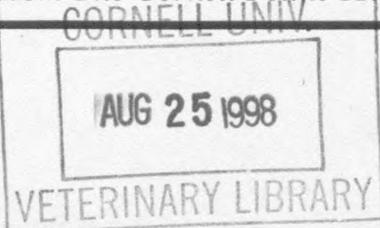
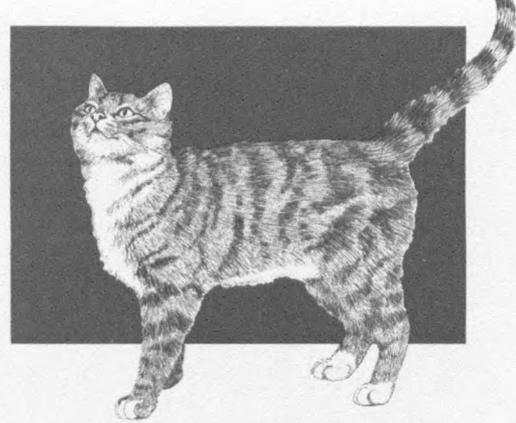


# Perspectives On Cats

A Newsletter for Cat Fanciers  
From The Cornell Feline Health Center

Winter 1990



## Holiday Safety Checklist

This is the season when holiday decorations abound, providing dangerous temptations to the inquisitive cat. Following is a checklist to ensure your cat's safety during the holidays.

### Candles and Fireplaces

- \* Use glass chimneys over lit candles to protect your cat from singeing its fur and minor skin burns.
- \* Place candles in locations which cannot be reached by your cat as an added safety precaution.
- \* Always use a fireplace screen whenever you use your fireplace. The screen will prevent sparks from landing on your floor as well as a nearby person or pet.

### Decorations

- \* Hang soft unbreakable ornaments on the bottom tree branches. Breakable glass ornaments can be hung on higher tree branches, out of the reach of your cat's paws.
- \* Use strands of cranberries, plastic or wooden beads to replace tinsel. (Tinsel is commonly ingested by curious cats and can cause intestinal impaction which may require surgery.)
- \* Prevent your cat from gnawing or pulling on electric light cords by coating exposed wires with a solution of hot pepper sauce.

### Christmas Trees and Holiday Plants

- \* Prevent your tree from toppling over by securing it with wire or heavy fishing line to a nearby curtain rod or ceiling hook. Another alternative is to attach an oversized piece of plywood to the tree stand for additional stability.

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### Important Notice

The Feline Health Center will be closed for the holidays from December 25 through January 1.

**Briefly ...**

**New Drug Shows Promise for Treating  
Skin Diseases**

Many cats suffer with allergic pruritic skin diseases. The condition may be more prevalent during some seasons, and skin lesions may occur. Long-term treatment is often required to control the pruritis. Unfortunately, some pruritic skin diseases that respond to anti-inflammatory drugs worsen when the drug is withdrawn.

Cornell University's veterinary dermatologists, Drs. Danny W. Scott and William H. Miller, completed a study using the antihistamine, chlorpheniramine maleate. Of 26 cats with pruritic skin disease that were treated with the drug, 19 were cured of the pruritis. The condition was reduced by 50% in another cat, and only six showed no improvement. No adverse effects were observed in the cats.

Although it shows great promise, chlorpheniramine maleate currently is not licensed for use in cats. Further studies on its safety and mode of action are required.

(Resource: *Animal Health Newsletter*, December 1990)

**Update on Feline Infectious Anemia**

Feline infectious anemia (haemobartonellosis) is caused by the rickettsial organism, *Haemobartonella felis*. The organism parasitizes red blood cells. According to Dr. Grindem and his research associates at North Carolina State University, feline infectious anemia may be more common than previously thought. Their research showed that healthy cats, as well as ill cats, could harbor *H. felis*.

Factors that may increase the risk of cats developing the disease include the presence of an immunosuppressive disease (i.e. feline leukemia or feline immunodeficiency virus), lack of vaccinations,

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history of cat-bite abscesses, age (over three years old), and access to the outdoors. The reason for feline leukemia being more common in cats with feline infectious anemia is unknown, however it is speculated that the anemia caused by *H. felis* makes the cat more susceptible to FeLV or that FeLV triggers a latent *H. felis* infection.

Dr. Grindem indicates that the exact prevalence and clinical impact of haemobartonellosis cannot be determined until a practical diagnostic test is available which can detect carrier cats or cats with low-level infection.

