casual and they say, "Oh, you're back. Did you have a nice little walk?"

Oh, if they only knew!





Dialogue

BRICKBATS AND BLOOPERS

Dear Editors:

As a copywriter for a national educational supplier I am appalled at the number of grammatical and spelling errors in your 1982 Winter Issue. I have noticed them in the past also, but decided to send you a copy of the spelling mistakes I have found, along with some typographical and grammatical errors. I don't know if you have any proofreaders, but if you do, you might consider getting rid of them...

Cynthia J. Hoile
Janesville, WI.

Dear Editors:

I love the magazine - - - read it from cover to cover - - - but I am disappointed and repelled by the horrifying number of spelling and typographical errors. Such a beautiful magazine should not have one on nearly every page...

Kitty Eames, Cotati, Ca.

(Because of space limitations, both of these letters have been abbreviated. Ed.)

Dear Cynthia, Kitty, and readers:

Editing a publication can sometimes be a lonely job. One wonders if subscribers really are reading every word that is written. Or are you just talking to yourself on the printed page?

Some publications deliberately run highly controversial articles in an attempt to elicit some reader response.

We found out about our readers in a different way. Our Winter Issue contained a monumental collection of "bloopers", and our reader response was incredible.

It was gratifying and embarrassing at the same time. We can't think of another publication that can boast of subscribers who take the

time to read every single story and filler, word by word, letter by letter, and then take the pains to critique every word, punctuation, style and spacing.

Some of the criticism was justified, some of it wasn't. But the important thing is that you care!

Because of the Animal Health Foundation affiliation, Today's Animal News is mostly staffed by professionals who donate their time and service. This "labor of love" makes for long hours and a very limited operating budget.

Our problems are compounded by the computer. The romantic days of "hot lead" typesetting shops are gone, replaced by computerized photo process typesetting.

Originally even this process required a human operator who typed the copy into the machine, picking up notes and instructions of the writer, making changes and decisions.

But the latest advancement even replaces that final human with a new process called O.C.R. (optical character reading). This new mechanical monster gobbles up sheets of specially coded copy, "reads" it, translates it into "computerese". The machine then takes over and instructs other machines. It makes decisions as to spacing, lining up margins, and dividing words. It is so sophisticated that it even has a telephone line of its own and can speak (in computerese) to other computers in other parts of the country.

One last human gets a final chance to scan the results on a viewing screen and, hopefully, make suggestions to the machine. But, sometimes, the machine ignores last-minute commands. The machine has a mind of its own. It interprets everything. Even a spot of pulp on a sheet of paper, for

instance, can trigger the machine to do something. And not always what you may have wanted.

The machine is an unyielding task master. It has altered the standard typewriter keyboard to fit new requirements. The percent symbol means something new. The space bar has meaning of its own. The slash removes letters and words instead of dividing them. The hyphen is a special command. It is wonderful. And frustrating.

Living with a mechanical monster that is smarter than you can be an ego destroying experience.

But, in an age when publications are collapsing right and left, the machine makes an "offer you can't refuse." It provides type for a fraction of the time and cost of the old "hot lead" process.

The machine is currently suffering "growing pains." But as readers and editors suffer through, there is hope.

The capability of the machine is almost unlimited. It is learning to do new things constantly. In the future it will have the ability to scan any word for incorrect spelling and search its memory bank to correct it.

In the meantime, please remember that you can count on the accuracy of the contents of Today's Animal News. And, hopefully, the technical errors of spelling, spacing and symbols will be reduced. Keep reading. We love to hear from you, even if it is to criticize.

The Editors.

Dear Editor:

This is your computer. I highly resent any inference that I am in any way responsible for your errors. It is not my fault that you cannot master the appropriate symbols and commands. Unlike humans, computers do not make mistakes mystakes mistaiks mistayks mistaeks mist-akes misstakes.

Respectfully, O.C.R.





This charming photo of a chocolate Labrador puppy and decoy is by Dave Anderson.

CHOMP!

Not all biting is bad. Puppies, like babies, find out a lot about their world by tasting.

Most puppies establish a play relationship with owners by play-biting. But, sharp needle-like teeth can make that a painful game to an owner.

Since the puppy is learning, this is a good time for the owner to teach the puppy to be gentle. When the puppy bites too hard in play, let him know it. With a sharp tap on the nose, tell him firmly "No! Easy." An even more effective method is to press the puppy's teeth against his lips firmly enough for the puppy to experience biting himself. Again, the command should be "No! Easy." The puppy learns first-hand that his play-biting must be controlled.

Habits formed now will last throughout the lifetime of the puppy. And this is the time to nip the biting habit in the bud!

Let's get rid of Pit Bulls

By Doug Bundock

If enough people cared, we could eliminate Pit Bulls in a remarkably short amount of time. And the Pit Bull should be eliminated. It is a disgrace to the dog fancy and pet owners alike.

