



TODAYS *Animal* News

Holiday issue

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Unusual gifts
Pacemakers for dogs
The happy hunter
That sneezing cat
Feline rabies increasing
Stone problems in dogs

\$150

The Official voice of the Animal Health Foundation



AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION...



By Peter J. Vollmer

Peter J. Vollmer is the president of Group IV Ltd., Animal Behavior Consultant.

Of all the problem behaviors with pets that I deal with in private practice, those that fall into the aggressive category are the most difficult to modify on a permanent, long term basis.

There are several reasons I feel that this is the case. Usually the pet owner doesn't seek help until the behavior has had a long reinforcement history. The dog has been barking and growling at "intruders" such as mailmen, metermen, delivery people and paper boys for months, or even years. One day he nips, and the owner decides to get help, as "he's never done this before so there must be something wrong with him."

Usually aggressive responses have been occurring all along and have been reinforced each time. Territorial growling and barking constitute what are called precursor or antecedent responses which are preliminary to a more assertive act such as nipping or biting.

Reinforcement is achieved by the withdrawal of the stimulus which elicited the aggressive response. When the dog barks and growls at "intruders," the mailman, delivery people or whoever has come shortly leave the dog's presence. The act of leaving reinforces the response. It is as if the dog thought that his barking, growling, etc. led to the "intruder's" withdrawal. This is referred to as negative reinforcement — negative meaning subtraction or withdrawal, and reinforcement, because the response is more

likely to occur in greater frequency and intensity the next time around.

Another factor contributing to the difficulty of the change process is the fact that these events have taken place on a regular basis over time. Metermen, paper boys, etc. usually visit the home regularly during the month, week or day, and this regularity becomes a schedule of reinforcement. This in turn leads to highly persistent behavior.

Still another factor that contributes to changing the older dog's ways is the fact that an aggressive complaint usually is only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the surface lies a social relationship which the owner has with this dog that is less than desirable. Therefore, not only must an aggressive behavior pattern be modified, but also restructuring of the entire social relationship between the owner and the dog is called for. The owner is asked to learn an entirely new way of viewing and relating to the animal. This has proven difficult for many people to do.

Unfortunately, there are no "cook-book" solutions to these types of behavioral complaints. Each situation must be evaluated on its own merits. All this takes time, money and a lot of motivation on the owner's part.

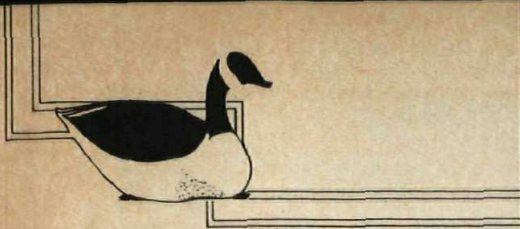
Fortunately, many, many aggressive complaints can be prevented from occurring through proper early handling. The young dog is relatively easy to work with, provided he's a normal, healthy animal. All it takes is a good, realistic understanding on the owner's part of how the puppy develops behaviorally into a mature dog and how the species com-

municates with others.

In the space allotted to me, I could not adequately explain to you the communication and developmental aspects of canine behavior, but I can recommend four reference sources that do an excellent job. *Understanding Your Dog*, by Michael W. Fox (C.M. & G, 1972); *Paul Loeb's Complete Book of Dog Training*, by Paul Loeb (Prentice Hall, 1974); *Help! This Animal is Driving Me Crazy*, by Daniel Tortora (Playboy Press, 1977); *The Wolf*, by David Mech (Natural History Press, 1970).

To those readers who have young pups, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of proper rearing. Much new information is now available — information that has been derived from years of research on animal learning and behavior.

Dr. R. L. Collenson, in a recent issue of *Today's Animal Health*, suggests that over 17 million dogs and cats are destroyed by humane shelters each year. Other studies have shown that typically some behavior problem is behind these euthanasias, and aggressiveness is towards the top of the list. Based on the estimated number of pets in this country, 17 million represents an enormous "failure" rate. So do yourself and your dog a favor and get educated. I'm sure you wouldn't take on the responsibility of raising a mink unless you first did a lot of research on the best way to go about it. Dogs require a specific type of handling that is based on their species history and learning mechanisms. All too few people have this understanding of *canis familiaris*. Are you one of them?



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THE VETERINARY FRONT

It's sneezin' season for felines, too.

Winter is the wonderful season of yuletide parties, snowball fights, drinking hot toddies around a roaring fireplace. It's also a time for coughing and sneezing and the common cold. And when the same symptoms appear in the family feline, humans often shrug them off by saying "Oh, Kitty has a cold."

A case of the sniffles is just something most humans expect to endure every year. Unfortunately, it's not that trivial for the cat. That sneezing "cold" could be the indication of a killing virus.

NOT YOUR "COMMON COLD"

Virus-caused upper respiratory disease is the most common and, perhaps, the most serious of the respiratory diseases that occur in cats.

Several organisms are capable of causing upper respiratory disease (colds) in cats but two virus groups account for about 80 percent of the cases. Outbreaks within households can be devastating and can include almost every member of your feline family.

Feline herpesvirus (not the human herpes we've all heard so much about recently), the cause of Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR) and one or more strains of Feline Calicivirus, the cause of Feline Calicivirus Disease (FCD), alone or in combination, are the most predominant organisms involved in infectious respiratory diseases in cats.

Both FVR and FCD occur worldwide with approximately the same frequency. Transmission of the viruses between cats usually follows direct contact with infective saliva, nasal or eye secretions. It is important to understand that either virus may be transmitted indirectly by human hands or on contaminated utensils (food and water dishes).

Although either may be present in nasal secretions, sneezing probably is not an important method of transmission. Studies have shown that sneezed droplets will scatter virus particles no more than a few feet. Feline herpesvirus lives for less than 24 hours outside the host, but Feline Calicivirus may live as long as a week. Fortunately, both viruses are killed by common household disinfectants.

A third major organism known to cause infectious respiratory disease in cats is *Chlamydia psittaci*. Chlamydial infection in cats is called Feline Pneumonitis, and is seen as a mild, often chronic, inflammation of the eyelids. A clear ocular discharge is usually seen with this disease as well as sneezing and mild nasal infection.

SYMPTOMS ARE SERIOUS

There are several other organisms known to cause upper respiratory disease in cats. Cold-like signs can be caused by very serious conditions such as fungus infections in the nose and cancer. So a prompt diagnosis is a wise step.

The FVR virus and FCD virus cause disease of sudden onset and usually short duration, characterized by severe cold-like symptoms. Enough similarities exist to make it difficult to tell them apart. Both cause bouts of sneezing, fever, and loss of appetite. Coughing may develop if the infection progresses into the windpipe and lungs. Watery discharges from the eyes and nose may become thick and cloudy as the disease progresses. Ulcers on the tongue, nose, and on the eyes may occur and be painful.

These diseases may affect cats of any age. However deaths are most common among kittens.

Specific antiviral medication is not available, so treatment is preventive and supportive.

Antibiotics are used to prevent complications associated with secondary bacterial infection. Fluids and food must be force fed several times a day. (These often must be given by stomach tube.) Nasal decongestants may help the cat to breathe more easily. Dried secretions on the nose and eyes must be removed frequently and soothing ointments applied to keep these animals comfortable.

The prognosis for recovery is guarded until the disease is obviously regressing and appetite returns. Most kittens and cats recover if treatment is started early and is continued well into recovery.

continued on next page

Cat sneeze can mean problems

The immunity established in recovered cats may last only a few months and subsequent vaccination is important to maintain immunity. Recovered cats are likely to become carriers of the viruses and this carrier state may last for years. The carrier cat is a hazard to be reckoned with if it is to be returned to a multiple-cat household. These carriers often show no symptoms of disease. Recurrent outbreaks of respiratory disease, particularly among kittens, is enough to assume that carriers are present. Cats with recurring respiratory infections, as with other chronic or recurring infections, should be checked for Feline Leukemia Virus.

PREVENTION IS THE KEY . . .

Routine vaccination and yearly revaccination has decreased the incidence of feline viral respiratory disease dramatically. There are two types of vaccine currently used throughout the United States. One is given by injection and the other is by drops into the nose and eyes. Selection of which type to use should be made on the basis of the household situation, breed, age, and overall health of the animals. Your veterinarian is best suited to determine which vaccine to use.

By Charles Robinson, DVM

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The veterinary front

Insecticides, good and bad

PET-OWNER'S GUIDE TO INSECTICIDES

There is a great deal of information and misinformation about insecticides being thrown at pet owners these days. Garden shops will tell you what's good for a cockroach is good for a flea; pet shops carry an array of every product known to man; health food establishments warn against all chemicals and push herbs instead.

Reading the labels is no help unless you have an advanced degree in chemistry - - - or read the rest of this article.

There are five general classes of insecticides. They each come from different sources, have different effects, and have different advantages in insect control.

NATURAL chemicals are found in plants or soil and have been known for thousands of years. The earth compounds, sulfur and arsenic, are still in use today. Insecticides which derive from plants are rotenone, nicotine, and pyrethrins.

Most natural products act either by direct contact or in the stomach. They generally kill rapidly, but have very little residual activity. These substances, if used alone, would have to be reapplied frequently.