(Resource: *Animal Health Newsletter*, October 1990)

**Perspectives  
On Cats**

*A Newsletter for Cat Fanciers  
From The Cornell Feline Health Center*

The ultimate purpose of the Cornell Feline Health Center is to improve the health of cats everywhere, by developing methods to prevent or cure feline diseases, and by providing continuing education to veterinarians and cat owners. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Director: **Frederic W. Scott, D.V.M., Ph.D**  
Assistant Director: **John E. Saidla, D.V.M.**  
Editor: **June E. Tuttle**  
Secretaries: **Sheryl A. Thomas, Gwen Frost,**

This publication is made possible, in part, by a grant from **9-Lives Cat Foods**. We gratefully acknowledge this interest and support in the furthering of feline health. This acknowledgement of our gratitude is not an endorsement of any particular company or product.

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## The Year in Review

The following is a brief review of the year's activities of the Cornell Feline Health Center. The activities reflect the center's three primary goals—

- ✓ prevent and cure diseases of cats
- ✓ educate veterinarians and cat owners on cat health care
- ✓ aid veterinarians in the treatment of new or undefined cat diseases

### For Better Feline Health

The following projects are funded by contributions and gifts to the Feline Health Center unless otherwise noted. The yearly cost of those projects funded by the Center totals \$90,000.

#### Recombinant feline vaccines

Recombinant poxviruses are being investigated as potential carrier virus vaccines. Considerable research in numerous laboratories has been conducted with vaccinia virus. However, research in our laboratory has shown that another poxvirus commonly found in nature is more effective than vaccinia virus as a potential carrier virus for feline vaccines. The project was supported for three years by the Morris Animal Foundation, but currently it is supported by Feline Health Center funds.

#### Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) vaccine

In addition to the studies with recombinant vaccines, studies have been underway for several years to develop an effective FIP vaccine. We have developed an experimental vaccine, and current studies are aimed at improving its efficacy and safety.

#### Characterization of FIP virus proteins

Studies are underway to characterize the individual proteins of FIP virus and to develop monoclonal

antibodies against these proteins. A comparison of the various strains of FIP virus will be conducted using these monoclonal antibodies. We hope this data will aid in development of efficacious vaccines and better diagnostic tests. This project is funded by Rhone Merieux.

#### Diagnostic test for FIP

Development of specific diagnostic tests for detection of FIP virus in cats is actively being pursued. The tests currently available can detect coronavirus infection, but cannot distinguish if it is FIP or another coronavirus.

#### Antiviral studies

Studies are underway to assess the potential antiviral activity of a number of compounds against retroviruses including feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). It is hoped that such studies will result in development of a commercial antiviral compound that can be used to treat cats infected with various viruses, similar to using antibiotics for bacterial infections.

#### Feline immunodeficiency virus

This virus is being characterized, and *in situ* hybridization studies are being conducted to better understand how this virus infects cats and produces persistent infections and alterations in the immunocompetency of infected cats. We are also investigating possible neurological disease caused by FIV, and the interaction of toxoplasmosis and FIV to result in a recrudescence of clinical toxoplasmosis in cats.

Populations of exotic cats are also being tested for FIV. Approximately 30% of the Florida panthers are infected with FIV. We have also been able to identify FIV-positive bobcats, snow leopards, lions, tigers and jaguars in zoo populations, but have not

been able to isolate the virus.

Immune enhancement of FIP virus infection

FIP is an immune-mediated disease, with antibodies contributing to the overall disease rather than providing protection. We are studying various parameters of this immune enhancement in order to better understand how FIP is produced in infected cats. This also could aid in vaccine development.

Efficacy of a feed additive for reducing odor in litter pans

A special additive for feline diets to decrease fecal and urine odors was evaluated. The study was funded by a small grant from a commercial company.

**Cat Health Education**

Publications:

The culmination of three years of work is contained in *The Cornell Book of Cats* which was released in January 1990. It has received flattering