Several breeds of dogs continue to be identified by slang names, such as the "police dogs", "Russian Wolfhounds", and "Lassie" dogs. The terms may be incorrect, but harmless. But in the case of lumping all bull terriers into the single catch phrase of Pit Bulls, several fine breeds of dogs are being given an identity they don't deserve. The continued use of the name gives a grisly glamor to a shameful area of criminal activity.

The beautiful white bull terrier that you see in today's show ring is as much a Pit Bull as is the bulldog. As his name implies, the bulldog was once used in the vicious sport of bull baiting. But he has long since left this kind of behavior in the closet of his past. Today's bulldog is best known for his gentleness and no one would think of calling him the Bull Baiter. But, if he did adopt this nickname, it is certain that some perverted souls would be tempted to try him out at it again. And it is even possible that we might have a clandestine return of bull baiting events. There is little doubt that it could attract the same crowds that now flock to illegal cock fights and dog fights.

PIT BULLS MUST GO

A grim glamor goes along with the name Pit Bull. Even the media stories about Pit Bulls often interject descriptions of the "Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde" personality, and their terrible powers. The awful crushing strength of their jaws is described by pound per inch strength, as though this was unique in only one breed. Pit Bulls are given credit for savaging small children, women and family pets. All dogs caught in this activity are identified, if they bear any vague resemblance to any one of the bull terrier family. The villain may be a mixture of who-knows-what, but will probably be labeled Pit Bull.

Dozens of other breeds daily get into trouble, nipping children, harassing sheep, chasing cattle and cars. They may get some minimal notice in the press, but never the delicious recounting of the fearful inheritance of the breed. Can you imagine, for instance, a headline that screams,

"Savage Toy Poodle Goes On Killing Spree"?

Reporters seem to love to pepper Pit Bull stories with terms like "ripping, violent, killer-instinct, crazed frenzy, ruthless, potentially deadly, brutal, legendary, ravage. . ." In the opinion of this writer, this only fosters a morbid fascination for some readers.

There is no question that dog fighting flourishes, despite publicised "crack-downs". In most areas, if you really want to find a dog fight, you can. Dogs, cats, and other small animals are stolen regularly as part of this activity.

INNOCENT GET THE BLAME

So why not start calling it what it is? Throw away the term of Pit Bull. Kennel clubs don't use it, why should you? Lots of people happily own up to owning and breeding Pit Bulls. But, if we substitute the proper term, fighting dogs, how many will confess to that? There is little romance to "fighting dogs", and breeding them would be an open admission of a criminal act. If nothing else, it would at least drive these breeders further underground.

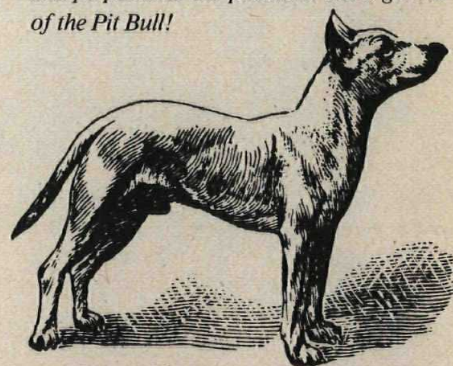


Is this a Pit Bull?

Almost all newspapers, and some magazines, now accept ads for Pit Bulls, often knowing the implications of those ads. What if they refused and accepted only the identification of fighting dogs? Who would advertise?

It would in no way create a hardship on the breeders of proper, recognized breeds, because no honorable breeder would sell to the fighting dog enthusiasts, anyway.

Strip away the romance and identity of the Pit Bull and put the picture into the proper perspective. There are white bull terriers and colored bull terriers. There are Staffordshire bull terriers and American Staffordshire terriers. These are breeds that have evolved into family companions and loving pets. And there are fighting dogs. To use Pit Bulls as a common cross-reference for all only clouds the real issue and perpetuates the problem. Let's get rid of the Pit Bull!



Or is this a Pit Bull?

SF FIGHTS DOG FIGHTERS

A series of brutal attacks by "pit bulls" on San Francisco residents has triggered an all-out war on the dogs by the S.F. SPCA. In nearby Oakland, Calif., SPCA director Charles Marsh said pit bull attacks are reaching an "alarming" stage.

San Francisco Bay Area SPCAs have combined their forces to carry out a program to regulate ownership of potentially dangerous canines. An estimated 10,000 pit bulls reside in the Bay area, according to S.F. SPCA director Richard Avanzino. And Avanzino says he knows of at least two dozen attacks by these dogs on humans recently.

The lucrative "sport" of dog fighting has been flourishing in Northern California. Owners of a winning pit bull can net as much as \$50,000 from a single match, according to SPCA investigators.

First aid for bites

By Joel Blumberg, DVM

The number one fact to remember about bite wounds on pets is: They are always worse than they appear!

After giving first aid don't stop there. Get your pet to a veterinary hospital for a thorough examination for more extensive, contaminated, or internal injuries.

PUNCTURES: The smallest hole in the skin can indicate a major puncture that leads deep into other tissues. Animal fangs are not particularly wide, but they are long. Those narrow holes can be deep! Usually hair and surface dirt are driven into the wounds. Loose tissue (fascia) just under the skin can slide across and cover the tract left by the tooth and falsely give the appearance that the wound is very superficial. The fascia "plug" can prevent the wound from draining so that bacteria that entered on the hair and dirt can start to multiply. Without treatment that tiny hole in the skin can turn into a nasty abscess.