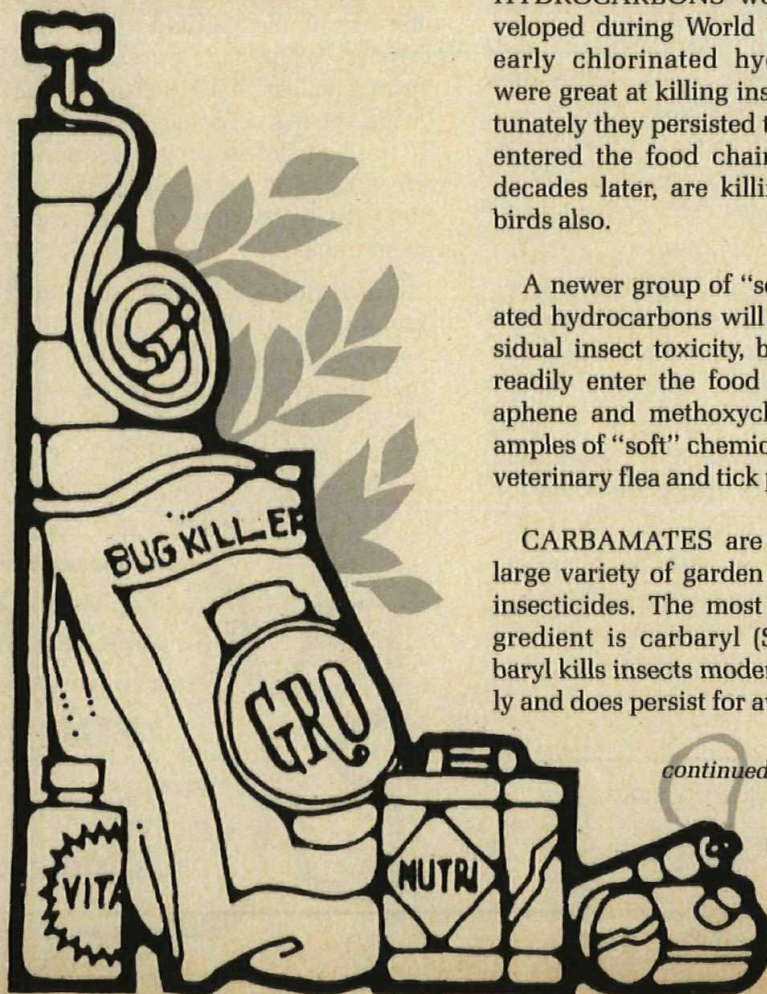
Pyrethrin is used frequently in aerosol flea products sold by veterinarians. It has great toxicity to cold-blooded animals and poses a low danger to warm-blooded creatures, such as pets and their owners.

Pyrethrin comes from chrysanthemum flowers. CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS were first developed during World War II. The early chlorinated hydrocarbons were great at killing insects. Unfortunately they persisted too long and entered the food chain and now, decades later, are killing fish and birds also.

A newer group of "soft" chlorinated hydrocarbons will produce residual insect toxicity, but does not readily enter the food chain. Toxaphene and methoxychlor are examples of "soft" chemicals found in veterinary flea and tick products.

CARBAMATES are found in a large variety of garden and animal insecticides. The most popular ingredient is carbaryl (Sevin). Carbaryl kills insects moderately quickly and does persist for awhile.

continued on next page



Bug poisons can poison pets, too.

Continued from page 5

Carbaryl is a powder and, therefore, is safer to handle and less apt to penetrate the skin than liquid insecticides. Carbaryl is especially useful on sensitive pets, such as puppies, cats and rabbits.

ORGANOPHOSPHATES have been developed over the past thirty years. These chemicals interfere with an enzyme, called cholinesterase, which is responsible for the transmission of nerve impulses. The most toxic organophosphates are the dreaded "nerve gases" we've all read about.

The tame versions are such well known chemicals as Ronnel, DDVP, and malathion. Many dips, kennel sprays, and foggers contain organophosphates. Precautions have to be used with these chemicals, but when used correctly they are among the most effective insecticides around.

SYNTHETIC PYRETHRINS are just now getting governmental approval for animal use. This new class of insecticides combine a high degree of insect toxicity with vastly improved safety to pets and people.

At the moment synthetic pyrethrins are available in sprays sold by veterinarians. The sprays can be used safely on nursing puppies and kittens, and even directly on the pet's bedding.

Eventually synthetic pyrethrins will appear in other insecticide products.

There is underway such rapid changes in insect control that pet owners should check with their veterinarians before launching a major war on fleas, mites, lice, or ticks.

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It's nearly impossible to package lions, tigers, whales and dolphins together under a Christmas tree . . . but the folks at Marine World Africa/USA think they have solved the problem with a different kind of gift. The San Francisco area park offers a year-round Annual Pass as a yuletide gift, and sends along a cuddly stuffed animal toy (as shown above) as a bonus.

PELICANS, EAGLES COME BACK

It took ten years, but ever since the use of the pesticide DDT was banned in the U.S., populations of brown pelican, bald eagle and other avian species especially sensitive to it have increased. Both species were rapidly approaching the extinct list before the stringent rules went into effect.

Both large birds rely on small mammals and fish for their diets, and it so happened that their diet mainstays contained large residues of DDT. The immediate effect was not the adult bird, but thinner eggshells caused an extremely high

mortality rate in nests. The eggs couldn't even support the weight of an adult bird.

Other birds similarly affected but also making a comeback, albeit not as dramatic as the bald eagle and brown pelican, are peregrine falcon and osprey. Researchers are still trying to find the answer why some large birds are more susceptible to DDT destruction than others.

Migratory birds such as some falcons and black-crowned night herons are still in danger. They take long journeys every year to South America where DDT is still in use.

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Many forms of animal life have become associated with Christmas time, but the dove has become more than a decorative symbol. It has become an expression of the hope for peace we all cherish at this time of year. It's good to remember how the lowly dove has come to be our ambassador of peace.

As Noah drifted across the flood waters he set forth the dove as a scout. But when the dove returned to the Ark, Noah knew that there was no dry land anywhere.

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the Ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth.

Genesis 8:9

This was not good news for Noah, but he "put forth his hand and took her and pulled her into the Ark." He waited for another seven days to try again and once more "sent forth the dove."

All day Noah waited. And still the dove did not return. Had it perished in the storm? Was the entire earth still under water? As night approached he feared that he would not see his dove again. But a tiny spot appeared on the horizon. As it grew closer it was the dove, a tiny, tired, frail messenger winging its way to him.

And the dove came to him in the evening. And, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off!

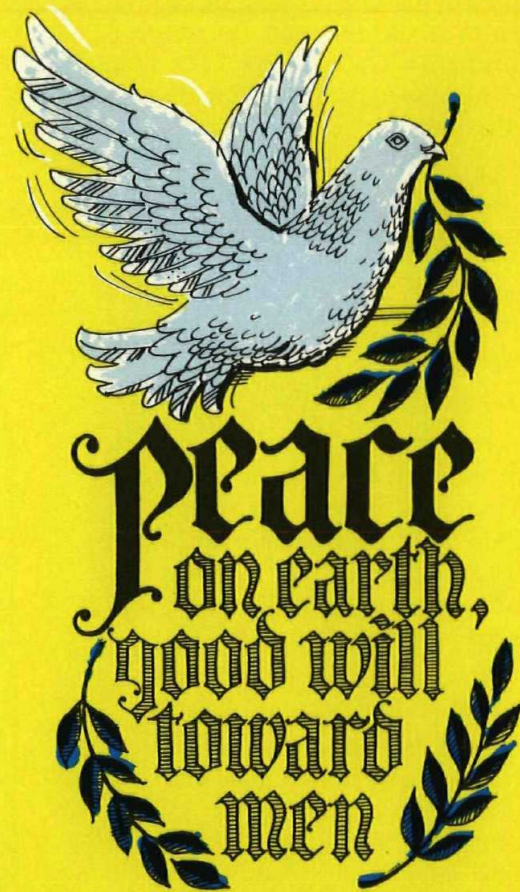
Genesis 8:11

And it was the proof Noah needed that the waters had begun to subside.

According to some legends the dove stained her feet red permanently when she landed in the bright red mud.

But Noah waited another week and again "sent forth the dove." And this time she found a home and food and "returned not again unto him anymore." And Noah, as he removed the cover from the Ark, knew his quest was over. "Behold, the face of the ground was dry." And Noah was commanded to "bring forth with thee every living thing." And he did. And there was peace.

The symbol
of PEACE...
and what it
means . . .



In the news

New snake ban

A "harmless" red-necked keelback snake from Thailand made headlines in Los Angeles recently when it sent its amateur herpetologist owner to the hospital. A bite started internal bleeding because the snake venom was preventing blood clotting. City officials immediately ordered a ban on future pet shop sales of the snake.

Goosebumps . . .

What is this thing called "goosebumps" which people get? Well, according to a lot of scientists, it's a carryover from when our furry ancestors roamed the globe, living a precarious life in caves against all sorts of larger, and four-legged predators. Goosebumps back then made the hair stand out on end (they still do), making humans look larger than they actually are. This might have caused predators to take a second look at their potential quarry. The erect hairs also trap warm air next to the skin to cut down on heat loss during times of stress.

Cats and water . . .

Domestic cats don't care to swim or even get their feet wet in water for a good reason. They have very little oil in their fur, it's not in the least waterproof, they get easily water-logged with all that hair and have a hard time staying afloat.

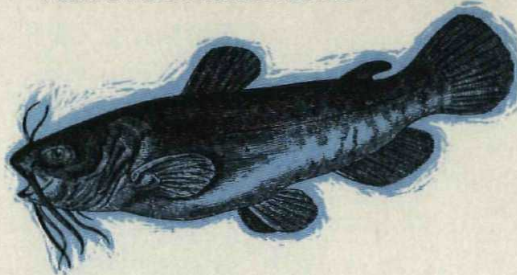
Canine dander . . .

After you've given your dog a bath, drench him with one part fabric softener and five parts of water. This will cut down on the amount of dander, skin particles and other bits and pieces of post-bath shedding. The process will usually be effective for at least six weeks.

Cockatoo sexing . . .

