

Cat Affairs



December 1991

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*Wishing you all everything good for Christmas,
the New Year and always*



Christmas 1991 may not be the merriest of times, with so many bread winners out of work, and young people faced with bleak job prospects. Those on fixed incomes are also suffering, and those who see interest rates falling on investments.

Indeed, we are seeing the result of the recession very much ourselves. More clients are asking for more time to pay, and many people reporting poor stray and abandoned cats can't afford to pay anything at all towards the cost of catching them. We are even getting, for the first time ever, a steady trickle of people bringing pets to the office because they can't afford food and veterinary attention. This is the saddest situation of all.

But, as at every Christmas, we can still share what we have with those we love, in a special spirit of peace and good will.

The Council of the Cat Protection Society therefore wishes each and every one of you a happy Christmas, and looks towards a New Year which may hopefully bring brighter prospects of a return to a stable economy.

Meanwhile, we have to tell you that our President of the last four years, Lyn Thomas, has resigned. Lyn's husband has been offered secure employment in Queensland, and like many young couples today, they have decided to relocate and start a new life.

We wish Lyn and Martin good fortune in everything they undertake. We wish to thank Lyn for her hard work and dedication during the past years, and for all she has helped to accomplish. Not least has been the move downstairs of our Welfare Section. If this hadn't taken place, it is doubtful if we could have coped with the increasing pressure of work. As it is, she has helped us achieve modern, functional working conditions, worthy of our professionalism.

We also wish to thank members for their continuing support and encouragement. Your letters cheer our spirits, your subscriptions and generous donations help us to keep going.

Here's a Christmas toast to one and all!

THE STATE COUNCIL OF
THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NSW

THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF N.S.W.

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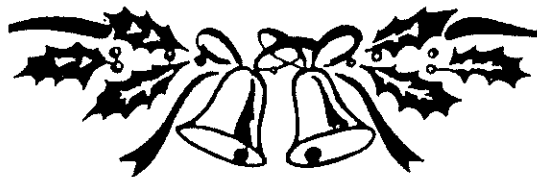
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A Christmas Quiz

for you!

If you have a little time to spare during the Christmas rush, sit down and see how you go with these questions. Answers are inside the back cover.

1. The domestic cat has more bones than a human.
True () False ()
2. Cats can see in total darkness.
True () False ()
3. The cat's ears can register frequencies two octaves lower than human ears. True () False ()
4. The cat can clear eight times its own height when jumping from a crouching, stationary position.
True () False ()
5. The scent and cry of a female cat in heat can carry for over a kilometre. True () False ()
6. Cats should have a saucer of milk every day.
True () False ()
7. In their natural state, cats hunt for food in packs.
True () False ()
8. At full speed, a cat can cover a short distance at a rate of about 31 miles an hour.
True () False ()
9. Cats are colour blind. True () False ()
10. "Flehming" is the word vets use for a chronic cough in a cat. True () False ()
11. The Balinese cat was originally found in Bali.
True () False ()
12. A tortoiseshell cat has a white coat with patches of colour on it. True () False ()
13. Manx cats can have tails. True () False ()
14. Kittens' eyes start to open at 2 days.
True () False ()
15. You should pick kittens up by the scruff of the neck, exactly as their mother does.
True () False ()
16. Cats should have a vitamin and mineral supplement added to their diet.
True () False ()

17. Dog food is also suitable for cats.
True () False ()
18. On average, a cat sleeps for 10 hours out of 24.
True () False ()
19. If you mate a tabby cat with a black cat, you will get some tabbies and some black kittens.
True () False ()
20. The Sphynx is one of the most unusual of cats because it has very long, silky fur.
True () False ()
21. The Cheshire Cat appears in "The Jungle Book" by Rudyard Kipling. True () False ()
22. A crushed up aspirin tablet mixed with its food will calm a sick or nervous cat. True () False ()
23. If a cat is pawing at its eye, flush the eye with a mild solution of salt water. True () False ()
24. Owning a cat is actually good for your health.
True () False ()

PS: Thanks to veterinarian Alice Noe-Nordberg for checking the answers for us.



A Beautiful Epitaph

*By weight of the wearying years, and by
grievous illness
Compelled, I come at last to the Lethean
lake-side;
"Have thou Elysian suns," said Proserpina,
smiling,
"Elysian meadows?"
Nay, but if I deserve it, O Kindly Queen of the
Silence,
Grant me this boon: One night to return to the
homestead,
Home to return by night, and into the master's
ear
Whisper: "Across the waste of the Stygian waters
Your Felis, most faithful of cats, still holds you
dear."*

John Jortin (1756)

Translated from the Latin by Seamus O'Sullivan

So, you'd like to be a vet!

By Kim Kendall, B. Vsc.

Do you have a son or daughter who'd like to be a vet? Do you think you could make a good vet yourself? Here's a "behind the scenes" look at the profession from a vet who writes regularly for "Cat Affairs."

(P.S: In case you're wondering about a first name which could apply to either sex, Kim is a young woman.)

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I am regularly asked about my choice of profession and career, and I always preface my response by saying that I am having a wonderful time being a vet, that it is a small profession still imbued with a great deal of camaraderie - but that it is definitely not for everyone, even those who "love animals."

Veterinary science is a profession, like nursing, with a lot of thick and thin to get through, and many of the rewards are intangible. Indeed, many intelligent and competent vets leave the field disillusioned by many factors and attracted by other prospects.

In a survey done by Brisbane University, 95% of graduates were glad to have done the course, even though only 70% were in any way still connected with a veterinary career. (And even among those still connected, some were only being a vet part time and were involved in other interests.)

Having said that, let's investigate the lifestyle and see if it may suit you.

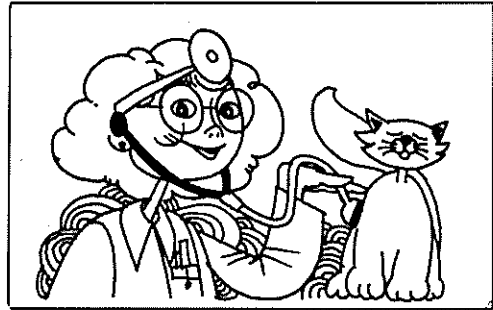
Certainly the University portion is very enjoyable. If you can get enough marks to get into the course, you can get through it. I trained at Sydney University, and have never felt inadequate in any of the countries where I've practised. I have, in fact, found that my predecessors from Australia have left such a positive impression that I always have been very well received.

I have stayed in private, small animal practice, although academia occasionally appeals. I have varied my life by changing countries, not just jobs, and by doing locums (fill in positions) rather than staying in one place for a long period.

The one constant factor in all the places I've worked, including Australia, England, USA and Zimbabwe, is this: you have to like PEOPLE as well as animals to do well and stay sane in private practice. You also have to enjoy the routine work as much as sorting out the complex problems. "Common things occur commonly," but if you allow them to bore you - as sadly, many vets do - then you will either not stay in

veterinary practice long, or will be bored and resentful of the demands made on your time by your career.

My own progress through post-graduate years has been varied, but I always seem to end up doing interesting things because of veterinary pursuits and connections. Veterinary surgery and medicine used to be almost solely an art in the days before effective drugs replaced the old pharmacopea. It is now a science, and an inquiring mind is an asset - and also a liability, I'm occasionally told!



You need to ask questions

If you're thinking of being a vet, ask yourself if you readily accept the surface values which appear easily, or do you look a little harder to make sure that it all adds up correctly?

There is still a lot of "art" in veterinary science, and that lies in asking the valuable questions - questions of owners, producers, drug company representatives, even senior vets and lecturers at the University.

Will you stay with a problem until the pieces fit together or resolve? I would say that the major characteristic of a good veterinarian is persistence. It gets you through the degree course, it makes you keep on with a difficult problem, and it helps keep you sane through all the small routines of a vet's day.

The other vital trait that's needed is being able to communicate, and here I mean with people and not only animals! Every animal comes attached to an owner. Even wild animals in Africa are owned by the Government or the person whose land they are on at that minute. There are career paths for those who "only like animals," but the majority of vets have to deal effectively with a wide cross section of people. Sentimentality is also a burden. You cannot love every animal you see, it is not your right - someone else usually owns it - and you may not be able to make the best decision for its welfare if sentiment is your major guide.

I have an enormous respect for animals, from bacteria, protozoa and insects that I battle with every day, through reptiles and birds, to the mammals that I deal with regularly and those I only hear about. The hardest part is not (as I'm often asked) having to euthanase animals, particularly for the ones that have reached the end of their endurance - for them it is a release - but having to convince people who are not overly committed to their animal's welfare to take the appropriate course of treatment. Disinterested owners are my stress factor.



However, that is more than compensated for by the multitude of caring and diligent owners who come to me for help. And of course, by the wonderful animal characters who crop up regularly for consultation. No, you can't love them all, but I like to think many of them are friends.

What about rewards

In terms of careers, there are many better paid paths to choose. Vets come 27th in the average lifetime earning list, well behind defence force personnel, builders and doctors who are in the top 20. The veterinary work week is also pretty anti-social, particularly for solo practitioners. Many dinner parties and other occasions are disrupted, and an off duty weekend is treasured.

However, opportunities available for veterinary graduates seem almost unlimited! I have met vets who have done or been offered the following: A position on the Space Shuttle . . . the only dentist available in the African bush for 10 years . . . PR officer for a confectionery company . . . a major land developer and millionaire in London . . . a man who parleyed \$A1000 into \$A1 million on the stockmarket in 10 years . . . to name just a few.

Of course, private practice - as an associate and then eventually as a principal - is the route followed by most young vets for the first years at least. However, there are also Government postings that offer options: abattoirs require animals to be examined, farms must be inspected, there are campaigns to eradicate various diseases that must be organised and so on.

Large producers of livestock (especially chickens, fish and pigs) require vets, and food suppliers for these producers may also employ their own vets, or use contract vets to develop the best food and environment for animals.

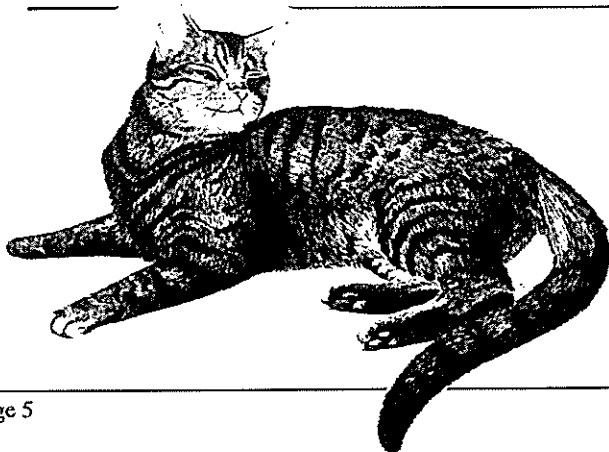
Drug companies also employ vets to conduct research and as representatives. In the last few years, research establishments have been required to employ a specially trained vet to supervise conditions under which laboratory animals are kept. These areas have all become controversial in the recent past, and veterinary contributions are therefore becoming increasingly important in developing solutions to difficult ethical questions.

Universities themselves offer career paths for dedicated academics, and not only in the veterinary department. A veterinary degree, especially if followed by further qualifications, is a sought after achievement in other areas of University endeavour. Some vets go on to get a medical degree, and are very well placed for Public Health positions. And onward up the bureaucracy. The Australian Veterinary Association is very helpful about outlining possible career paths, subsequent to obtaining a degree, but one situation encapsulates it all in my mind.

