

TODAYS  
**Animal News**



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*The Official voice of the Animal Health Foundation*



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# TODAYS ANIMAL NEWS

Volume 7/number 7

July, 1981

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# Dialogue

Dear Sirs:

In the Jan/Feb issue of Today's Animal Health I noted Virginia Handley's comments on my open letter which appeared in the Sept/Oct. issue.

Because Handley disclaims any intention of taking a position against CO chambers I feel I should send you the enclosed copy of her letter to California Animal Shelters dated 1978. It was this letter which got my dander up enough to sit down and write my letter "To Whom It May Concern", and which seemed to upset her.

I also enclose two copies of letters supporting carbon monoxide euthanasia. I find it difficult to reason with people who dislike the sound of "gas chamber." The fear of gas by most people seems to be due to the fact it can kill a person without the victim realizing he is in trouble.

My opinions about euthanasia result from 50 years experience with CO and animal shelter personnel.

Yours very truly,  
D.L. Caswell DVM (retired; contract veterinarian City of Salinas)

TO: California Animal Shelters:

Two bills of interest to you passed the California Legislature and will go into effect January 1, 1978.

SB3165 requires animal shelters that sell dogs or cats to research laboratories to put up a public sign stating so. This requirement would also apply to any shelter that sells to an animal dealer who in turn sells to laboratories.

SB1481 bans the decompression chamber. The preferred method of euthanasia is injections of sodium

pentobarbital by trained personnel. A veterinarian or animal health technician could provide adequate training.

Some shelters are considering a change to nitrogen gas or carbon monoxide. We recommend against these methods for three reasons:

1. It is expected that both methods will be banned within the next legislative session.

2. Both methods cause the animals to experience visible distress, then panic and suffocation.

3. Both methods are more expensive than injections.

When the decompression ban went successfully through the 1978 session it was with the legislators' understanding that the alternative was sodium pentobarbital. Nitrogen and carbon monoxide were not considered as humane alternatives.

Before any alternative is chosen such as nitrogen or carbon monoxide that is considered inhumane by many humanitarians, we strongly believe that it warrants a public hearing before the City Council or Board of Supervisors.

If you would like the benefit of a veterinarian who has assisted several shelters with the change to injections, you may call upon Dr. John Oliver, Saratoga, Ca.

Please let us know if we can be of assistance. We have extensive material available on euthanasia methods which we can send to you on request.

From: Virginia Handley,  
West Coast Coordinator,  
The Fund For Animals, Inc.

Dear Dr. Caswell:

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Your letter of February 10 to Mr. Karl Nording was passed on to me for reading. I very much appreciate your comments and enclosures. I am delighted to know that you, as a veterinarian, protested the article by Dr. John Gilbaugh. It is indeed scandalous that such information is written in the way he has presented this matter for his column. He certainly is not an objective observer or reporter.

Also, thank you very much for the description of the gas chamber utilizing bottled carbon monoxide. I thoroughly agree with you that this is the most humane method of euthanasia.

Again, thank you very much for your interest and efforts. We are delighted that you are a member of the Humane Society of the United States.

Sincerely yours,  
John A. Hoyt  
The Humane Society  
of the United States  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Williams:

From the references I have found dealing with carbon monoxide euthanasia of animals I can give the following information: Evidently, this is one of the most efficient and painless methods known to euthanize animals. They simply go to sleep with no pain nor struggling. The method is probably analogous to a general anesthetic and is more humane than some of the gases used for killing people sentenced to death for a crime.

Very truly yours,  
O.A. Soave, DVM,  
Director Division of Laboratory  
Animal Medicine, Stanford  
University School of Medicine.

Dear Sirs:

As a former employee of the Los Angeles Animal Care and Control I would like to respond to a letter in your Nov/Dec issue on euthanasia of animals in Animal Shelters.

(continued on page 21)



# "It's Not So Bad, Old Boy . . ."

## Reggie teaches humans about life

A true story by Mary A. Ryan

Reggie paused on his leash to nose through the grass on his daily trot towards the cherry tree. Once in a while when they get that far, Mrs. O'Neill dared to pull on his leash to walk past the tree, but Reggie sat right back on his haunches, refusing to miss his very favorite "marking spots."

"All right, Reggie, you win," she'd admit, letting the sheltie investigate around the base of the tree.

It was on an afternoon like this when they met an elderly lady who stopped to chat with them. "And, hello to you, too," she looked down at the tail-wagging little dog. "Do you shake your paw to say hello?" she asked, leaning towards him. Reggie sat and offered a white stockinged paw. "Well, now what a nice old doggie we have here," mused the lady.

"But what makes you think he is old?" Mrs. O'Neill didn't like what the lady had said and the tone of her voice indicated it.

"By the white flecks in his eyes," she spoke softly . . . "some of us get them when we get old." Mrs. O'Neill turned back hurriedly to get home and inside her own door.

Then she looked carefully at her handsome dog. She had never noticed anything wrong and still didn't see exactly what the lady meant. Reggie was eleven years old, though.

Reggie's days seemed healthfully busy with announcing the mailman, the paper boy, the garbage man, and anyone else who approached the O'Neills.

Reggie barked special greetings to Mr. O'Neill when he returned from work. Mrs. O'Neill could hardly give her husband a welcome home kiss because the little sheltie jumped all over him. "It's hard to know to whom I should speak first . . . my dog or my wife!" Mr. O'Neill joked.

And, at night, as Reggie slept under the bed he was content knowing that his loving owners were just above him.