Most male cockatoos have a dark, nearly black iris, while females have a lighter brown iris with almost a reddish hue. These are adult birds, only. Cockatoos six months or younger both have a light brown iris.

FISH STORY WITH A HAPPY ENDING



Plop, plop, fizz, fizz . . .

Veterinarians are often faced with unusual problems. For example, the owner of a large seven-pound shovel-nosed catfish from a tropical aquarium called up his Royal Oak, Michigan veterinarian with a plea for help.

It seems the hobbyist was adjusting the hood on the huge tank when the glass cracked, careened down through the water and sliced open the back of his prize, rare catfish. He was told to bring the nearly filleted fish down right away.

The veterinarian knew he could suture the wound closed, but how in the world do you anesthetize a seven-pound catfish? He called up

an ichthyologist friend who told him to put the fish in a small tank and drop in some Alka Seltzer tablets. The carbon dioxide released into the water would do the trick.

It took quite few tablets to do it, but soon the tank was bubbling away with a collection of Alka Seltzer tablets fizzing on the bottom. The anesthesia worked and the fish was lifted on to a table layered with wet towels. The suturing took ten minutes, and then the fish was dropped into another tank of clean water. Minutes passed and no movement. Oxygen was fed into the water and the fish was moved about the tank in a swimming motion. About 15 minutes later the sutured catfish returned to normal.



"Golly, it looks almost human, doesn't it?"

SOLUTION TO THE STONE PROBLEM . . .

NEW DOGFOOD DISSOLVES STONES

One of the most painful and vexing problems in dogs has been bladder stones. But now a revolutionary new dogfood has been developed which can dissolve uroliths (urinary stones). The food, called S/D, comes from Hills-Riviana, a major producer of specialized diets for cats and dogs.

The majority of urinary stones in dogs are the result of chronic urinary infection. Certain diets may contribute to the development of urinary stones. Insufficient water intake can also play a role.

When the various factors are right (actually wrong) small crystals, called struvite, begin to form in the urine. Most struvite crystals are eliminated when the dog urinates. However, some crystals will join together and begin to "grow". Eventually struvite gets too large to pass and the serious condition of

urolithiasis, urinary stones, is the result.

Until recently the only means of treating urolithiasis was by performing surgery. In an old or debilitated animal the procedure could be risky.

Now the veterinarian has an alternative treatment available. By prescribing S/D and administering drugs, many high risk urolithiasis patients can be successfully treated without surgery. The special diet must be fed exclusively for three to five months. In addition, the dog may be given antibiotics and urinary acidifiers every day. Also the dog should be encouraged to drink large volumes of water by adding salt to the food.

From time to time the urine should be examined and x-rays taken to check on possible infection

and to see how quickly the struvite is dissolving.

The obvious advantage to surgery is that the stone(s) is removed at once, not over a few months. But, in many cases, the stones will reappear after surgery. The ultimate cost of surgical and nonsurgical methods end up being somewhat comparable.

S/D is effective for struvite type stones only. Other forms of urolithiasis cannot be treated by the S/D method. Fortunately for pet owners, struvite type stones represent the majority of stone problems in dogs.

The development of S/D has given the veterinarian a safe nonsurgical alternative in combatting urolithiasis. Many canine lives will be prolonged and made healthy as a result of S/D.

GOOD NEWS FROM SASKATOON . . .

Prospects look brighter for peregrine falcons and muskoxen in Canada, thanks to the concern and efforts of naturalists there.

They are hoping that peregrine falcons will learn to accept tall buildings in Saskatoon as a substitute for the steep cliffs that would be home in the wild. Training the falcons to inhabit office buildings can also provide an extra bonus for city dwellers, since the falcons prey on pesty pigeons and starlings.

Four birds, six weeks old, two male and two female, were recently released from the roof of a downtown hotel building and seem to be accepting city life so far. They are still too young to forage for themselves and are being fed by the researchers. One male falcon sustained some wing injuries while adjusting to the metropolitan environment and was rescued for treatment.

The birds wear special silver bands and carry an emergency telephone number to help researchers track their progress.

Peregrine falcons are the swiftest creatures known to man, but until the ban of DDT in the 70's they were seriously threatened with extinction. They have been making a slow comeback, with the help of North American conservationists. Much of the funding comes from the United States in a "hands across the border" effort to save the peregrine.

One big danger still faces the birds. They migrate annually to Central and South America where the pesticide DDT is still in use.

Meanwhile, down on the ground, Canadians are optimistic about a program to restore the muskoxen to the wilds as a source of food and fur for the native indians.

A small herd of 13 orphaned offspring are being studied at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at Saskatoon.

The shaggy creatures once roamed the frozen northlands of Canada in much the same manner as the bison did in the plains of the United States. They provided meat and a wool that resembles angora for the Inuit indians until 1917. At that point the population declined to a dangerously low number and a total hunting ban was imposed.

But now the numbers have increased to about 22,000 and limited harvests are taking place again. But researchers are carefully studying the "population boom" to obtain a balance between the muskoxen and caribou that share the same feeding areas. Both animals are plagued with the problems of over-feeding, hunting, and the intrusion of man.

In addition to these problems both animals are in danger of losing their natural habitat completely to the development of new oil fields.



White cats, blue eyes, and deafness

Most of us know that cats with white fur and blue eyes are usually deaf. But what about a white cat with one blue eye and one yellow eye?

If you guessed it's deaf in one ear, you're correct! And if you want to impress other cat owners, you can call this hereditary affliction Waardenburg's Syndrome, after the geneticist who did a lot of published research on it. Actually, white fur and blue eyes equals deafness can also be applied to certain breeds of dogs (some hounds, collies, some terriers, Dalmations, etc.) mink, mice and rabbits. And it has been discussed and written about since 1829.

This genetic anomaly causes lack of development in the inner ear and consequent deafness. It affects mature cats. A lot kittens are born blue-eyed but the pigmentation changes as they mature. Cats with long hair are more likely to be deaf in both ears, cats with short hair are usually deaf in only one ear.

Not all white cats are deaf, only about 20 percent, but those with blue eyes are much more likely to be affected since the lack of eye pigmentation (i.e., brown, yellow, hazel, etc.) is an indication of Waardenburg's Syndrome. If both parents are deaf, the chances for kittens also to be deaf is about 80 percent.

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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A simple guide to Kicking the kitty box habit

Winter means kitty spends more time inside, and that means you have to face the endless chore of refreshing the litter tray even more frequently. If you really find that job distasteful there is an alternate solution that works for many cat owners: teach your fussy feline to make use of the human facilities instead!

Easier said than done, you say. True . . . but with patience and ingenuity you may be able to truly "toilet train" your cat.

According to experts, your first step is to duplicate the conditions of the kitty box on the human toilet. Cover the seat entirely with Saran wrap (or a similar wrapping material) and sprinkle a small amount of kitty litter in the center. Some animals may require a bit of "used" litter with it. The slight odor will remind them of their familiar "rest stop" and assure them that this is an acceptable spot. Usually, when the cat finishes relieving itself it will automatically follow with the traditional "scratch and cover" routine. This should make a small rip in the covering and allow the contents to drop through and into the toilet.

From this first step it is just a matter of decreasing the amount of litter and also reducing the plastic wrap.

Of course, there are a couple of inconveniences, but these are well worth the end result. You'll need the cooperation of all the humans in the household for a few days. And you'll probably want to start the project during a time when no visitors are expected. And, naturally, even the most clever will never be able to handle the flushing process.

But, if you are patient and own a willing kitty, before long you may be able to discard the old kitty litter tray for good!

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"Buster, the killer kitty", from Philadelphia, clawed his way to victory and was crowned the 1982 Glamour Kitty of America at the 17th annual contest recently at Florida.

"Buster", a 3-year-old, 17-pound blue-grey "household" cat was acquired by his owner for a mere 25 cents at a flea market.

LARGEST ANIMAL STILL LIVES

What was the largest animal ever to inhabit the earth? Nope, it wasn't, as many people suppose, the dinosaur or some other now-extinct prehistoric beast.

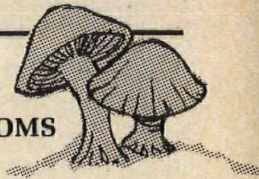
The biggest animal that ever lived is still alive and swimming in our oceans, according to International Wildlife magazine. It is the blue whale, which grows to a length of 100 feet and may weigh as much as 300,000 pounds!

An endangered species, the blue's world population has been estimated at less than 8,000. At birth, the calf is an astounding 24 feet long. Imagine giving birth to an animal that is about the size of an average motor home!

The calf drinks 100 gallons of milk a day from a "straw" that connects to its mother and can gain as much as 200 pounds a day.



DON'T BLAME THE MUSH ROOMS



Then there's the true story about the family in Olympia, Washington.

Mom, dad, and five kids returned from a hiking trip with a load of fresh-picked mushrooms from nearby forests. After eating them, they gave the leftovers to the family cat.

A bit later, they noticed the cat in obvious distress, and going into what appeared to be convulsions. They called their veterinarian who quickly advised them to forget the cat and get the family to the nearest hospital. All seven underwent the trauma and discomfort of having their stomachs pumped out. Weakly, they returned home, not looking forward to the sight of a dead cat stretched out on the kitchen floor.

Instead, they found the family feline purring away in a box and busy washing a batch of kittens she had just given birth to.

Sure, our dogs do a bit of ear-scratching and head shaking accompanied by flapping ears, but when the dog seems to be spending an excessive amount of time trying to scratch an ear infection, it's time his owner took a hand in it to see what's wrong.

Actually, the average dog owner can't tell much by peering into the dog's ear, even with the aid of a flashlight. It needs instruments found in a veterinary clinic. And if your dog seems to be constantly pestered with an irritating ear, it's a good chance otitis media or otitis externa is to blame. Otitis externa is an infection of the outer ear, otitis media is an infection of the middle ear.