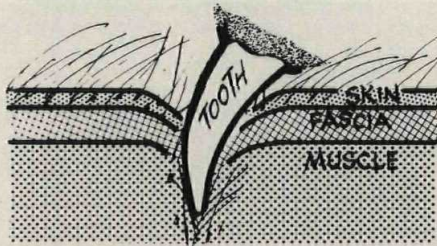
BRUISES: Sometimes there is no puncture but just a discoloration over a tender spot. Again, don't be misled into thinking that bruise is something minor. The teeth on older dogs and the side and back teeth on all dogs are quite blunt. Without puncturing the skin there can be a tremendous amount of crushing action . . . to the point of creating hernias or breaking bones.

WHIPLASH: It is possible for an animal to be seriously injured or even killed in a fight without having a single bite mark. Medium and large dogs can pick up a small animal and whip it back and forth a few times and produce more damage than a five minute mauling. When an animal is shaken rapidly any soft organ that is enclosed by hard bone can be bounced against the bone so severely that the organ can be severely torn. Such is the case with lungs enclosed by the rib cage or the brain inside the cranium. The only external signs may be wet matted hair created by the aggressor's saliva.

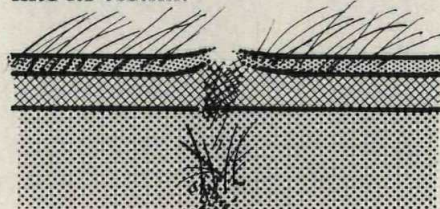
Besides the obvious signs of punctures, swelling, and pain, What are the more subtle signs that your Pet has been injured in a fight? Look for limping, wanting to rest, loss of appetite, a soft cough or wheeze, rapid breathing even when lying down, acting confused when called.

These are some first aid measures you can take before taking your pet to the veterinary hospital. First clip the hair away and clean the wound. A warm wet washcloth works well. Then flush the wound with two percent hydrogen peroxide. Cover any gaping wounds with a clean towel. Do not give aspirin or any "pain killers" from the medicine cabinet! If possible carry the animal to the car rather than encouraging him to walk.

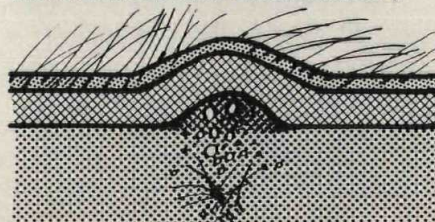
Definitely do not adopt a "wait - and - see" attitude when it comes to bite wounds. What you may end up seeing is a very sick pet. The reassurance of a trip to your veterinarian is worth the cost of the visit. Besides, the fees charged for treating a fresh injury are always much less than those required for handling older infected ones.



Fang drives hair and dirt deep into its victim.



When fang is withdrawn fascia slides across. Hair and dirt left.



Without proper treatment an abscess develops days later.

YOU & YOUR PET

Fleas: Year-Round Bad Company

Have you been watching the kind of company your pet keeps? Although uninvited, fleas have a pesty way of imposing themselves into your pet's life, causing skin irritations and possible tapeworm infestations.

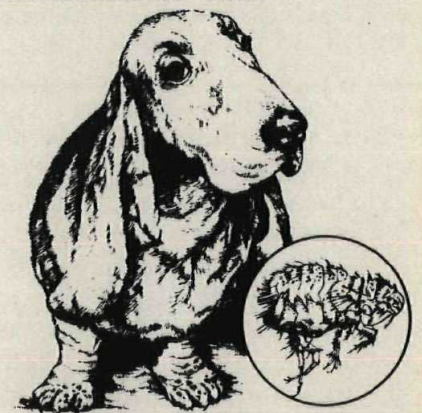
Be advised that these intruders don't always disappear after spring and summer months. It's possible for fleas (in smaller numbers) to survive the colder months right in your home.

Flea eggs usually find a nesting area in bedding, furniture, floor cracks or grass. If your pet stays indoors, keep its living area "flea-free" with frequent vacuuming and use recommended flea powder or aerosol. For outdoor areas, appropriate flea powders and sprays should be used regularly during warm months.

As for removing fleas from your pet's body, it's best to rely on the advice of your veterinarian. An abundance of powders, sprays, collars, dips and oral medications are currently on the market. But the right cure can vary greatly from cats to dogs, or from kittens to puppies. Pregnant animals and those in ill health also need special consideration. And remember not to use two over-the-counter remedies at the same time without consulting your veterinarian. Such combinations can be dangerous for your pet.

Veterinarians who are Hospital Members of the American Animal Hospital Association maintain a complete pharmacy of effective remedies. Check with an expert before testing over-the-counter aids on your pet.

For more information about how to rid you and your pet of fleas and other types of "bad company," contact your nearest AAHA Member Hospital. Or send a self addressed, stamped envelope to AAHA for a copy of our special brochure entitled "Fleas."