For Christmas that year, Reggie received a silver-plated bowl for his food. "Merry Christmas, Reggie!" Mrs. O'Neill said as she watched Reggie walk toward the gleaming food dish. But suddenly he jumped back, as though frightened. He retreated to a corner where he sulked and stared at the bowl. No amount of coaxing brought him back. Finally Mrs. O'Neill put food into the old plastic dish and Reggie gobbled it down quite happily. But every time a meal was placed in that silver bowl Reggie acted startled, as though the shiny reflections from the new bowl hurt his eyes. Mrs. O'Neill thought about what the old lady had said when she and Reggie had met her on that walk not long ago.



Actually, Reggie had been acting strangely in other ways lately, bumping into things . . . not coming when called. Perhaps they should talk to the veterinarian.

Mrs. O'Neill held Reggie reassuringly as Dr. Jackson took the dog's temperature and gently checked him over, paying particular attention to his eyes and ears.

"Yes, he has cataracts. An operation is expensive and not always as successful as it is with humans."

Mrs. O'Neill was afraid and sad and it was hard to say anything more but she finally managed to say "He doesn't always seem to hear as well, either."

"Now, Mrs. O'Neill, you have to understand about that, too. As your dog gets older, the bones in the ear grow closer together so naturally he can't hear as well as he once did. So face up to the perfectly natural fact that Reggie is aging and that cataracts and loss of hearing are just part of that process." Dr. Jackson paused to pat his old patient. "Nature gives some wonderful ways of compensating . . . you'll see . . ."

Mrs. O'Neill cried when she told her husband about Reggie, but he replied quietly, "We'll just take care of him the best we know how . . . make it easy for him and show him we love him."

Actually, Reggie had been taking things easier already. More and more he let Mrs. O'Neill take complete charge of answering the door. He decided to trust the mailman and paper boy. Now, too, he'd wait until Mr. O'Neill sat down in his easy chair to greet him, tail still wagging.

Meanwhile, his eyes got cloudier and Reggie became increasingly cautious. Descending the stairs became a major project, one foot testing, then two feet on the same step as quick as he dared descend. But he never gave up.

Sometimes though, Reggie acted very much like a person trying to hide his problems. Take the misplaced water bowl. Reggie kept nosing around until Mrs. O'Neill knew something was wrong. Finally, it all made sense when she saw the bowl out of place. She replaced it, calling him to it, wetting his nose to let him

(continued on page 21)



## Ape gets lawsuit



## Brickbats for Royal Family

Researcher John Seebeck of the Wildlife Division plans to breed the three females and one male now in captivity. "It's very exciting to discover a new species," he said, "Because most biologists go through their lives without having something like this come up."

A palace spokesman reportedly claimed it wasn't grizzlies that would die — just “ordinary bears, black or brown or something” — and, anyway, “It’s been going on for donkeys’ years . . . nothing out of the ordinary has been ordered for the wedding.”

According to Pribram's attorney, Washoe has a record of biting incidents and had bitten about 20 university workers before the Pribram incident.

The largest exhibition of pets ever held in this country will include 130 breeds of dogs, more than 100 turtles and tortoises, 1000 pigeons, thousands of fish and cats, birds, rabbits, reptiles and almost anything else that people keep as pets in their homes.

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Photo by Jim Callea **Marine World Africa, USA**

# Llove Those Llamas!

Brakes screech as a tourist's car suddenly swerves to the side of the road. The driver does a double-take — as several llamas watch from the nearby field.

Although they really aren't rare today (there are several thousand in the U.S.) the strangely exotic look of allama is usually a traffic stopper.

Why a llama? Although some llamas are kept for work, many are pets and breeding stock. But, buying a llama is not always easy. Many owners become so attached to these charming oddities that they are reluctant to sell them to strangers. And since it takes 11 -12 months to produce one baby, the supply is a bit limited. You might want to think twice about it anyway, since an adult female llama can fetch from \$3,500 to \$4,500!

The largest population of llamas can be found in California and Oregon (one Oregon ranch has over 500), but New Mexico also has several herds. Wyoming ranchers claim llamas make the best predator control ever. The llamas live with the sheep, keeping a wary eye out for marauding coyotes. When a predator gets too close the "guard llama" dispatches it by firing a stream of vile spit with deadly accuracy. It is their natural defense mechanism and a highly effective one (although rarely employed against humans).