An official "Think Tank" in the United States a few years ago discussed the concept of what trades and qualifications would be essential to a surviving community after a nuclear catastrophe. They decided that for a community to function healthily, it would require a veterinarian, a nurse, a farmer, an engineer and a builder. No doctor, lawyer, banker, not even an Army general!

I've always felt proud of the fact that a veterinarian's qualifications can be the key to a huge variety of careers, and yet they are still part of a profession that is small enough to ensure a warm welcome anywhere there is a fellow vet.

I do hope this will be of some help to those who may be considering the profession. I'm certainly still glad I chose it.



Welfare Report

At this time of the year we are awaiting the usual, awful flood of kittens.

So far we have been able to place all the healthy kits old enough. It is now mandatory that kittens have to be eight weeks old and immunised before we try to find homes for them.

Of course, these new Government guidelines have had repercussions. Many pet shops now refuse to accept kittens, because they don't want to pay for vaccinations and then be left with kittens on their hands. In turn, backyard breeders are finding it hard "to get rid of" unwanted kittens.

This is all to the good, because we are now hearing, "I have to get her desexed because the pet shop won't take her kittens any more."

On the home front, we've had a wonderful year with staff. No turnover at all! For the first time, I think, in eleven years, we still have the same Welfare Officers - five experienced, caring girls.

Sandy Moss has just celebrated her tenth year with us, and Lyn Edworthy has been with the Society for three years. Tania is back with us after having twin boys (very handsome ones!) and Janelle and Kelly have both married during the year.

Helping Welfare, of course, we also have volunteers Lena Larsen and June Chapman. Lena has finally given up field work, but is equally efficient in the office, making sure all jobs are completed, manning the 'phones, and chasing up our bad debts. June helps us every Tuesday and any other day she's needed. Then there is Julie, always on call to help us in moments or hours of crisis.

As an important extension of our welfare work we have Parkland, where Shirley and Ron Butler supply TLC for cats and kittens in waiting. We are finding a few more homes than last year, but it's still disappointing not to be able to place more little animals.

We advertise every single week in the Saturday Morning Herald, the Saturday and Sunday Telegraph and the Weekly Trading Post. We have also tried suburban papers, but they haven't been very successful.

Sooner - though probably later - it does seem that compulsory registration and desexing of cats will become a reality. In the meantime our efforts in desexing are increasing each year, thanks to the help of our wonderful cooperating vets and a seeming increased public awareness of why desexing is so important.

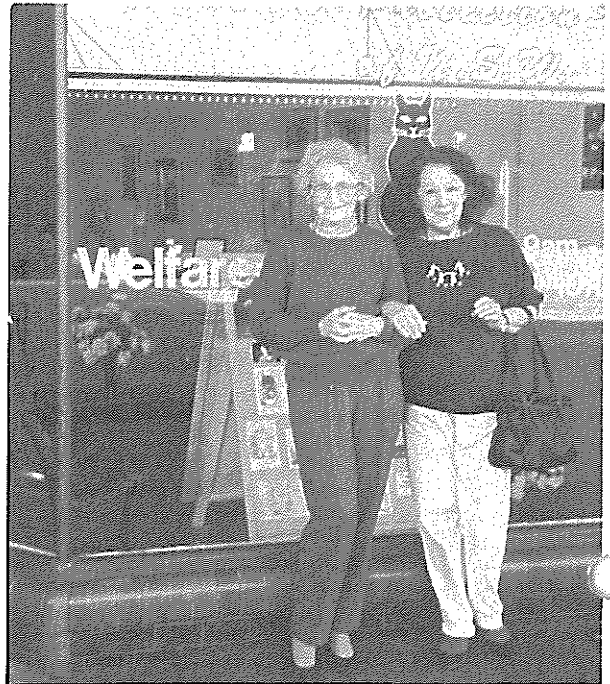
Microchip identification is being adopted by some vets, the RSPCA for dogs, and The Animal Welfare League for dogs and cats.

There are two systems operating at the moment for retrieval of information, so CPS is waiting to see which system becomes the official one before adopting the practice. It will of course be an added cost for cat owners, but well worthwhile.

Be assured that welfare is working hard on the usual pleasant and unpleasant jobs.

Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year to you all.

Nance Iredale
Welfare Director



A happy pair outside our Welfare office: Nance Iredale, Welfare Director, Honorary Treasurer and member of State council, with Julie Gorrick, Secretary/Administrator and Editor Of "Cat Affairs." (Julie is holding the bag.)

All members are cordially invited to visit the office, at 103 Enmore Rd Enmore, opposite the Enmore Theatre. Hours are 9am-4pm, Monday to Friday. Cats can also be brought directly to the office for desexing, Monday to THURSDAYS. Just be sure the cat has had nothing to eat or drink from the previous night. It will be kept overnight at the vet's, and can be collected the next morning.



MEET MISS KITTY, RAT CATCHER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

On the first of August this year, a V.I.C. (Very Important Cat) was the toast of the residents of the ground floor units in the South Wing of Wesley Gardens Retirement Village at Belrose.

Miss Kitty (Shaw) had caught and killed her one hundredth rat, and since that date her total has risen well in excess of 100.

The rats visit the duck pond in the grounds of the village, but not for long when Miss Kitty is around.

Miss Kitty is the protegee of Ms Jean Shaw, a resident of Wesley Gardens, and a favourite of the ground floor residents of South Wing, who share her food and veterinary expenses.

Miss Kitty, a pretty tabby with white vest, was toasted champagne. Despite her extraordinary prowess as a rat catcher, she is a most unassuming young lady. Indeed, her favourite pastime is to sit quietly grooming herself in the sun.

Here's a toast to your next hundred rodents, Miss Kitty. Well done!



P.S: Lots of friends were invited to Miss Kitty's party. This is the cover of the invitation. Inside Miss Kitty said "You are invited to my party to celebrate my century of rat catching." Miss Kitty's admirer Miriam Harris was kind enough to send us her own invitation for "Cat Affairs" to publish.



Always Remembered

A donation in loving memory of my beloved Bo-Bo.

Mrs P Brooks

In memory of young Tommy, the happy wanderer, who passed away in August of this year. Lovingly remembered.

Shirley Pikler

In memory of Basil McCluskie, died the ninth of November.

Precious Memories of my "Honey."

*Golden blossoms fall like silent rain,
Upon the grave beneath the tree,
Where Honey now lives sleeping,
No more her sweet face shall I see.*

*I'll not feel the vibrancy of her contented purr
As I did when I'd stroke her soft warm fur,
While her beautiful eyes would gaze at me,
In her pussycat way, saying: "It's time for tea"*

*Never again to creep 'neath the sheets
On my bed, now winter is nigh,
My tears begin to flow again
As I breathe a sad, sad sigh.*

*But should I now be feeling so blue?
Honey wouldn't want me to;
She'd not want me to feel so sad
But to think of the happy times we'd had.*

*From our garden she would never roam,
Always stayed right here at home,
So never did I feel alone,
She was the sweetest cat I've ever known.*

*Now, all I have, are precious memories,
Of the little cat I loved so dearly,
And she loved me too, she made it clear,
Over so many happy years.
So I'll dwell now on the pleasure she gave
To me, in so many different ways,
Then, maybe someday, when I stand by her
grave,
I'll not feel so much pain, maybe I'll smile once
again.*

By Hilda York

THE ANIMAL LABS

This article is reprinted from the publication "The Independent Monthly," of June, 1991.

The article points out that Melbourne is the "animal research capital of Australia," but in terms of funding for animal research - see the panel - New South Wales comes second.

Animal experimentation in Australia is a big and highly secretive business. A year ago, BRETT WRIGHT sought through the Freedom of Information Act to discover how the use of animals in science is regulated at the University of Melbourne, one of Australia's biggest consumers of laboratory animals. The university provided access to its confidential files on 250 animal experiments. Wright explains here for the first time much of what goes on in the animal labs.

Behind locked doors at the end of a long corridor on the seventh floor of a salmon-brick building at Melbourne University is a room where monkeys are kept for experiments on the nervous system and the brain. The small, artificially-lit room contains steel cages occupied by five macaque monkeys. The animals are alert, studying the visitor with an intense interest. One of the younger monkeys moves stiffly. The back of its shaved head is creased with a thick line of black stitches.

In an adjoining room, a week-old macaque, about the size of a kitten, is being bottle-fed by the laboratory staff. It lives in a humidicrib. Its head has been

injected with fluorescent dyes which will enable the scientists to follow the pathways among the nerve cells when the animal is killed and its brain sliced for examination.

The monkeys, which come from a breeding colony in Werribee, near Melbourne, may live here for up to six months, undergoing dye injections or spinal lesions-cuts made by a scalpel in the spinal cord which render the animal paralysed down one side of its body. The monkeys suffer the equivalent of a severe stroke which enables the researcher to examine how the neural pathways can regenerate after injury. Although a few may return to Werribee, most die here, killed at the end of each experiment while deeply anaesthetised.

The monkey experiments are the life-work of Professor Ian Darian-Smith, head of the department of anatomy at the University of Melbourne and an eminent medical researcher. He has worked exclusively with monkeys since 1965, using about 25 animals a year.

Darian-Smith's scientific interest is in how the brain processes information received from the senses, and how it regulates movement, especially in the hand. Because primates are the only animals with a hand functionally comparable to humans, he must use monkeys in his experiments.

Darian-Smith gave evidence to the 1989 Senate Select Committee inquiry into animal experiments. He was the subject of a submission made to that inquiry by the Australian and New Zealand Federation of Animal Societies.

That submission referred in part to research Darian-Smith published

in 1985 on the results of injecting monkeys with a neurotoxin to create symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease, including severe tremors or stiffness of the limbs, paralysis or sluggish movement. The Federation claimed the experiment would have distressed the animals. Darian-Smith agreed that was true.

In one of his latest experiments, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), he cuts open a pregnant, anaesthetised monkey to inject dyes into the head of the foetus. The unborn animal is then returned to the uterus. Two weeks later, the fetus is surgically removed and its brain prepared for microscopic examination. The mother is returned to Werribee.

The experiment is part of a research program to create maps of the neural pathways at stages in the animal's development. Darian-Smith says the work may lead eventually to a better understanding of diseases such as cerebral palsy.

The experiments, he concedes, have no direct application to humans. "We're at a level of analysis which is not directed specifically at therapy," he says.

"But that does not mean, in the long run, that an understanding of these pathways is not relevant. We firmly believe it is, but it's an overstatement to say this work will immediately produce advantages for the patient."

His experiments, and hundreds of others at Melbourne University, were approved last year by a university animal ethics committee of which Darian-Smith was the chairman. The 13-member committee, constituted under university law, comprises animal

researchers, university officials and two external members who have no official links with the university. Known as the central committee, it oversees animal research at Melbourne, examining and approving experiments authorised by smaller departmental ethics committees attached to 23 animal houses on campus. The committee employs a full-time vet to provide expert advice.

Melbourne University's ethics committees, and their counterparts in research institutions in Victoria and other states, are the legal and moral machinery of a secretive industry which consumes hundreds of thousands of animals a year and millions of dollars in government and private funding.

In 1991, the NHMRC provided \$21 million for 364 animal experiments in NSW and Victoria. Another \$10.1 million was provided for research programs using animals. Millions more went in untied "block grants" to medical institutes which experiment on animals. Animal researchers also receive grants from the Australian Research Council, state government departments, the Victoria Health Promotion Foundation and the National Heart Foundation.

Almost nothing is publicly known about how the money is spent, how many animals are used, which species are used, and what happens to the animals.

Claiming it might lead to threats against researchers, the NHMRC refuses to release copies of research applications. The research bodies, with few exceptions, maintain a cloak of secrecy over the deliberations of ethics committees and the identity of animal researchers and committee members.

