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Nostalgia

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Those Good (Or Not So Good?) Old Days

A different study involved detailed observations of the large cats at the Philadelphia Zoo. It was found that tigers, leopards, and other large cats have the same sleep cycle and sleep behavior as domestic cats.

Only one sleep disorder, one which is particularly disturbing and disruptive to people, has so far been documented and studied in animals. It is narcolepsy, a disorder where a person suddenly falls asleep, no matter in what position or activity. Narcoleptic attacks are triggered by excitement, and in the past, when the disorder was not fully understood, these people were labelled as lazy or were believed to have some psychiatric disturbance. It is a dangerous condition and may lead to accidents and injuries because a person may suddenly collapse during an attack. The sleep cycle of narcoleptics has been studied and it was found that they lack the normal slow-wave sleep which precedes REM sleep. During an attack, narcoleptics enter directly into REM sleep.

The disorder has been identified and studied in dogs. Dr. Hendricks is aware of a colony of narcoleptic Doberman pinschers on the West Coast. These dogs are all related and it is thought that narcolepsy in dogs, as in man, has a hereditary basis. Narcolepsy can be controlled with drugs and Dr. Hendricks is treating an American Staffordshire terrier puppy. The disorder is quite disruptive to dogs as attacks are brought on by the stimulus of food. Another narcoleptic patient being observed by Dr. Hendricks is a horse which is stabled at New Bolton Center. This horse has an attack each time it is led from the stall to pasture, its head and neck drop to the ground and are dragged along as the horse continues to move. The disorder has also been reported in a Shetland-Welsh pony and a miniature horse.

Another sleep disorder, bedwetting, which primarily affects young children, is thought to also occur in dogs. Owners have reported that housebroken dogs suddenly urinate while asleep. These animals usually awaken and appear upset at their action. This disorder can have serious consequences for the animal as owners may not be willing to tolerate it in a housepet.

Sleep and its function and mechanism are not fully understood. "We don't know why we sleep or what makes us go to sleep," said Dr. Hendricks. She hopes that sleep studies of animals and the study of their sleep disorders may provide answers to sleep in general and to sleep disorders in particular, and that it may lead to early detection of medical or neurological problems which first manifest themselves during the sleep cycles.

Ah, for those "good old days" when a five-cent cigar actually cost a nickel! Those bygone days when we were not concerned with attempting to decipher TV ratings but only with what Lowell Thomas would bring us on the seven o'clock radio news are, unfortunately long-gone. Those were also the days, however, when mother used a hand wringer for the family wash, and dad stoked a coal furnace. And let us not forget that at one time, in the not-too-distant past, when an appendectomy was a risky bit of surgery, and a trip to the dentist was an invitation to a horror show.

So, in the "good old days" life was less complicated, but it was also somewhat tougher, and who is to say which is better—past or present? Here are a few gleanings about the former life at the Veterinary School. Judge for yourself!

From 1884 until 1920 tuition at the Veterinary School was \$100 per year. In addition, students paid a one-time, five-dollar matriculation fee for their three-year course of study. Students could not use a library, however, since it didn't exist until about 1908. They did get the opportunity to fashion horseshoes from scratch.

Until the 1940s trolley cars rolled past the school on Woodland Avenue. This was convenient for commuters, but most of the cars seemed to be equipped with square wheels; the effect of which was sufficient to jar one's dental work and play havoc with any delicate instruments that happened to be in operation.

The popular treatment for canine pneumonia was to apply a generous amount of camphorated oil to the chest wall, with friction, and then cover it with a flannel bandage. This was of dubious therapeutic value to the patient, but it did wonders for the sinuses of the student who administered the treatment.

Before 1945, a surgeon's reputation was greatly enhanced if he/she (and usually "he") could perform a spaying operation through an opening of no more than one inch in length. Before about 1940, most abdominal surgery was concluded by spooning a copious amount of a new-fangled drug known as sulfanilamide powder into the peritoneal cavity. Although this most certainly killed some microbes, it was also highly effective in setting-up foreign bodies, due to the insolubility of sulfanilamide.

In these days of specialization, it is interesting to recall that one faculty member had four professional degrees. Dr. Harry Campbell, who taught bacteriology from 1910 to 1948, earned his V.M.D. degree in 1902 and then collected degrees in medicine, dentis-

try, and pharmacy. Dr. Campbell was a quaint individual with a cherubic face, who possessed a rather sizable paunch. When he lectured, he was inclined to lay that paunch on the edge of a long table which extended across the front of the classroom. As he lectured, he more or less did a little "tippy-toe" dance step back and forth behind the table, with the protuberance sliding smoothly along. In bacteriology laboratory, Dr. Campbell sat in a straight-backed chair which he tilted back against the wall at a rather sharp angle. Once situated, he would open a newspaper to the stock market page, and promptly fall asleep. Almost always, some unfortunate student would drop a petri dish filled with agar. This would jar Dr. Campbell awake, and he would proclaim in a loud, cracked, falsetto voice, "Water will spill, and glass will break men!" This was immediately followed by, "Gotshall, Gotshall, some man spilled his agar." (Mr. Gotshall was the beleaguered laboratory technician.) Dr. Campbell would then slip back to slumberland. It should be added, that in addition to being interesting, Dr. Campbell was an effective teacher.

At times, the pharmacy laboratory resembled what one might expect in a winery or cooking school because those were the days when tinctures, fluid extracts, emulsions, and syrups were prepared. These concoctions were put together in large flasks, in which they were shaken, heated, decanted, distilled, and otherwise abused. The preparations burbled and gurgled and emitted fragrant, and sometimes, repulsive odors. As part of their training, students were required to identify these medicines by odor and taste, and to define them by their Latin name. One favorite preparation was Nux Vomica Tincture, whose supposed therapeutic value depended upon its strychnine content. This was tasted very carefully.

In good humor, we've shared a few glimpses of the past. It is possible that most of us who survived these experiences do, indeed, view them as the "good old days"—despite the lack of some creature comforts and the presence of trolley cars with square wheels!



*Veterinary Department
Pharmacy and Second
Year Anatomy Room
circa 1912*