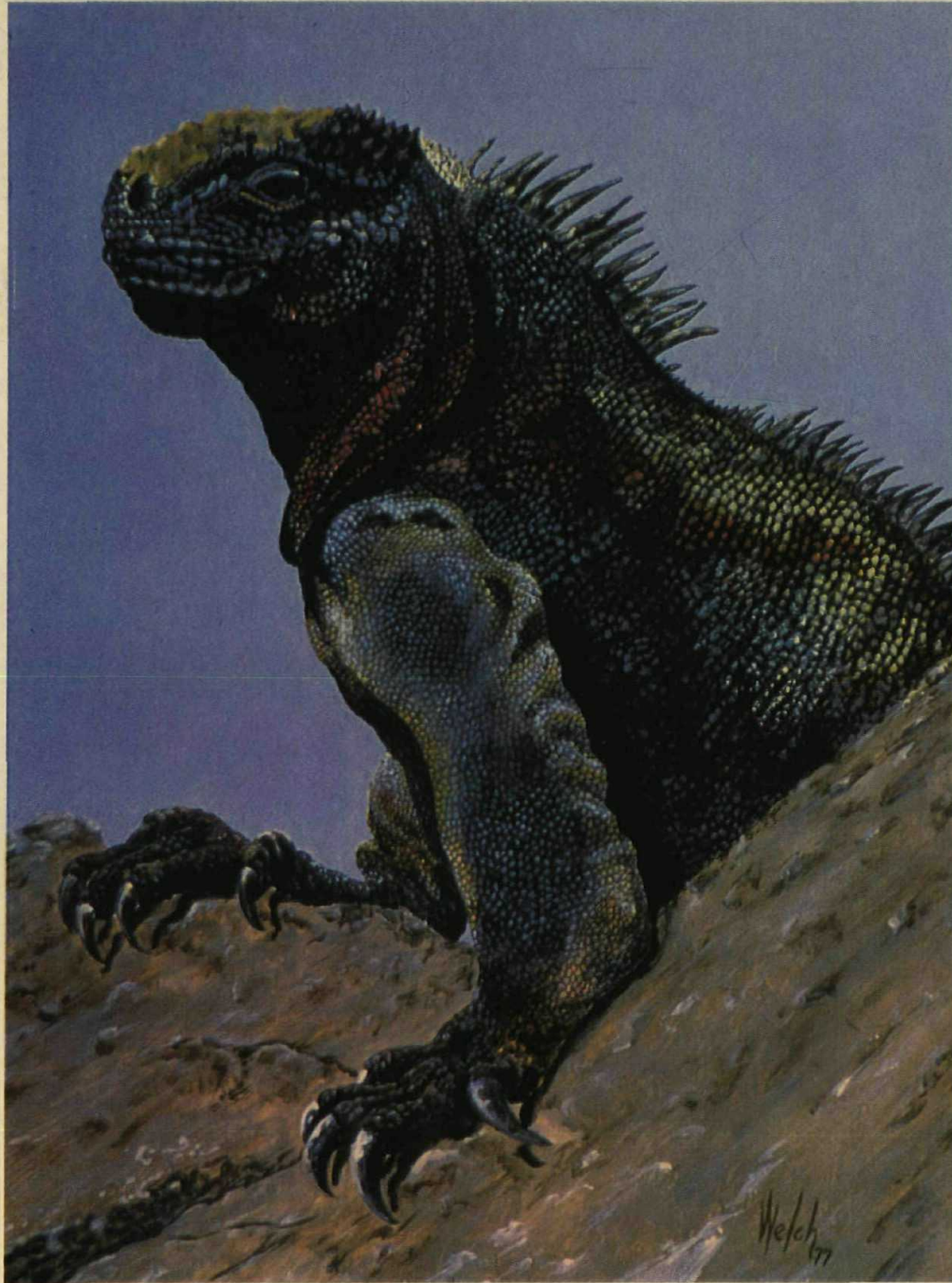
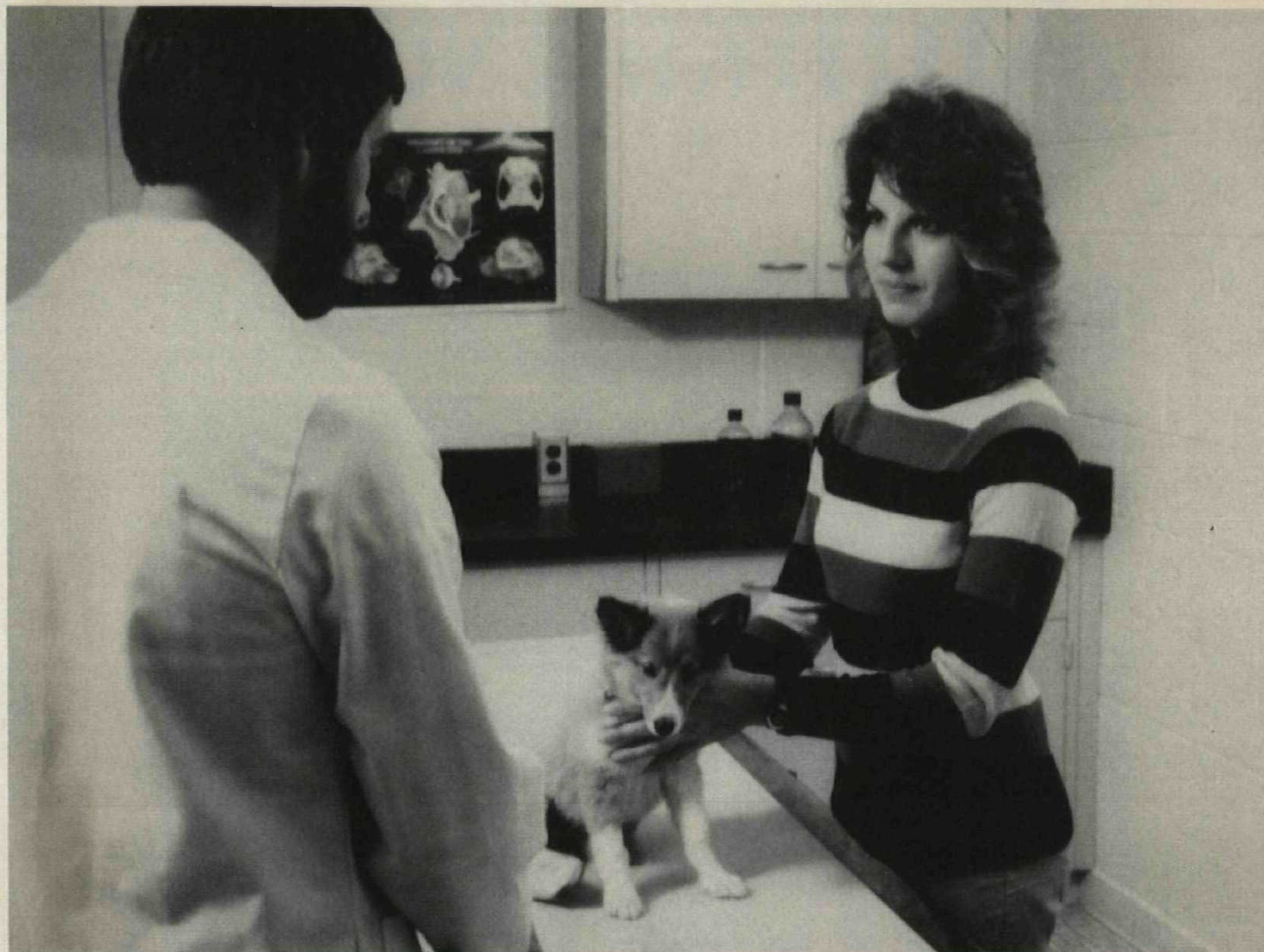


TODAYS
Animal News



WINTER ISSUE \$1.50

The Official voice of the Animal Health Foundation



Now your dog can have this advanced parvo protection!

