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Animal Crackers

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Photos by Addison Garry.

"Sweetie" is feeling much better after her acupuncture session with Corrina Snook Parsons, V'99 (pictured). A veterinary acupuncture clinic opened at the Ryan Hospital last October to complement traditional medical treatment for companion animals with a variety of disorders. Inset: a close-up view. Call (215) 898-4680 if you would like to schedule an appointment.



Photo by Sabrina Louise Pierce.

Santa Claus (a.k.a. Dr. Reid Groman, staff veterinarian) visits with three "cured critters" at the Ryan Hospital's Cured Critters Holiday Party on December 11. Nurses in the Intensive Care Unit created the party in 1992 to reunite with injured or sick animals they had cared for. The invitees are pets who were especially dear to the staff or who overcame overwhelming odds.

Animal Crackers



Domestic and wild animals in Sri Lanka and India seemed to sense the oncoming earthquake and tsunami that hit South Asia in December and fled to safety, *National Geographic* has reported on its website. Eyewitnesses say that, before the disaster, elephants screamed and ran for higher ground, dogs refused to go outside, flamingos abandoned low-lying breeding areas, and zoo animals rushed into their shelters and would not come out.

Although officials have documented more than 150,000 people dead across the region (as of December), relatively few animal carcasses have been found. Along the Indian coast, where thousands of people died, the Indo-Asian News service reported that buffaloes, goats, and dogs were found unharmed.

The belief that animals possess a "sixth sense"—and know in advance when the earth is going to shake—has been held by people for centuries. Wildlife experts have conjectured that animals' more acute hearing and other senses might allow them to hear or feel vibrations deep inside the planet, alerting them to approaching catastrophes long before people realize what's happening.

Thanks to a \$4-million gift made in December by a Swiss group, the Barry of the Great Saint Bernard Foundation, Switzerland's famous St. Bernard dogs can continue working at their monastery in the Alps. Over the past 200 years, the dogs have rescued 2,000 lost travelers in the mountainous region. The breed has been known to detect avalanches minutes before they occur. Their Alpine rescue missions are now aided by helicopters and heat sensors.

In October, the monks of the Great St. Bernard mountain pass in southern Switzerland, who have raised the dogs since the mid-seventeenth century, said the costs of keeping the kennels had become too high and they could no longer afford to maintain them. To save what has become a national symbol, a group of Swiss bankers and animal lovers set up a foundation to continue breeding the dogs. The group also plans to create a St. Bernard museum, set to open in 2006.

The first cloned-to-order pet sold in the United States is named Little Nicky, a nine-week-old kitten delivered to a Texas woman grieving

over the death of her 17-year-old cat. The kitten, which cost \$50,000, was cloned by using from DNA from the owner's beloved cat Nicky. The California-based company who created Little Nicky, Genetic Savings and Clone, said that by May 2005 it hopes to produce the world's first cloned dog—a much more lucrative market than cats.

Did you know that...

...Sharks are capable of two types of reproduction? Some sharks lay eggs that are called "mermaids' purses," while others give birth to live young.

...All polar bears are left-handed (or left-pawed)? They are also one of the very few mammals with hair on the soles of their feet.

...Giant Galapagos tortoises have a lifespan between 150 and 200 years?

...An elephant's trunk has 40,000 muscles and tendons?

...When opossums are "playing 'possum," they are not "playing"? They actually faint from sheer terror. ■