Ear problems are fairly common in dogs. External parasites such as fleas, lice, mites and ticks can cause it; foreign bodies in the ear passages can set up an infection; and once it's started it takes veterinary help to cure it. There's no one particular bacterium that causes otitis --- it can be any one of several familiar infectious agents such as staph, strep or coliform organisms, or even a fungus. The dog's constant scratching, pawing or rubbing of the ear only further irritates the affected delicate tissues. If not treated, otitis media could lead to more serious problems in the ear or even brain.

Otitis Externa, if not treated, can easily spread deeper to Otitis media. Otitis externa is visible in the outer ear passages or the ear flap and is easily treated. But otitis media means the infection has ruptured and the eardrum and the infection has spread to the middle ear. Only rarely are cases of otitis media seen that were not preceded by otitis externa.

To confirm the diagnosis, the dog is anesthetized and a thorough examination of the ear is carried out. This is not easy because quite often the tissues are swollen and the ear passages are packed with dead tissues, debris, secretions and other bits of flotsam that impede a thorough examination. The ear must be cleaned out as the examination proceeds, hence the need for anesthetizing the dog.

Ear Diseases



If it's a routine case of otitis media (which is usually accompanied by otitis externa), treatment is carried out at the same time as the examination. This means a scrupulous cleaning job to provide ventilation, good drainage, and an immaculate ear channel. Antibiotics are applied to combat the infectious bacteria. In severe cases this can be a lengthy process, for anything less than a clean ear means the infection will get underway again. In severe or chronic cases, it's sometimes necessary to resort to ear surgery to eliminate infectious lesions.

Otitis can affect all dogs. It would seem that dogs with erect ears are more prone, since the ears are wide open and not protected by the ear flap. But dogs with ears that hang down are also susceptible since the flap chokes off ventilation and can impede air flow. Worst of all, it provides a warm and moist environment for bacteria to thrive. Once dirt, debris, foreign bodies cause an infection in the ear channel, it can easily spread to the eardrum, rupture it, and bring on a case of otitis media.

Many ear infections can be avoided by the conscientious and regular inspection and cleaning of the dog's ears at home. Cleaning can be accomplished easily by carefully wiping out the ear with a cotton ball, moistened slightly with a bit of alcohol. If the cotton comes out with a great deal of dark brown matter it probably means that a trip to the veterinarian is in order. If the ear has a strong musky smell it could also indicate the start of an infection. Keeping the ear clean takes away the "breeding" areas for many infections. Otitis externa is one canine ailment that is easily signaled by the dog to its owner. And it should be treated before complications develop.

GENETIC ENGINEERING COMES TO VETERINARY MEDICINE

Cetus Corp. of Berkeley, California - a giant in the field of genetic engineering and recombinant vaccine research - and TechAmerica Group, Inc., have signed a collaborative agreement covering research and development of products for the animal health industry. Cetus will do the basic research on the products and TechAmerica will be responsible for clinical research, production and marketing.

INFLATION HITS DOG THEFTS

The inflationary spiral has even affected dog thieves. In a recent decision to upgrade the definition of grand theft the California court system now suggests that only the theft of a dog valued at \$400 or more falls into that category. The value, until now, had been placed at only \$200.

Thawing dog food

If you buy frozen meat for your dogs, thaw it out in the refrigerator, not at room temperature. It may take longer, but the risk of spoilage when thawed at room temperature is high. Your nose may not detect anything wrong, but the dog's digestive system will.

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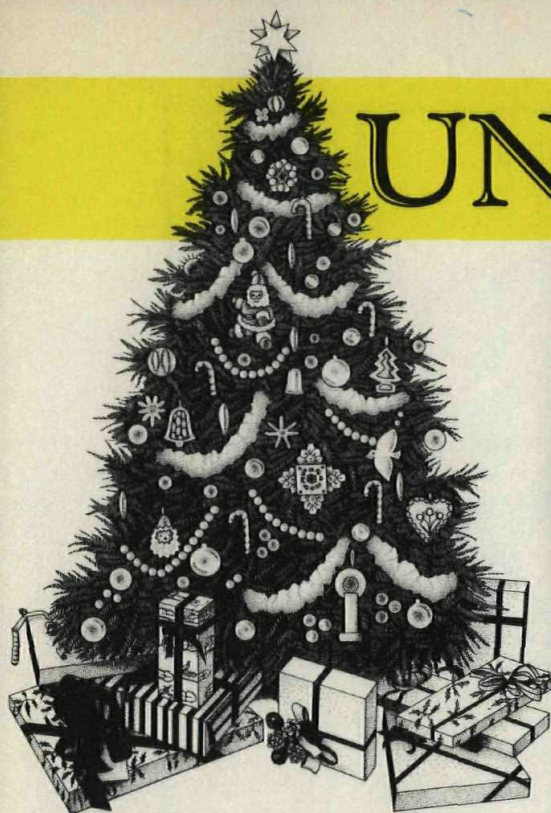
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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

TODAYS ANIMAL NEWS



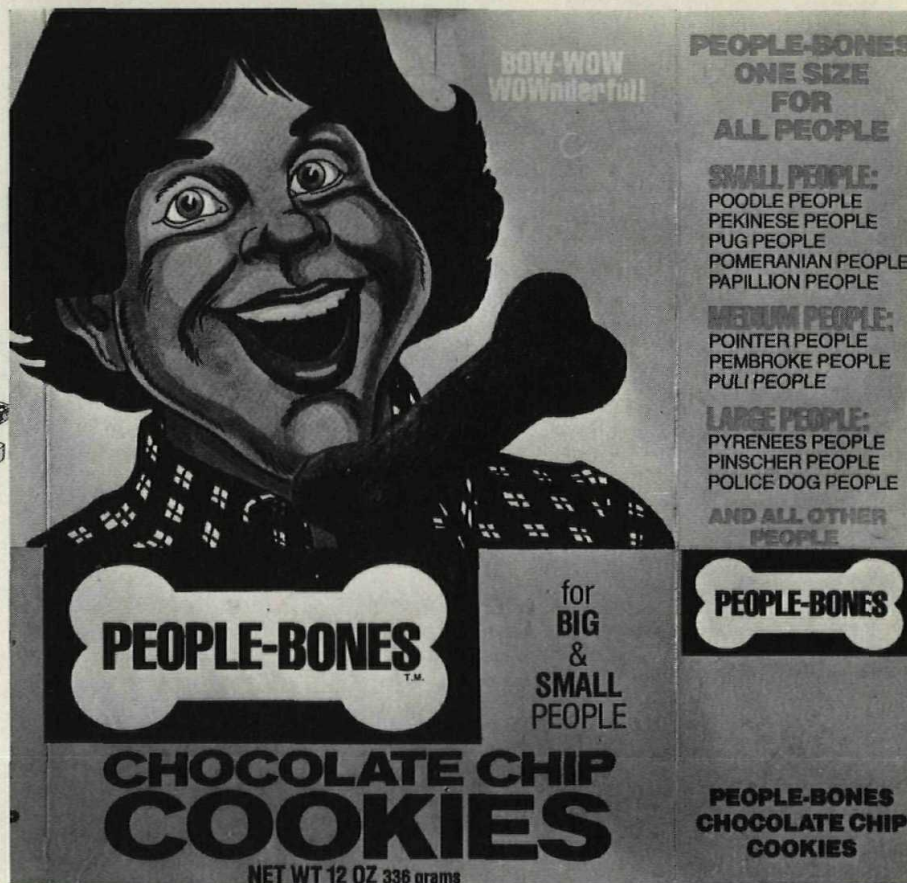
UNUSUAL HOLIDAY

Every year it's the same old story. All the Christmas shopping has been done and now it's time to pick up something for the family pet. And it usually ends up being about as exciting as the necktie from your cousin in Nebraska. Well, this year we at Today's Animal News are going to do something about it . . . with a special feature covering unusual and fun items for pets and pet owners at Christmas!

Watch his eyes turn wide with wonder when you present your dog with the biggest bone he has ever seen!

You'll have to plan ahead for this surprise. Get your butcher to save an entire upper leg bone from the next beef he trims out. You can wrap it in plastic and keep it until Christmas in your freezer.

Now to prepare it. You'll need your biggest broiling pan. Put in the whole bone with a generous amount of herbs (no spices) and seasonings. Garlic, oregano, thyme, whatever sounds good to you. Cover the bone with water and for a bit of extra flavor throw in a few tasty vegetables. Celery, carrots, onions, and bell peppers all add extra zest to the mix.



Just about any dog owner will recognize this "spoof" of the well-known Milk Bone package. And not only is the package unusually well done with humor, but the contents are tasty bone-shaped chocolate chip cookies. The back of the package even includes an offer to send in for your "personalized I.D. people tag."

The side of the package indicates that People-Bones are for Small People: Poodle People, Pekenese

People, Pug People, Pomeranian People and Papillon People. Medium People include Pointer People, Pembroke People and Puli People. Large People include Pyrenees People, Pinscher People, Police Dog People . . . and all other people.

This is a sure way to bring a chuckle to any dog owner. As the manufacturer says, "they are Bow-Wow Wonderful!" An unusual fun gift for any dog owner.

Pop it in the oven at about 350 degrees for about six hours or so. When it is done it can be cooled and wrapped in plastic until presented.

Save the surplus broth and vegetables. They can be used as soup stock for you or can be added, a little at a time, to your pet's food.

The cooked bone won't turn rancid as fresh, raw bones usually do. And it won't splinter. With luck your pet will still be enjoying this Christmas bonus for weeks to come. And the entire project will only require a few minutes of your time, and a few cents from your budget.