The University of Melbourne does not allow visits to its primate

colonies, in which squirrel monkeys, marmosets and macaques are being used for research into deafness, in-vitro fertilisation and Alzheimer's disease.

For the first time, however, in response to my requests, the university provided access to the files of the animal experimentation ethics committee - known as the central committee - including research applications to the committee for experiments carried out in 1990 and the minutes of the committee relating to those experiments.

The research applications, relating to 250 animal experiments in progress in 1990 on the university's main campus, and the minutes of nine committee meetings, provide a rare insight into the state of animal experimentation in Australia.

Three conclusions can be drawn from examining this material: a very large number of animals are used; ethical deliberations over animal research are, in large measure, controlled by the animal researchers themselves; and not enough effort is being put into the development of alternatives to animal experiments. In 1990, Melbourne University's central committee approved the use of more than 88,000 animals for scientific experiments. Overwhelmingly, these experiments were "terminal" - that is, they resulted in the animal being killed, usually by drug or anaesthetic overdose, gas or, in the case of small animals like mice, by breaking the neck. Large farm animals are sometimes killed by captive-bolt pistol.

The researchers were authorised to use in the year 63,000 mice, 11,650 rats, 1,860 pigs, 1,600 sheep, 80 monkeys, 450 dogs, 126 cats, 66 horses, 370 goats, 200 cattle, 4,000 quail, 1,360 guinea pigs, 850

rabbits, 1,950 chickens, 1,170 cane toads, 20 ducks and 25 lizards. The volume of dead bodies has caused a disposal problem: the on-campus incinerators no longer meet the air-quality standards of the Environmental Protection Authority, and the cost of incineration by an outside contractor is estimated at \$50,000 a year.

The experiments range from the benign to the bizarre. Many thousands of animals, mainly mice, are used as a source of antibodies for studies in immunology. The mouse is injected with foreign material. These antibodies are collected by draining out the animal's blood while it is anaesthetised. Some animals are used to grow tumours for cancer research, others to test the safety of new commercial products such as sun-screen lotions.

Rats are injected with turpentine to induce inflammation, cats deafened to aid the development of hearing implants, mice infected with lethal bacteria to study the mechanism of diarrhoea, and sheep dosed with live roundworm larvae in an effort to find a vaccine.

Rats are favourite laboratory tools. Rats endure scurvy, pneumonia, high salt diets, vitamin A deficiencies, and cancer-causing chemicals painted onto the roof of the mouth. In one experiment, funded by the National Heart Foundation, rats have all four feet taped to a table for up to an hour to induce mild stress. The experiment is part of a study of hypertension. Tooth decay is induced by maintaining rats for eight weeks on a diet which is 60 per cent sugar. In another, the roots of teeth from dogs killed at the Lort Smith Animal Hospital in North Melbourne are transplanted into the flesh on the back of laboratory rats. The experiment is investigating materials used in dental surgery.

Some experiments have little to do with human health and are concerned with potential economic gains in the meat industry. There are experiments into "defleecing" hormones which might replace sheep shearing. Chemicals to make pigs grow faster are being tested and drugs to vaccinate battery chickens against respiratory disease are part of another experiment. Several experiments, which use horses and dogs, are intended to improve methods of detecting doped animals in the racing industry.

All experiments are assessed by an elaborate system of ethics committees with representatives drawn from staff, the animal welfare community (usually vets) and the general public. Melbourne University is proud of its system of regulation of animal experiments, a system it believes is rigorous and one of the best in the country. Nevertheless, the system has flaws.

University files show the central committee - an ethics watchdog or "a policeman within the university," as one member put it - did not adopt procedures which would satisfy a national code of practice for the use of animals in science, endorsed in 1989 by the NHMRC and CSIRO. Adherence to this code, which is a condition for an institution seeking funds for animal research, requires that animal experiments are considered and approved by the full committee, not by an executive or sub-committee.

However, until recently, under the central committee's terms of reference, adherence to the Australian code of practice has not been strictly required. It is understood that recent amendments to the terms now make the code mandatory.

When asked in writing if the central committee's method of examining proposals was now in

breach of the national code, the university issued a one-word response: "No." According to the information I obtained on past experiments at Melbourne, a proposed experiment was examined in detail by one member of the committee. Typically, his recommendation was endorsed by the chairman and sent to the next meeting of the committee, which gave the recommendation "final approval." Members of the full committee have a right to seek information about experiments but this was uncommon. According to the committee's secretary, "generally speaking, there is not a lot of discussion" of proposed experiments at the meetings.

The minutes of a meeting on August 2, 1990, are typical. "The committee agreed to approve 24 proposals provisionally approved by the chairman." On seven occasions in 1990, an experiment was approved by the committee in the absence of the committee member who had examined the research application.

The Bureau of Animal Welfare, an investigation unit within the Victorian Department of Agriculture, describes the approval-by-sub-committee process as "unacceptable."

Scientists often have to guess at the number of animals needed for an experiment, commonly over-estimating the figures and occasionally under-estimating them. Researchers are asked each year in a questionnaire to explain why variations in numbers have occurred.

In 1988, a senior microbiologist who was using mice to study the immune system requested 2,000 mice for the following year. Her annual report to the committee a year later reveals that 4,093 mice, more than double the number requested, were used during 1989.

Her explanation was less than

illuminating: "The emphasis of the experiments swung to in-vivo [live animals] work during the year because that was the successful line of work as opposed to in-vitro [test tube] studies which do consume fewer mice." The committee granted her request for a further 4,000 mice and did not make any further enquiries.

The involvement of outside, independent committee members in approving experiments at Melbourne University is minimal. The detailed examination of research applications to the central committee is dominated by experimenters - six committee men who are themselves animal researchers who approve each other's experiments.

In 1990, the committee approved 124 new animal experiments. Of these, 105 or 85 per cent were approved on the basis of recommendations by these six members.

The two external committee members - Dr Graeme Smith, director of the Lost Dogs Home, and a Melbourne lawyer, Thomas Yuncken - examined just 14 proposed experiments, while a member of university council, John Ryan, examined five experiments.

Smith, who is a member of similar animal ethics committees at four other research institutions in Melbourne, did not attend four of the nine meetings in 1990 because of overseas travel and family commitments.

Yuncken, a solicitor with the prominent Melbourne firm of Arthur Robinson and Hedderwicks, has criticised on two occasions the lack of research applications examined by outside members. The minutes of the August committee meeting recorded the comment that "more lay members . . . should become involved in assessing applications." Yuncken says the

comment was his and, although it has resulted in him seeing more research applications "on an informal basis" the proportion of applications examined by outsiders remains low.

"Part of the problem, I suspect, is a bureaucratic difficulty from the university's end: they have to send them out to me and I have to send them back, and that takes a little longer," he says. "I think it's important that lay members be involved in potentially controversial projects. I would still like to see more proposals. I raise that from time to time and I go through a period where I see more - then it drops off again."

A Melbourne University graduate who retains social and sporting links with the university, Yuncken has served on the central committee as its sole "category D" or independent lay representative since 1984 and has examined hundreds of research proposals. It is an unpaid job which he takes seriously, occasionally seeking information about experiments through friends or acquaintances within the university. Although his firm does legal work for Melbourne University, he avoids any professional link with the institution.

Approving Darian-Smith's monkey experiments was hard, he admits.

"To be honest, I still have reservations. It was not an easy decision to make and it was one I thought about for some time. But I'm satisfied on balance that the risk is worth taking if the results which are hoped to be achieved are achieved or even substantially achieved."

Yuncken says the task of judging the scientific merit of an experiment and the need to use animals is extraordinarily difficult, and one where the lay person has to rely heavily on the advice of the researcher. While he has queried

many applications, he has yet to reject one.

The Australian code of practice demands the use of non-animal research techniques available include cell and tissue culture, computer modelling, autopsies, and post-market surveillance of new drugs.

In its general principles, the Australian code of practice requires that "techniques which replace or complement animal experiments must be used wherever possible," but it does not say whose job it is to make this happen. It is not in the code's list of responsibilities for ethics committees. Indeed, in practice, through their devotion to the efficient regulation of animal experiments, the ethics committees assure the continued use of animals.

The code does say that researchers must ask themselves whether the aims of the experiment can be achieved without the animals, but there is no requirement to ask anyone else.

Many researchers do not want change. When Melbourne University scientists apply to the central committee to use animals, they are required to state why animals are necessary for the experiment and why alternative techniques have been rejected. Responses in 1990 include: "There is no alternative"; "The functional composition of the mammalian nervous system can be studied only by using mammals"; "Computer models are not sufficiently developed to replace animal experiments"; "The questions we ask can only be answered by experimental analysis."

The perfunctory tone of these responses highlights the problem: the researchers have no strong incentive to spend time and money looking for alternatives.

An entrenched problem is funding.

As much of the research is funded by grants from outside bodies, the experiments appear to be as much the result of the ingenuity of the researchers in writing grant applications as the pressing need for new knowledge.

In order to get funding, the researcher has to publish, quickly and often. Experiments, using well-defined, easily manipulated animal models, suit the publish-or-perish attitude well.

Consequently, it can be hard to see what scientific purpose an experiment serves. One researcher, with backing from the Pig Research Council, is trying to show that intensively farmed pigs are becoming genetically adapted to confined housing. "If this project is successful," he writes in his application, "it will refute a major objection of the animal welfare lobby - that animals must necessarily suffer if confined and farmed this way." The central committee initially queried the proposed experiment. The researcher wrote back saying: "At this stage we don't know what we will be measuring because we don't know how the sows will respond, if at all." Armed with additional information, the committee approved the experiment.

Another experiment, which is being funded by the Australian Tobacco Research Foundation, is a study of the adverse effects of nicotine on the heart "and how they might be prevented." The experiments are authorised to use 40 dogs a year. The dogs are anaesthetised, injected with nicotine, killed and their hearts removed.

The researcher says the experiment has nothing to do with cigarette smoking, claiming his objective is a better understanding of how the nerves control heart function. Clearly, he says, the effects of nicotine can be prevented simply

by not smoking. However, Yuncken - who approved the experiment - says he believes it is worthwhile because of the large number of people who are addicted to cigarettes.

Many scientists believe, as Darian-Smith puts it, that "the use is justified by the ultimate outcome."

"An act is cruel if it has a mindless or sadistic approach. But if you do something which may cause pain in the animal, and it's seen as a useful thing, then I don't see that as an act of cruelty," he says.

The view among many animal researchers that pain or suffering can be justified tends to skew the ethics committee's role towards ensuring pain is minimised, not deciding whether the experiment has merit or could be done some other way.

Darian-Smith says alternative research techniques may eventually replace the use of monkeys in brain research, although he believes they would greatly slow the progress of medical science.

"I think (without animals) 80 per cent of research would come to a halt," he says. "The guts of medical research would fall apart."

So the question remains: Is the use of animals in science an act of necessity or a product of professional inertia?

"There will be a time the world will look back on vivisection in the name of science as they do now to burning at the stake in the name of religion."

Dr. H.J. Bigelow
Harvard Medical School

Melbourne is the animal research capital of Australia. In 1991, the federal government's chief advisory body on medical research, the National Health and Medical Research Council, provided \$12,614,299 from the NHMRC for major research programs in which animals are used.

The major medical research institutes using animals in Melbourne - the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, the Howard Florey Institute, the Baker Medical

Research Institute and the Murdoch Institute - received NHMRC block grants in 1991 totalling \$14,255,278.

In other states, total NHMRC project and priming grants for animal research in 1991 were:

NSW \$8,895,906;

Queensland \$4,481,912;

South Australia \$5,642

WA \$2,472,541

Tasmania \$356,694

ACT \$404,749

(Source: Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health).