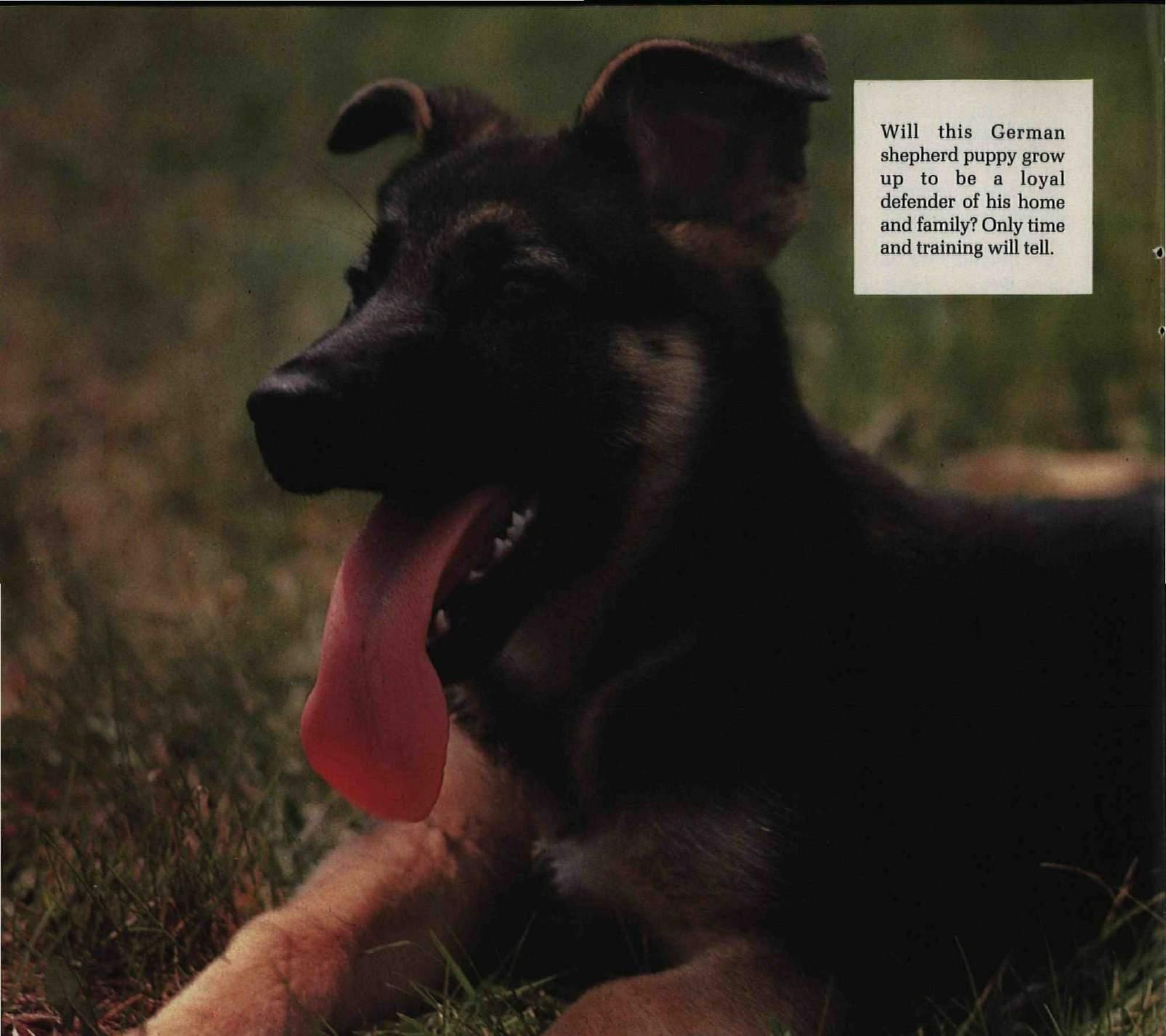


American Animal Hospital Association



Dept. TAN 3
P.O. Box 6429
South Bend, IN 46660

Dedicated to improving
the quality of life for your pet.



Will this German shepherd puppy grow up to be a loyal defender of his home and family? Only time and training will tell.

STARTING OUT RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME

In your own home you can avoid many problems by assuming a dominant role while rearing your puppy. The youngster relates your family to a pack, and looks to establish a position within that pack or social group order. Establish yourself as the leader from the start. Don't allow the puppy to challenge you over objects. If it threatens you over food, toys, or areas, put a stop to it immediately. If not stopped now it will present more severe problems later.

Growling or snapping at you can be handled by taking the rebellious puppy by the nape of the neck and shaking it vigorously while, at the same time, telling it "NO!"

Whenever a challenge occurs you should meet it with correction that is sufficiently firm to resolve the problem at the time. Failure to resolve the problem only means that it will have to be faced again later, in a more severe form.

Don't use a rolled newspaper. It does not provide positive correc-

tion and shows the dog that you don't mean what you say. The rolled newspaper is a hollow gesture that encourages the dog to try again.