Bone appetite!

AY GIFT IDEAS...



Your doggy friends will love the "Doggone! It's 1983" calendar, containing a variety of canine friends in twelve fullcolor photographs. It is available at most gift, stationery and book stores. A portion of the proceeds from sales of this calendar will be donated to the Humane Society of the United States.

Here's a novel gift idea for both dog and master. An obedience training class gift certificate for that special someone on your list. It's a gift he or she will always remember.

Check around for the best training class in your area (the Humane Society can often suggest one) and make arrangements to prepay the tuition for the next class for the unruly dog. The instructor will be happy to provide a card or gift certificate indicating the enrollment of Bowser, which you can gift wrap.

The dog need not be purebred, but it should be current on all shots, including parvovirus. The cost is usually very reasonable. The dog should be at least six months old, but it is never too late to learn.

This will finally put an end to the procrastinating and excuses and get both dog and master launched on the road to good canine manners.

What not to give for Christmas! Live animals should not be given on Christmas day. Too much excitement and activity makes a poor situation for the adjustment of a new pet to a strange environment. The stress can exhaust a young animal and even cause it to become ill.

If you are really completely sure that you have chosen the right pet for the right person you can accomplish the same thing, and save the pet from the holiday rigors, by wrapping a picture of the gift pet instead. A gift announcement can explain that the pet will be available to its new home and owner after the holiday festivities are over.

This will also allow the recipient of the gift to properly prepare for the new pet with food, bedding, dishes, etc. Sometimes the unexpected arrival of a new pet can be more of a burden than a blessing.



Nepeta Cataria Citriodora sounds pretty exotic but it is just the fancy name for catnip (in this case it is called lemon catnip) and it can make a very inexpensive and fun gift for your cat. Your nursery probably won't have any actual growing plants left in stock, since it is usually sold in the spring. But why not pick up a packet of seeds and grow your own catnip indoors?

For less than two dollars you can buy a hundred seeds and some little pots to start your own indoor catnip garden. And within two to four weeks you will have your own crop of catnip growing. Cats love it so much that you may have to put your pots in cat-proof spots and ration the amount of catnip that you provide Kitty at one time.

Most cats get a real "high" on the plant, eating it, rolling in it, and generally behaving as though in a second childhood.

You can pick it and put it aside to dry, and it will continue to become stronger and more potent. Sprinkle some into a small piece of fabric and tie it up into a little pouch and your cat will have a toy that will provide hours of entertainment.





Crash! There goes another ornament from the Christmas tree, thanks to the fantasy play-hunting of the resident cat.

But why? The family feline "has it made." Well-fed, comfortable and secure. But it seems that if it isn't out hunting the song birds in the yard it is stalking goldfish or holiday decorations inside the house!

The desire to hunt, and to sharpen hunting skills through play, is inherited and is affected very little by the comforts provided by humans. This is why abandoned cats can often call on those skills to survive in the wild.

That hunting instinct may be compared to some retrieving breeds of dogs who possess a natural inclination to flush and retrieve birds. Many generations have passed since those breeds depended on their hunting abilities to survive.

The Happy Hunter

The ancestors of our domestic cats were solitary. As a result cats' prey is small animals that can be handled by a single hunter, as opposed to the "big cats" who are able to catch and kill bigger game through a team effort.

Domestic cats' prey is at times known to include grasshoppers, crickets, lizards, birds, mice, snake, chickens and even rabbits. Cats

may appear to be highly skilled hunters, but an expert on feline predation, Paul Leyhausen, estimates that only one third of the attempts of a cat to capture a mouse will be successful.

Are cats a major threat to birds? According to a study of feral cats conducted many years ago, approximately only 10 - 20 percent of the feral cat diet consisted of small birds.

The hunting techniques of the cat are considerably more rewarding with ground prey. The patient stalking and waiting is less effective with the flighty behavior of birds. Anyone observing a cat in the yard creeping up on a bird can see the frustration of the feline as the bird, seemingly oblivious to danger, flies away to a new spot just out of range, foiling the patience of the cat. In general, a cat is more likely to hunt birds in an environment lacking small rodents. *continued* →

The typical family feline hunting

If, as is hopefully the case, there are few mice around, will keeping a cat well-fed decrease his hunting? Unfortunately, no. Cats will even leave a meal if a likely prey is available. What can be done to protect your avian friends from your feline friends?

First: Remember as with most prey, those captured are usually old, very young, or sick. It is part of Nature's survival of the fittest plan.

Second: Keep bird feeders and bird baths away from shrubs, tall weeds and other ideal hiding places for hunting cats.

Third: Providing the cat with plenty of toys will sometimes help. The time spent in make-believe hunting will be just that much less time in pursuit of the real thing.

Fourth: If you are really determined to stop your cat from catching wild creatures you can make the cat wear a small bell on a collar. He'll still hunt, but this "early warning" system will seriously reduce his success ratio.

Most of our domesticated animals have lost their abilities to survive without the care and support of man. Most domesticated dogs are helpless when forced to fend for themselves. But the cat continues to be the one animal that maintains the tools of survival. And the millions of feral cats are the living proof of this. The cat may be vexing to bird lovers, but it's hard not to admire the abilities of this happy hunter!

DID YOU NOTICE?

Check the address label on this copy of your magazine. You may be receiving it through the courtesy of your of your veterinary hospital in the interest of helping you to keep informed on good health care for your pets. We hope you enjoy it!

in the NEWS

INCREASE IN FELINE RABIES

Just in case you're not convinced about the continuing threat of rabies among wild and domestic animals, be informed that rabies cases in Iowa (not your typical rabies area compared to states in the southwest) jumped 68 percent from 1980 to 1981 alone. On the household pet side, dog rabies increased from 22 to 49 cases, and cat rabies from 44 to 83.

Fifty-seven humans received bites from animals exposed to rabies, and 42 of them involved cats. Iowan felines also led the list in rabies bites from 1977 to 1980.

A total of 661 animal bites were recorded and 452 people were treated with Pasteur anti-rabies injections. None of them contracted rabies.

Health researchers blame Iowa's skunk population as the largest reservoir of rabies infections in both dogs and cats. Rabies vaccinations are not required for cats in Iowa, but they are for dogs. In 35 rabid dogs, only one was up to date on its rabies shots.

The Iowa statistics mirror nationwide figures. Documented cases of rabies in animals have doubled in the last three years: 3,298 in 1978 to more than 7,000 in 1981. Also, for the first time, the number of rabid cats reportedly surpassed the number of rabid dogs . . . by about 20 percent.

FIERCE FISH GETS ANGLER.

An avid Ohio fisherman rejoiced when he hooked a 15 pound muskie. But when Bob Grimm of Columbus, Ohio, plucked his catch from the water the muskie latched onto the angler's middle finger. This was one fish that didn't get away. In fact, it wouldn't let go.

With the fish still attached, Grimm drove to the office of doctor a few miles away and had the pesky muskie removed from his digit. The fish had bitten completely through the finger and it required a half dozen stitches to close the wound. Grimm left the fish with the doctor.

Fido in jail?

Los Angeles is probably the only city where dogs can get a "rap sheet" even though they're innocent. There's a law on the books which says whenever a dog owner has to serve time in jail, even for a few days or weeks, the dog has to do time also.

The law was intended to cut down on the number of homeless, unfed strays. Unless the sentenced dog owner finds a home for his pet while he or she is doing time, Fido gets the same sentence, but not the same cell.

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LUCIA, WE LOVE YOU!

Dear Today's Animal News:

Enclosed is the money for two more years of a wonderfully written magazine.

Today's Animal News is so fulfilling, and I've learned ever so much more to take care of my four cats, one dog, and one dove.

I've even helped friends who needed advice on their pets and your magazine comes in handy.

Keep up the great articles and stories. Maybe I'll send you a story of my cat Milly whom I've raised since she was one day old and is now six years old and big and very healthy.

I hope more people can buy or subscribe to this magazine because it's very educational! Thank you for a great magazine!

Lucia Flores, Norwalk, Calif.

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

Dear Mr. Bundock:

Perhaps you will recall my inquiry about feral cats. I was grateful for your response, printed in the December 1980 issue.

I am happy to report that my book is being published in December. The title is **Maverick Cats: Encounters with Feral Cats**, and the publisher is Walker and Company of New York. The book is an unusual combination – a personal celebration of the feral cats we've come to know on our own land in Vermont, and a factual report on the research into the lives of these animals around the world. Feral cats are being studied on four continents, and this book will have information not previously available to the general reader. Again, my personal thanks to you. This book would not have been possible without the response of dozens of people like you . . . in journals, and in organizations, agencies, and universities.

I hope you enjoy reading **Maverick Cats** as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

Ellen Perry Berkeley,
Shaftsbury, Vermont.



Dialogue

WE KEEP TRYING . . .

After receiving your assurance some months ago that you were indeed striving to improve the literary calibre of your magazine, I have been looking forward to reading one without being "tripped up" by a typo – or spelling mistake, etc. As yet, I see no improvement. I have wanted to read a magazine like yours for years and was so pleased to find one – but you cannot imagine how galling it is to find it at last, only to be irritated by the atrocious spelling and glaring typos!

Regretfully,

Kitty Eames, Yelm, Wash.

Dear Kitty:

Hang in there. We really are trying, even if it seems that we are only trying your patience.

Our computer now scans all our copy with a spelling checker. But it only has a memory of 200,000 words and may still slip up once in a while.

Our staff is comprised of people who donate their efforts to the magazine and foundation. Hiring more people, as you suggest, would rob the foundation of working funds.

No publication likes mistakes, but they still happen. *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, recently ran about three inches correcting errors. *Pure-Bred Dogs*, official organ of the AKC, recently ran three pages correcting mistakes in a previous issue. They say that to err is human, to forgive is divine. Perhaps that is why they still put erasers on pencils, Kitty.