The Cats' Carol

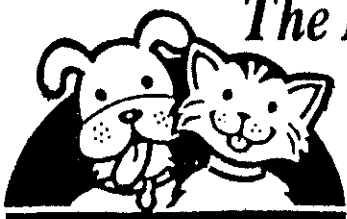
This special Christmas carol for cats was written by Sister Letitia of the Community of St John the Baptist in Windsor, England. It is sung to the tune of "Once in Royal David's City."

*Come you cats of every colour
Kittens too, of every size
See, the lord who made the tiger
Lowly in a manger lies.
Praise him all his little tigers
Let your joyful purring rise.*

*Siamese and stately Persian
Homely black and Tabby gay
Leave your cushions, leave your
roof tops
Call a truce with mice today.
Swift and silent, velvet footed
Hasten now down Bethlehem way.*

*See, he smiles to see you coming
Mary welcomes you within.
Joseph with a friendly finger
Gently strokes your furry chin.
Ox and ass are there beside you
Sheep and camel peering in.*

*All creation sings his praises
Voices, music, sharps and flats
Join the chorus, cats and kittens
Praise him, just by being cats.*



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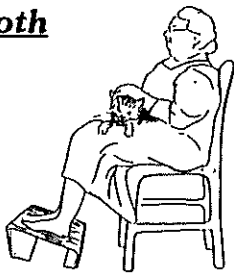
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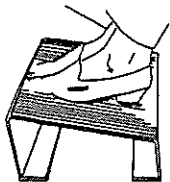
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Welcome to New Members...

Wonderful to have you with us, members who joined in August, September and October:

Ms T Bartolozzi of St Ives, Ms G Barwick of Paddington, Mr D Brown of Granville, Mr and Mrs B Cook of Telopea, Mrs C Culverwell of Saratoga, Mrs C Duane of Merrylands, Ms J Fitzpatrick of Sutherland, Mr T Goddard of Saratoga, Mrs L Fullagar of Lugarno, Ms S Fleming of Five Dock, Mrs K Hart of Centennial Park, Miss L Lepore of West Ryde, Ms A Middlebrook of Petersham, Mr O Prieckaerts of Newtown, Miss L Scott of Camden, Miss L Swindells of Cammeray, Miss J Toune of Glebe, Ms P Townshend of Stanmore, Miss R Varnie of North Strathfield, Mrs H Whitehead of Ettalong, Mrs A Workman of Lane Cove, Ms M Belfanti of Mosman, Ms D Brehm of Randwick, Mrs R Bourke of Wheeler Heights, Mr J Brustolin of Leichardt, Ms L Charlesworth of Glebe, Miss M Davis of Cook - ACT, Mr F Fardelle of Enmore, A Iajza of Redfern, Ms K Lever of Newtown, Miss K Madigan of East Killara, Ms M Morrison of Hornsby, Miss B Roberts of Engadine, Ms I Schwaiger of Campsie, Ms R Vala of Redfern, Mrs A Valis of Strathfield, Mrs D Vernon of Berowra Heights, Ms C Williams of Lilyfield, Master J Skousen of Fadden - ACT, Ms S Myers of Berala, Mrs M Meggitt of Double Bay, Ms J Burgess of Enmore, Mrs A Apps of Auburn, Mrs M Avling of Ermington, Ms C Bright of Normanhurst, Mrs A Bronger of Campsie South, E Celese of Summer Hill, Miss J Coffey of Allambie, Ms B Drake of Arncliffe, Mr J Flakus of Point Piper, Miss M Folks of Marsfield, Mrs G Friederich of Batehaven, Ms Fulloon of Beverley Park, Mrs F Goulder of Ryde, Mrs G Hatton of Rockdale, Ms S Ingram of Wyong, Ms D Inkson of Bondi Junction, Mrs J Lowensohn of Marsfield, Ms J Marriott of Chatswood, Mrs E Marvell of Glebe, Ms P McAleer of Heathcote, Mrs J McLeish of Kingswood, Miss A McVay of Sadlier, Mrs A Niemeier of Roseville, Ms R Oliver of Greenacre, Ms M Perry of Prospect, Mrs A Petrozzino of Petersham, Miss E Pope of Lakemba, Miss D Robey of Randwick, Mrs M Royal of Carlingford, Mrs L Sperling of Dover Heights, Miss M Thompson of Yagoona, Ms L Turner of Woronora, Miss K Vitols of Chatswood, Mrs E Williams of Telopea, Miss S Wong of Camden, Mr G Zikovic of Northmead.

For Children...

A kitty to dress up for Christmas.



What to do:

Tear out this page, then paste it on thin cardboard.

When it's quite dry, cut around all the shapes with sharp scissors, including the flaps. (Little ones will need an adult to do this for them.)

If you wish, you can colour in the clothes and hats before cutting them out.

She's an old fashioned kitty, as you see, but there's an outfit for every occasion . . . for sleeping, for school, for sport and for "very best."

What do you think kitty should be called? If you send me a name in your own handwriting, with your own name and address on a stamped envelope, I'll send you a sheet of our cute cat stamps. (The Editor)

AND A SPECIAL MERRY CHRISTMAS to all our JUNIOR MEMBERS, and the children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and young friends of all our adult members, from all of us here at C.P.S.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTERS

Police to the Rescue

There is quite a story to tell about my tabby cat Thomas.

My son was taking his girlfriend home in the early hours of the morning last August, when they came across a very badly injured cat in the middle of the road. They moved the cat gently to the side of the road, then my son 'phoned me to ask for advice on what to do next. It was a quarter to one in the morning.

I suggested they head straight for the RSPCA at Wollagoona, because they have an emergency service all night. My son immediately proceeded to do so, but on the way was stopped by police and asked why he was going so fast.

When he explained the situation, the police radioed their base to find out the number of the nearest emergency vet. It was at Bondi, much closer than the RSPCA. Then, without further ado, the police gave my son an escort for the badly injured cat to Bondi Veterinary Hospital, where the emergency vet was waiting (due to a call from base.)

The cat's broken jaw was repaired, my son paid the vet bill, and we advertised to try and find an owner. No one replied, so I now have dear little tabby Thomas, bringing my count of cats to four - who share our home with two dogs.

Marta Ayling.

Ermington

Ed's note: Three cheers for the compassionate police who stopped your son's car.

Cat Language

My neighbour's cat, also a desexed male, often visits my cat Perri. One morning I heard soft miaowings coming from the front porch, so I stood just inside the door and listened. Both cats continued "talking" to each other for quite a few minutes, making many different sounds. It was a delightful chat, and when I told my neighbour he was quite envious that he hadn't been there to hear the gossip. I would love to know what it was all about!

Perri is now almost 15, and I do so hope to have his

wonderful company for a few more years. He waits for me each morning to open the back door, then lies down ready for his daily brush and comb. He is still very active, jumping up about 8 feet to my bedroom window, then perching on my shoulder as I carry him out to the kitchen. (I leave his breakfast covered on the kitchen table so it won't be too cold.) He still races up tall trees, too, so I'm very hopeful we'll have much more time together. Incidentally, congratulations on the latest journal, I do enjoy reading "Cat Affairs."

Elma Denton

Carlton

The Story Behind The Subscription

I am sorry my subscription is a little late. Each pay now I have to be more frugal than before (and I always have to be frugal!) until I pay off my vet's bill . . . I had to get a loan.

My adorable black-fluffy cat, Aristophanes, was found to have a spinal cord abnormality late last year - Christmas week in fact. I'd found him paralysed one night when I arrived home from work. He'd been limping on and off and the vet thought it was arthritis. Well, to cut a long story short, I dragged him - panic stricken - to the local vet first thing in the morning, the next day to a specialist in Turrumurra.

I've battled on. He has improved so much, against all expectations. I've nursed him through a few bladder infections. I've sat down and pumped urine from his paralysed bladder. I've stroked him, told him how beautiful he is. My reward is his gradual improvement and a renewed interest in life.

All the vets, except the specialist, recommended euthanasia. I couldn't destroy his personality. I was nearly forced into this mid-year, but again I pulled him out of it, better than ever.

What I have in return is love, and a little cat with a new vitality and appreciation of life. He doesn't walk very well, but feeling has returned to both back legs and to his tail. He no longer has a bladder problem, but I keep a close check on him just the same!

So bills that should be "paid on time" tend to lag a little. But I thought you'd be interested to know of the love I've invested in my little Aristophanes.

Norah Packham

North Sydney

Enter Four Gladiators

This delightful story is from a book called "Cats In the Belfry," by Doreen Tovey. The setting is a quiet English village in the 1950's. The author's Siamese cat, Sugieh (posh spelling for "Sooky," no doubt!) has been mated, with much difficulty, and has now produced the kittens ... the four gladiators. This excerpt tells of Sugieh's approach to motherhood P.S.: Shorty is the name of her consort, Doreen's male Siamese.

+++++

Sugieh had her kittens at the end of March. After a harrowing evening trying to persuade her to have them in a cardboard box lined with newspaper, as recommended by the cat book - while she persistently kept getting out of it and marching upstairs flat-eared with indignation at the very idea - they were born just after midnight. On our bed, otherwise she said she wouldn't have them at all, while Charles and I sat either side of her, cat book in hand, anxiously awaiting complications.

There were none, but it was the last time anything was to go off quietly in our house for a long time to come. The next morning we awoke to the depressing discovery that Sugieh, who never did anything by halves, had decided to become the Perfect Mother.

That, while it lasted, was purgatory. For the first few days she hardly left the kittens for a moment. When she wanted food she stood at the top of the stairs and shouted. When we took it up to her she was either back in her basket feeding them as though they were delicate lilies about to fade before her very eyes, or pacing anxiously up and down like a commercial traveller with a train to catch.

The kittens weren't much help either. The only time we did persuade her to come down with us for a while, she hardly had time to cross her eyes at Shorty in the old familiar way before there was a piercing wail from above, and she was off up the stairs two at a time shouting look what happened when she left them for a moment. Now they were being kidnapped!

Nobody outside a lunatic asylum would have wanted to kidnap that lot, and well she knew it. From the moment they solemnly opened one eye each, days before they should have done, and leered forth at the world like a lot of piratical Fu Manchus, it was obvious they were up to no good. It gave Sugieh's act a wonderful fillip, though. Much better than the Perfect Mother, she was now the perfect mother defending her children from the kidnappers.

Nobody was free from suspicion on this score. When the Rector came to tea she no longer sat on his knee and shed affectionate hairs on his best black trousers. She stayed in the hall giving him sinister looks around the door. When the butcher's boy arrived, instead of running out ahead of everybody else to have a private word about the liver, she glared at him from the window bawling One Step Nearer and she'd Call The Police.

When police did come one morning, in the shape of P.C. McNab bearing a summons for Charles (who not surprisingly, had driven into town one morning in a coma and left the car under a no-parking sign for two hours) she kicked up such a fuss we weren't at all surprised to see McNab bring out his notebook as soon as he got

out into the lane, and make an entry that undoubtedly related to breaches of the peace. And when Aunt Ethel came for the weekend especially to see the kittens, and we brought them downstairs thinking she at any rate would be all right because she was a friend of Sugieh's, the Perfect Mother nearly went mad.

One after another, as fast as she could, she grabbed the kittens by the scruff of the neck and rushed them dramatically back to the spare room. When Aunt Ethel followed apologetically after her with the basket, and an odd kitten she found on the stairs, Sugieh, standing bravely on guard in the doorway, growled at her so realistically, with her tail bushed and the Siamese fighting ridge raised down her back, that Aunt Ethel came downstairs faster than I have ever seen her move in her life and caught the next train home.