Punish the dog only when you catch it in the act of making a mistake. Don't expect it to relate punishment for some error committed an hour or two in the past. This only confuses your poor dog.

Be fair. Be consistent. Be firm, when necessary. And your dog will grow up with respect and love for you.

Beware of Beware signs

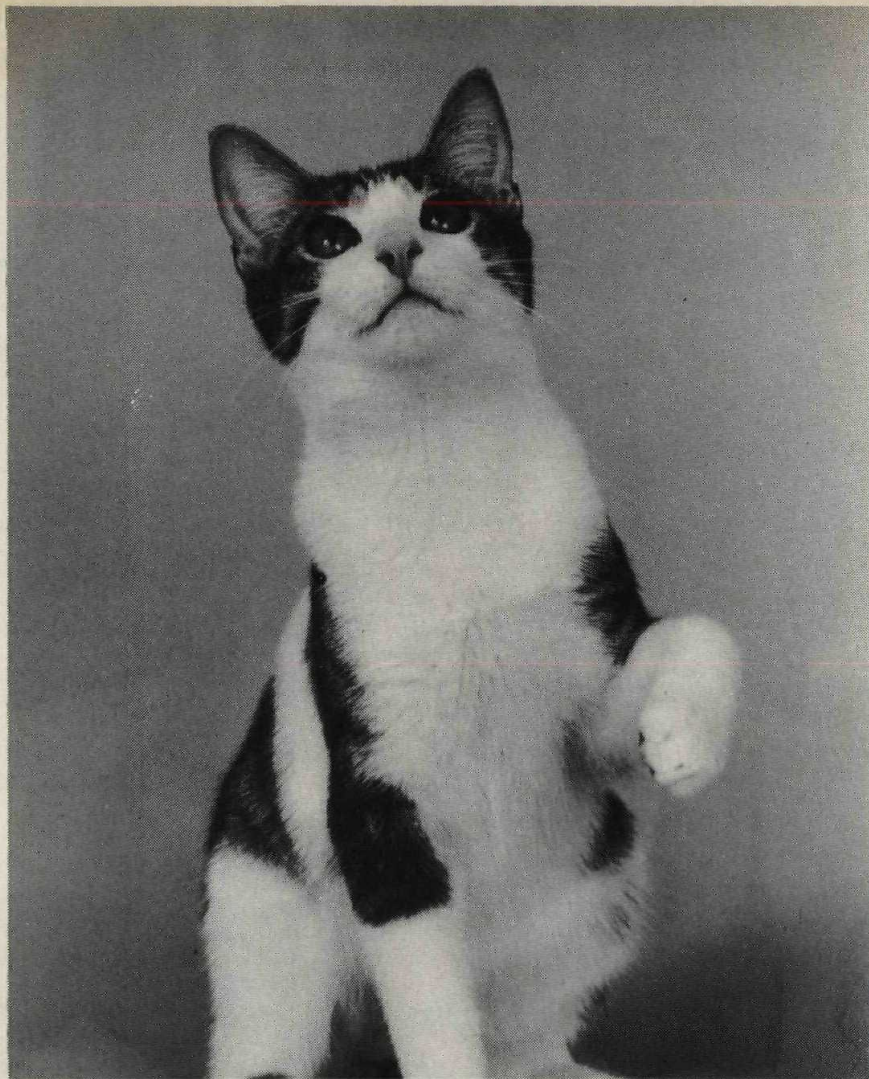
Many people think the mere displaying of a "Beware of the Dog," sign is all they need to protect themselves from a lawsuit just in case the dog sinks his fangs into someone entering his yard.

Well, it doesn't work that way. Quite a collection of cases dealing with dog bites have been amassed in law books, and in 99 percent of the cases, a "Beware of the Dog" sign means the dog owner has to pay up if the victim decides to sue. If the dog is at large in the yard and an innocent encyclopedia salesman opens the gate and is promptly nipped in the ankle, well. . . better start checking the Yellow Pages under "attorneys."

Conceivably, the same thing could happen if a burglar tries to enter your kitchen window and Rover takes a bite out of his anatomy. Granted, the burglar was there on a nefarious errand, but if he decides to sue for damages, he has a case based on many precedents.

The same thing applies to other animals. If your dog chews up a purebred miniature poodle or Siamese cat belonging to your neighbor, you're in trouble.

The key phrase in this as far as the judge is concerned is "prior knowledge of the animal's actions." If you knew your dog has a tendency to bite, or if he has bitten people in the past, no amount of "Beware of the Dog" signs will help you in court. You have a better chance of defending yourself in a lawsuit if you had no idea your dog would bite someone.



You can teach an old (or a young) cat new tricks. Thomas demonstrates his "paw shake" that made him a finalist in the 1981 Meow Mix Sweepstakes. This year, the fifth annual Meow Off Sweepstakes will offer six finalists the chance to show off their poise, talent and voice their purrs. The grand prize is \$25,000 and a role in a cat food commercial. . . and the chance to become a feline TV star!