Thank you for your continued interest. We strive to do better, but cannot promise to be perfect.

Editor.

ARE LEGAL RIGHTS RIGHT?

Dear Sirs:

Most serious of the issues raised by your magazine is that of legal rights for animals. Regardless of my position on this issue which has deeply divided the veterinary community, the end result of outrageous settlements for damages awarded to pet animals will be higher insurance premiums for veterinarians and increased animal health care costs. Many animal owners will be forced to choose between foregoing the pleasures afforded by pets, or worse yet neglecting the pet's health needs.

It is thus my contention that if some few animal owners are allowed to reap great rewards in the name of animal rights, the majority will bear the cost of this enterprise resulting in negative effects on the pet animal population as a whole.

I am interested in your magazine for my clients and I find the majority of the articles timely and well-written. If I am to commit myself to vouching for the views presented therein, however, some thought must be given to my point of view.

Roger M. Geiger, D.V.M.

Dear Doctor:

Your point of view is well expressed and we want to share it with our readers. Today's Animal News welcomes all communications dealing with the well-being of animals.

Editor.

(Because of space limitations, some letters have been abbreviated.)

TAGUE FANS...

We just saw the latest issue of *Animal News* that features the work of Kathleen Tague. I am personally delighted because the Chesapeake featured is my dog, Chesnick's Beirdneau Lucias, CDX. Kathleen's picture looks so much like Birdie; touching her seems to be the logical thing to do when you see the picture. Your reproduction is beautiful and is a credit to the original. I am very impressed with the printing of the magazine when you can do such a great job of those brown tones.

Sincerely,
Janis Nicholes

Dear Janis:

It has been very gratifying to receive so much interest regarding our recent article, "Artist by Accident." For other Tague fans we are printing her address so that you may now contact her directly: Kathleen Tague, 602 "D" Street, Davis, CA 95616.

We hope to feature more of Miss Tague's work in a future issue, so keep watching!

Editor.

NORTH AMERICAN DEFENDER

Dear Editor:

Regarding Anita's letter saying she feels she is paying too much for the course really upset me.

Two years ago I took that same course. I maintained a straight A average. It took me about a year to complete the course because I had to work full-time as well. I paid my payments with my assignments. I feel that Anita went much too fast with her studies. That course not only opened the door for me in veterinary assisting but it gave me enough drive and confidence to become a professional dog groomer.

If I never took that course I could honestly state that I would never be where I am today. Thank you North American School of Sciences!

Suzanne Meleske, New York.

HOUSING INADEQUATE?

Dear Mr. Blumberg:

In the July-August issue of *Today's Animal News* there was featured an article by Darlene Stauffer on how to build a dog a quonset hut.

Although I agree with the author that dogs deserve adequate shelter, I do not believe that a metal-drum doghouse will accomplish this purpose.

Metal is one of the greatest conductors of heat and cold. The oil drum pictured on page 11, shown out in the open and raised on a small platform, will not adequately protect an animal from extreme cold or heat. Inadequate shelter is the same as no shelter at all.

In the summer, a metal drum sitting out in the sun would reach 100-plus degrees in no time - injuring any animal that touches it. In winter, freezing temperatures could cause the drum to stick to flesh, tearing it. A dog sitting inside, surrounded by that much heat or cold, could experience great discomfort and even death. If he is free to leave the drum in those instances, he is still being denied adequate shelter.

The author pointed out that vibrations in the metal drum terrified her terrier during a thunderstorm. I see no value in subjecting a dog to that.

A simple dog house can be built out of good boards, insulated with straw and/or old blankets. A fiberglass house is also protective. (Enclosed is a useful model plan for building a doghouse.) Any caring owner should, in addition, provide opportunity for its dogs - and cats - to come in the house during severely cold weather or seek shade and water during hot days.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Wright, Director, Animal Sheltering and Control, The Humane Society of the United States, Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Wright:

Your comments are well-taken. However, to be fair, we did accompany the oil-drum article with two outlines for building a wooden dog shelter. One was for a conventional dog house and the other discussed an "A" frame shelter. And we always welcome other ideas that will make life more comfortable for our pets. Your "model plan" sounds interesting, but there was no enclosure with your letter. Perhaps you would like to share it with us in the future.

Editor.

PIT BULL PROTEST

Dear Sirs:

Since I am an owner of two "pit bulls" I can assure you that Mr. Bundock's condemnation of "pit bulls" was indeed a bum rap. Those who have the opportunity to disseminate their opinions in magazines should do so within their field of real knowledge and expertise.

I would suggest that Doug Bundock stay within his field of art where his voice and criticism may be more justified.

Sincerely,

Frederick F. Everhart, D.V.M., J.D.

Dear Doctor:

Although we realize that all readers won't agree, we have always considered opinion an important part of the content of *Today's Animal News*. And, to be fair, we bend over backwards to print differing views such as your letter, also.

The point of the article was simple. It was an attempt to strip away some of the glamor of pit dog fighting. We are sorry if some readers failed to understand or agree. Mr. Bundock's "field of real knowledge and expertise" includes some 25 years as professional handler and trainer of dogs, movie dog trainer, and formerly licensed for all breeds by the American Kennel Club.

Thank you for your interest, and we hope that you will continue to share your views with us.

Editor.

Good for your car . . . bad for your pet . . .

ANTIFREEZE AND PETS

The advent of winter brings out a rash of TV commercials and newspaper advertisements about "winterizing" the family auto. This means antifreeze in the radiator, and if precautions aren't taken, it could also mean a fatal dose of antifreeze to dogs and cats.

All it takes is one ounce of antifreeze to kill a 15-pound dog, and as little as one-third ounce can be fatal to a ten-pound cat.

What this means, of course, is that every drop of spilled antifreeze should be quickly mopped up from the garage floor. If the radiator is filled outdoors, shovel up the spillage and a lot of gravel with it, put it in a plastic bag, tightly secure it and put it in a sturdy garbage can. For some reason, cats have a real fondness for the taste of antifreeze, not knowing that it could be the last liquid they'll ever drink.

Antifreezes made for motors contain insoluble calcium oxalate crystals which collect in the tubules of the kidneys. They quickly produce uremia and acidosis. This toxic condition develops within 36 hours after ingestion. But symptoms develop earlier than that, often in an hour or less.

Depression is the obvious signal. If animals are forced to move, they may stagger or collapse. Vomiting, loss of appetite and intermittent convulsions are other symptoms.

Sometimes they seem to recover, but within 24 to 36 hours, the deadlier signs of uremia and acidosis set in.

Sperm whales are known to dive more than 3500 feet in search of food.

In the news

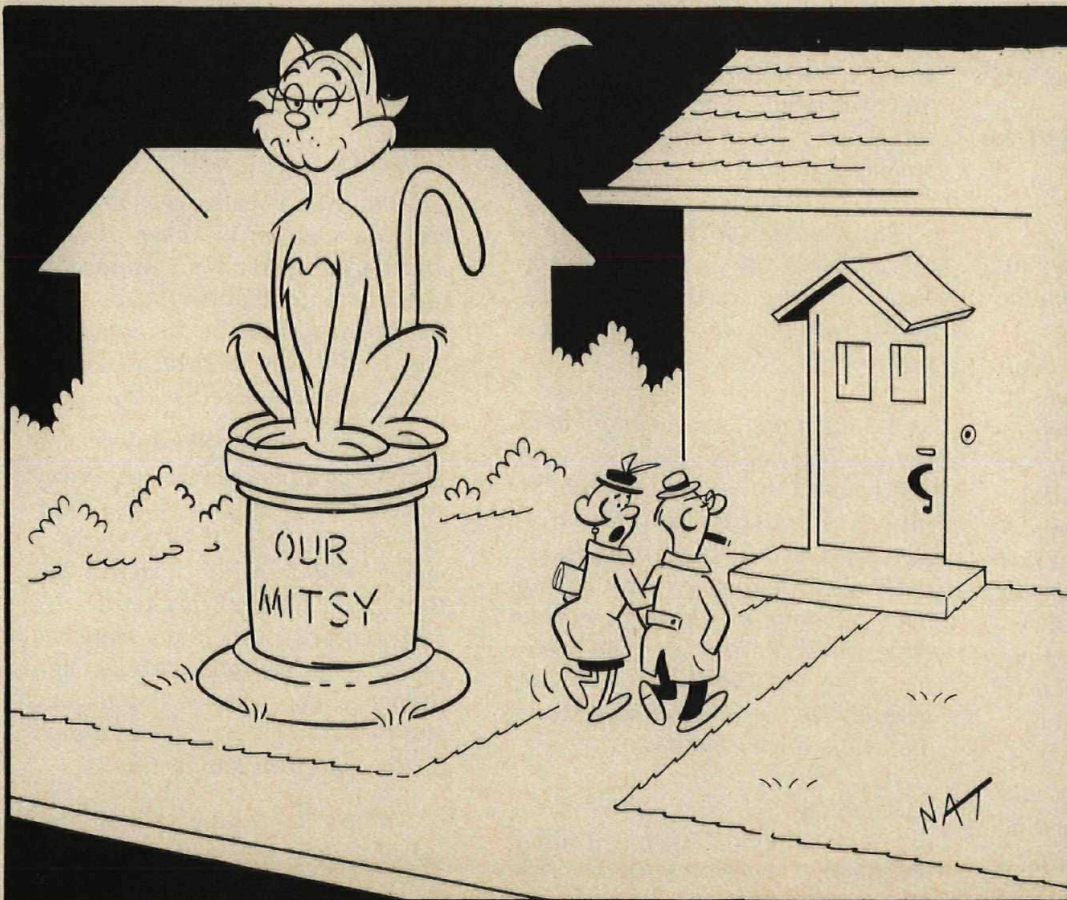
TOXICOLOGY HOTLINE

The Animal Toxicology "hotline" in Urbana, Illinois is available to veterinarians, farmers and dog owners, providing a 24-hour service every day of the year. The number is (217) 333-3611, and there is no charge for this service.

