



# Animal Crackers

## Dog Bites

An average of 12 people die each year from dog bites and as many as one million require medical attention. The Insurance Information Institute reports that insurance companies paid a record \$1 billion for dog bite liability claims in 1996 alone. Medical treatment for dog attacks costs society \$102.4 million annually.

The American Veterinary Medical Association and State Farm Insurance Companies have initiated a campaign to raise awareness about dog bites and promote responsible pet ownership. The brochure published explains that any dog, if provoked, has the potential to bite and gives tips on how to prevent dog bites. These include: socialization so the dog feels at ease around people and other animals, training the dog to obey basic commands such as "stay", "no", and "come", and not allowing the dog to run free. Copies of the brochure may be obtained by calling 887-254-FIDO (3436).

The AVMA supports dangerous animal legislation by state, county, or municipal governments, provided the legislation does not refer to specific breeds.

Those planning to purchase a puppy for the first time should carefully consider the original purpose of a breed (hunting, herding, guarding, etc.), and temperament. One of the reasons it is better to buy from a breeder is that it provides the opportunity to see littermates, parents, and other adult animals.

Dog bites are the number one health problem of children. It is important to teach children how to correctly interact with dogs and not to approach strange dogs. Dogs can be wonderful companions, but it is the responsibility of the owners to make them "good citizens".

## Health Concerns

The Morris Animal Foundation has released results of a survey of pet owners. Dog owners identified cancer, skin disease, and dental problems as conditions most affecting their animal's health. Other concerns were nutrition, hereditary disease, and external parasites.

Among cat owners, urinary problems were the main concern, followed by dental problems, cancer, and feline leukemia.

Cancer was the leading disease-related cause of death in dogs and cats.

## Most Popular AKC Breeds

Total registrations are the basis of the AKC's "Top Ten" ranking. The Labrador retriever with 158,399 registrations continues to be the most popular breed. Rottweilers remain in second place, although their total registrations are declining. Chow Chows and Dalmatians are recent fad breeds whose registration numbers have been declining rapidly. In 1997, German shepherds ranked third, golden retrievers fourth, and poodles fifth. German shepherds have been in the top ten for over seventy years.

The other breeds leading in registrations are beagles, dachshunds, cocker spaniels, Yorkshire terriers, and Pomeranians.

The miniature schnauzer was the most popular terrier breed in 1997, followed by West Highland white and Scottish terriers.

A total of 1,307,362 dogs were registered by AKC in 1997.

## White German Shepherd Dogs

Breed standards are under the control of breed clubs and some have disqualifi-

cations which prevent competition at AKC championship shows. There have been white German shepherds since breed was established over a hundred years ago. They can be registered with AKC as purebred, but cannot be shown as that color is listed as a disqualification in the standard.

These dogs are not albinos, they have dark eyerims, nose, and pads. The white color is a recessive gene, both parents must carry the gene to produce a white puppy. It is said that the heredity deafness found in some white animals is not linked to this gene. It also is said that white is the wrong color for the breed's work in the armed forces and other areas. The white shepherds seem to lack the exaggerated rear angulation and sloping toplines which are seen in present day show dogs.

Recently, the United Kennel Club announced that it is considering registering a new breed — white shepherds. These dogs will compete at UKC shows, but unless the German Shepherd Dog Club of America changes its breed standard, they cannot compete at AKC shows.

Creating a new breed is not without precedent. AKC recognizes varieties with breeds. Not too long ago, Norfolk and Norwich terriers were separated by ear carriage and wire and smooth fox terriers became separate breeds based on coat texture.

## Book Reviews

*The Irrepressible Toy Dog* by Darlene Arden (Howell Book House/Macmillan USA, \$17.95 hardcover).

Small dogs have special needs which may be quite different from those of larger dogs. These distinctions are covered, from the new-born through puppyhood, going to a new home, housebreaking, and learning house man-



ners. Health care and behavior problems are discussed and there are short profiles of the various toy breeds.

The importance of socializing from the 21st to the 45th days is stressed. Generally, toy dogs are too fragile for small children, but children can learn how to behave gently with them. Grooming should start at five to six weeks and should include teeth cleaning (toy dogs are notorious for dental problems). It's unusual for a breeder to send a puppy off before the age of three months because, as a rule, toy dogs take longer to develop than a large breed puppy. A crate is important as a safe haven and an aid in housebreaking. Traveling with a crate can convince a hotelier to make an exception to a No Dogs policy.

Other bits of information in the book are that it is not unusual to see toy dogs become geriatric at around 11 to 12 years of age — when many giant breeds may have come to the end of their lives...

**Collapsing trachea**, considered to be an inherited condition, is a problem in a number of toy breeds. Coughing is one of the signs and the owner smoking may contribute to the problem..... **Traction alopecia** is caused by the topknot in some breeds as the elastic or barrette

used to hold the topknot in place pulls the skin and hair and eventually causes permanent hair loss in the area. The recommendation is not keeping the hair in a topknot all of the time... Not every breed is right for every person. Every dog has considerations such as activity level, temperament, coat care and special health concerns that could be either negatives or positives for you. The pug dates back to 400 B.C. originating in China where it was depicted as the Foo dog. Dutch traders brought pugs to Holland, where they became favorites of William of Orange when a pug saved the prince's life because its barking alerted to invading Spaniards. William's tomb contains a carving of the monarch with his pug.

Much more useful and interesting information about toy breeds can be found in the book.

*The 1998 Cat Fanciers Association Yearbook (Cat Fanciers Assn., P.O. Box 1005, Manasquan, NJ 08736 — \$39.00 postpaid — hardcover).*

This large volume is of particular interest because of many color photographs of the different breeds of cats in the advertisements. While the breed may

not be identified, there is an address for obtaining more information. There is a large section of black and white photographs of CFA Grand Champions and Grand Premiers and an interesting well-illustrated article on Abyssinians in America. Another article is on the American shorthair and covers early breed history. A few excerpts — "there is definite proof that several shorthair cats were brought to America on the Mayflower..... During the San Francisco Gold Rush of 1849, miners paid approximately \$50 each for top quality proven rodent hunting cats from the ship S.S. Ohio..... Shorthairs sold for \$50 to \$100 a piece during the San Francisco rat plague of 1884..... As American cats became more plentiful, farmers and miners began to select kittens that appealed to them based on flashy colors....."

The comprehensive index covers many articles published in earlier editions of the Yearbook. I have been assured that copies of these articles can be obtained from the office of the CFA.

Much CFA business is covered along with show results. However, the book may have much of interest for anyone who likes to read about cats. ●



*Dr. Josephine Deubler, V'38, had the ultimate dog show judging assignment. She judged the best in show competition at the Westminster Kennel Club show at Madison Square Garden, New York, in February. The School hosted a reception in her honor, though Josephine could not be there. Her stand-in was a life-like, life-size photo cut out which was a great success.*