



Summer 1997

Animal Crackers

M. Josephine Deubler
University of Pennsylvania

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Recommended Citation

Deubler, M. Josephine (1997) "Animal Crackers," *Bellwether Magazine*: Vol. 1 : No. 40 , Article 23.
Available at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/bellwether/vol1/iss40/23>

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Animal Crackers

Popular Breeds

The Cat Fanciers Association reports the most frequently registered cats. This is the world's largest registry and the tally suggests worldwide preferences for pedigreed cats.

1. Persians
2. Maine Coon
3. Siamese
4. Abyssinian
5. Exotic
6. Oriental
7. Scottish Fold
8. American Shorthair
9. Birman
10. Ocicat

The Exotic is a Persian hybrid with a short, easier to care for coat. Its nickname is the "lazy person's Persian." The Oriental resembles the Siamese but does not have the points. It comes in many solid colors, tabby patterns, part-colors and bi-colors. The American shorthair was called the Domestic shorthair until 1966. It is North America's own breed and its ancestors came here with the early European explorers. The Birman is the "Sacred Cat of Burma." It has distinctive white markings ("gloves") on all four feet.

The American Kennel Club registered 1,332,557 dogs in 1996. The top ten breeds were:

1. Labrador retriever
2. Rottweiler
3. German shepherd dog
4. Golden retriever
5. Beagle
6. Poodle
7. Dachshund
8. Cocker spaniel
9. Yorkshire terrier
10. Pomeranian

The Labrador retriever has been

America's most popular breed for the past six years. From 1929 to 1935, Boston terriers, now ranked 21st, were the most popular breed. Cocker spaniels were first from 1936 to 1952 and from 1983 to 1990. Poodles were at the top of the list for 22 years (1960 to 1982). The list has 143 breeds registered, including three in the Miscellaneous Class (Anatolian shepherd dog, Havanese and Löwchen).

President's Dogs

Socks Clinton probably is the first cat known as an important member of the President's household, but dogs seem to be in the majority as residents of the White House. Fala, a Scottie, was an inseparable companion of FDR. It is said that a destroyer was sent to fetch him when left behind on a trip. Fala stood at attention when the national anthem was played. Richard Nixon's speech about his cocker spaniel, Checkers, probably rescued his political career. Lyndon Johnson is remembered for his beagles, Him and Her, especially when he was photographed lifting them by the ears.

Warren Harding had an Airedale, Laddie Boy, who had his own chair to sit in during cabinet meetings and he had a birthday party with the neighborhood dogs invited for an iced dog biscuit cake. Teddy Roosevelt had a favorite terrier, Skip, found while hunting in the Grand Canyon. Herbert Hoover had a German shepherd, King Tut.

The Lincoln's Fido was the first presidential dog to be photographed. He was part of his master's funeral procession and his photograph by Ingmire became a national best-selling card-photo.

George Bush's springer spaniel, Millie, dictated a book on the best-seller

list to First Lady Barbara Bush. The Kennedy's had a number of dogs. Charlie, a Welsh terrier, was the first dog they brought to the White House, but many more came to them as gifts. Pushinka, a daughter of the Russian space dog, Strelka, was a present from Premier Krushchev and passed security inspection as a possible spy dog.

It was Harry Truman who said, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog." There are hundreds of stories and several books documenting this interaction between man and animal.

Laboratory Tests

Laboratory tests are used in making accurate diagnoses or as part of a routine physical examination.

Complete Blood Count (CBC) — includes red cells, white cells, hemoglobin, and platelets. The differential count identifies the different types of white cells. The white cells can indicate bacterial or viral infection as well as diseases such as canine malignant lymphoma. The red cell count and hemoglobin indicate anemia when lowered. Anemia may be due to chronic blood loss or iron deficiency. Platelets are decreased in bleeding disorders.

Blood Chemistry findings aid in the diagnosis of kidney, liver, pancreas and other organs.

Blood Glucose, when elevated, is commonly associated with diabetes mellitus and other endocrine diseases. Low blood sugar may indicate an insulin-producing tumor of the pancreas.

Blood Urea Nitrogen and creatinine, when elevated, might indicate kidney disease. There are many other tests which may be used.

Heartworm is confirmed by the presence of immature *Dirofilaria*

immitis or circulating antigen or parts of the parasite in the blood.

Fecal Flotation is used to detect intestinal parasite ova and protozoa, so that proper medication may be prescribed.

Skin Scrapings are examined microscopically to identify parasites like sarcoptic and demodectic mange mites.