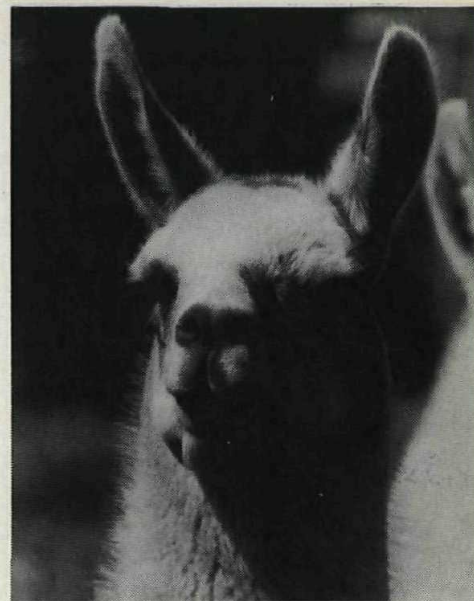
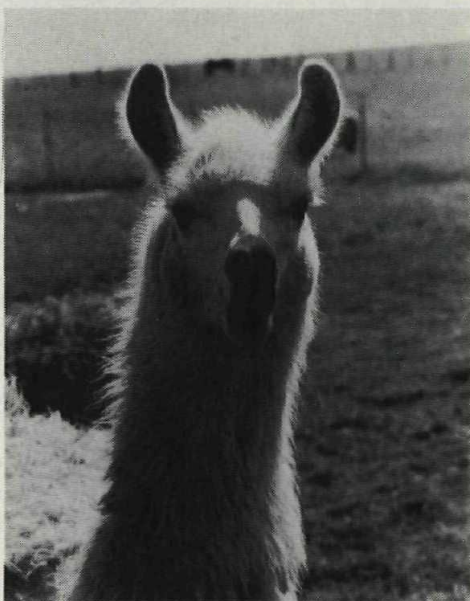
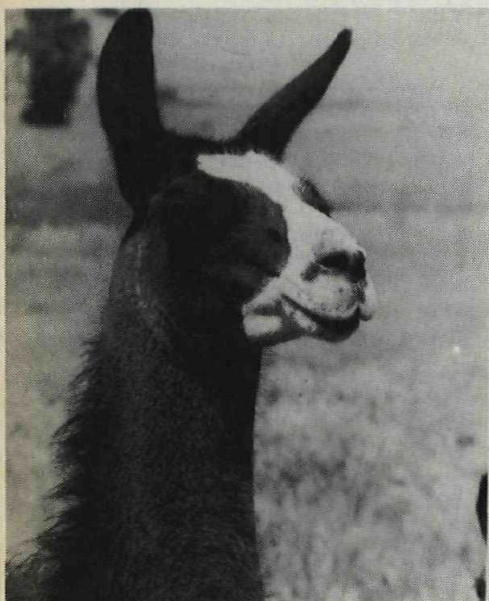
They are such practical pack animals (they can carry from 50 to 100 pounds) that some parks are looking to the llama as a replacement for burros. They are easily trained, get along well with humans and other animals, and

leave considerably less "litter" on the trails. This "discovery" is hardly new, since the Incas depended on the llama to help carve out their South American empire.

The llama, like his close relatives the alpaca, guanaco, and vicuna, has the look of a creation from a children's fantasy book that has suddenly come to life. Its personality is an odd mixture of affection, intelligence, curiosity and independence. They are relatively easy to keep, eat less than a horse, live from 15 to 25 years, should have occasional brushing, are clean, gentle, and enjoy the company of other llamas. A llama may not be for you, but they are lovely to look at!



# Llove Those Llamas!



*As these pictures demonstrate, there is a great variety of types in llamas.*



*Llama breeder Fred Bauer with some of his "friends."*



**Photo feature by Jim Callea**



# Llove Those Llamas!



Youngster tries out his new legs.

Adults congregate to admire five-week-old baby llama.





# THE OTHER SIDE

*How very little we understand about these wonderful creatures who warm our lives. They share our joys and pains equally, asking little or nothing in return. Their stay with us is much too brief.*

By Joan Martin

Cindy came to us as a puppy on a day when we had brought a white rabbit to the S.P.C.A. shelter. We had been asked to move to another state by my husband's company and we felt we could not take a rabbit with us. As we waited for the attendant to come we looked at puppies. The "unwanted" sign on the front of the German shepherd and collie won all of our hearts.

We decided that we could take a small dog along with us on our move so Cindy became our special love for nearly fifteen years.

She was an unusual pet, always aware of the boundry line around our property and never straying from home. She guarded the house and yard with her life and we were always safe with our girl nearby.

Just before she turned 14 Cindy had a stroke. It seemed after that she, in the words of my son, "lost all her personality." We wondered when the end would come, for she was not the same anymore.

It was just before her 15th birthday that we took her to be put to sleep for, with the advice of the veterinarian, the time had come.

Several days later our son called us from the college he was attending. We had decided not to tell him of Cindy's death, for it might affect his studies. He and the dog had been inseparable as he grew up. "How's Cindy?" our son asked his father on the telephone.

"Why, I guess she's okay," he said, covering the phone with his hand. "I don't know what to tell him," he whispered to me.

"It's funny, Dad, but I had a wierd dream a couple of days ago. I was standing at the edge of a woods looking out as Cindy came walking along a path in front of me. I called to her but she would pay no attention. I called and called and she marched purposefully ahead, not heeding me at all. As soon as she passed I looked up the path to see what held her attention. At the end of the trail stood a gravestone. It was hers."

My husband felt it was time to tell our son the news. "I just knew it," the voice on the telephone was sad. The dream and the happening took place just about the same time and we knew that as close as the boy and his dog were — it helped our son to prepare for the separation that had to come.

## PUBLIC BEAR WRESTLING BAN

It's a bare fact. Public bear wrestling is illegal, says the United States Department of Agriculture.

Public bear wrestling gained popularity in recent months, with wrestling bears being exhibited in most major cities and on television programs.

But, public bear wrestling contests — where the audience is invited to participate — are illegal.

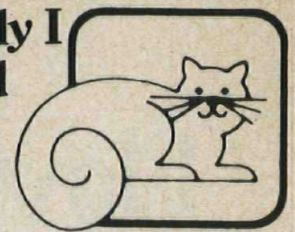
"Recent court decisions around the country have said public bear wrestling . . . does violate the Animal Welfare Act and is, therefore, illegal," said John K. Atwell, a USDA veterinarian.

"Exhibitions where a trainer wrestles a bear are not illegal," he said, "because professional trainers know the quirks of their animals and how to protect themselves and their animals from injury."

## HEAVY INSECTS

If we put all the people on earth together and weighed them and did the same with all the insects, the insects would weigh 12 times more than the humans, reports the National Wildlife Federation.