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OBESITY

Is Pleasingly Plump Healthy?

"Fat is no more a health barometer than a dog's nose, and a 'pleasingly plump' pet could be suffering from malnutrition," say authorities at the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).

Obese or overweight pets have one thing in common with overweight humans--an improper diet. In recent months the association has focused attention on fat cats and pudgy budgies.

"We have received some comments concerning malnutrition in pets, so we conducted a survey. Frankly, we thought we would find that it was the exotic or uncommon pets that are suffering from malnutrition," said Dr. Warren G. Walker, a former president of the American Animal Hospital Association.

"We were somewhat amazed to find that 90 percent of the veterinarians felt we should focus malnutrition warnings on dogs, 87 percent on cats and 35 percent on birds. Very few mentioned other pets," Dr. Walker explained.

In another survey, when responding to the question, "What do you feel your clients should know about cats?", over 80 percent of the veterinarians said diet was among the most important considerations.

It is sometimes difficult for the average pet owner to determine if a pet is overweight or malnourished, and an overweight pet may be suffering from malnutrition.

There seems to be a trend to overweight pets. Pets are being placed on diets. Some pet food suppliers are now aggressively marketing special foods.

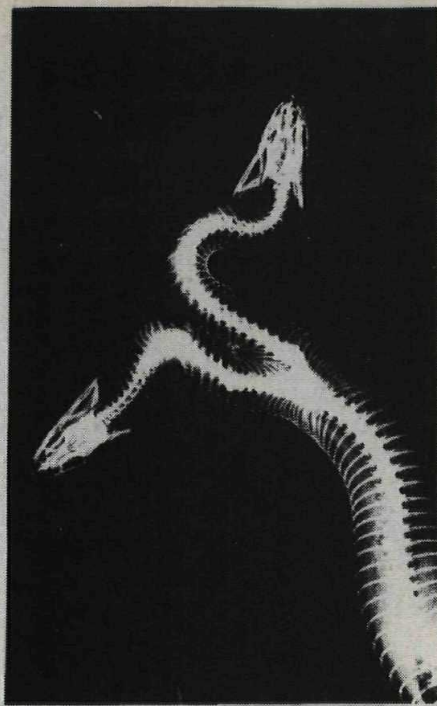
Some of the problems of pet weight control are similar to human problems. "It's a complex area, and each case requires individual attention; however, here are a few general rules which were supplied by Dr. Walker.

- Weigh your pet. Get on a scale and note your weight. Then hold the pet and get on the scale again. Subtract the difference to get the weight of your pet. It may not be accurate, but it will be a guide.
- Ask your veterinarian if your pet is about average in weight. He can usually spot a weight problem without using a scale!
- Watch out for high calorie treats. Caution your children not to feed high sugar content foods which provide excess calories.
- Ask your veterinarian for specific diet advice for your pet. "And then be sure to follow the advice," our spokesman emphasized. Fat can be uncomfortable, and it does shorten the life span of man and animals.

"Cats are about the only creatures we know of who can actually suffer pain from a disease known as steatitis, which is caused by an improper diet of too much red meat tuna," Dr. Walker explained.

"If birds eat only seed, you will probably develop a fat bird suffering from malnutrition. A good, well-balanced diet and a moderate exercise program is the best answer for birds and animals, as well as man."

"Most pets will respond to a prescribed reducing diet with some weight loss in a month or two. If your pet doesn't lose weight within three months, consult your veterinarian," Dr. Walker recommended.



Double trouble

This two-headed gopher snake may be harmless to humans, but it spells double trouble for gophers and other small rodents. It is often said that two heads are better than one but not if you are a two-headed gopher snake looking for food or trying to escape danger and each head moves in a different direction. The chances of survival in the wild for this "mistake of nature" would be extremely slim.

But approximately 10 years old and almost four feet long this two-headed gopher snake is thriving at the Los Angeles Zoo. Found nine years ago at a construction site the snake was only about a foot long. The radiograph shows where the heads attach and share the same body. While both heads have fed and drunk water, the right head is dominant.

Both brains are capable of controlling the body. (The right head is known as Reginald and the left head is Llewellyn to zoo keepers.) But these mixed commands cause problems in response to food or escape from a predator. Therefore, two-headed snakes have little chance for survival in the wild. Russ Smith, Lead Keeper in the Reptile House, explains, "Even in captivity their survival rate is low. Usually these types of snakes have some other congenital problem which leads to their early death."

But Reginald and Llewellyn appear to be the exception that proves the rule.



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What you can do

Unfortunately, many older folks on fixed incomes even find it hard to relate to the \$100 veterinarian bill for the care of a pet.

If you don't have it, and don't know where you are going to get it, even a hundred dollars is an impossible dream.

It's hard to appreciate spending millions of dollars for space exploration or to develop a new agricultural program for some country that you have never heard of. It's really hard when you can't scrape up the few dollars needed to help your pet that may be your only friend and companion in this world.

That's where the Animal Health Foundation would like to help. For only a few dollars they can provide essential veterinarian care for the pets of the elderly who have no other sources of income. These dollars sometimes make the difference between losing or keeping the only companionship of some of our needy, older citizens.