Yes, there are several vaccines to protect dogs against parvovirus infections. Most of them use killed feline panleukopenia or modified live virus feline panleukopenia virus to provide protection against a canine disease.

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Vanguard

Your dog deserves its protection



The Official Voice of the Animal Health Industry

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TODAYS ANIMAL NEWS

Volume 8/Number 1

Winter 1982

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Plant a bush---Save a whale



BERRIES FROM A MAGIC BUSH

Jojoba (pronounced ho-ho-ba) is a plant that is actually a native desert shrub. (*Simmondsia Chinensis*). It is a plant that is found throughout the Sonora Desert area of Mexico, California, and Arizona. The jojoba plant produces beans which contain up to 50% of their weight in oil. And that oil is similiar to that of the oil found in the sperm whale. If the world could produce enough jojoba there would never be the need to kill the sperm whale again.

Although it sounds like a very simple and quick solution to the stopping of needless slaughtering of sperm whales, it isn't that easy .

In 1972 the Marine Mammal Protection Act resulted in the banning of importation of whale meat and whale by-products, including sperm whale oil, into the United States. However, other countries are still slaughtering the sperm whale to obtain the oil and until there is a suitable replacement at a comparable price there does not seem to be an end to the killing in sight.

Jojobas could be the alternate answer. Jojoba plants are either male or female. Since only the female plants will produce beans and males are only used for pollination over-planting is required to ensure enough females. Unfortunately, it takes the jojoba at least three years to flower, and so until that time the sex of the jojoba plant cannot be determined.

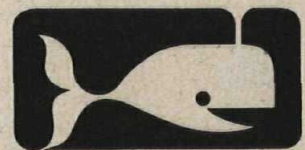
After the plant has flowered and the sex determined, and excess males removed, at least another two years is required before the females will produce beans. Five years is a long time to wait for the plants to produce beans, especially when the demand for the oil is so heavy and the supply is so low. Currently all jojoba beans are from native plants, and as yet are no producing plantations. There is a happier side to the jojoba, though. It is believed to live and produce for a hundred years. It also appears that, after the plant starts to produce, that it will produce larger quantities of beans each year as the plant grows larger and larger.

It appears that jojoba oil is not only similiar to sperm whale oil, but superior. It is a non-greasy, odorless oil which is actually a liquid wax. Unlike other oils, jojoba penetrates into the skin and therefore appears to have an excellant future in the field of medicine as possible medications will be able to be added to the oil to treat certain skin ailments. Jojoba oil also does not allow certain types of bacteria to grow, which could prove it to be extremely valuable in the treatment of such conditions as acne. The automotive industry may be able to utilize jojoba oil in many areas because of its ability to withstand high temperatures. There are currently a few companies using jojoba oil in such products as motor oil, and claim it increases the miles per gallon considerably.

It has already found its way into the beauty supply industry and can be found in acne treatments, shampoo, lotions, soaps, makeup, hair oils, conditioners, and the list goes on and on.

As a general lubricant it seems outstanding. Even a rusty old zipper that does not want to work often can be made to work like new with a little jojoba oil applied to it. Each year more and more industries find that jojoba oil can be used in their products to either replace something they were using or to improve an old product.

The problem with jojoba is that there are currently more uses for it than the supply. Since it takes at least five years before the plant will produce beans, it looks like it will be a long time before there will be enough oil to meet the needs of industry. Although jojoba is not an overnight cure for the slaughtering of the sperm whale, at least it is a start. And the future for both the jojoba and the sperm whale looks brighter.



By Kathie Aamodt.

After Bill Wilkerson's car was rammed broadside at a rain-slicked intersection last August, he found himself a passenger in a speeding ambulance en route to the emergency room at the University of Florida-affiliated Shands Hospital.

Although he would soon undergo five hours of treatment and plastic surgery to close some nasty facial wounds, Wilkerson was more worried about how his riding companion had fared in the mishap. His passenger, an 8-month-old yellow Labrador retriever named Brandy, was simultaneously being rushed in his wife Katie's car to the emergency clinic at UF's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, located just a few blocks southwest of Shands. There, Brandy's severe leg injuries would soon enable her to make medical history of sorts.

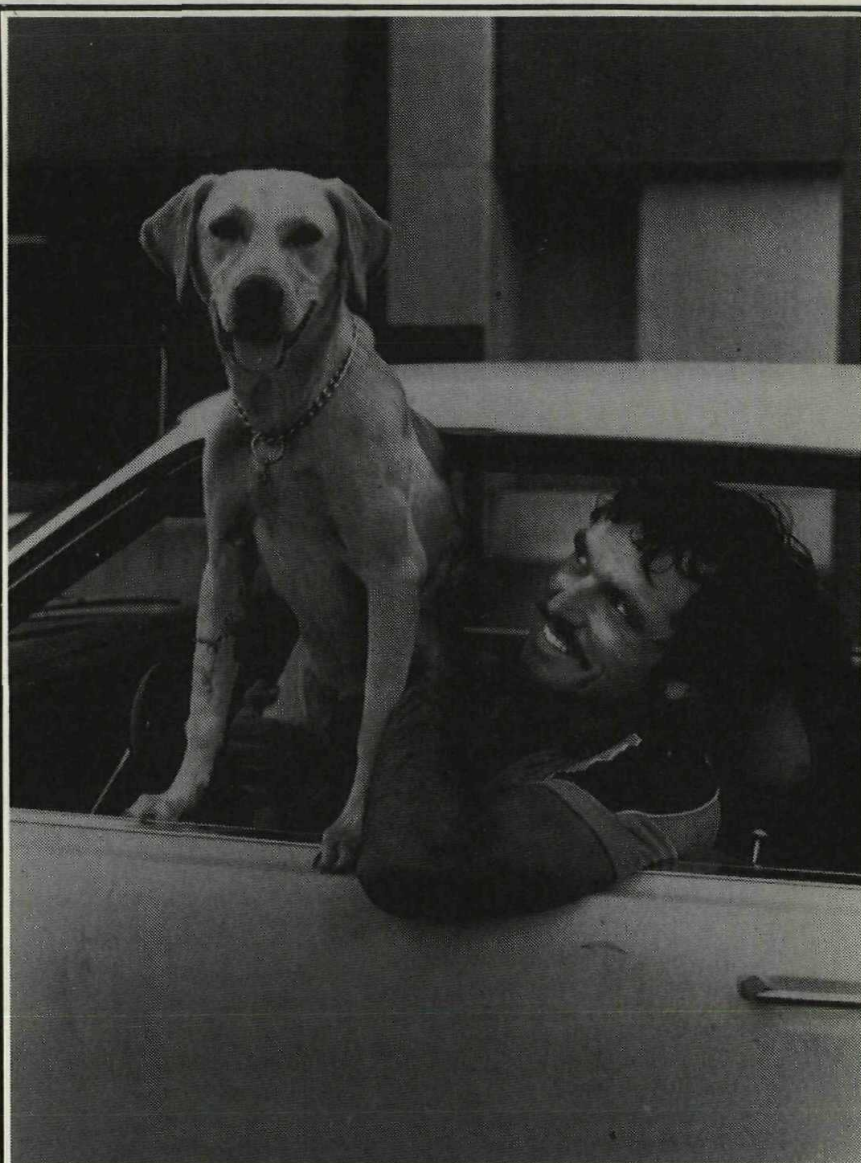
In the collision, Brandy's right-front leg was broken in two places, crushed between the passenger-side door and the front seat where she had been sleeping. UF veterinarians performed bone surgery the next day and immobilized the injured limb so would mend properly.