## If Only I Could Talk!



I'd tell you that each day my body deposits minerals in my hair, leaving an accurate record of mineral deficiencies and excesses. If these nutrient levels are out of balance, physical and mental illness may result. (See Bone Appetit: Rating Pet Foods, Consumer Digest, November/December 1979).

### COMPUTERIZED HAIR

**ANALYSIS FROM PHI:** Because hair is an ideal indicator of your pet's mineral makeup, it is natural that a scientific analysis of your pet's hair may help uncover any mineral related problems. (Many health and behavior problems can be mineral related.)

PHI will provide a no-guess analysis of mineral imbalances which may affect your health and behavior, using the latest scientific equipment and computers available.

**All it takes to be sure of your pet's status** is four tablespoons of hair collected from chest area. Simply clip about four tablespoons of hair from your pet. Wrap the hair sample in tissue paper or in a plastic bag. Mail the sample in an envelope along with the coupon below, and your check or money order for \$24.50.

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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ Cat ☐ Dog ☐ Horse ☐  
 Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Male ☐ Female ☐  
 Animal's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mail To: PHI, Box 432, Billings, Montana 59103.  
 ALLOW 4 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY

### YOUR PERSONAL REPORT AND ID NUMBER:

You will receive a detailed personalized easy-to-read 11" x 14" report indicating mineral balances as well as information needed to interpret and act upon imbalances. You will also receive a special ID number for your pet that can be used for future reference.

The cost of this invaluable service is only \$24.50.

### DO IT TODAY! YOUR PET'S HEALTH DEPENDS ON YOU.

PHI, Box 432, Billings, Montana 59103.

Analysis Available For DOGS & HORSES.



Parts of this article taken from an article by Dr. T. G. Bradfield, originally appearing in the **Hound Crier and Long Eared News**.

If you have ever suffered the pain of an aching back you can certainly appreciate the agony your dog could feel from a ruptured disc. It's an age-old problem in man and dogs, first described almost a hundred years ago. Fortunately, the knowledge and treatment of intervertebral disc problems has made steady progress to the present refined surgical procedures and modern drug therapy for treating the condition.

Basic knowledge of the spine and the structure of a disc helps to understand the disc syndrome. In-

tervertebral discs are the cushioning pads, or "shock absorbers" between the individual bones of the spinal column called vertebrae. The discs serve to distribute pressure and allow limited movement between the vertebrae. Dogs normally have seven cervical (neck), thirteen thoracic (chest) and seven lumbar (abdominal) vertebrae. The remainder make up the tail of the dog.

Between each vertebra is a disc which is made up of a tough, fibrous outer layer called the annulus fibrosus. And a soft jelly-like inner core called the nucleus pulposus. The spinal column is constantly absorbing great strain

and shock, and the jelly soft nucleus is essential for this purpose. When age, trauma or heredity triggers the degeneration of that nucleus an animal will suffer from disc disease.

Like a soft spot on a tire, a disc can bulge at a weak point. If the bulge puts pressure against the spinal cord, nerve damage will occur. If the disc leaks some of the degenerated nucleus out of the weak spot, or if the nucleus "blows out" very serious signs will occur. Disc disease in the neck area usually produces severe pain in the muscles and skin of the neck, causing the head to be held

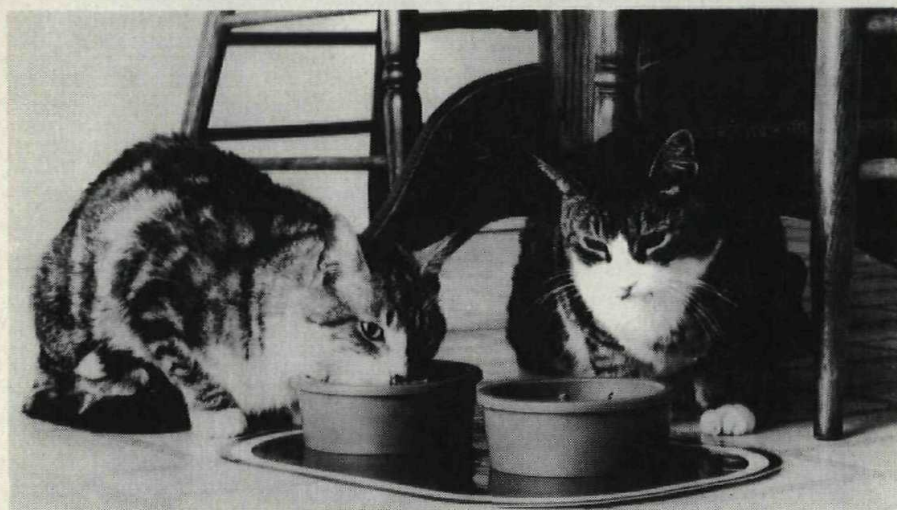
(continued on page 23)

# OH, MY ACHING BACK!





# FUSSY, FINICKY FELINES



**S**uddenly, right out of the blue, your cat turns up its nose and refuses to eat. Why? The professionals have some suggestions for your fussy feline.

The first thing to do when you notice a dramatic change in your feline's attitude toward mealtime is to keep a close watch for a day or two. Observe the basic feeding habits you and your cat have established. According to the experts, the pet owner should first ask himself the following questions, which generally will provide a solution to kitty's lack of appetite.

Where do you feed your cat? Check the immediate surroundings. Cats prefer a fairly quiet, somewhat secluded spot away from the distractions of people and other pets.

What about feeding bowls? Select low, heavy bowls so they will stay in place; and clean them regularly, preferably after each meal. Leave food out for about half an hour; if your cat shows no interest or eats only part of it, remove it. Never let food stand more than eight hours.