Many times, dog owners can render immediate assistance in a suspected poisoning incident when there isn't time to rush to the animal hospital, due to distance, or it's after office hours.

BIG FIG

What's the biggest tree in the world? If you guessed a redwood you are probably wrong. A Morton Bay fig tree growing in Santa Barbara, California, is estimated to be the largest in the world, reports the National Wildlife Federation. Planted in 1877 from a seed brought over from Australia, today the tree is almost 70 feet tall with a trunk more than 30 feet around. About 15,000 people could stand in its shade!



"WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GET THEM TALKING ABOUT CATS."

Check Your Label...

Does your label have the name of a veterinary hospital on it? If so . . . that hospital has chosen you to receive a complimentary subscription to Today's Animal News.

It is your veterinarian's way of providing you with vital information about your pet's health and care . . . and at the same time expressing appreciation for your patronage.

His, hers, and the pets bathroom

INDOOR PLUMBING FOR PETS

A company in Florida called American Sanitary Systems is working on an indoor toilet for dogs and cats. Not just a litter box, the standard indoor plumbing arrangement for felines for years; and not just newspapers on the floor, the standard puppy-training setup until the dog learns to bark at the door. No, this system is tied in with the home plumbing system and puts Kitty or Fido on an equal footing with its human owner.

Basically, it's a fiberglass tub with aluminum slats on the floor. The animal steps on the floor and a switch is activated. When it steps out of the tub, a small motor goes into action, the floor is tilted 180 degrees and jets of water flush away the wastes, somewhat like the action of a dishwasher. The water stops, the floor returns to horizontal, and everything's ready for the next occasion.

Sounds simple, like one of those things "Why didn't they invent something like that years ago?"

Well, it wasn't all that easy. For one thing, they had to convince the animal (especially dogs) this was the proper place to go. It took a lot of research by the inventor, Franklin Temel, to come up with the proper mix of odors. Temel and his co-workers tried all sorts of grasses, tree bark, leaves, dirt, even dried canine feces, before they arrived at a suitable scent. He had the help of Dr. Thomas Campbell, Florida veterinarian, and one of the investors in the Temel project. Campbell sees Temel's indoor plumbing unit as a boon to veterinary hospitals.

Production on the pet toilets is just getting underway, and they're not cheap at this stage. Dog styles come in three sizes, and there's one size for cats. Costs are about \$50 for the small ones to \$350 for the big canine sizes.

The veterinary front

Detecting cage bird illness early . . .

Cagebirds are masters at concealing signs of illness. By the time their owners detect signs of lethargy, poor appetite and moping about with fluffed-up feathers, the illness, no matter what it is, already has a strong and possibly fatal grip on the bird.

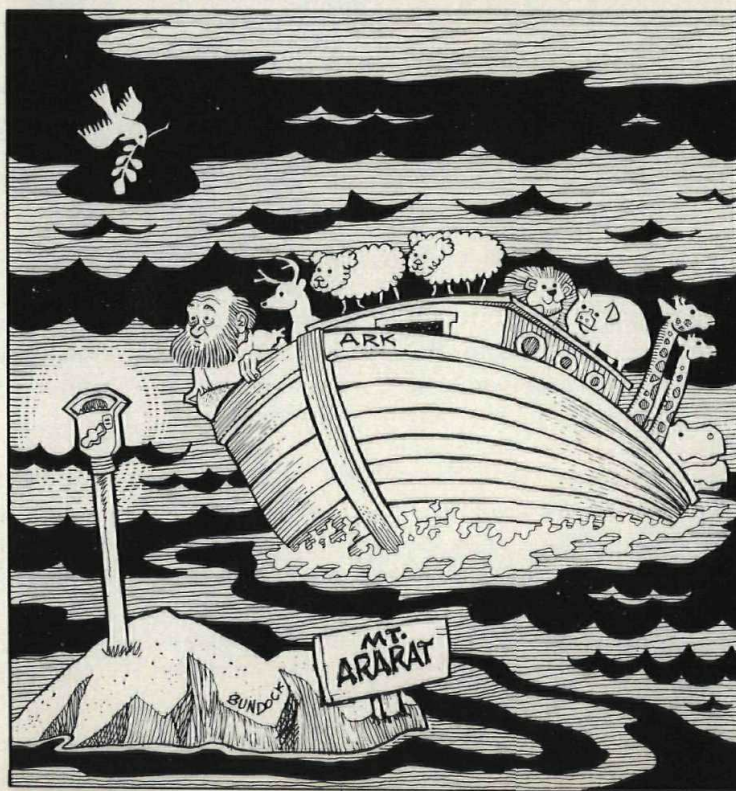
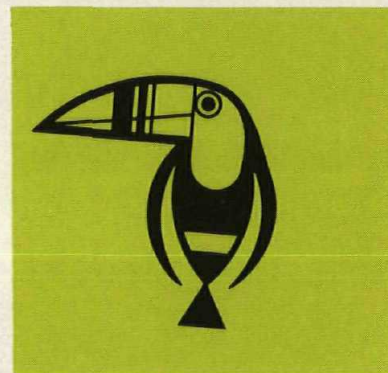
Obviously dying birds have been brought into animal clinics, weak, but able to stand up and look around or even eat a few seeds. Minutes later, they were dead.

This indicates good appetites are not necessarily a sign of good health. Birds, unlike dogs and cats, will often eat no matter how sick they may be. In fact, they may even overeat while ill.

The easiest way for an owner to check on the bird's health is to place a gram scale in the cage. Let it get familiar with the wobbly device. Check the weight when in good

health and, every week or so, place the bird on the scale and check it again.

To be doubly sure, have the bird's blood chemistry checked at the veterinary office. Have it re-checked every month or six weeks to compare it with the last reading. Any changes in blood chemistry are usually the first signs that the bird is ill. They occur long before the lethargy and fluffed-up feathers signals set in.



MUSH!



4,000 years later, sled dogs are still running . . .

By Pierce Opla

By November the weather in the Adirondack Mountains of New York is decidedly crisp. Early snows sometimes flirt with the region but everyone knows that colder weather and serious snow is on the way.

For sled dog racers and their teams here and throughout the U.S. and Canada, it's time for serious training and conditioning. The tough three-month schedule of international competition starting in January will require every bit of strength and discipline for driver and dog alike.

In the mountain village of Bakers Mills, N.Y., Harris Dunlap, the 1982 World Champion Sled Dog racer, is already well into a sophisticated training program with his prized team of specially bred "Alaskan Huskies."

"Teamwork . . . that's the key. You're not talking about a situation like the Kentucky Derby where one animal races against another. In sled dog racing it's the orchestration of every animal with the leader. In the unlimited class competition that I race in, it's one man and 16 dogs working collectively as a single unit," he says.

"No other sport asks as much of an athlete as we ask of these dogs," adds Dunlap, a 43-year-old art teacher turned dog breeder and professional racer.

Indeed, a growing number of people have become taken by the exhilaration, beauty and fun of sled dog racing. Sprint dogs, like the kind Dunlap races, frequently run at speeds of more than 18 miles per hour on 20-mile snow covered courses in sub-freezing temperatures.

The International Sled Dog Racing Association includes about

1,650 members in 42 states, nine Canadian provinces and seven European countries. It sanctions more than 100 races a year with many, like the big \$30,000 Alpo International Sled Dog Championships held in Saranac Lake, N.Y., the last weekend in January.

Modern sled dog sprint racing (as opposed to distance races like the famed 1,049 mile Iditarod race in Alaska) is a closed course event on a trail packed by snowmobile. Each team is timed by a stopwatch or electric timer. In races of more than one heat, the total elapsed time is used to determine the winner. Individual teams usually leave the starting line at one, two or three-minute intervals.

Racing teams are divided into four groups:

Unlimited class: In this group drivers must start with a minimum of seven dogs although many use more. Trail distances vary from a minimum of 12 miles to as much as 25 to 30 miles.

Seven Dog Class: Teams in this class have a minimum of four dogs and a maximum of seven. Trail lengths vary from seven to 12 miles.

Five Dog Class: This group starts with a minimum of three dogs and a maximum of five. Trails vary from five to eight miles in length.

Three Dog Class: A minimum of two dogs are used with a maximum of three dogs. Trails vary from three to five miles.

Months of training . . .

Preparation for the race schedule, which stretches across North America from the Adirondacks to Alaska with many stops in between, begins in the summer for most participants. Only a core of 200 or so professionals compete in all the cash prize races across the country. Most ISDRA members stay pretty much in local competition with some excursions to more distant locations.

For Harris Dunlap, the quiet summer months, removed from the bustle of 25,000 miles of truck and bush plane travel, are when he works to instill confidence, skill and attitude in his dogs.

"We start work with yearling puppies who have no education. It is important to be patient and forgiving, to make training fun. With any dog training, never exceed what a dog can take, either physically or mentally," he says.

Learning the ropes . . .

He starts by putting younger candidates for future race teams next to older dogs. He uses a harness line that pulls a wheeled practice cart called a "gig." It has an adjustable hydraulic drag that can make pulling harder or easier. Speed and distance are not as important early in the game as is learning to make frequent turns and to understand the command for right turn and left turn, "gee" and "haw".

"I think older dogs teach younger dogs. If you have taught the older dogs all the commands, they will assist you in teaching the pups," he says.