But there were complications: Brandy would need three additional operations to replace lost skin from the leg wound, a costly and time-consuming procedure that would keep the playful pup laid up weeks at a time after each skin graft.

Normally, there would be no alternative, but if there ever was right time to have an injury of this kind, Brandy was lucky enough to pick it.

Two University of Florida veterinarians had been working with plastic surgery specialists from Shands and UF's College of Medicine, trying to adapt a human skin grafting procedure to animals, specifically to dogs and horses.

The procedure . . . called split-thickness sheet grafting . . . involves removing a partial layer of skin from another part of the body and transferring it to the wound site. The extreme thinness of the graft, measured in thousandths of an inch, enables the blood capillaries of the recipient area to grow into the new skin.



Bill Wilkerson and his Labrador "Brandy" both seemed pleased with the outcome of some history-making surgery just received at the University of Florida Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Wilkerson and his dog were both injured in an automobile accident, and UF veterinarians adapted a skin graft procedure from human medicine to replace lost skin the dog's injured limb.

While the standard grafting procedure is done free-hand by surgeons in both veterinary and human medicine, sheet grafting involves the use of a dermatome, an air-driven, precision instrument that works in principle much like a carpenter's plane, except instead of shaving wood it removes skin in layers as narrow as 25,000th of an inch.

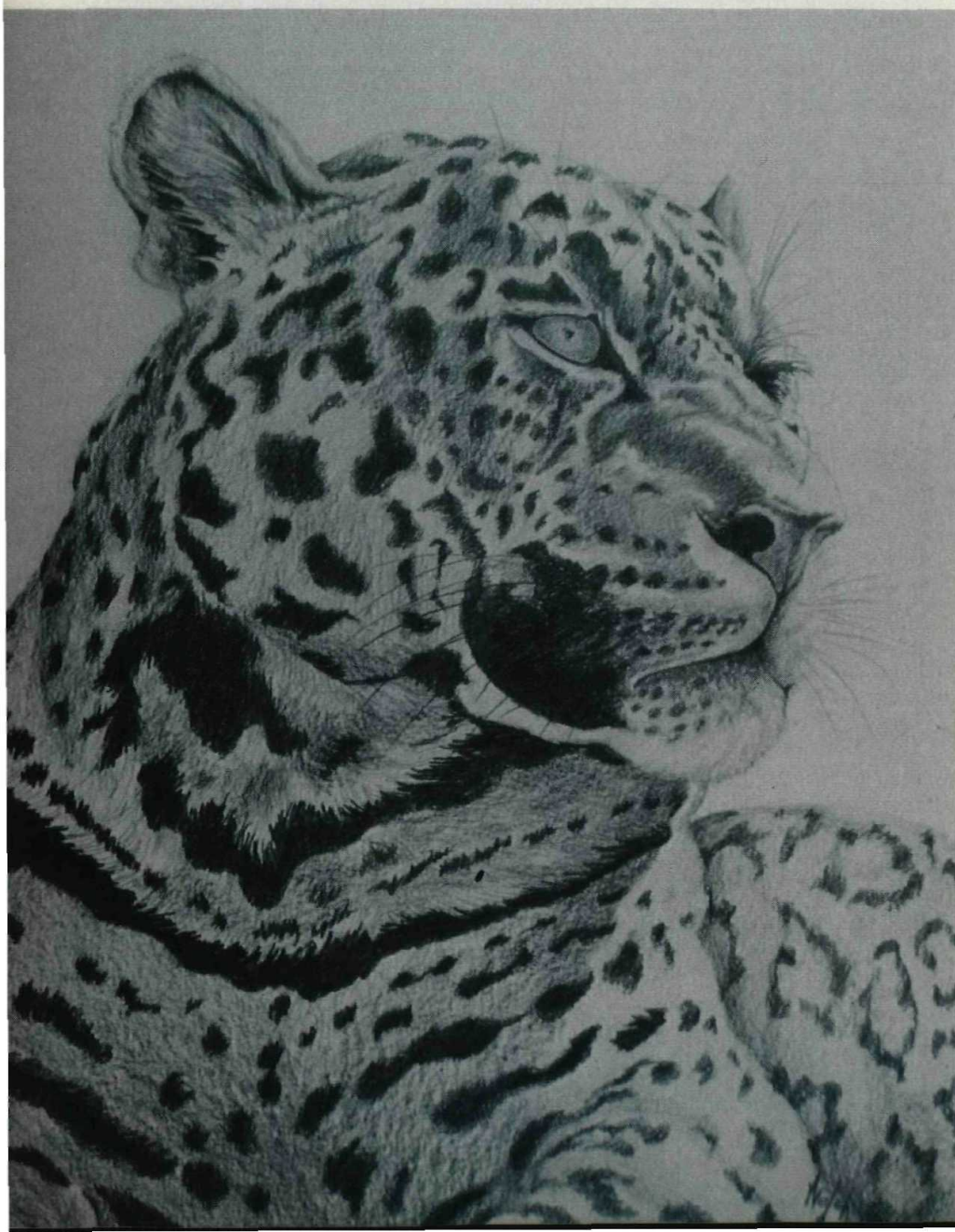
"I'm pretty excited about our success with the sheet graft," said Dr. Curtis Probst, resident surgeon at the veterinary hospital. "We're