How much are you feeding your cat? Cats are known to get bored and fussy if you feed them too often and too much at one time. About four to seven ounces of food will sustain an average adult cat, which may be fed in one or two portions per day. Naturally, kittens and pregnant or nursing mothers will eat more, and inactive cats will eat less than energetic ones.

What are you feeding your feline? Many cat owners rely on commercial cat foods. Most commercial grades do offer a reliable diet, but check the labels. If the words "complete", "scientific", or "balanced" are used, the food probably contains the necessary nutrients established by the Dog and Cat Food Industry.

"It's a good idea to supplement commercial food with an ounce or two of hamburger, liver, fish, or cooked eggs once or twice a week," according to Julius Fishler, D.V.M., noted feline veterinarian and Research Advisory Board member of Lowe's, inc. "Cats need large quantities of protein, and they do not efficiently digest the calories from fat or carbohydrates unless they are in the presence of protein calories. Vitamin supplements are recommended in certain cases, but should be prescribed by your veterinarian."

Your cat should always have fresh water. Though there continues to be a controversy on whether or not you should feed dry food to your cat, cats eating this type of food need even more water than cats eating canned food.

Milk can be provided as a supplement to your cat's diet and should not be used as a substitute for water. Most cats lose the ability to properly digest milk as they grow older and they generally get diarrhea from it.

Now, what if you've checked all these routine items and your cat still refuses to eat? First, continue the food as usual. If he's still not interested, entice him with delicacies such as liver or cooked eggs in small quantities. (Lamb kidneys will usually stimulate the most listless appetite.) Your cat can easily get hooked on delicacies, however, and refuse to eat anything else. Fussiness should not be confused with a true loss of appetite. If your cat continues to refuse food for several days to a week, it may signal illness. It's time to call your veterinarian.

Research provided as a service by Lowe's, Inc., makers of Kitty Litter.

## Puppet parents

How do you raise a rare bird only with humans, but not have it build a lasting relationship with humans? Well, the San Diego zoo officials hope the answer is puppets.

Zoo keepers are attempting to raise an Andean condor chick, with the hope that the rare and endangered bird may someday be released into the wild, without an association with humans. The chick is named Rhodan, after a monster in Japanese horror movies, and is only handled when zoo workers wear puppets that resemble an adult condor.

Although the puppet is constructed of leather and plastic, with the wool of a sheep and a beak made of plastic, Rhodan has accepted it as his parent. When Rhodan becomes a 35 pound adult with a ten-foot-wing spread the zoo officials hope he will seek the company of other condors.





For the younger set...

# HEINRICH THE HORRIBLE WINS AGAIN

The pillow trick tricks everybody

By Bunny Hammersla

**"If** only he'd learn to pick up his own pillow," I sighed, retrieving it for the third time that evening. Heinrich The Horrible had developed the habit (amusing at first, now tiresome) of knocking his pillow off the couch as he slept, then wailing and whining to have it picked up and replaced under his head.

"As dogs go, he's fairly smart," answered the master of the house, "but don't you think that's expecting too much of his learning capacity? Or our teaching capacity? Might as well expect him to wipe his feet when he comes in."

"Would you care to make a little wager?" I asked. "I'd like a try at it --- the pillow bit, I mean."

"A hundred bucks says you can't teach him to pick up his pillow and put it back on the couch. In case you lose, do you have a hundred?"

"All I have is twenty-five that's not grocery money."

"You're on, then. Twenty-five it is. I'll give you a month, but no corporal punishment or foul language. He's a quick study."

The next morning, eager and confident, I started in. Ordering Heinrich to sit, I pushed the pillow off the couch, crouched on all fours and picked it up in my teeth, and pounced back on the couch to drop it. He sat there with his head cocked to one side, taking it in. I pushed the pillow off.

"Okay, Heine, pick it up." He knew that command. He seized the throw-rug on which he'd been sitting and bolted out the back door.

"No, no! The pillow, Heine, the pillow!" and I punched the pillow a few times to demonstrate. Then I

flipped it onto the floor, picked it up in my mouth, crawled onto the couch and dropped it again. This is some trick for a 50-year-old housewife, I thought. I glanced at the curtains. They were closed, so the neighbors couldn't see me making a fool of myself.

The quick study sat there, scratching a flea.

"Okay, Heine, pick it up," I repeated, pushing it off again. He looked around to see what was available, pointedly ignored the pillow, and trotted into the back yard with the rubber door---mat.

I started over. My jaws were beginning to ache, and each time I squatted, the knee bones creaked alarmingly. Heine clearly liked the game. He was beginning to catch on, too --- each time I flopped on the couch he leaped on me, all one hundred pounds of smelly animation, barking furiously. Then when I edged off the pillow and gave the command to pick it up, he gripped my arm in his huge jaws and tried to drag me outside. Finally I got wise and closed the back door. Now we were getting somewhere. I shoved the pillow off and squatted, picked it up in my mouth, crawled back up onto the couch, spat out the pillow and a mouthful of dog hairs, turned around --- Heine had wandered off into the laundry room to see if the empty dog --- dish had miraculously sprouted food. I had an idea. The best way to a shepherd's intelligence would be through his stomach. I stuffed a handful of dog biscuits into my pocket, and he followed me back to the couch, his wet eager nose glued to my side. Knocking off the pillow once more, I said, "Okay, Heine, pick it up." He didn't need to be told twice. His incisors clamped around my pocket and

with a ripping scrunch he made off with three of the dog biscuits.