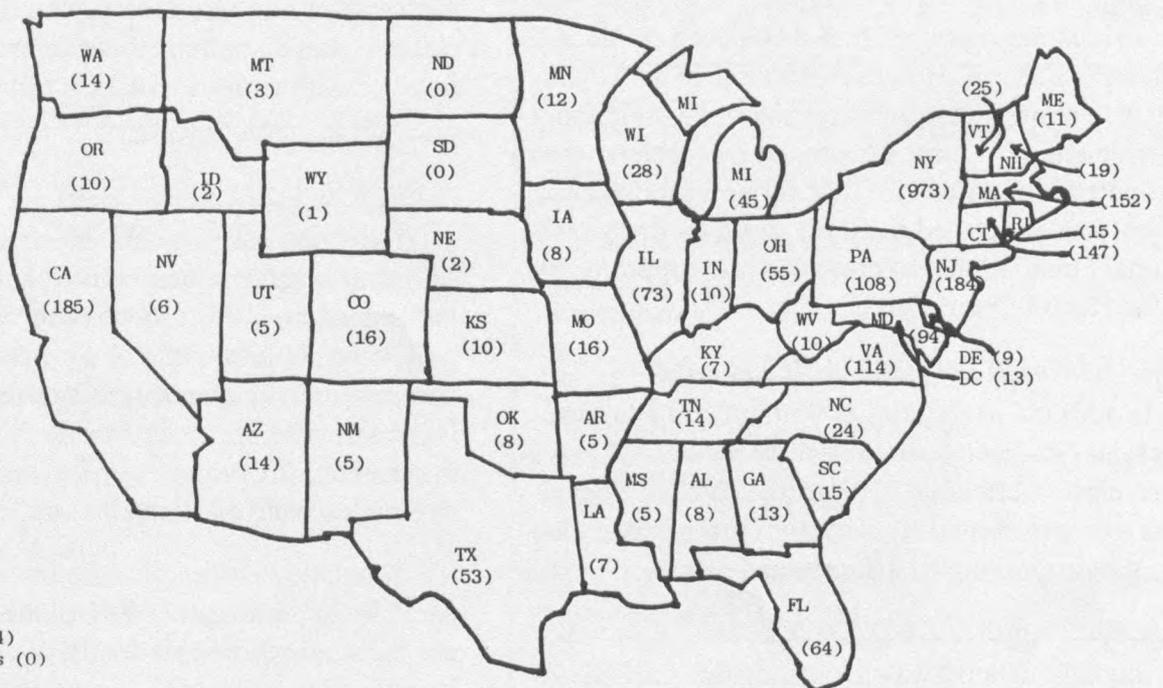
reviews in cat magazines and local newspapers. The book is now in its second reprinting. Two important purposes are served by the book—comprehensive information for the cat owner and funds for our work from the royalties earned from book sales.

This past year *Perspectives on Cats* was sent to approximately 2800 members of the center (see geographic distribution map). During the year the newsletter provided information on vaccines, non-toxic plants for cats, bronchial diseases, anatomy, consumer issues, and “Mail Bag”.

Client information brochures are available on a cost basis to veterinarians for distribution to their clients. Over 41,000 were ordered by veterinarians for their offices.

Camera-ready articles are produced by the Feline Health Center and distributed to about 500 veterinarians who publish the articles in their client newslet-

**Geographic Distribution of Members**



ters. The combined circulation for these newsletters totals 42,000.

The center provides publications specifically for veterinarians—*Feline Health Topics* and the *Information Bulletin*. These publications provide brief articles on topics of current interest in the veterinary community. Currently 26,000 veterinarians receive these publications.