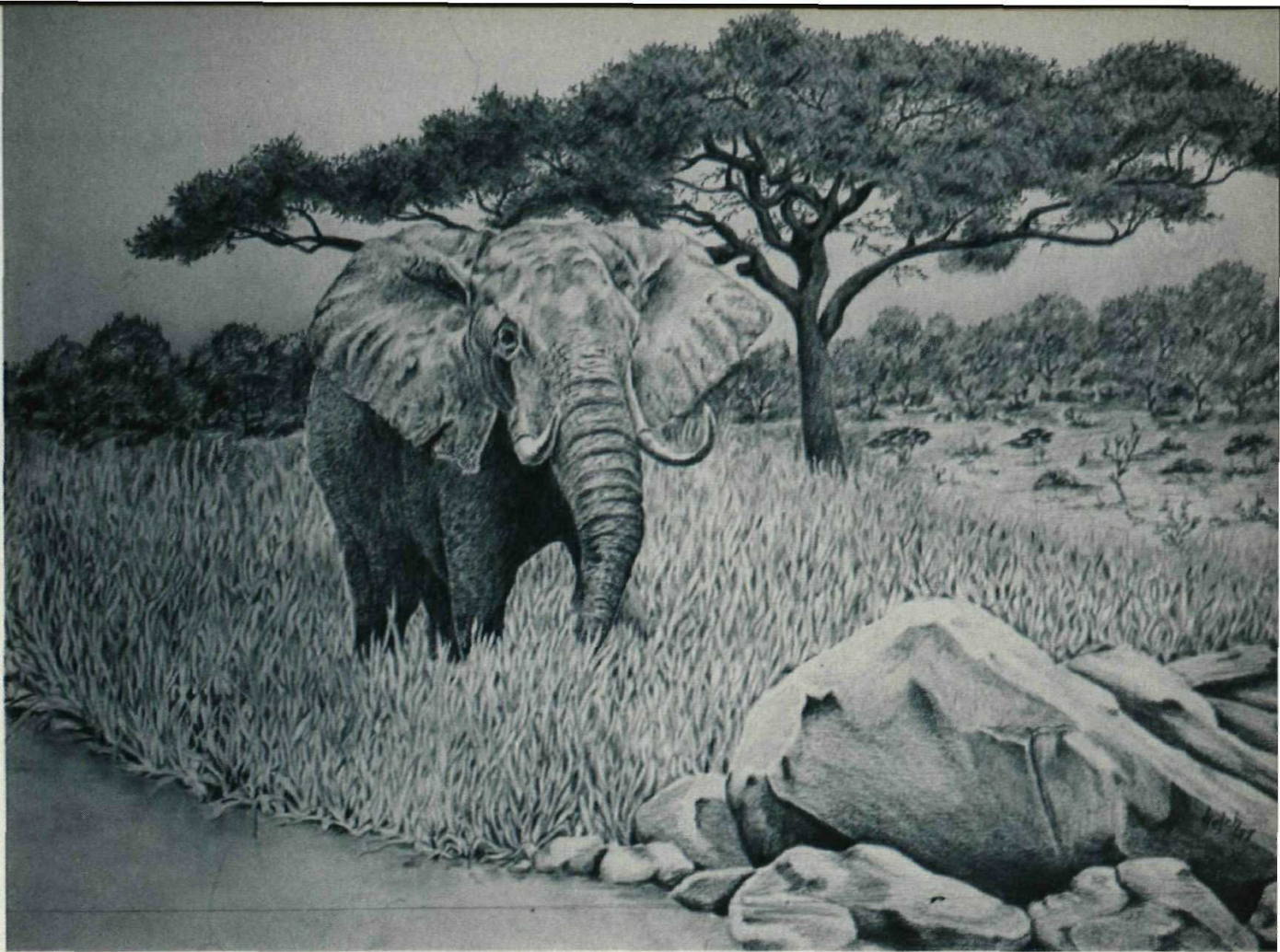
not the first to attempt the procedure on animals, but we have properly adapted the technique whereby it can develop into routine treatment in veterinary medicine. I no longer consider sheet grafting experimental."

"The biggest drawback is that the sheet graft does not regrow hair, so there will be a bald spot on the receiving site," said Probst. "But a pet owner usually cares more about the animal's health than his looks."

ANIMALS & ART

From pampered pets to
wild elephants . . . Welch captures them
all in drawings . . .

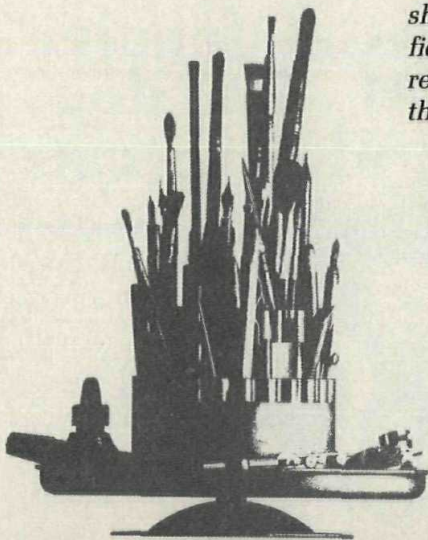




Artist captures wildlife

It's a busy life for this versatile young artist. Jerry Welch spends his time in his Chicago studio creating everything from gears to educational filmstrips for Saudi Arabian schools. He has produced hundreds of Christmas card designs and editorial illustrations for weekly and monthly publications. His medium of expression is as varied as his subject matter. Depending on the particular project he works in pencil, pen and ink, acrylics, oils, water color, air brush and silk screen.

Only one thing appears to be consistent for Welch, and that is his love for animals. His real love is for wildlife illustration. His paintings, as shown here, reflect the discipline of much technical illustration in other fields. But, unlike many artists who have developed a fine precision in rendering technical subjects, the wildlife paintings of Welch still portray the feelings and emotions of the artist.



Although "fascinated by wild cats", Welch is kept busy portraying domestic pets in portraits for people in his community.

The big cat and elephants pictured here, along with our cover, are typical examples of fine techniques of Welch. There seems little doubt that he will someday be a major force in the field of wild animal illustration.

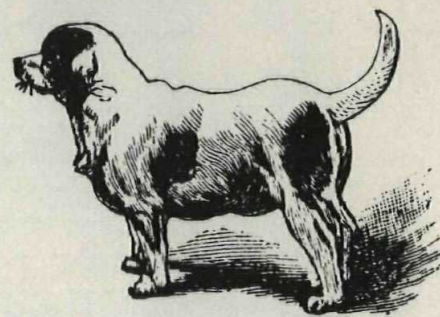
Paintings by Jerry Welch

Many dog owners share the mistaken idea that providing food strengthens the bond between dog and master. If one accepts that premise, as far too many do, then the more food the stronger the bond of affection. And, as a direct result, millions of dog owners feed their dogs more and more. When their dogs have had enough and some food is left uneaten the owners search around for some more tempting bill of fare to tempt the dog to eat more. Tempting scraps from the human dinner table are given. Even candies and cookies are tendered to satiated pets. The frantic pet owner feels rebuffed when "Fido" fails to finish the latest food offering. To overcome this "rejection" the pet owner searches the super market shelves for a more appealing diet. The television commercials re-enforce the food affection relationship, and the desperate dog owner tries one diet after another in an attempt to recreate the dramatized scenes of "fido" lovingly wolfing down his meal.

Killing with kindness . . .

Unfortunately, the misguided pet owner is wasting his time, money, and pet. Happily, dogs love you for what you are and not for the luxuries you provide. Witness the homeless vagabond along the roadside with his faithful dog. Neither may know where the next meal or shelter will occur but that has no bearing on their bond of affection. Or, by comparison, take the typical household where "Fido" is at home all day with his mistress who provides all the food and comforts. The pet probably waits all day for the return of the father or children to greet with uncontrolled enthusiasm and affection. Obviously not for a food reward.

Feeding "Fido" has become a national past-time, to the detriment of the poor dog who becomes fat, sluggish and inactive years before his time.



It seems ironic that at a time when Americans are concerning themselves more and more with fitness and diet that they are contributing to a general lack of condition in their pets. Want to really do your dog a favor? Take him for a walk, play ball with him, give him some sensible exercise, and provide a diet that will help him become fit instead of fat!

Editor: _____

Practical John's key locator . . .

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MESSAGE _____

No one can be absolutely accurate about the incidence of obesity in American dogs. The most commonly used figure is that 40% of the cared-for dogs in the United States are significantly overweight.

In round numbers, this means 2 to 22½ million dogs. These dogs are not just pleasingly plump. In a strict medical sense, they are critically ill, with an illness which frequently creates other serious clinical problems and shortens life.

Obesity is an insidious disease not generally understood by pet owners. It appears slowly and gradually and typically, the dog owner ignores it. And then one day, the owner suddenly perceives the reality of his pet: grossly obese. Lethargic and dull, making little contribution to his own or anyone else's happiness.

What is the mechanism that triggers obesity?

Nature provides animals (including human animals) with the ability to build an energy reserve in the form of fatty tissue. Back in the days when dogs ran wild, when hunting was good and the food supply ample, the animal created fat reserves. When the bitch was about to deliver and nurse, she also accumulated fat reserves. When the pickings were sparse . . . or the demands were great as in nursing a litter . . . the reserves were used and the animal's body weight was brought back to normal. In the wild state, dogs tend to maintain a calorie balance.