A few hours later, we were both exhausted and no closer to a breakthrough. Heine was satiated with dog biscuits and ready for a nap; my knees were raw, my pockets torn, my joints aching, and lingering in my mouth was the after-taste of old foam-rubber stuffing and dog slobber. I decided to try a different tack.

Ordering Heine to sit, I went to the back door, opened and closed it, and wiped my feet on the rug, exaggerating the motions.

"Here, Heine, wipe your feet!" When he came bounding over I put my finger near his nose and began to turn slowly. He followed, as if mesmerized. Miracle of miracles, he was scuffling his feet in imitation. I couldn't believe my eyes. Round and round we went, wiping our feet, I praising and patting, he barking and wagging his tail. We wiped our feet and wiped our feet.

I decided to press my luck. Back to the couch. Off with the pillow, down on all fours, scramble up, drop the now soggy pillow, push it off.

"Okay, Heine, pick it up!" I turned. Heine was stretched out on the rug, snoring.

That evening I was ready to surprise the master with the feat --- wiping caper. I hoped man's best friend hadn't forgotten his new-found trick. I opened and slammed the back door, shuffled my feet on the rug and said "Here, Heine, wipe your feet!"

As we both watched in disbelief, he galloped to the pillow still lying on the floor, picked it up and jumped on the couch to drop it. I swear he was grinning.



# HAIR TEST TELLS HEALTH

About 15 years ago a biochemist Oscar Rasmussen analyzed some hair samples from a horse and discovered the lower the magnesium concentration, the more nervous the horse. In time, he discovered hair samples could differentiate between a normal animal, a nervous one and a very nervous one.

Thus began the introduction of hair analysis into veterinary medicine, a diagnostic tool that is slowly gaining acceptance.

Hair grows about one-sixty-fourth of an inch per day, so a hair sample one to two inches in length is about two to three months old. Hair has the property of absorbing trace minerals and heavy metals and hair samples collected from animals in an urban area have a lot more of these elements than those from rural areas, due to urban pollution.

According to an article in DVM magazine, Rasmussen takes hair

samples through a thorough washing first in special solvents. Then it is dried and placed in an acid solution which dissolves the hair. The solution is put in an atomic absorption or an atomic emission unit that can analyze the contents of 20 or 25 minerals in two or three minutes.

So far, most hair analysis procedures have taken place with dairy cattle, beef cattle, horses and swine. But an increasing amount of dog and cat hairs are being sent out for hair analysis. The same process can also work with bird feathers.

Rasmussen says the presence of abnormal amounts of heavy metals can lead to neuromuscular problems. Veterinarian Roy Nipko of Salt Lake City noted a lot of herniated disc problems in canine spines in his region, and sent in some hair samples in an effort to find out the reason why. The poodles and dachshunds with disc

problems were found to have 9.9 percent less iron and a third less manganese than normal in their hair samples. Treatment with a selected vitamin-mineral supplement brought a "vast improvement within 60 to 90 days," said Dr. Nipko. He prescribed the supplements for about 350 dogs with herniated discs and "the return rate has been less than five percent."

Said Nipko, "hair analysis is not perfect; it's not black and white." But he has achieved results.

Dr. A.W. Krause of Littleton, Colo., tried hair analysis on dogs with scaly coat conditions that would not respond to standard treatments. The tests revealed a specific mineral deficiency and a vitamin-mineral supplement cleared the condition in two months.

Hair analysis is not a magic cure, nor is it a foolproof method. But the hair's ability to absorb minerals and reveal whether there is an excess or shortage of trace minerals and heavy metals, is proving to be a valuable diagnostic tool.

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# PARROT TALK...

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER . . .

The increasing popularity of parrots as pets has created a need for more and more information on their behavior and care. The following article, written by Carol M. Bettencourt, is printed here to help fill that void. The article does not deal with medical care or feeding of exotic birds, but instead, the psychology of the household bird.

### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PARROT

Which sounds more fun to you? A parrot who talks, climbs, does amazingly funny things, is constantly moving about and very affectionate? Or, a parrot sitting in a cage, miserable, who, whenever you

put your hand in the cage acts as if it's never seen a human being before, and the only action you get out of him is when you have to cut its toenails?

The article you are about to read deals with the behavior of parrots, and how you can, through better understanding, have more fun, and relate better to your parrot, which I consider to be one of the most fascinating household pets there is available to the average person.

Unfortunately, many of the more intelligent birds, such as parrots, are kept little more than prisoners in small cages, a situation that soon creates a mutual lack of interest and vitality between bird and owner.

Any thinking person who has owned parrots is aware that these creatures are most often the reflection of either a doting or an ambivalent owner. The latter frequently becomes bored with his new charge, and when he is initiated into the destructive and noisy tendencies of what he first saw in the pet store as a decorative household ornament, the confines of the bird's "safe area" becomes increasingly smaller, until all that's left for the poor bird is the interior of a wire cage.

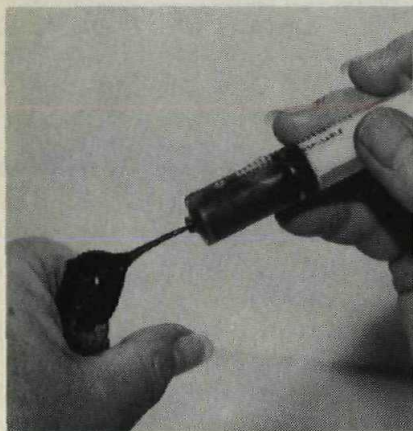
As I am typing this article, the interruptions by my adolescent Yellow-Naped Amazon parrot, Broom-Hilda", who

continued on page 22

Photo by Jim Callea







This baby hummingbird is being fed a special diet from human hands. It is a delicate process that should be handled only by experts. Baby birds should not be taken from their natural environment unless in obvious danger. If taken they should be given to a proper rescue center for raising.