Even Sugieh, I think, realised she had overdone it at the time. Either that, or she was tired of playing at perfect mother. The next morning, anyway, she dumped the kittens in bed with us at 7am as nonchalantly as if she'd never heard of kidnappers, went off into the garden, and didn't come back until nine. From then on she made it perfectly clear that they were as much our responsibility as hers.

We have often since wondered whether being dropped on their heads as often as those kittens were in the next few weeks had any connection with the way they grew up. Every morning at least one of them went down with a thump as Sugieh leapt madly on the bed, stuffing kittens into my arms as fast as she could.



It was significant that the one who got dropped on his head most often was Solomon.

Everybody who knows him at some time or other asked us why on earth we called him Solomon. The answer is that it was his mother's idea of a joke. Knowing full well that we planned to keep a boy out of her first litter as a show cat and to call him - rather brightly, we thought - Solomon Seal - she obligingly produced three toms to give us a choice, watched with intense interest for a couple of weeks as, cat book in hand, we went over their points and debated which one to choose - and finally had the biggest laugh of her life when it turned out there was only one we could keep. Solomon, the one we had written off at the start because he had big feet, ears like a bat, and brains to match. All the rest, including the diminutive girl, were blues, and Solomon was the sole Seal Point we had hoped for.

Solomon, in addition to his other faults, had spotted whiskers. Long before the dusky smudges appeared on his nose and paws to warn us that he was ours for life, we had been able to distinguish him from the others by this peculiarity. "Like an orchid," said Aunt Ethel, tenderly retrieving him from the coal bucket on her next visit, after she and Sugieh had made it up, and Sugieh, dumping her squirming, screeching family into Aunt Ethel's lap by way of a peace offering, had dropped him overboard as usual. Orchid or not, it was by his whiskers we recognised him as the one who always fed lying down.

We nearly had a fit the first time we saw it - three kittens feeding away for dear life and standing, to get a better grip, on the fourth, who appeared to be unconscious.

After we had dragged him out three times to give him air, however, only to find within a few minutes he had disappeared once more beneath the scrum, we began to get suspicious. When we lifted the top layers of kittens and had a look our suspicions were confirmed. While the others squealed and clawed and battled for position on top, the one with the big feet and spotted whiskers lay blissfully underneath, on his back, with the whole bottom row to himself.

The result of his uninterrupted meal was, of course, that he soon became the biggest kitten of the lot, and it was because of this, and the fact that he was Sugieh's favourite, that he was always being dropped.

When she felt like showing off - and it did, though we hated to admit it, make a charming picture - it was always Solomon that she carted down the lane, smirking blandly over his fat white head at the applause. As, however, the outing was essentially in the nature of a film star posing with her offspring for the benefit of photographers, she usually dropped him on the path as soon as she got back and left him for us to put away.

As he grew bigger she dropped him more and more. When she carried him upstairs his fat white body bumped solidly against every stair.

Aunt Ethel, trying fruitlessly to wrestle him from Sugieh's grasp on one such occasion, forecast darkly that he would grow up not quite right in the head. She couldn't go wrong there, of course. No Siamese is ever quite right in the head. Nevertheless it was odd that when Solomon did grow up he had even more peculiarities than

an ordinary Siamese - including an overwhelming desire to be dragged around by the scruff of his neck.

It was incredible, seeing that once Sugieh stopped being the perfect mother she acted more as if she needed a course in child care, how those kitten survived. When they wanted washing she washed them so hard they nearly shot out of their skin. When they annoyed her she bit them so hard they screamed for mercy. All except Solomon, who bit her back and then, when she chased him, rolled over and waved his four black socks so disarmingly that he got an extra feed while the others weren't looking.

Sugieh herself had no idea of diet at all. At four weeks old, when according to the book we were supposed to start weaning them on to a patent milk food, she said it wasn't good for them and drank it herself. At six weeks, when we were going around the bend because - acting no doubt on her instructions - they shut their eyes and mouths firmly when they as much as saw a saucer, and we despaired of ever weaning them, we found her upstairs one morning surreptitiously feeding them with large lumps of rabbit from her own breakfast, and watching proudly while they fought like tigers.

She knew quite well that it was wrong. When we lectured her about their delicate stomachs she sat with her ears down, looked at us from under her eyelashes, and said it was Solomon. It may well have been at that. Solomon, who was the one we had worried about most over this feeding business because he was such a big kitten, and how he was managing on nothing but his mother's milk we had dared not think, was at that

moment standing knee deep in the middle of the rabbit bowl slurping it like spaghetti. Solomon, at any rate, was the one chosen - not from malice but because she thought he was so wonderful we couldn't resist him - to bear the blame for everything from then on.

When she stole one of Charles' best yellow socks and showed the delighted kittens how to chew holes up and down the leg till it looked like a colander, it was Solomon - when the reaction set in and she realised what she had done - who was detailed to bring us the remains, while the rest sat in trepidation on the landing, ready to run.

Then we went to the cinema one night and foolishly left them on our bed because it was cold, and they looked so appealing cuddled together on the eiderdown, it was Solomon (the rest, led by Sugieh, bolted under the bed the minute they heard us coming up the stairs) who was left in small, solitary splendour to explain the row of holes across the top of a brand

new blanket. He had a job doing that. There was only one cat whose mouth would have fitted around those wet holes, and she was flat on her stomach under the bed pretending she was part of the carpet.

There was only one cat, too, strong enough to turn back the bedspread and eiderdown and pull the blanket out. Solomon listened, his big ears wide with horror, while we told him who she was, what she was, and what we were going to do with her when we caught her.

Something obviously had to be done in a hurry if he was going to save mum from the tanning of her life - and on the spur of the moment he did it. As I held the blanket up, wailing that it was now absolutely useless, he bounced forward, his eyes bright with inspiration, and wiggled a fat black paw through one of the holes. That, he said, was the game they had been playing before we came in. That was the very reason Mum had chewed the holes, and it was terrific fun. Why didn't we have a go?

We were always suckers for that little black pansy face. We did. Within a few seconds the bed was a hilarious mass of kittens charging gleefully up and down the eiderdown and poking paws at us through the blanket, while Sugieh, reappearing as if by magic once she knew the danger was past, grabbed Solomon by the scruff of the neck and dropped him lightheartedly off the pillow as a reward.

It wasn't the only reward she gave him. I nearly fainted on the spot when after supper that night he marched proudly into the living room with his spotted whiskers sprouting on one side as exuberantly as a gorse bush - and the other side completely bare. He was only eight weeks old then, and we thought they had dropped out as a result of eating too much rabbit. We didn't know Siamese mothers did that to their favourite kittens when they were particularly pleased with them. The vet told us that when we called him to see Solomon at half past eleven that night - rather shortly, we thought, seeing that he was supposed to be very partial to Siamese.



"A simple meow will do."

Compulsory Desexing Lobbying Update

All long-term members of The Cat Protection Society will know about our efforts to lobby for compulsory desexing of cats.

In fact, when we collated the correspondence/research/media stories/brochures/etc. the other day - just since 1978 - our "Lobby File" was well over 100 pages.

It is largely on material provided by us that Parliamentarians Michael Elliot in South Australia and Richard Jones in NSW have based their proposed Cat Acts calling for compulsory desexing.

More recent members of the Society may not be fully aware of all we have done, and what we are continuing to do. They may also like some more facts about desexing, to help them persuade friends, relatives, and colleagues to have their animals desexed.

We have posters and leaflets available for members to put in letterboxes, and you only have to ring the Welfare Office to receive a supply.

Meanwhile, we continue to send petitions to Richard Jones, and would value your cooperation. The wording of the petition has to be correct, so you will find the formal approach set out for you on page 21. Photocopy this, and add extra ruled pages. Then get as many names and addresses as you can, making sure that each petitioner also SIGNS the petition. Post petitions to the Hon. Richard Jones MLC, Legislative Council, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 2000. Don't forget to mention that you are a member of The Cat Protection Society! As you see by the latest letter from Mr Jones, reprinted here, he is optimistic that compulsory desexing is at last on the way. Help him to keep up the pressure by keeping petitions rolling in.

If we could keep Richard supplied with petitions to present every single day, as he suggests, there is no doubt of the effect on other politicians.

May I also suggest that you write to your OWN State and Federal parliamentarians, and ask them to give you an outright yes or no to the question "Are you in favour of compulsory desexing of cats?" Your Society is doing everything possible to achieve the goal all of us have wanted for so long. Please, join your own efforts to ours.

- Editor



Richard Jones

Member of the Legislative Council

Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW, 2000

Phone: (02) 230 2858

1 November 1991

Julie Gorrick,
The Cat Protection Society of NSW,
103 Enmore Road,
Enmore 2042

Dear Julie,

Many thanks for your petitions. You may have noticed that the ConCom Ministers agreed to take steps to introduce legislation for the compulsory desexing of cats a couple of weeks ago.

I do believe there is finally a move to bring about compulsory desexing. As soon as I hear anything else on this, I will keep you posted. In the meantime, these petitions are very valuable. I like to present these petitions every single day in Parliament. These ones you have given me will last a while, but I would be grateful for any more that you can obtain.

My Cat Bill, of course, is sitting on the Notice Paper but unfortunately Fred Nile got in before both my colleagues and myself as he managed to somehow get the eye of the previous President and listed a number of Private Members' Bills and Motions before us. It will be impossible for us to be able to debate the Bill during this particular session.

Nevertheless there is hope now that the ConCom Ministers have agreed to compulsory desexing.

It might be worth your while writing to Tim Moore to ask him what action the Government will be taking.

With best wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

RICHARD JONES

FORM OF BEQUEST

To those caring persons who may be disposed to assist our Society in its work, the following Form of Bequest is suggested:

I give and bequeath to "The Cat Protection Society of New South Wales," for the use and purpose of the said Society, the sum of _____ dollars, free of all death and estate duties, and the receipt of the treasurer of the said Society shall be sufficient discharge to my Executors.

The Society, being a corporate body, can receive bequests of real estate as well as money.



On behalf of
The Cal Protection Society of N.S.W.
and others who care about cats.

Without legislation requiring compulsory registration and desexing of cats, responsible ownership is not encouraged.

Of those who manage to survive in the streets, lanes and factories, many present a problem to the community by invading property, fighting with owned cats, polluting gardens, upsetting garbage containers etc.

Of those brought to the attention of animal Welfare agencies, many thousands must be destroyed each year because homes cannot be found for them. This needless destruction, a waste of time, money and human resources , could have been avoided. It is also distressing for all concerned to kill such a great number of healthy animals.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your Honourable House will enact legislation to provide for the compulsory registration of all cats, and the compulsory desexing of cats other than those specified by registered breeders. We urge you to support any legislation providing for such measures. And so your petitioners in bound duty will ever pray.

[illegible]

All about your cats...

Answers to our questionnaire

The Questionnaire published in our June issue drew the most wonderful response! Over one hundred members replied, and many used extra sheets of paper to amplify their answers . . . there was so much to say about their much-loved felines.

I want to thank Eva Constantinou for helping collate the information. Eva works in the family printing firm which prints "Cat Affairs," and with brother Tony and niece Antoinette gives us help and service beyond the call of duty!

Now, here are the fascinating facts:

How many cats do you have? 36 respondents have one cat each, closely followed by 34 with two cats each. Fourteen have three cats, 15 have four cats, three have six, one has seven, three have ten, and one has 13. ("The more the merrier," was the comment.)