In contrast to his wild ancestors, the typical American dog leads a placid life, uneventful in a nutritional sense. Neutered animals are comparatively placid; the neutered female need not meet the demands of lactation. The food supply is ample, and there are no lean days. Especially during the short winter days, dogs are less active and eat more out of boredom. The result is a gradual development of obesity.

I am often asked, "Could it be glands?" Rarely an individual canine may suffer from a hormonal deficiency which reduces the metabolic rate. A low metabolism tends to lower the rate of energy expenditure and thus to encourage the accumulation of body fat.

**By J. F. Alberson, D.V.M., of
HILL'S PET PRODUCTS, INC.**

But this is not the usual picture. Instead, we see a vicious circle. For some reason, the dog accumulates fat. This slows him down, reduces his activity. Because he burns less energy he grows even fatter, and so on, ad infinitum.

The usual result: a sloppy fat dog whose only interest is eating.

Why do so many Americans overfeed their pets?

The \$200 million spent annually on advertising pet food may have a bearing. That is because palatability is stressed more than nutritive quality, and many dog owners wind up believing that the best food is the one the dog eats most of. Consequently, the dog owner is inclined to provide more than enough food . . . to the dog's detriment.

Consider the economics: if 1 in 5 pet owners (20% of pet owners) overfeed their dogs by 4 (25%) they would account for a retail sales rise of \$200 million annually!

Why should we be concerned about obesity?

The most serious aspect of it is its effect on heart and blood vessels. The heart of an obese dog is typically crowded by fat deposits, so its pumping capacity is limited. In spite of this, it is called on for heroic efforts because the fat deposits throughout the body create the need for additional feet of blood vessels, increasing the pumping job required.

While this is happening, lung capacity is also lessened when the organs are crowded by fat. This limits the lungs' capacity to transfer oxygen to the blood. When the blood is poor in oxygen, more blood is needed . . . another increased demand on the heart's pumping capacity. Small wonder that these extraordinary stresses on this large muscle pump usually lead to its early deterioration, failure, and eventually the death of the animal.

What else happens to the fat dog? There is immeasurable discomfort and pain due to the effects of excess fat on the skeletal system which must support the weight increase.

Joints are subject to erosion and crippling pain. The waddling painful gait of a grossly obese pet is a pitiful and preventable sight.

Obesity is also conducive to fatty tumors and sebaceous (greasy) dermatitis or skin problems. It's been shown experimentally that obese dogs are more likely to develop diabetes. The worst aspect from the owner's point of view is that the obese animal is usually a dud as a companion.

Though the effects of obesity are complex and serious, the measures for correction are straightforward and simple. Since the prime cause for obesity is an oversupply of energy, correcting it consists of reducing the animal's energy intake below caloric needs. To replace the caloric deficit, the animal's body will burn stored fat.

Of course, in practice, this is not as simple as it sounds. The dog has definite requirements for nutrients other than calories (protein, vitamins and minerals, for example). If one simply reduces the amount of conventional food fed, these needed nutrients will be reduced to dangerous levels at the same time.

What is required is a diet in which optimum amounts of protein, vitamins and minerals are present but calories are reduced by 40%. Such a food is readily available through veterinarians and is called Prescription Diet r/d. (Or the veterinarian can provide a recipe so the dog owner can prepare a reducing diet himself.) Eating a food which offers only 60% of the calories he normally gets, the dog will lose weight at a steadily predictable rate.

This is accomplished in r/d by substituting indigestible fibre for carbohydrates such as sugars and starches, and by limiting the fat to only levels required for essential metabolic functions, such as skin health, fat-soluble vitamin transport, etc. The food is designed to prevent both physiological and physiological hunger pangs and avoids having a chronically hungry, begging pet.

Dedication, a close adherence to



OBESITY the SUBTLE KILLER

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HAVE ANOTHER CHOC'LIT COOKIE, POOPSY?



GOOD GOLLY... FIFTY CALORIES APIECE!

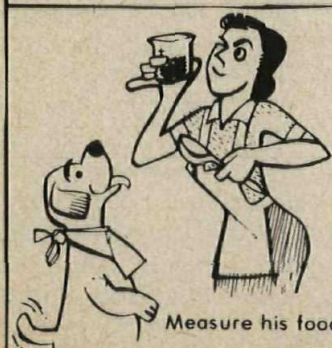
Remember: if it makes you fat - it makes your dog fat!

Feed your dog early and he'll have more active time to digest and use food.

NOTHIN' LIKE A LITTLE AFTER DINNER SNOOZE...



Exercise! Frequent walks could be good for both of you.



Measure his food. Remember that as he gets less active or older, he requires less.

SUBSTITUTE:

All sorts of vegetables, cooked or uncooked... fruit, fish, cottage cheese or cooked eggs.

They contain a lot of vitamins and few calories.

Four ounces of ice cream has 150 calories... a half cup of cooked carrots has 15.

Get the idea??

Celery has so few calories that you can hardly even count them.

One pound of kibble has 1500!

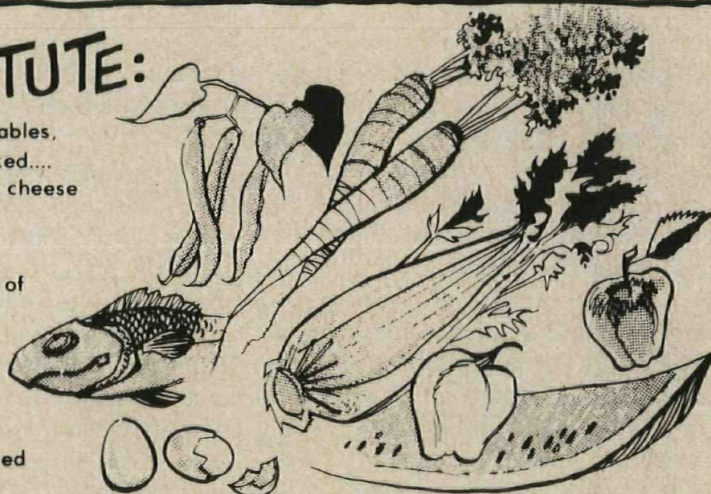


A pound of canned dog food has 500!

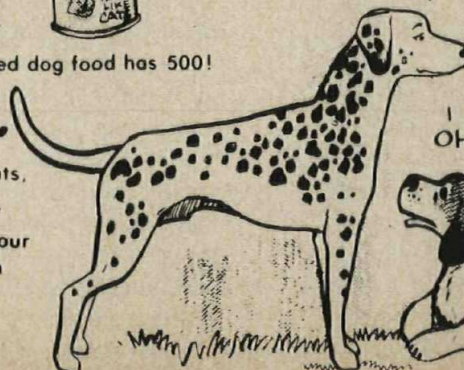
AVOID...

Butter, candy, peanuts, fats, cookies, bread.

If all else fails, see your veterinarian. He can provide a special reducing food....