## Bad news for dogs

A liver and white colored English springer spaniel named Ringo wearing a sign around his neck reading, "I'm for loving, not for eating" lost his appeal in California.

Ringo, along with his human supporters, was trying to put a bill before the California State Assembly to prohibit the eating of dogs. The bill was instigated by Sen. Marz Garcia, after several incidents of dog eating by Southeast Asian immigrants were reported in the press.

The defeated bill would have made it a misdemeanor to kill and eat a domesticated dog or cat. But the bill was defeated as a "racially and culturally insensitive solution."

## CAT OUT OF THE BAG

That expression came about centuries ago when farmers in Europe brought piglets to market in a bag called a poke (you've heard of a "pig in a poke"). Farmers sometimes tried to swindle customers by putting a cat into the bag instead of a piglet. If the buyer was suspicious, he'd open the bag and let the cat out.

Today's Animal News

miniature poodles, pekingese, cocker spaniels and others. The first signs can occur by the time a dog is two years old. Recurrences from the same or another disc is common.

After your veterinarian has confirmed the diagnosis he will make the decision to proceed with surgery or treat conservatively with bed rest and drug therapy. The amount of after-care following medical treatment or surgery varies with the degree of paralysis that exists and will differ with each patient, but generally these guidelines will be helpful:

Handle the dog carefully, pick it up only when necessary, and give the animal adequate support when doing so.

Keep the dog as quiet as possible and confined. Cage rest for a prescribed time is very important. See that the animal is comfortable and is kept clean, and that a proper amount of food and water are consumed.

Maintain excretions. Be sure that the dog is able to urinate and

defecate. Loss of bladder and bowel function is a common problem.

It is disturbing and unsettling to see your pet either become suddenly paralyzed or in severe pain. But surgical techniques for correcting this condition offer a high percentage of success and often is the only alternative for curing the present problem and preventing recurrences. It involves procedures to remove as much degenerated disc material as possible and to remove pressure off the spinal cord. This relief from pressure is what allows the condition to correct itself. Drug therapy is also aimed at relieving pressure by reducing the reaction and inflammation at the site of injury.

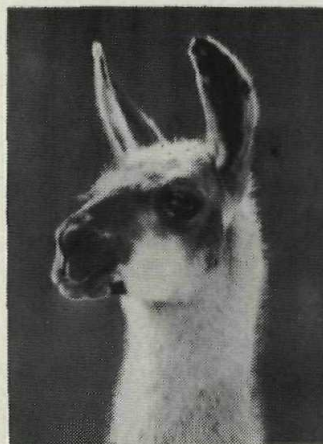
But whatever the course of treatment there is cause for hope, and many dogs can return to a normal, healthy life. But, remember that the chances of success increase by getting immediate attention for the dog with a disc problem.

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# Reggie....

know. Reggie turned away, almost snorting as if to say: "What made you think I was looking for water?" After a bit he casually returned to the spot and soon busy lapping sounds were heard.

Reggie's days changed gradually to more and more rest. But he always looked forward to his daily walk. Ambling along, he wagged his tail as he stopped to sniff the ground and leaves, finding all sorts of interesting and important smells... like always. And when he reached the cherry tree, he would balk, just like always!

Reggie was getting more affectionate than ever... always cuddling up if Mr. or Mrs. O'Neill sat on the sofa beside him.

"Not really like the old times though, is it, Old Timer, when you were so noisy, but it's not all bad is it?" The dog liked to nuzzle himself into Mr. O'Neill's lap.

Then something strange and wonderful began to take place. Perhaps, now that there were fewer things to see and hear and bark at, Reggie's instincts from his Shetland Island ancestors sharpened and he began to use this special gift. At 10 sharp every night Reggie padded upstairs to his spot under the bed. If the O'Neills did not follow him soon, he shuttled from under the bed, cautiously padded the thirteen steps downstairs, traversed the slippery linoleum floor, and sniffed until he found the O'Neills at the table or across the braided rug at the sofa. Then he barked and barked, wagging his tail. At first, the O'Neills decided he just wanted to go outside again. But this did not satisfy him. He came back in and continued barking.

"Whatever is the matter?" the O'Neills wondered. They decided to go upstairs and go to bed, and Reggie followed.

The same thing happened again and again. Reggie was ready to go to bed and if the O'Neills didn't come upstairs with him, he'd laboriously make the trip down again to bark at them until they, too, would come upstairs to bed. Reggie followed right after them

and then eased himself under the bed.

"Reggie is using his herding instinct on us!" exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill, almost in unison.

The O'Neills began to look forward to being "rounded up." And sometimes Mr. O'Neill scooped Reggie up in his arms when they reached the foot of the stairs, saying "Well, we'll just make it easy for you tonight, Old Timer, and thank you for reminding us what time it is. You are really a great dog!"

## Dialogue

*I believe the closer the attendant is to the act of euthanasia the better for the animals. Although I am not in total agreement or at ease about it, from my own experience the response these animals give while being held and talked to, such as licking and tailwagging shows me that it is exactly what they have been longing for.*

Yet it does not seem right that we must euthanise these animals. It is however extremely necessary to avoid further overpopulation. The CO chamber in my opinion is so far away from what these animals need, HUMAN AFFECTION!