How did you acquire them? Of all the ways cats can come into our lives, members of CPS are - if you'll permit the expression - suckers for strays! A whopping 103 cats - or 44% - were adopted as strays, followed by 19% acquired from breeders, 11% bred by owners, and 11% purchased from CPS. 9% came from the RSPCA, 8% from pet shops and 3% from a vet.

Names, Ages, Colour, Desexed or Not: Congratulations dear members of CPS, every one of you who replied has had their cats desexed if old enough.

As for names, two head the popularity list - Tiddles and Puss! They're followed some way back by Blackie, Dixie, Tom, Lucy, Fluffy, Muffy and Ming. Overall, "human" names seem to be favoured, including Sally, Winston, Candy, Jasmine, Tabitha, Sam, Sarah, Darryl, Diana, Edwina, Polly, Phoebe and Claude. Among the more unusual names are Tussnelda, Crunchie, Springtime, Miss Tiggywinkle, Mrs Samantha Twitchett, Scruffy Wonkle, Soda and Angel. (Yes, Angel is snowy white.)

Ages range across the board, of course, from kittens to grand old Wobbles, a veteran of 19 and a half. There are many cats of 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, often described as still kittens at heart!

Of those owners who mentioned the sex of their cats, 35% noted females and 17% males. That leaves almost 50% unaccounted for, so the balance in favour of females needn't be taken too seriously.

Now, the favourite colour - and you guessed it, tabbies romp home. In fact, 19% of all the cats in the survey are tabbies, followed by tortoiseshell with 14% (we think this probably includes calicos), grey or grey and white cats with 13%, black and whites with 12%, all black 10%, ginger and ginger/white with 8%.

Among pure breds, Siamese head the list at 6%, followed by Burmese and Persians at 5% each. The remaining 13% is shared by other pure breds and moggies of other colours (such as white and cream, beige, caramel.)

Who looks after the cats in your household?

58 respondents have sole responsibility for their cats, 50 share the duties. Some of the comments in this section include: "It's basically me. Michelle loves my husband, but he doesn't like cats!" "Mum and I share equally." "My neighbour is a great help." "They're all mine, which is wonderful!" "My husband shares everything except changing the litter!"

How your cats are fed:

This was a really interesting section. Many owners gave detailed descriptions of their cats' diet, including health tips like adding crushed garlic and boiled brown rice to food, growing grass in containers for indoor cats, stirring a raw egg into the bowl once a week and serving chopped vegetables now and then.

The most popular diet was a mixed one comprising a selection of canned fish and meat, plus raw meat and/or fish, occasional dried food. Some owners served chopped liver or kidney once a week, and others shared their own main meal with the cats if it was appropriate. "Loves shepherd's pie," said one owner.

Among canned foods, Whiskas was the most popular brand, followed closely by Snappy Tom, further down the line Dine and generic brands (No Frills etc.), then Kit-e-Kat, Sheba and Kitty's Dinner. Chub, the semi-moist "sausage," also rated a mention, and the most popular dried foods were Whiskettes and Go-Cat.

54% of all cats in the survey drank both milk and water, 42% drank just water, and 14% drank only milk. (At this point, we'd like to emphasise that "milk" is not a good idea, fresh water should always be available.)

The vast majority of cats were fed twice a day, with a few queuing up for three meals, and two getting their bowls replenished FOUR times a day! Very few owners gave their cats in-between meal snacks, and there were few problems with cats going off their food.

When a problem DID occur, it was usually related to a lack of variety. Offer the same food three days running, and "She turns up her nose," was a comment repeated quite often. However, some cats absolutely refused to eat certain brands of canned food or some varieties. Happily, only a few owners reported that veterinary attention was necessary for a feeding problem. The consensus was that cats make it very clear, all by themselves, what they expect in their bowl!

Are your cats outdoor, indoor, or both?

A little over half of the cats in the survey spend time both in and out of the house. Only a few are completely outdoor cats, but a healthy percentage - 47 cats in all - live their lives completely indoors. Many owners added that when outdoors, their cats are supervised.

To the question, "Where do your cats sleep?", a whopping 42% sleep - of course - on their owner's bed! Another 40% sleep "anywhere in the house," which often includes the bed, and the remainder occupy a spare bedroom, the laundry or a chair in the living room. (Incidentally, even when there are lots of cats in the household, most owners report they ALL sleep on the bed.)

In multi-cat households, 68% of all cats get along with each other, 21% tend to ignore other cats in the house, and the rest are sometimes sociable, sometimes aloof.

When it comes to toilet habits, there's an almost equal division between cats who use both a litter tray and the garden, cats who use a litter tray only, and cats who always use the garden. Whichever is the case, owners don't seem to have problems with toilet training.

As for toys of their own, 55% of our members' cats are indulged with their special playthings, 45% don't have toys as such (but many play with paper bags, balls of wool etc.)

Do your cats come when you call them?

Clever cats ! Over 80% come every time owners call them (or whistle them.) Another 10% come "some times," 4% don't come at all, and the rest come "most times." In multi-cat households, they respond to their own names.

Do you have a favourite cat?

This question evoked emotional responses. 69 owners of more than one cat said they DIDN'T have a favourite, but 36 admitted that a certain cat had a special place in their hearts. The reasons for favoritism were varied . . . here are some of them: "Cricket, because she was the runt of the litter," "Muffy - a Caesarian birth, and not expected to live," "Billie, nursed back to health after a car accident," "Scruffy, she is more dependent on me," "Meggsie, but I don't know why," "Mrs Brown - when cats get old they seem to love you more," "Smudge, because of a very sweet nature." Others said they loved their cats equally, with comments like, "Different personalities, but equally delightful," "They're both precious," "I love them all for different reasons," "Don't believe in favourites." When it came to having a telepathic experience with a cat, 69 owners said this hadn't happened to them, but 36 said yes, they felt sure their cats could read minds.

This led to the next question,

"Can your cats make their needs understood?"

And all except one owner said "yes." (Interesting to speculate why this is the odd one out, isn't it?) Answering, "Do Your Cats Ever do Inexplicable Things?" 64 owners said "Yes," and 53 said "No." Many owners gave the example of their cats knowing when they were sick or miserable, and offering extra affection at these times. They also sensed well beforehand if they were going to the vet, or the owner was packing for a holiday. Many scooted off and were hard to find!

Do your cats welcome visitors?

61% of all cats look forward to visitors, and make them feel welcome . The rest run away and hide, cast baleful glances at the interlopers, or do something else to indicate their disdain. Some cats don't respond too well to children, others love them. Some cats "come round" when they get used to people.

Talking about health, 76% of the cats in the survey receive yearly vaccinations. The most common illnesses are cat flu and abscesses, followed by a litany of complaints including kidney problems, tumours, cystitis, immune deficiency virus, ringworm, allergy to fleas, lung worm, injuries received in accidents and fights with dogs, fur ball, ear mites, hernias, hormone deficiency, cardiomyopathy, bad nerves, gastroenteritis, tick poisoning, tooth problems and feline acne.

Despite this roll call of complaints, however, all the cats in our survey had recovered, and owners were on the whole very pleased with the veterinary treatment received.

There were a few exceptions. One owner reported that "the vet shaved her tummy for an op, when she was in to have her teeth cleaned." Another thought her cat was being treated as an "experimental object."

Some owners decided to change vets, and reported an improvement in attitude and service. There was one comment that vets are inclined to "talk down" to women. Another said a really good vet is always there when needed, including after hours.

Home Remedies? Only a small proportion of owners use home remedies on their cats, though there is a growing interest in homeopathy. A Bach's flower remedy, Rescue Remedy, is used by a couple of owners if they feel their cats are stressed. Garlic was mentioned quite a few times, either in crushed, fresh form or as capsules. "Wonderful for general health," was one comment.

Several respondents warned against "amateur treatment," pointing out that human remedies are sometimes dangerous for cats. And others agreed that "lots of love is the best home remedy."

Worms and Fleas: 98% of all people who answered the survey worm their cats regularly, and all take measures to control fleas.

A daily or twice-daily comb with a special flea comb is the preferred method, and most owners find this sufficient. Several use a flea bomb in the house at the beginning of summer, and find this keeps fleas at bay during the entire season. About 20% use flea collars, a smaller percentage use flea powder now and again. And about 10% of cats have a regular bath in warm weather, which owners say they enjoy! Proban was also mentioned as a deterrent, together with a little eucalyptus dabbed on the coat, pennyroyal, regular vacuuming of floors, brewers' yeast dusted on the fur, and "an eagle eye for the little monsters."

General Health Tips: Most owners emphasized the need to watch for a change in the cat's habits. For example: "Newman urinated in the bath one day - she would never do this normally. There was blood in the urine, so we took her to the vet at once. If she hadn't been so clever, we mightn't have spotted the problem until much later."

A good diet and regular grooming was also mentioned, and a warning against too much dried food. One member advised brushing the cat's teeth regularly to guard against tartar build-up, another said to be aware of any change in temperament - "If your cat becomes very quiet, there is possibly a health problem."

Grooming and Bathing: The majority of cats have a special grooming session once a week, in addition to combing with a flea comb. About 10% have a regular bath in summer, to control fleas - as noted previously. One owner gives her cats a "dry bath," using bran heated to warm on a tray in the oven. The bran is rubbed into the fur, then brushed out.

Are they allowed on the furniture? One hundred members said "yes," and only six said "no." Regarding a scratching post, 39 have a special post, the rest use what takes their fancy. This can be trees, the sofa, the back fence, cane baskets, an old coir mat, various items of furniture. And even those that DO have a special scratching post rarely use it, it seems. "She ignores it . . . walks straight past and starts scratching the lounge."

Do you clean their teeth? Only four owners said they do. However, about 20% have their cats' teeth cleaned by the vet, and there is a general feeling that it is important to keep an eye on teeth, especially tartar build-up.

Among special grooming tips mentioned were these: "After brushing, rub down with a silk scarf for extra gloss." "If your cat is an indoor cat, make sure the nails are clipped regularly." "For a good shine on the coat, rub hand cream into your hands, wait a few minutes, then stroke the coat."

Holidays: This was a really interesting question, with quite a few members saying they don't take holidays because of the cats.

However, the majority choice is to ask a friend to live in, or a neighbour to take the responsibility. This is

closely followed by asking family members to look after the cats, or leaving them at a cattery. 10% never go away, a few husbands and wives take separate holidays so the cats can be cared for at home, and a couple of owners take the cats on holidays with them. Those who asked a neighbour to look after them generally mentioned this was only for a short period. For longer periods, they were boarded.

Many members mentioned catteries and boarding establishments they were happy with, so here is the list: Sharon Hume, French's Forest . . . Jenny at "The Happy Dog Shampoo Parlour," . . . Jean Atkinson, Granville . . . Petersham Cattery . . . Palane Kennels at Hazelbrook . . . Riverview Vet Clinic, Lane Cove . . . Mr Baker at Bondi/Rose Bay . . . Joel Sleeman at Eastwood . . . West Nerang Cat Motel on the Gold Coast . . . Pluto's Boarding Kennel and Cattery . . . Transpet at Bringelly . . . Petlands at Dural . . . St George Animal hospital . . . The Pet Care People (who come to your home) . . . Puss n'Boots Cattery at Dural . . . Mr Druce at the Auburn Vet Clinic . . . Scott's Pet Care Service . . . Barnstone cattery at Duffy's Forest . . . MeadowMist at Marsden Park . . . The Contented Cat Inn . . . Glengarra Cattery in Garner, SA . . . The Animal Welfare League . . . and Parkland, at Blacktown.