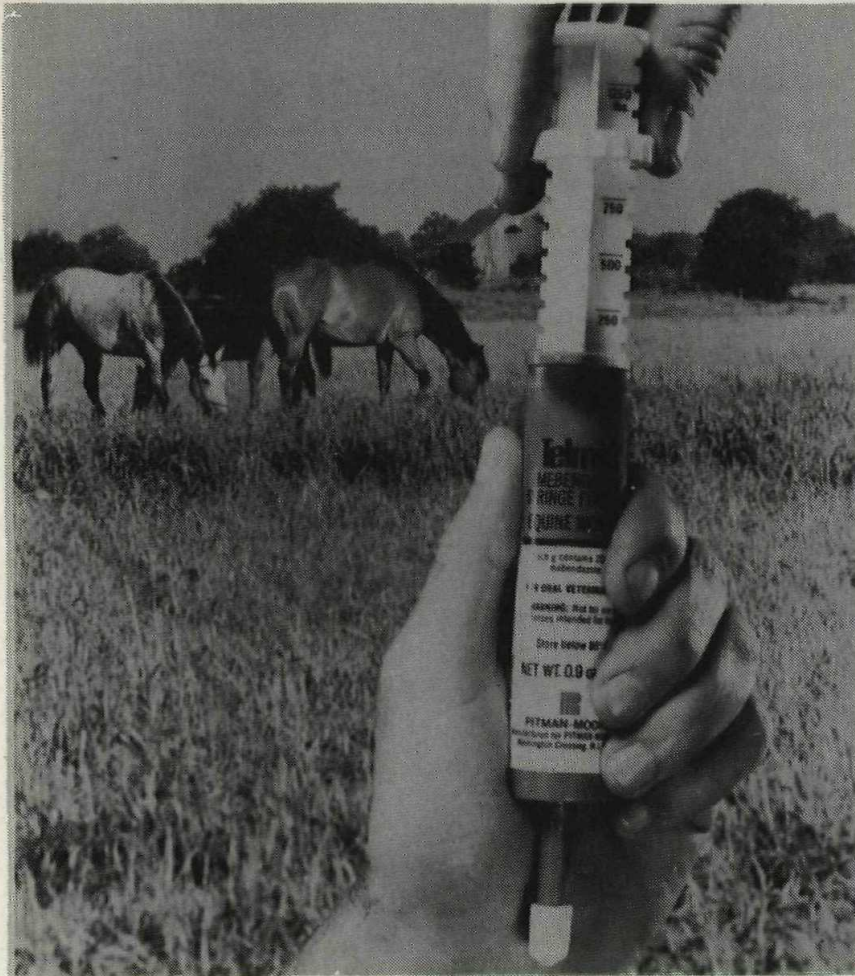
Y'KNOW... TOO MANY SQUARE MEALS MAKE ROUND BODIES!



I KNOW. OH, I KNOW!

DOUG BUNDICK

NEW PRODUCTS



This simple syringe can make life a lot easier for horse owners, according to Pitman-Moore, Inc. It contains a new and improved formulation of Telmin (mebendazole) and makes it simpler to worm your horse with a high effectiveness against major worming problems, says the manufacturer. The new Telmin S.F. formulation comes in a unique single-dose syring with a convenient dial dosage and enough wormer to effectively treat a 1,250 pound horse. It has been demonstrated to be safe for foals, stallions, and pregnant mares of any age or physical condition, according to the manufacturer.

POISON COYOTE COLLARS HEARINGS SET

Foes of the coyote have convinced government officials to overturn a 1972 ban on 1080, a poison that had been employed for coyote control until the Nixon administration edict. The poison was discontinued because of its indiscriminate toxic reaction to all forms of animal life. Now, Western ranchers and sheepmen claim that improved technology will make the poison more effective and selective. Hearings are being scheduled to consider making the poison available again to ranchers.

FROM DOGS TO RICHES

"It's just as easy to fall in love with a rich man as a poor man," according to an old saying. And with that in mind a study has recently been completed to help you find and marry a millionaire. First you have to find an available rich person and find some common ground to meet. One suggestion is that you buy a good show dog and seek your prince or princess charming at dog shows. Dog shows, according to the report, abound with millionaires. This is going to be news to many dog show enthusiasts who are wondering where the money for their next entry fee is coming.

YOU & YOUR PET

Dental Care: A Pet Concern.

From our earliest childhood we're taught the importance of good oral hygiene. Well, proper dental care is just as important for pets as it is for their owners.

Dogs and cats are both susceptible to dental problems. Without proper attention, plaque, tartar and, eventually, bacteria can accumulate and begin to cause damage to the teeth and gums.

Although cats may be less vulnerable to tooth decay than their canine counterparts, they can and do develop cavities. Food will accumulate in their small cheek pouches and cause tartar to build up more rapidly than normal. It's not unusual for a two-year-old cat to have excessive tartar or periodontal disease — even though his front teeth may look perfectly healthy.

Be on the lookout for warning signals from your dog or cat. If you notice bad breath, swollen gums or loose teeth, contact your veterinarian. Better yet, make sure your dog or cat gets regular dental check-ups starting at about two to three months of age.

Maintenance of complete dental services (including routine gum work, extractions and general teeth cleaning) is just one of the standards that Member Hospitals of the American Animal Hospital Association must fulfill. For more information about proper dental care for your pet, contact your nearest AAHA Member Hospital. Or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to AAHA for a copy of our special brochure entitled "Dental Care."



American Animal Hospital Association



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Dedicated to improving
the quality of life for your pet.



As more and more of the wildlife of world becomes threatened with extinction it is encouraging to find that the "king of beasts" is still holding his own. African lions appear to plan their population growth depending upon availability of food and territory. They have the ability to adjust to a changing environment. And they breed so easily in captivity that many zoos find an overabundance of young lions. This old patriarch was photographed by staffer Joel Blumberg.

Is your cat getting the low ash diet it needs?

The proper ash level is a critical element in a cat's diet, since excessive amounts of minerals, especially magnesium which analyzes as ash, have been found to contribute significantly to urinary disorders.

Compare the average amounts of ash and magnesium in the leading commercial cat foods with the average amounts in Science Diet Domestic Feline:

AVERAGE % OF DRY WEIGHT		
	Commercial Cat Food	Science Diet
DRY		
Ash	8.60	5.60
Magnesium	.16	.09
CANNED		
Ash	9.10	6.20
Magnesium	.20	.10
SOFT-MOIST		
Ash	8.10	5.90
Magnesium	.16	.11

You can see that Science Diet Domestic Feline contains restricted amounts of these minerals and provides ash levels formulated for the best health of your cat.

Scientifically formulated.

The ingredients for Science Diet Domestic Feline are determined by scientific formula and the high quality is maintained through rigid quality control of both ingredients and finished product. Commercial cat foods use variable least-cost formulas to keep their prices low. You can be sure your cat is receiving consistent, high quality nutrition with every bowl of Science Diet Domestic Feline.

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Science Diet Domestic Feline appeals to those who want their cats to have the

nutritionally superior diet that helps assure the very best in health and appearance. You'll find it only at leading pet shops, catteries and from your veterinarian in dry, canned or soft-moist forms.

For more information, ask your veterinarian or write to J.F. Alberson, D.V.M., at Hill's Pet Products, Inc.



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These three little kittens will someday be Asian lions. They were born at the Los Angeles Zoo, but their mother soon lost interest in them and they wound up in the arms of Birdie Foster, an animal keeper at the zoo. She will be their foster mother now. Asian lions are an endangered species with less than 200 of the cats left in the wild, all found in India's Gir Forest.

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OBESITY . The insidious disease

Continued from page 9

only the low caloric diet and total family cooperation will produce a steady weight loss of approximately 5% of the dog's normal healthy weight, each week. An occasional dog has a strong need for attention through tidbits. He may be given morsels of the dry-type low calorie food.

A word of warning: the dog who has once become obese is likely to become obese again unless his diet and exercise are carefully managed.

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By Elizabeth Randolph and published by Little, Brown and Co., 1.95.