*If I can as a humane being and attendant show these animals kindness and affection, it warms my heart to know that they will not die as they have lived: COMPLETELY ALONE!*

Sincerely,  
K.S. Hussey, W. Covina, Ca.

### RUBBER SNAKE TRICK FLOPS

Pigeons pose a number of problems for city dwellers, and inspire a variety of ideas to dispatch the pesky birds. In San Diego recently, a tire salesman tried hanging a bunch of rubber snakes by a wire to frighten the pigeons away from the awning over the door. The pigeons stayed, the store manager was reported to the Humane Society for abusing snakes, and one of the pigeons made off with one of the snakes to use as a liner for its nest.

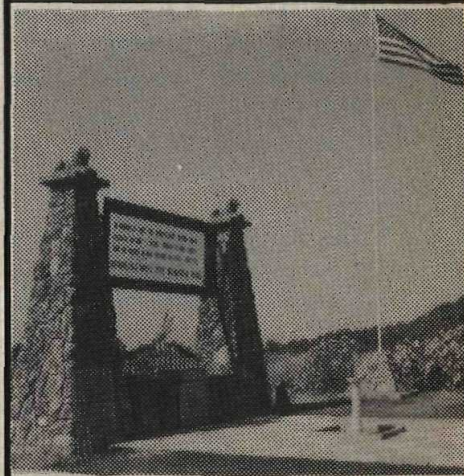
## Newcastle nipped

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Americans were saved from two serious outbreaks of exotic Newcastle disease in 1980, to the tune of about \$2.8 million.

The first outbreak required the destruction of 2,100 birds at 120 locations in 13 states and the District of Columbia. Later in the year more than 30,000 exotic cage birds had to be destroyed at some 550 locations in 45 states.

"But it was worth it," said deputy administrator Pierre Chaloux, "If this foreign disease became established in this country it would cost the poultry industry — and, ultimately, consumers — an estimated \$400 million a year."

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# PARROT TALK...

was christened after the little green witch of comic-book fame, become increasingly annoying. Someone who has not been the object of affection of one of these beautiful green birds, cannot be aware of the tenacity that they are capable of. She cannot understand why she is not allowed to participate in the game I am playing with this noisy black machine, so after a time she contents herself with rearranging the papers on my desk, and then tiring of that, climbs up my arm to my head, and tidies up my "feathers".

Very affectionate with me, this bird will single out friends and relatives with whom she suspects I am becoming too cosy, and will violently show her resentment by flying or running up to that person and inflicting some rather painful bites, showing a mock display of size and bravery. But when confronted, she often waddles back to me, pidgeon-toed, as fast as she can, anxious for the comfort and safety of my shoulder.

She will often insult my friends, who cannot resist trying to stroke those soft, velvety green feathers, which she feels is too much familiarity on their part, by nipping their hand or ear and running back to me

with her naughty chuckle, seemingly knowing that I find her antics too amusing to punish her with much seriousness. Unfortunately, this has caused many visitors to our house to only visit me from across the room, which Broom-Hilda considers a polite distance. But even the I become the object of her jealousy, as when I am engrossed in conversation with guests. She will first gently begin to nip at my cheek, and then harder, when she feels I have talked to that person long enough! The banished to her cage, she will begin to talk softly, repeating enderamennts that she has heard me say many times to her, more often than not degenerating into a harsh scream which reflects her resentment of being locked in "prison".

For fear of being accused of humanizing Broom-Hilda, I feel it neccessary to explain that parrots, especially hand-reared specimans, are some of the most gregarious creatures existing, and very prone to be bored and unhappy when not with their human "families". There is hardly anything sadder than a beautiful parrot of any type, who has resorted to behaviour such as feather plucking to while away the hours when it is left alone. This

can be prevented by giving your parrot the love and attention he needs, and providing toys or chewing material to keep him busy while you are gone.

I cannot stress enough, that a parrot must be made to feel "part of the family", if you want him to be vivacious and have a good attitude toward people.

(continued next month)

There are two species of camels—the one-humped Arabian camel, or dromedary, found across northern Africa, and the sturdier, two-humped bactrian camel, found in Asia's Gobi Desert.



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# Oh, my aching back!

## Help for disc problems

low and rigid. The dog can be in such pain that he whines or constantly cries out, and objects to being picked up or handled. Occasionally knuckling or stumbling in the front legs is seen.

In the mid-back (thoracolumbar) region reluctance to walk up stairs or jump from a chair may be the first signs observed. If the protrusion of disc material worsens, more pressure is applied to the sensitive spinal cord, causing signs which vary from lack of coordination and wobbly gait to partial or complete paralysis of the rear legs.

The severity of the signs of disc disease will vary according to the location of the ruptured disc, the forcefulness of the rupture, and the length of time pressure is applied to the spinal cord.

Sometimes when an extensive, forceful rupture or "blow-out" of a disc occurs, hemorrhage or bleeding in the spinal canal occurs. When this happens the onset is sudden and paraplegia comes on rapidly. As this progresses, the head is pulled back, the front legs stiffen, breathing quickens and death often follows.

The most common sites for ruptured discs are in the neck and midback where the thoracic vertebrae stop and the lumbar vertebrae begin. Midback is where protection from the ribs and their ligaments end, and where most stress is placed on the spinal column.

Disc disease can strike any animal when it gets old or suffers from an accident. When clinical signs point to a disc problem, it is imperative that medical help be sought as soon as possible. In the more severe disc problems, immediate treatment allows for much shorter recovery periods and often prevents permanent paralysis.

You should be especially watchful if you own one of these breeds in which disc disease is a common hereditary problem, such as dachsunds, bassets, beagles,

(continued on page 20)

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