When it comes to travelling with a cat in the car, two thirds of respondents don't do it unless absolutely essential - eg, to go to the vet. The ones who do make the point that the cat must be well secured. Several advise covering the basket with a towel or cloth, which helps the cat to relax. Others advise getting the cat used to the car while it's stationary, then going just a few short trips to acclimatise the cat. On a long trip, it's important to take a litter tray, fresh water and bowl.

Incidentally, are cats pleased to see their owners when they return from holidays? 78% of owners said yes, there was instant pleasure.

The rest said it took a little while for the cat to come round (and a few cats showed active displeasure at having been left in a cattery - they gave their owners a nip on the ankle when reunited!)

Favourite Cat Books: Thank you, lots of members said that "Cat Affairs" is their favourite. Many said "anything and everything to do with cats." Here is a selection of others mentioned, for your interest: Cat Poems by T.S.Elliott, In Praise of Cats, an anthology collated by Dorothy Fraser and Annette Newman, Cats on Velvet by Frank Legg, Thomasina by Paul Gallico, The Complete Book of Cats by Judith Stech, The Cat That Came for Christmas by Cleveland Amory, Do Cats Need Shrinks? several books by Frank Manolin, including "C is for Cats" and "A Calculating Cat," The New Cat Hand Book, The Illustrated Cat, Charles, the Story of a Friendship by Michael Joseph, Every Cat, A Clowder of Cats by Bryan Holmes.

Do you Celebrate your Cats' Birthdays? 57 "no" answers, 45 "yes" answers, and some "occasionally."

How do You Cope with Friends Who Don't Like Cats?

There were lots of pithy answers to this question! Here, to give just a few: "With difficulty!" "I ignore them" "I convert them!" "I pity them and slyly try to educate them" "I tell Tasman to ignore them" "They put up or shut up!" "They're not welcome in my house" "Claudius and I come as a pair" "We don't have friends who don't like cats" "I try to keep them apart" "My cats must know - they ignore them" Majority consensus? The cats come first!

How do you rank words to describe the special appeal of cats: "Affectionate" is the winning word, closely followed by "Beautiful," then "Loving," "Companionable" "Intelligent" "Independent" "Loyal" "Graceful" and "Mysterious."

Many people ranked them all equally, and others added their own words to describe their special feelings about cats.

Funny and cheeky came up a few times, devilish and playful were mentioned, also unique, dependable, magical, cuddly, warm and accepting, mischievous, entertaining, spiritual, incomprehensible, adorable, heart warming, fulfilling, calming, responsive, indispensable, restful, welcoming, and simply "best friends."

But among the glowing terms there were a few not so complimentary. For example: Jealous, and greedy . . . selfish . . . possessive . . . cunning . . . bold.

And one respondent had a unique point of view: "They are the best watch dogs you could have! They pick up every sound and react to things well before I'm aware of them."

The question about changing the rules in units which don't allow cats naturally didn't apply to everyone. But there certainly is a firm interest in this subject and one which we'll try to explore fully in a future issue of "Cat Affairs."

Have you made provisions for your cat's welfare in case of your death?

Answers were almost exactly divided on this question between "Yes" and "No." Among the "yes" answers, the most popular arrangement is for a family member to take the cats. Nineteen members have already organised this. Another eleven have left instructions for their cats to be euthanased, and eleven have made provisions in their wills for the care of the cats. Our own Society, the Animal Welfare League and the RSPCA have been mentioned.

The majority of members do not carry anything in their wallets giving emergency instructions, but many said they intend to do so.

Problems with stray cats: Luckily, most respondents aren't aware of stray cats in their neighbourhood. Some said that dogs are the problem! A few mentioned Tom cats who come marauding for food and looking for fights.

General comments about cats: As you would expect, almost every questionnaire offered something special in this section. Here is a sample: How people can live without them, I'll never know! There's so much to say - I can't sum it up - life is not complete without them. To put it simply, I just love cats. I do so love their private, independent natures. There must be legislation for compulsory desexing! I have had Alex since she was 4 days old. She is the best thing that has ever happened to me. There must be tougher penalties for animal cruelty, compulsory desexing, and a more positive approach to cats from the media.

Sam is part of the family. Caring for him is such a rewarding experience. My cat is my best friend. Claudius has become my most trusted and loyal companion. I would part with my Ferrari car before I would part with Claudius. As I write my answers, Tiger Lily is curled up beside me on the floor.

A neighbour has about 30 cats, but all healthy and all desexed. As he is a pensioner, he must deprive himself to feed them.

I am so concerned that two beautiful cats of mine, tabbies with magnificent coats, went missing without trace last year. I suspect there are cat killers in the community.

Cats are like children, and should only be in the care of those who will treat them well. Just as children are not animated dolls, cats are not animated toys.

Cats are intelligent, loving friends, always there to cheer you up. We have no children, and our cats fill what could have been a vacancy in our lives. My cats fill me with great contentment. They give me company and responsibility, as being physically incapacitated I don't get out much. The problem our community faces with cats is a "people problem." Living alone, they are my family.

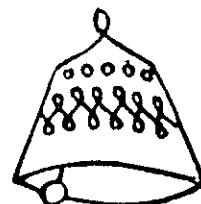
It is most important that cats are kept in at night. You must ALWAYS know where they are. All cats must be registered and desexed.

If I could, I would fill my house with cats! My world revolves around them.

So there you are. Thank you all for your wonderful response. It has been a joy to many of us in the Society to read through the questionnaires, and has also given us much food for thought.

And isn't it great to share our feelings?

Julie Gorrick
Editor





LOCAL RESIDENTS

These three beautiful cats live in Marrickville with their companion Dr Barbara Levien, not far from our Welfare Office and Op Shop - where Barbara is a valued volunteer.

Dozing in the sun is Chocolate Burmese Cleopatra, next to Seal Point Siamese Papagena. On the bentwood chair is Brown Burmese Sherpa, also known as "The Chemistry Cat," because she was a present from the Chemistry Department of the University of New England when Barbara retired.

P.S: Just a thought . . . have you considered giving a day or two a month to the Op Shop? You'll enjoy being with fellow cat lovers, and the shop itself is pleasant. Give the office a ring on 519 7201 for more details.



The animal memorial cemetery and crematorium

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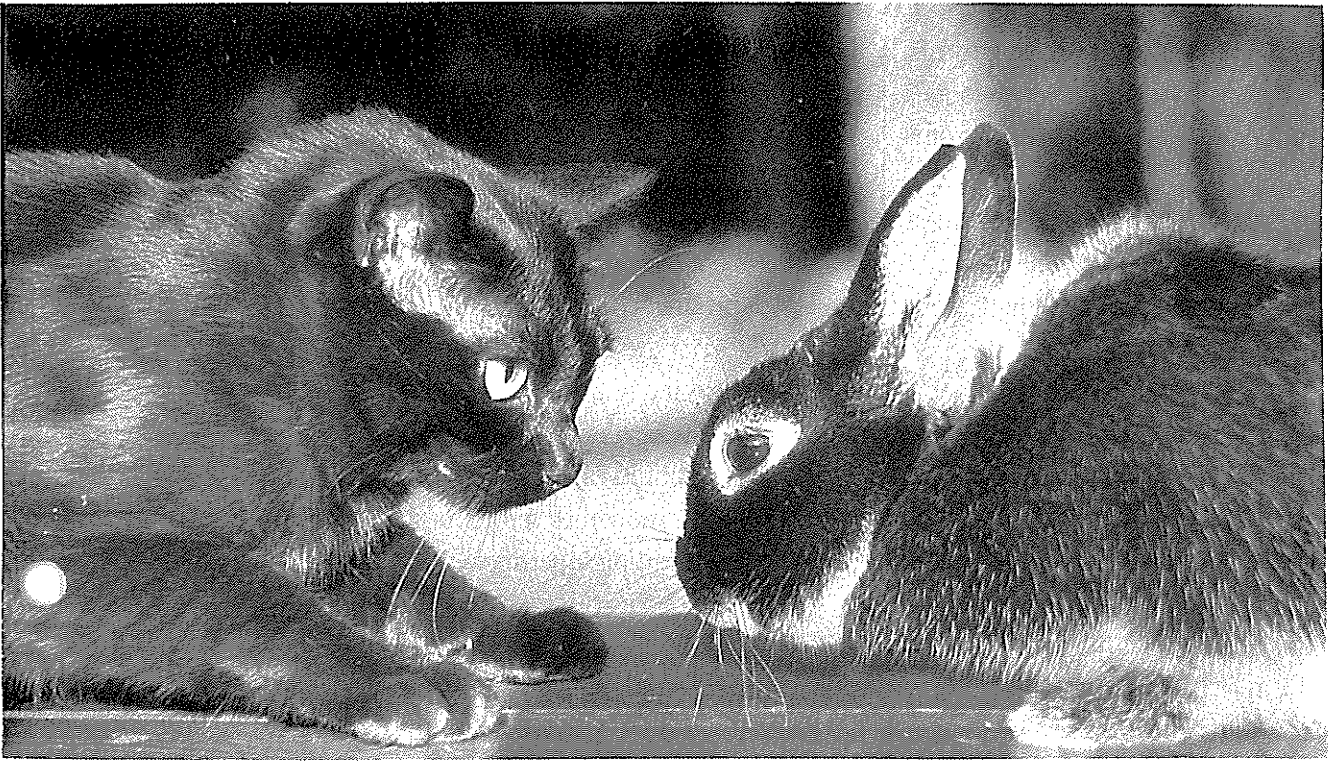
**Personal, Individual
and Understanding
Attention**



**Cremations,
Burials,
Memorials.**

Ring for our free colour brochure
St. Mary's Road, Berkshire Park, 2765
(045) 72-5333

What are they saying to each other?



Write a fun caption and you could win a prize!

There are TWO first prizes:

Each winner will receive a copy of the novel **WEDLOCK**, by CPS member Margaret McClusky, PLUS a pretty framed cat print.

Wedlock is a "sexy, Sydney comedy of errors," published by McPhee/Gribble Penguin, and contains one raunchy language. But it is great fun, and Margaret has offered to write an inscription in each winner's book, making them collectors' pieces.

And TEN extra prizes

The next 10 winners will each receive six sheets of cat stamps to personalise envelopes and stationery.

So get yourself in creative mode, write your caption on a piece of paper, and post it to

CAPTION CONTEST

Cat Protection Society of NSW
103 Enmore Road, Enmore 2042

Winners will be personally notified and their names announced in the next issue of "Cat Affairs."



A little time to spare? How about becoming a volunteer?

In the last issue of "Cat Affairs," we asked for contributions for the Op Shop, and the response has been great. Thank you, and please keep the goods coming in if you can, the tiniest contribution is welcome.

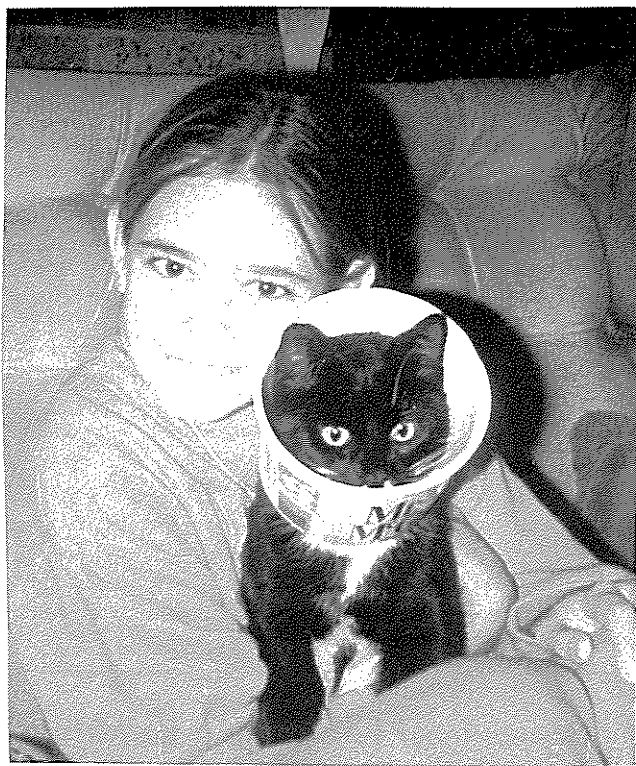
Now, here's another request: Would you like to WORK in the shop one or two days a month?