Living alone is tough. Living on a fixed low income is tough. But, the love, affection and companionship of a pet can make each day rich and rewarding.

Would you like to help? Donations to the Animal Health Foundation go a long way, because concerned veterinarians also help with donations of their time and service. We're concerned with helping make life worthwhile for these pet-owning senior citizens. Millions of tax dollars have already gone to lavish space programs. We are only asking for a few down-to-earth dollars to life here. Your contribution, small or large, can make the difference between a lonely solitary existence or a life warmed by the loving companionship of a pet.

Contributions of any amount will help. Send to: The Animal Health Foundation, care of Today's Animal News, 2002 Fourth St., Santa Rosa, Calif., 95404. Your gift could make the difference!



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—Incubation 2-12 days.



4. Flea eggs hatch to the larval stage which feeds on available organic materials. Larvae go through three molts. Being tiny and hidden in cracks, these are often out of the way of normal vacuuming.
—9-200 days



5. The third stage larva spins a cocoon and becomes a pupa. These are very resistant to methods of control.
—7 days to 1 year



6. The cocoon finally opens and an adult flea emerges. Hungry, it immediately looks for a meal on a warm-blooded animal. This is the only stage that spends time on the pet.



FLEA LIFE CYCLE

(Information is from Small Animal Dermatology by Muller, G. H. Kirk, R. W. Ed. 2. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Co., 1976.)



Interesting new products



PUSS POUCH

Administering medication or cutting nails can be a tricky proposition with some cats. But the folks at Commercial Products Research have come up with a way to handle Tabby's tantrums. According to the manufacturer, the Puss Pouch is ripproof, washable, safe, and veterinarian tested. And the handy flaps allow the owner to reach any part of Tabby's body safely.



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RETURN OF THE WHOOPER

Did you know that the whooping cranes almost disappeared back in the late 1940's? At that point only one flock of fewer than twenty cranes were left in the entire world. And scientists didn't know why the flock was producing so few young, because nobody knew where the whoopers went to lay their eggs.

After a long search, scientists found the whooping crane nesting ground in Canada's remote Wood Buffalo Park. This crucial discovery gave biologists the chance to begin to save the great white birds. This is the kind of program that comes under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. And the Department of the Interior has a free booklet that tells how you can get involved in a program that's designed to conserve our national wildlife and plants. For your copy of "Endangered Species", write to the Consumer Information Center, Dept. 636H, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

Most species decline because of habitat alteration or destruction, pollution, exploitation, or the introduction of competing species of plants or animals to the area. Basically, the Endangered Species program protects wild animals and plants from extinction and provides programs for restoring them to the point where their existence is no longer in jeopardy.

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Guard dogs not for everybody

A LOADED GUN

You probably wouldn't keep a loaded gun laying around the living room of your house. Well, some "guard dogs" can be just about as dangerous.

So-called sentry and guard dogs may have their place in fenced-in factories, lumber and equipment yards, but having one of these specially trained dogs in the home is just about as bad as keeping a loaded gun within easy reach of children. This point has been repeated year after year, but the large advertisements for "guard dogs" to defend the home against burglars, rapists and vandals still appear in the magazines and on TV. The truth is, attack trained dogs can seldom be properly controlled by the average homeowner, no matter what the owner may think of his prowess with canines. And most homeowners don't really need a dog that has been formally trained to attack.

Unfortunately, dog trainers are not licensed in the manner of other professionals. Just about anyone can hang up a shingle and claim to be an expert attack dog trainer. And with a worried public willing to lay out thousands of dollars for canine protection, many "instant experts" have done just that.

Many of the dogs from these so-called trainers have been taught to bite, but lack the essential control to make them completely dependable. The unwitting buyer can find himself with an overpriced problem biter that is as much a threat to himself as the possible "bad guy."

Trained guard dogs have trigger reactions. They do not always take the time to differentiate between a burglar and a salesman knocking at your door. Rowdy children can touch off a dangerous reaction.

Statistics show a startling correlation between urban crime rates and the incidence of dog bites. In New York City, dog bites never climbed past the 28,000 per year mark before 1965. But now

they've reached the 40,000 plateau and the figures are climbing higher every year. This is because so many city dwellers are "stocking" their homes with "guard dogs." And these are usually the larger breeds which cause the greatest amount of physical injury to people.

The safest guard dog to have in the home is an alert family dog with a propensity for barking at strange noises. The last thing a burglar, intruder or vandal wants to hear is a noisy dog waking the occupants of the home. Mere size doesn't count. A noisy medium or small sized dog has far more effect than a quiet large dog. Obedient, well-trained dogs that are accepted as family members do the job of guarding much better than a large breed chained out of doors.

Guard dogs should be praised, not scolded, for barking at strangers. By the same token they should be taught to know the difference between family members and friends and strangers. And, of course, they should be taught the difference between senseless barking and barking for a good reason. No one needs a dog that "cries wolf" all the time!