#### Seminars:

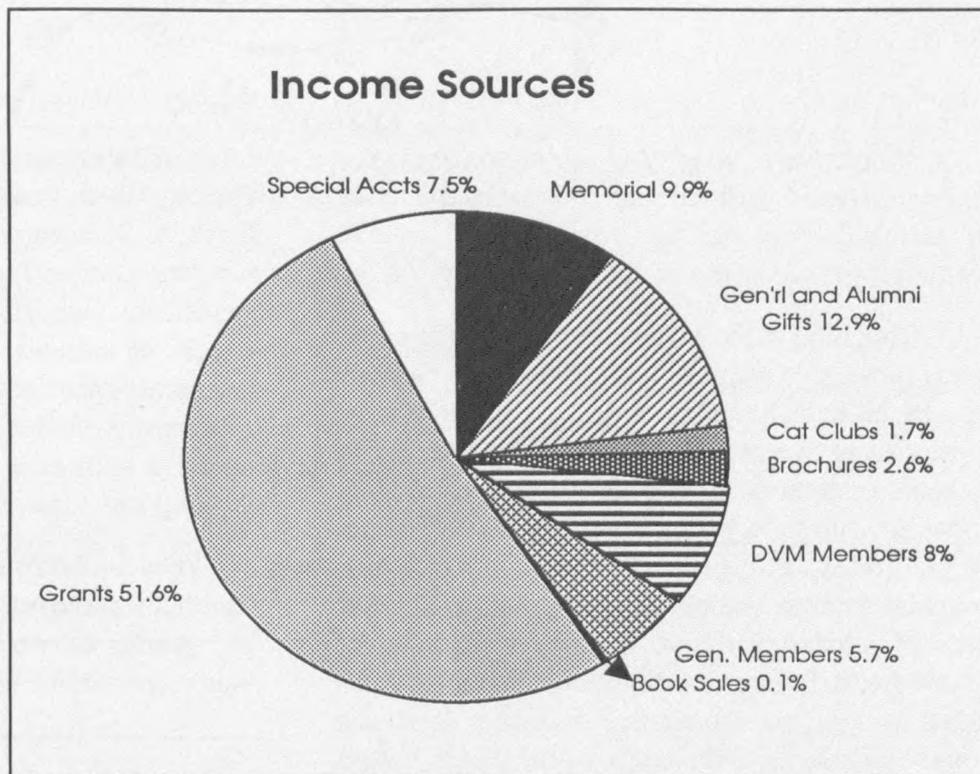
The second annual *Feline Seminar* for veterinarians was held this year in August at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine. The five day seminar attracted 183 veterinarians representing 29 states, Canada, England and France. Topics presented by staff and guest speakers included dentistry, behavior, internal medicine, soft tissue surgery, radiology, nutrition, pathology, oncology, emergency and intensive care medicine, infectious diseases, computer education, and ophthalmology.

#### Exhibits:

A new two-panel exhibit and brochure were designed by Cornell's Media Services department for the Feline Health Center. The exhibit was first displayed at the New York State Fair in August. It will be used at veterinary society meetings and at cat shows.

#### Consultation Service:

The recently established **Dr. Louis J. Camuti Memorial Feline Consultation and Diagnostic Service** has handled about 1,600 calls on feline health this year. This is the first service in the United States which provides answers and advice to veterinarians and cat owners on cat health topics. The



recent addition of a computer network system and data base program helps to provide faster responses to questions. The service is available from 8:30 am to 12 noon (EST), Monday through Friday (except holidays).

#### **Financial Support**

The bottom line for any organization or company is its financial status. The Feline Health Center is considered financially autonomous, receiving no direct income from state funds to support studies or office operations. Revenues are generated by memberships, special funds, memorial gifts, bequests, book sales, and grants (see Income Sources chart) to support all of the center's activities and staff salaries (except for the director). Each year becomes more difficult as costs for laboratory supplies, equipment, and publications continue to escalate. In fact, this past year the Feline Health Center would have been \$52,500 in debt if there wasn't a carryover from the previous year's budget. This next year may result in curtailing some of our services if we are unable to obtain sufficient funding. ■



## Mail Bag

*Q. My cat has a cough that comes and goes. She has been treated with various antibiotics and does not get well. What can you suggest, as I want to completely get rid of the cough?—L.A., New Jersey*

A. Coughing in the cat can be caused from upper airway (nose, sinuses, pharynx, larynx), lower airway (trachea, bronchi, lungs) or cardiovascular problems. Upper airway causes include pharyngitis, tonsillitis, tracheitis or tumors. Lower airway causes include bronchitis, pulmonary fibrosis, enlarged mediastinal lymph nodes, allergic bronchitis, lungworms, bronchial foreign bodies, cigarette smoke or other types of inhaled irritants. Cardiovascular causes include heart failure, cardiomyopathy, heartworm disease and pulmonary edema. A correct diagnosis should be made as to the cause of the cough before one can hope to stop the cough.

*Q. What are the side effects of prednisone and do I need to test my cat's urine every now and then?—L.A., New Jersey*

A. Prednisone is within the group of drugs that are classified as steroids or glucocorticoids. The side effects are dose related and can occur with the lower anti-inflammatory doses or the higher immunosuppressive doses.

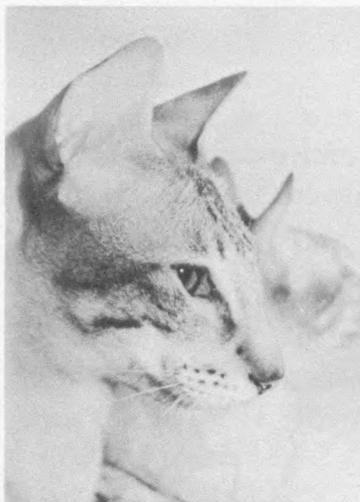
Increased appetite, thirst, and frequent urination are common side effects with anti-inflammatory therapy. These are usually of little health significance and are greatly reduced when prednisone is given on alternate days. Occasionally more severe changes take place such as behavioral alterations (i.e. depression, drowsiness, viscousness), panting or diarrhea. Stopping therapy is usually the best way to treat these more severe reactions.