You might be retired, a mum with school aged children, work part time, a student, or temporarily out of work . . . any which way, we think you'll find it quite good fun being an "Op Shop Lady" (or gentleman, for that matter.)

Hours are between 9 and 3.30 pm Monday to Friday, or 9 to 12 on Saturdays. You always work with another volunteer - who loves cats! - so it's a friendly atmosphere.

A very pleasant idea is to organise a day with a friend, so the two of you can work together.

Anyway, if you'd like more details, just give the office a ring on 519 7201. We rather desperately need volunteers at the moment, so remember . . . even one day a month, and you'll be received with open arms.

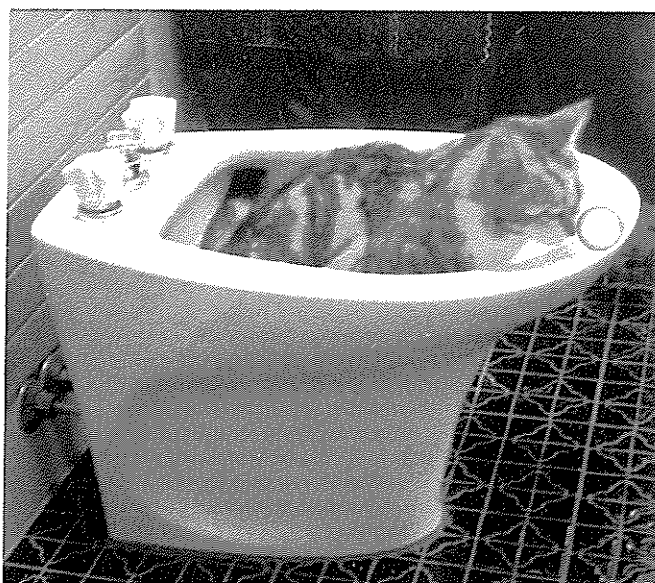
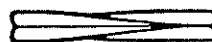


From Moggy To Manx!

This is Scrapa, very special friend of Jane McLachlan of Kogarah. Scrapa was a stray who adopted Jane and her mum, then managed to get himself run over and had to have his tail amputated - result, instant Manx! To stop him biting or licking the tail area, veterinarian Dr Skopek of Beverley Hills devised this clever collar from an empty margarine container. Scrapa wore it for four weeks without complaining, and is now sprightlier and scrappier than ever.



Christmas greetings to all at the Society from Cheeky, who shares his home with Frances Kurschildgen of Baulkham Hills. This is Cheeky with last year's Christmas presents - and he expects just as many this year.



"Aaaaah . . . that feels better." Penny Ferguson's cat Eta finds it convenient to use the bidet on a rainy day, rather than get all wet venturing outdoors.

My Girl Jinxy



By Christine Parker

Here's how my cat came to be part of the family:

A friend from work brought a tiny kitten to the office one morning. She had found it on the median strip of a very busy road, facing certain death. She couldn't leave it there, but she didn't really like cats!

The kitten sat on my desk for the rest of the day, hardly moving. She managed to sip a little milk, but mostly stayed curled up in the bottom level of my filing tray.

She was absolutely filthy. Her coat was a solid mass of grey dirt, which sprinkled onto my desk whenever she moved.

Of course I took her home that night, and in the morning, just as I was leaving for work, she began taking fits. After they stopped she just lay there on the floor without moving, and I was sure she would die.

Off I went to the vet, who told me she was covered in fleas and droppings - hence the grey coat. She had been so badly bitten by fleas that some of her blood had drained, hence the fits. Added to this she was only a few weeks old, really too young to leave her mother. Altogether, her chances of survival seemed slim.

However, the vet treated her and cleaned her up, and under that grey coat of flea droppings was a pretty little black and white girl!

After the terrible trauma of our first day together, she has gone from strength to strength. Because of what I thought was her delicate constitution, I have always handled her with kid gloves - but she has remained in perfect health (touch wood!)

Pampered and spoilt rotten she may be, but for five years she has brought me great joy, and I think she is a shining example of feline perfection.

Away in a Manger

*The little black cat knew her time had come.
But she was a stray and had no home.
The leaf-lined hollow where she lay was chill,
The wind-blown bracken thin, and offering little shelter,
Boding ill for her coming litter.
She sensed that near was warmth and shelter
from the winter's bitter blast
And watched the ladies with their secateurs
Trim and cut the holly in the church's porch
And twine the ivy, and arrange the pure
whiteness of the flowers
Until, at last they left.
The open door invited, and she crept within
With footfall soft and deft.
She sniffed the strange sweet harshness of
evergreen,
The incense of chrysanthemum, a whiff of fresh
warm straw
And what was more,
Quite near her quivering whiskers.
She leaped into the welcoming safety of the
manger
And pushed the Christ-child just a little further
on,
Making room for her, the Stranger.
Christ's Mass dawned,
And choir and congregation sang, and
Heaven with jubilation rang.
And in the crib's strawed comfort curled the little
stray,
Amber eyes a-blink with love and ecstasy
On this, HER infant son's birth day.
The children crowded round as children will;
But in that holy place she had no fear,
And joined her rapturous purring song with
theirs,
Just loud enough for God to hear.*

This Christmas poem was sent to us by Diana Groves, who found it several years ago in the magazine "This England."



MEET ISIS AND DAWN ➡

Dawn Atkinson wrote the winning story in our recent contest. Her prize was a portrait of her cat Isis. Here they are together. Commenting on the portrait, Dawn wrote, "The artist Lesley Hood has caught the soul or inner essence of Isis." He is certainly a very fine specimen of a tabby.



"I don't care if you believe it or not. I grew these pumpkins, and I'm entering them in the Show next year."

- Molly de Villier



**"Oh, How we love
Sunday mornings."**

EVERYTHING IN THE GARDEN'S LOVELY!

This is Alice Kemp, with tabby Paddington. Alice is the niece of Phyl Schott, a long-time member.

A

Answers to the Quiz

1. True. The cat has 240 bones, humans only 206. Of course, the cat's tail counts for quite a few extras!
2. False. Cats have very good vision in dim light but cannot see in complete darkness.
3. False. It can register frequencies two octaves HIGHER, but is less sensitive to lower frequencies.
4. False. Even a cat can't go this high in one bound. However, it CAN clear four or five times its own height.
5. True. In fact, it is said to convey these messages for several kilometres. So even if there aren't any Toms close by, they'll soon come courting.
6. False. Cats do not need milk once they are weaned, and in some cats it causes diarrhoea. Fresh water should always be available, of course.
7. False. Unlike the "big cats," cats go out on the chase alone.
8. True. Cats are short distance specialists, and run very quickly in short, rapid bursts.
9. False. Once it was thought they could only see black, grey and white, but cats have since been trained to discriminate between colours. Whether or not they attach significance to colour is not known.
10. False. The word refers to the strange, lip curling, nose wrinkling expression which is thought to be triggered by odours, especially sexual ones.
11. False. The Balinese appeared as a spontaneous mutation in the United States in the 1950's. Basically, the Balinese cat is a long haired Siamese with its points in the same colours.
12. False. A tortoiseshell has a black or brown coat with patches of amber, lighter brown, cream or rust, just like a tortoiseshell. A white cat with colour patches is a calico.
13. True. In some pure bred litters there can be a "Rumpy" Manx without a tail, a "Stumpy" Manx with a rudimentary tail, and even a kitten with a tail of ordinary length. Of course, the ideal is the "Rumpy."
14. False. They start to open between five and 10 days.
15. False. When mum picks up a kitten this way, the kitten goes completely limp and can be carried without harm. A human should pick up a kitten (or cat) by placing a hand under its hindquarters and scooping it up, using the other hand to steady it.

16. False. If your cat is healthy and eating a varied diet, it doesn't need supplements. Good quality canned cat food, including fish and meat varieties, is well balanced and nutritious.

17. False. The protein and fat content of dog food isn't high enough for cats.

18. False. Most cats sleep for 16 hours out of the 24, including numerous little cat naps as well as extended hours of sleep.

19. False. Because the tabby gene is dominant, all the kittens in this first generation will be tabbies.

20. False. In fact the Sphynx is a hairless cat, with just a light covering of soft down on face, ears, paws and the end of the tail.

21. False. It is the cat which is only a smile in "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll.

22. False. In fact, aspirin can cause vomiting and liver damage. Giving the cat just one tablet is the equivalent of giving an average-size human adult 15 tablets in the one dose.

23. False. Use plain warm water, dripping it into the eye from a piece of cottonwool. However, before doing this, part the eyelid gently and have a look. If there is a foreign body penetrating the eye DON'T attempt to remove it. Take the cat at once to the vet, securing its body and legs inside a container with the head poking out so it can't scratch at the eye. Or cut the base from an empty, round margarine container and slip it over the cat's head to prevent pawing. If there is no foreign body, flushing with warm water may remove the irritation. If the cat is still disturbed, again, take it to the vet.

24. True. In the first place they give you companionship and love, which is good for your sense of well being and enjoyment of life. They also offer comfort when you're stressed - a good cuddle, and things don't seem so bad after all. So cats can help your mental health. On a physical level, stroking a cat has been found to lower blood pressure, thus helping to prevent heart disease and strokes. And there's no doubt that a cat's beauty and grace is a source of aesthetic pleasure day in, day out. What a perfect package!



MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

To The Secretary, Cat Protection Society of NSW,
103 Enmore Road, ENMORE, 2042.

Membership

I/We apply for membership or renewal of membership for the year commencing June, 1990. (Note: Those joining between January and June remain financial until June, 1991.)

Subscription:

Life membership - \$250.00 Annual membership - \$10.00

Pensioner Membership - \$5.00 Pension Number

Junior membership (16 and under) - \$5.00

Enclosed is cheque/money order for \$.....

My name and address are given below.

Donation

I/We would like to make a donation towards the humane work of the Society.

Enclosed is cheque/money order for \$.....

Please cross all cheques and make payable to
THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NSW

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss Initials

SURNAME, Block letters please.

Address:

Postcode: Telephone:



Christmas Party Reminder:

*The date is December 14th, time 2.30p.m.
Place is our Welfare Office, 103 Enmore Rd,
Enmore. Please come and bring your cat
pictures. Refreshments will be served! New
and old members very welcome.*

Special Christmas Raffle!

A kind member has donated a VCR to help raise funds for the Society.

The tickets are \$1.00 each, or three tickets for \$2.00.

The raffle will be drawn on Christmas Eve, so there's just time to order your tickets and get them posted.

Please send a cheque or money order for the number of tickets required, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

VCR RAFFLE

Cat Protection Society of NSW
103 Enmore Rd., Enmore, 2042

Thank you.

The Membership Secretary,
The Cat Protection Society of N.S.W.
103 Enmore Road, ENMORE, 2042.

Change of Address Form

(Please cut out and return to address shown)

If you have changed your address since applying for new membership or renewal, would you be kind enough to fill in this form

Surname Initials
(BLOCK LETTERS, PLEASE)

New Address

..... Postcode

Previous Address:

Thank-you for your co-operation