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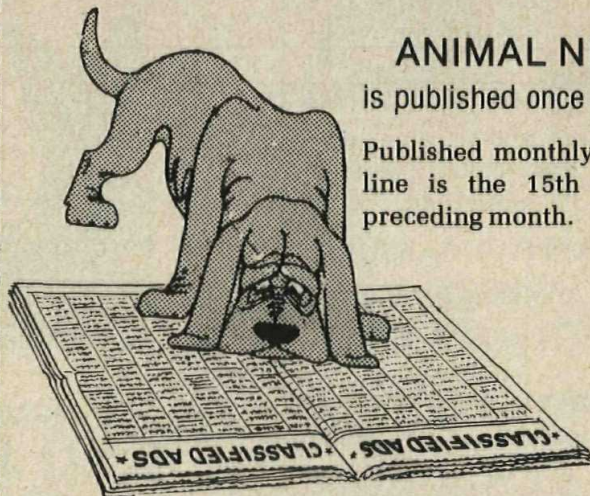
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In The News·news·news·news·news

THOSE KILLER BEES ARE STILL COMING

Romance has calmed down the "killer bees" of Brazil, reports *International Wildlife* magazine. Mating with more docile bees has reduced the hostility level of the tough African immigrants by about 50 percent. The Brazilian bees are actually no more poisonous than other bees, but their tendency to attack in armies of 1,000 . . . rather than in gangs of 50 to 100 . . . caused 16 known human deaths in Brazil between 1962 and 1974. The "killer bees" are still progressing towards the United States and are expected to arrive in the U.S. around 1985. But, hopefully, by the time they get here they will have a more peaceful attitude towards life.

DOLPHINS DIE

Despite international bans, the Japanese continue to catch and kill dolphins. According to a Kyodo News Service story, Japanese fishermen recently captured and killed 20 dolphins.

BUGGY BEAGLES

A termite inspector's best friend may soon be his dog. One of the big problems in tracking down the pesty pests (termites, not dogs) is getting underneath buildings and into the tight corners and crevices. Well, if Bob Outman, of San Carlos, has his way that problem will be solved with specially trained beagles.

Outman has been training police dogs for Bay Area police departments has now branched out into the termite-tracking-beagle business. He has about four dozen specially trained hounds for sale to exterminators.

MILLIONS OF DOGS KILLED

The next time someone you know talks about having a litter of puppies "for the kids" you might remind him of the latest statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. About 13 million dogs and cats are destroyed annually by Animal Shelters, according to the USDA. About another 5 million are abandoned and die from a variety of cause.

NOW, IT'S KILLER WASPS

While some people are still worried about "killer" bees, a news story from Washington D.C. announced that "killer" wasps will be arriving in the U.S. next spring. The parasites are being shipped from India to test their effectiveness in killing gypsy moth caterpillars that defoliate about 13 million acres of trees annually.

Stray dogs get gourmet feast

The strays at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recently enjoyed a feast for a king . . . or at least a travel agent. The pooches dined on the very most select prime rib from Alberta, Canada.

The choice steaks, enough to feed 300 travel agents, were shipped from Canada to London for a convention. But, while in transit, the meat suffered a slight color change and so did the diet for the agents. The meat was offered to the lions at the London Zoo and was refused, and so made its way finally to the residents of the dog pound.

"I am sure that this book will be a valuable reference for members of the canine fancy and veterinary profession."

E. A. Corley, Director
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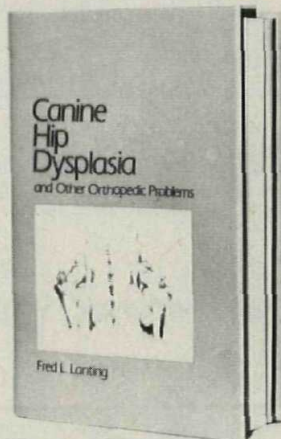
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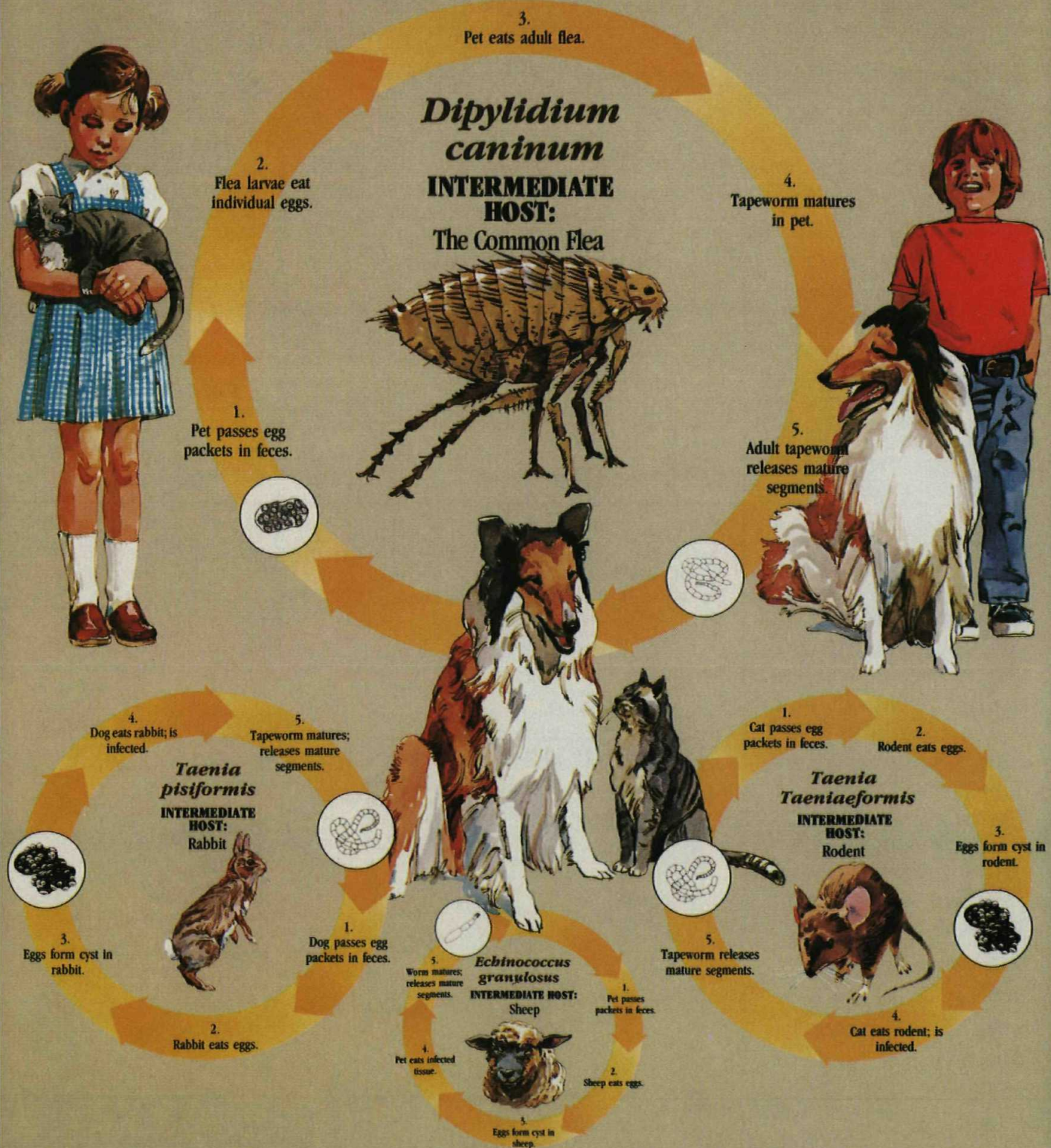
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TAPEWORM LIFE CYCLE

The tapeworm is one of the most common internal parasites affecting dogs and cats — and one which can also infect pet owners. This chart shows the life cycle of four tapeworm species and their common intermediate hosts.