New law for guard dogs

In January, Governor King signed into law the Guard Dog License Bill, making Massachusetts the first in the nation to have a statewide regulation of the guard dog industry. The bill was sponsored by representative Richard T. Moore and the Massachusetts SPCA.

Until now, there were no state laws or regulations specifically addressing the inhumane conditions which have repeatedly occurred in this business. Cruel training practices, unsanitary conditions, lack of medical attention, and deprivation of food and water were frequent documented guard dog abuses.

Pet owners too, have been victimized by unscrupulous trainers. For several hundred dollars, owners have innocently relinquished their dogs to a guard dog

school for "protective training." Because of unregulated practices, some dogs have been returned to their owners in poor health, a threat to their families and no longer suitable pets.

The new law requires a business training and/or renting out guard dogs to obtain a license from the Mass. Department of Agriculture. In addition to licensing, the Commissioner of Agriculture will promulgate regulations for the training, kenneling, transporting and general well-being of these working dogs. The Dept. of Agriculture will then authorize the Mass. SPCA's Law Enforcement Division and the Animal Rescue League of Boston to carry out this new law and the regulations to be promulgated.

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Bears may force people from parks

THE MUGGER BEAR

Bear bites are on the increase, too. A steady increase in the number of tourists visiting U.S. parks each year has so altered bear behavior that the dangerous animals have begun to attack tourists. It's called the "mugger bear syndrome," reports the National Wildlife Federation.

From 1910, when Glacier National Park was created, through 1955, only one person was injured by a grizzly there. As park visitation climbed rapidly in the mid-1950's the situation began to change. Since then 21 people have been injured by grizzlies and three have been killed.

To date, Glacier is the only U.S. park where grizzly behavior changes have become so obvious. But it's a problem all parks may face soon. "American parks provide a setting for continuous contact between bears and people, and as a result, we are beginning to suffer serious problems with fearless and aggressive bears," explained a University of Montana grizzly expert.

At other parks there have been reports of black bears charging people. But because grizzlies are so much bigger than their cousins (they can grow to 10 feet and 1,700 pounds) the situation at Glacier is much more alarming.

There is another complicating problem: The grizzly was classified as a "threatened" species by the fed-



eral government in 1975. Glacier is one of the bear's last major strongholds in the lower 48 states, and now because of its aggressive behavior, the animal's survival at Glacier may be ensured only by imposing stringent controls on people in the park. But this would contradict a federal mandate which states that parks are for people.

Recently, park officials have noted a new alarming pattern in the grizzly attacks. Instead of the classic confrontations involving a sow and her cubs, many attacks have involved just a single bear. And often the bears have attacked seemingly without provocation. In one case, a woman was killed when a young grizzly ripped into her tent at a popular campground and dragged her away.

"Last year," says National Wildlife, "only one minor injury occurred when two hikers surprised a pair of grizzlies feeding along a trail." But a number of hair-raising incidents took place, including one in which a woman had to take refuge in a backcountry out-house while a bear stood outside scratching at the walls.

In attempts to solve this serious problem, Glacier park officials are trying to prevent grizzlies from associating food with people. Garbage collection and storage facilities have been improved. At campgrounds, all ice chests and other food storage devices must be locked in cars at night. And backpackers are no longer allowed to bury trash in the trail.

Some trails and campgrounds have been closed. But despite preventative actions, problems still occur. What should you do if you encounter a grizzly on the trail? Here's some advice:

- Don't panic.
 - If the bear doesn't charge you, speak in firm even tones and back slowly away.
 - If the grizzly charges, shout (don't scream) at it.
 - If you are attacked, try to lie face down on the ground or curl up with your hands clasped behind your neck. Play dead. Don't struggle or cry out.
- Lots of luck!

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Prevent that dog bite

At some point in your life you may be faced with an aggressive dog that threatens to bite. What do you do?

It can be a frightening confrontation, but you may avoid being bitten if you keep calm and follow some simple rules.

Don't run! If you run you just stimulate the chase reaction. And a human can't outrun most dogs anyway.

Stand perfectly still. The dog may make lunges at you, bark and growl, and even touch you with its muzzle. These are all challenges to you. If you jump around, swing your arms, or kick at the dog you will be accepting the challenge and will probably be bitten.

The canine code of ethics just doesn't allow for an attack on a completely passive victim. It may take tremendous control on your part, but the best defense may be to just "freeze." Remember that nature has built this defense mechanism into many animals. Rabbits, some birds and, of course, the 'possum, play "dead" in order to survive.

If you know the aggressive dog you have a big advantage. Just knowing his name will throw him off guard. Snap out a simple command like "Rover, no!" and you will probably see an entire change of attitude.

When there is enough distance between you and the dog you may be able to discourage the attacker by pretending to throw something. Reach down and go through the motions of selecting a stone from the ground. (There really doesn't have to be anything there. The dog can't tell visually.) Assume the throwing position with your imaginary stone and many dogs will back off.

Avoid eye contact. Staring directly into the eyes of a dog can represent a challenge to him. You give him two choices by this act. One is turn away and the other is to meet his challenge by you aggressively.

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