Urinalysis is used for screening diseases of the kidney and urinary tract. When the sediment is examined microscopically, the information can lead to a diagnosis of infection or malignancy.

Culture and Sensitivity is used to select an effective antibiotic to treat a bacterial infection.

This is a very brief overview of the many tests available and their indications. When indicated, they can be an important aid in diagnosis.

Hot Weather Notes

Heatstroke is life threatening for dogs and cats, although cats rarely get overheated. In dogs, the signs are heavy breathing, staggering gait, bright red gums and tongue. If heatstroke is suspected, get the animal into a cool place, wet it down with cold water and get it to a veterinarian for emergency treatment as soon as possible.

Never leave a dog in a closed car — the sun can make it a death trap in just a few minutes. Keep clean, fresh water available at all times and feed in the cooler hours of the day. Provide a cool, shady sleeping place.

Vaccinations should be up-to-date, particularly to prevent Parvo virus, an illness that flourishes in hot weather. Rabies vaccinations should be current as time spent outdoors increases the chance of encounters with wildlife (possible rabies carriers).

Heartworm Medication may be recommended by your veterinarian. Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes and can be prevented with monthly medication between June and November.

“Hot Spots” usually appear when dogs have scratched because of reaction to fleas. Daily brushing or combing is a way to check for fleas and ticks. See the

veterinarian for preventives and treatment of the big, wet skin lesions.

“High Rise” Syndrome cats increase dramatically in the summer. Cats sustain fewer injuries when falling from greater heights but the most severe injuries occur when they fall from second or third story windows. Keep windows heavily screened or closed.

Garbage should be kept where dogs won't get it. Eating it can cause serious illness. Corncobs and bones are common foreign bodies found in the stomach and intestines. They can be life-threatening and expensive to remove.

Remember that leashes can be life savers. They can prevent dashing into traffic, chasing after other dogs or squirrels and other escapes that might result in injuries.

Your Aging Cat

By Kim Campbell Thornton and John Hamil, D.V.M.

(Macmillan USA/Howell Book House, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019 \$24.95 hardcover).

Sub-titled “How to Keep Your Cat Physically and Mentally Healthy Into Old Age,” this book is an excellent guide to caring for cats over eight years of age. Cats number over sixty million and are the fastest growing group of pets in the United States. Their low-maintenance requirements are important in today's society — and a relationship with a cat has important emotional and physical benefits.

The average cat life span is 10 to 14 years, but protected cats frequently live into their 20's. One cat is reported to have lived to age 36. A one-year-old cat is comparable to a 15 year-old human and a nine-year-old cat is approximately the same physical age as a 52 year-old human. Altered cats that live indoors are most likely to live longer.

In general a cat's geriatric years begin when it is 8 to 10 years old. Regular physical examinations are helpful. The authors discuss signs that indicate veterinary attention is needed. These include gain or loss of more than a pound,

vomiting, drinking more water than usual, change in appetite, gum and teeth problems, dry or dull coat and a change in energy level. With regular home examinations, including grooming, many illnesses can be detected before they become serious.

Massage techniques are discussed along with other alternative therapies such as acupuncture and homeopathy. There is a chapter on home care — giving medication and first aid. Some human medications are toxic to cats (ibuprofen, acetaminaphen and phenylbutozone). There is an appendix listing board-certified feline practitioners, books, magazine and even cat retirement homes. A glossary gives definitions of technical terms. This book covers just about all you need to know about your cat's aging process.

Vaginal Hyperplasia

Vaginal hyperplasia is a condition usually seen in young large-breed bitches, including Saint Bernards, bulldogs, boxers as well as other brachycephalic (short-nosed) breeds. It is thought to be caused by dysfunction. There is edematous enlargement of the vaginal floor and this may develop into an alarming mass of protruding vaginal tissue which may preclude natural breeding. The condition must be differentiated from vaginal prolapse which results in a “doughnut-shaped” mass protruding from the vulva.

The problem usually occurs during estrus. It may interfere with natural breeding. Rarely, it may occur at parturition and interfere with normal whelping.

Treatment usually consists of keeping the exposed tissue clean and lubricated with antibiotic ointment. In most cases, it will regress during diestrus. If the bitch is not to be bred, hormonal treatment in early proestrus may prevent development of hyperplasia. The treatment prevents ovulation, so it cannot be used in bitches intended to be bred.

The only permanent cure is ovariohysterectomy. In some cases, surgical resection may be indicated.