Handling now helps later . . .

By Kris Smith

There is one thing which may be said with certainty: at some time in your pet's life, it will end up in the care of a veterinarian . . . be it for yearly vaccinations and boosters, dental check-ups, or for something more serious and life-threatening. This knowledge can help you to help your veterinarian, and your pet.

Whenever you bring a new animal into your life, remember that sometime it will be required to leave its

sanctuary (your loving home) and enter an environment that is alien and stressful to it. Much of the trauma can be avoided if you will follow certain guidelines at home to assure that his emotional wellbeing is being as closely guarded as his physical wellbeing.

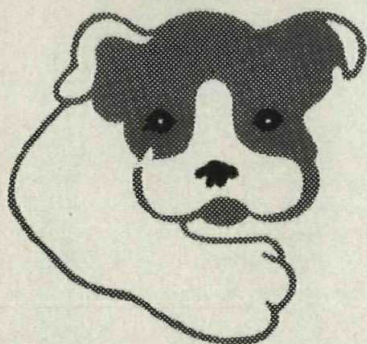
Handle your pet gently, but handle it all over. Imagine yourself in the pet's position: You arrive at the veterinarian's and here is a total stranger wanting to open your mouth, stick probes in your ears, place a long thermometer under your tail! If your pet has experienced these things as a matter of routine in its own home, it is going to be less traumatized by the thorough going-over it will receive at the veterinarian's. You don't have to make it into a stressful situation at all, demanding that he sit absolutely still. Indeed, with a puppy or kitten, it is likely to think you are playing a terrific game and it may want to grasp you and play back. Do not reprimand it for its fearlessness or its playfulness. It may feel as if it is being reprimanded for allowing you to peek into its ears, eyes, or mouth. Simply speak softly and with loving tones. Better to have a patient that wants to play with the stethoscope than eat it, or shy away from it.

These guidelines are easily overlooked. Few people other than dog or show enthusiast go beyond the basics of training the animal to accept grooming and bathing. Most simply do not realize the importance of all-over, gentle handling and probing.

You will gain invaluable knowledge of your pet's health as a by-product of all this. You will rapidly and readily learn to recognize all of your pet's peculiar knobs and knots, and when a new one appears in an unlikely place, you can get it to veterinary help before the problem gets out of hand and beyond help. You will learn what a normal temperature for your pet is, and how to determine when and if to call your veterinarian. You will also feel competent to handle any situation which may arise if you are unable to get to a veterinarian and may have to take advice or counsel over the phone in a life-threatening situation.

The ones who benefit most from this are not humans . . . not you and not the veterinarian, although certainly both benefit. The largest benefit is conferred upon the pet. Now when it goes to the veterinarian clinic for its routine or extraordinary services it will go feeling secure that nothing will be done there that has not been done before by loving hands at home.

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Pet owners live longer and better

Pet-human bond extends life . . .

Veterinarians have had a gut feeling for years that the relationship between pet and owner was beneficial. Now science is compiling new evidence to prove mankind is better off both physically and mentally because of its feathered and four-legged friends.

"In the past we have taken the value of the human-pet relationship for granted. However, we are finding the increased evidence that pets help human health, well-being and the quality of life," says Dr. William McCulloch, a professor at Texas A & M University, where he instructs veterinary and graduate students on the emotional ties between people and their pets.

Petting an animal has shown to lower blood pressure, said McCulloch, and a Pennsylvania study of 92 heart patients showed that those who owned pets had a significantly higher chance of surviving another year than those who did not.

He said that a recent study at the University indicated that when subjects rest quietly, looking at fish swimming in an aquarium, they experience significant blood pressure reduction.

But the entire human-animal bond has other important sociological and psychological benefits that researchers are just beginning to recognize.

The loss of a family pet can be a young person's first experience with death and can act as a dress rehearsal for the eventual death of parents or close friends.

Dogs and cats serve as child substitutes in a mobile society where a rapidly growing number of couples are postponing children, sometimes permanently.

Veterinarians have recognized many of these roles in the past, but were never taught how they, as animal doctors, should respond to their clients' reactions.

"We have to deal with the client's guilt, which is the same sort of guilt you encounter when someone dies in the hospital. Owners think perhaps they are to blame because they didn't bring the animal to us in time, and we have to help rid them of those feelings," said McCulloch, who now teaches a class on the sensitive art of dealing with the owner's grief.

A pet's death can be traumatic, even catastrophic, to some one, especially when the pet has provided the unconditional love and support that the owner was unable to seek from other human beings.

Veterinarians have learned to be sensitive to the guilt, sadness, anger, and depression people feel when their pet dies, McCulloch explained.

"They need to know that it is okay to have these strong feelings about their pets. In many cases a pet may be a person's only companion and thus provides their reason for living," he noted.

McCulloch tells students at Texas A & M they have to be aware that people may have just as strong a feeling for a goat, calf or other farm animal as they do for a cat, dog or parakeet. "Just ask 4-H youth how they feel when they must part with a prize winning calf," he said.

An English study, for example, revealed that pet birds given to elderly persons living alone in a home environment significantly improved their self-esteem and emotional

well-being. The presence of the new pet also resulted in increased visits from relatives and neighborhood children.

Consequently, McCulloch has begun a push to have pets accepted in local nursing homes and to have Texas officials allow companions in such settings.

Researchers in Pennsylvania have found that 99 percent of the people they interviewed talked to their pets, and 80 percent considered the animals to be members of the family. Almost a third confided secrets to the pets.

Much remains to be learned, however, and it is only in the past ten years that any serious effort has been given to describing the complex nature of the pet-people bond.

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New pet insurance plan

Veterinary medicine has reached a point where the public simply cannot afford to take advantage of available veterinary services, and rising costs often force pet owners to choose euthanasia over extensive medical and surgical treatment, Dr. Jack Stephens, a California practitioner says.

The veterinarian's answer to euthanasia is to structure rates, sometimes subjectively, so that he can reach the optimum fee that the client can pay before they utter those tragic words, "Fido has suffered enough, Doctor, you'd better put him to sleep." What a tremendous waste that scenario dictates. Veterinarians did not go to school for eight years to learn how to put animals to sleep. However, client economics require that procedure to be followed with increased frequency in veterinary hospitals today. What is unfortunate in these days of higher costs is that many of procedures that were affordable yesterday are not affordable, said Al Clarke, former vice president of Medical Pet Services, Poway, Calif.

Pet Insurance is not a new idea, and its history includes a long list of failures. However, CVSC feels that the lack of broad-based professional support and a solid financial foundation have been the principal problems behind past mistakes, says Dr. James Wilson, practitioner and lawyer, and a CVSC stockholder.

Dr. Stephens envisions CVSC offering three pet owner policies, including accident, accident with annual physical and vaccination, and a comprehensive major medical plan with a per incident deductible, as well as a breeder policy. Previously existing conditions and routine visits will probably be excluded from coverage, as is typical of other past and presently available pet health plans.

Dog owners' premiums will be set according to a differential rate structure based on pet age and breed, Dr. Stephens says, but he expects one rate will cover risks associated with insuring cats.

Today's Animal News

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