As the summer reaches into fall, the length and speed of the practice runs increase with Dunlap always mindful of weather conditions that could overheat the animals. A network of intersecting trails over flat and hilly terrain in the Adirondack forests around his kennel/farm serve as the training ground for these "canine athletes," as he calls them. Over the course of the year's training and race schedule, each of Dunlap's "string" of 30 racing dogs will run nearly 1,100 miles.

Diet and preventive medicine are other key factors that Dunlap feels are important in training. In fact, sled dog racing has become an important nutrition research in the development of new dog foods. Dunlap's dogs are fed an experimental high protein diet being tested by the Alpo Center for Advanced Pet Study and the University of



Harris and team struggle around a tight turn.

Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Research studies found that the special diet was a superior means for equipping dogs to withstand the extreme stress of racing.

Dunlap says regular veterinary care is also important. Heart worm medication, inoculations for distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, and parvovirus are standard procedure for his kennel of dogs, which can number 100 or more, depending on the puppy count.

Trained lead dogs from Zero Kennels command a \$2,000 selling price with the average price for team dogs running about \$750. The dogs are the result of ten generations of selective breeding. The base stock is the Siberian Husky with outcrosses into other breeds like greyhound, coon hounds, Alaskan malamutes, the Belgian sheepdog, and other working breeds.

Lean and tough . . .

Typically, a Dunlap sled dog is intelligent, eager to run and lean, averaging 23 inches at the shoulder and rarely weighing 55 pounds. An overweight dog, like an overweight person, cannot run marathon distances at a competitive pace.

A portrait of the typical sled dog reveals a crossbred cousin to the glamorous Siberian husky of show ring fame. Often sled dogs are huskies crossbred with German shepherds, Irish setters, foxhounds and even dalmatians.

Dunlap bristles when newcomers to the sport describe his dogs as "mongrels."

"Mongrel is a derogatory word. The Eskimos never had the classifications for dogs that our society has set up," he said. Agreeing with him is Valerie McCracken, a highly respected racer from Ely, Minn., who began racing 13 years ago when she went to a pet shop to buy a cat for her sister and wound up also buying a puppy for herself. She got involved in dog shows but soon wearied of that.

"It was too political. The judges seemed to be more concerned with who you were than with your animal. Success in racing is based on performance alone," she said.

A petite, attractive woman, she says she favors big dogs 60 pounds or over to give her the speed she needs when she races in the five-dog team competition.

Happy dogs . . .

"I like a dog who is happy, a dog who runs because he wants to. You can start to see that when they're puppies," she said.

Indeed, "happy dogs" are what one sees most of the time in sled dog racing. There's no advantage to disagreeable animals likely to get into fights with others and cost injuries and precious time on the race trail.

In fact, there are three words that are often used to summarize the qualities of the sled dog . . . endurance, fidelity, and intelligence.

Those are the words inscribed on a commemorative statue in New York City's Central Park dedicated to "Balto," a sled dog in one of 22 relay teams used to rush a supply of anti-toxin 600 miles from Nenana to Nome, Alaska to combat a diphtheria outbreak in the winter of 1925.

Historians say that for some 4,000 years people in northern climes throughout the world have depended on these dogs for transportation, protection, companionship and for hunting and trapping, too. Today's fast growing sport of sled dog racing is the most recent facet in a close-knit bond between human and animal that promises to continue a noble tradition.



Clients invest in veterinarian hospital

This is a story about a town that went out and bought itself a veterinarian. Well, not quite "bought" --- but more of a unique way of insuring veterinary service for a remote area.

Cadiz, Kentucky, located in the western corner of the state near the Tennessee border, is a cattle and hog raising area with the nearest veterinarian 25 miles away.

Daryl Rickard was a young graduate from Ohio State University School of Veterinary Medicine. He wanted to set up his own practice, but one problem existed: where to get the nearly \$100,000 to set up a new animal hospital, or even buy an existing one.

Stock ranchers near Cadiz set up a corporation with local investors, many of them cattle and hog producers sorely in need of veterinary service for their herds. They sold bonds and raised enough funds to build and set up a veterinary clinic. They posted notices on veterinary school bulletin boards, and Rickard, still nurturing his dream of his own practice, got in touch with the Cadiz investment group.

Terms were simple. Dr. Rickard would agree to practice in the county and would then be granted a lease on the new veterinary facility, with an option to buy it if everything worked out. Rickard, of course, played the major role in designing the clinic and ordering the necessary equipment.

That was five years ago and Rickard's still in Cadiz. Now he owns the clinic. And the nearly 100 shareholders all received a modest profit on their investment. Rickard's practice is a mix of small and large animals. Cattle and hog ranchers got him started; now the area's dog and cat owners have discovered him.

Pacemakers for pets, too . . .

Sunshine, an 11-year-old cocker spaniel with a failing heart, has discovered that the medical marvels of man can be a dog's best friend.

The bright-eyed canine recently underwent heart surgery at the University of Florida's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital for a condition known as a third degree heart block, a disturbance in the transmission of electrical impulses in the heart that can kill in minutes, if severe.

The dog was fitted with a recycled human pacemaker, about the size of a pocket watch, and her recovery was almost instantaneous.

"Since her operation, my friends call Sunshine the 'bionic dog'," says Ilisa Potash, the cocker spaniel's owner. Since Sunshine's puppyhood, dog and master have been virtually inseparable. They have traveled across the country together, and the cuddly canine even accompanied Ilisa to her college nursing classes. "Now she can do almost everything she could before her heart problem. The only activity I keep her away from is swimming in the ocean. She's an avid swimmer and I still might let her go in again someday."

Sunshine's health began to sag last May. Ilisa, a "critical care" nurse at Shands Hospital, remembers her pet's problem began with non-stop panting. Then after about three weeks, "one morning Sunshine woke up, took a few steps and passed out cold."

Ilisa rushed the dog to a veterinarian who diagnosed the heart block. The animal's heartbeat was a dangerously low 30 beats per minute, compared to the normal 100 beats. The veterinarian kept Sunshine under 24-hour surveillance while arrangements were made to transfer her to UF's small animal hospital for the pacemaker implant surgery.

continued on page 29



"Sunshine," an 11-year-old cocker spaniel, appears to enjoy "mugging" for the camera during a backyard romp with her owner, Ilisa Potash. Sunshine almost died from a third degree heart block, but has resumed her lively pace since undergoing an implantation of a cardiac pacemaker at UF's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital.

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The bionic dog . . .



Veterinary researchers in Australia have also been successfully implanting pacemakers in dogs. These photographs from the University of Queensland are of a dachshund named Bindi, who received her pacemaker in a 3½ hour surgery last summer.

"Pacemakers for dogs is a new concept, but Sunshine seemed like an ideal candidate for the operation," says UF veterinary cardiologist Dr. Frank Pipers. "For an 11-year-old dog she was in excellent shape and she seemed to be compensating for a heart block as well as could be expected.

"The only drawback was the treatment was still experimental, but without it we eventually would have lost Sunshine." Dr. Curtis Probst performed the surgery, implanting the pacemaker between two layers of muscle near the dog's left leg. The most delicate part of the 3 1/2-hour operation involved connecting Sunshine's heart to a temporary, external pacemaker, which allowed the veterinarians to control the patient's heart rate until the permanent unit was in place.

Sunshine remained hospitalized for four days while her surgical wounds healed. Weighing all of 33 pounds, the animal also had to adjust to carrying around a pacemaker of the same size as one used in a 200-pound human.

"She wouldn't lie down at all during the first couple of days after coming home, because of her incisions. And she wasn't given painkillers because the veterinarians thought she'd feel too good and would want to move around more

than she should. But after a week, she wanted to go outside and run around like she used to," brags Sunshine's proud owner.

Pacemaker implant surgery, which costs about \$600 to \$800, including hospitalization, is becoming more commonplace at UF. Dr. Pipers estimates that one or two dogs a month receive pacemakers.

"We're still refining the treatment and pacemakers can't help every dog with a heart problem. They are used mostly in dogs whose condition won't respond to medication. The pacemaker gives the veterinarian an alternative treatment when it appears that nothing else will work," Pipers says.

UF veterinarians now are doggedly pursuing the possible applications of pacemakers in other animals. Says Dr. Probst, "Although cats and most other domestic animals seldom suffer the third degree heart blocks, there is an indication that horses could benefit from pacemakers. We would try it only on a terminally ill animal when there is no other alternative.

"But the treatment eventually could give veterinarians another handle on treating heart rhythm disorders in several different types of animals."

Plague death

CATS AND PLAGUE

Two cases of domestic cats causing human plague, one of them a fatal case, have been added to the statistics. In all previous years, only six cat-associated plague cases have been reported. Now the total is eight.

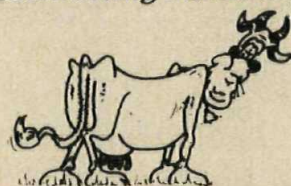
A South Lake Tahoe woman died of pneumonic plague, just about a week after she buried her pet cat. The cat brought home a dead chipmunk, no doubt carrying fleas bearing the deadly plague bacillus *Yersinia Pestis*. An autopsy on both the cat and its owner revealed the presence of *Y. Pestis*.

In the second case, a Colorado veterinarian was bitten by a cat who had an abscess on its jaw. Both recovered after strenuous treatment with antibiotics. Both were positive for plague bacillus.

The extreme rarity of such incidents merely highlights the danger of bubonic and pneumonic plague infections from flea-bearing rodents.

The death of the California woman was the first from pneumonic plague since 1924. But each summer one or two state parks or national forests are closed to vacationers due to an outbreak of plague among the many rodents inhabiting the parks. Fleas act as a go-between from one rodent to another, and in rare cases, from rodents to humans – and in even rarer cases, from cats to humans.

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