Long-term treatment with low dose steroids may produce dull, dry hair coat and mild weight gain. High dose immunosuppression may produce extreme

thirst, urination, and appetite; muscle weakness and wasting; liver problems; severe depression; and diarrhea. Some animals may even die from acute pancreatitis after 7 to 10 days of high-dose therapy. Significant side effects are seen in less than 10 percent of animals treated with anti-inflammatory doses and approximately 50 percent of animals given immunosuppressive doses. Some animals cannot be managed with even low doses without developing Cushing's syndrome.

When long-term steroid therapy is used, a physical examination and urinalysis are advised every three to four months. Owners should watch for, and report to their veterinarian, any significant side effects. ■

## New Memorial Fund is Established



The *William Ledoux Memorial Fund* was established by Nicole Ledoux and Larry Levy in honor of their six-year-old Siamese who died in April 1990. Those in the cat fancy may remember William for his special talents as a feline photographic model and as the official weather cat of the *New*

*York Post*. The *William Ledoux Memorial Fund* is helping to support the center's research on the fatal disease, feline infectious peritonitis. Contributions to this special fund can be made by sending your check (made payable to the *Cornell Feline Health Center*) to: **The William Ledoux Memorial Fund, Feline Health Center, College of Veterinary Medicine, 618 VRT, Ithaca, NY 14853.** ■

## *Honor Roll*

Since the Center does not receive financial support directly from the state, college, or university, private contributions are vitally important to the Center. Therefore, we gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the following individuals who have contributed \$100 or more to support our programs. We also wish to thank those individuals who have also contributed, but who are not listed on the honor roll.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Funds given for:</u>
George Compton and Patricia Stephens, Virginia	In memory of <i>Newcat</i>
Mr. and Mrs. Clayton DeKay, Virginia	General Donation
Muriel Dochtermann, New York	General Donation
John P. Fruccho, Esquire, New York	<i>William Ledoux</i> , C.E.O. Tabby Claw Enterprises, Memorial Fund
Beatrice Gasque, Vermont	In memory of <i>Queen Rebecca</i>
Mr. and Mrs. Graves, New Jersey	In memory of <i>Rolly-Polly</i>
Ann R. Hardy, New Jersey	In memory of <i>Luvey</i>
Cynthia Hirtzel and Raj Rajagopalan, New York	In memory of <i>Smoke, Electra, Zenith, and Tempest</i> ; In honor of Dr. Kathy Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald King, New York	In memory of <i>Potato Chip</i>
Mr. and Mrs. Ellice McDonald, Delaware	General Donation
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Northon, Vermont	In memory of <i>Kelly</i>
Dorothy Palmer, California	General Donation
Dr. and Mrs. Emil Perona, New Jersey	In memory of <i>Jiminy Cricket</i> and <i>Jamie Two</i>
Lois Shade, California	In memory of <i>Siddhartha</i>
Lorna Shade, California	In memory of <i>Siddhartha</i>
Helen Shepard, New York	<i>Dr. Louis J. Camuti</i> Memorial Fund
Marian and Virginia Steinbeck, Illinois	General Donation
Joan Tosti, Virginia	In memory of <i>Cleo, Teenie, Tao, and Pansy</i>
Emily VanValkenburgh, California	In memory of <i>Addaperle</i>
Diane Williams, Colorado	Feline infectious peritonitis studies
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Yarborough, Indiana	In memory of <i>Miss Kitty</i>
The Zimmerman Family, Connecticut	In memory of <i>Bodhi</i>

### Contributing Memberships

Marsha Althouse, Pennsylvania  
 Pat Becker, Connecticut (In memory of *Chelsea*)  
 Elizabeth Boyle, California  
 Marianne Krasnow-Davis, Missouri  
 Eileen Shivan, New York (In memory of *Patches, Einstein, Miss Gray, and Mamma Snoop*)  
 Ralph Wilgarde, Michigan

### Cat Clubs

**Connecticut:** Connecticuts  
**Illinois:** Lincoln State Cat Club, Inc.  
**Indiana:** North Shore Cat Club  
**Ohio:** Cincinnati Cat Club

## **To Honor Your Veterinarian**

If you're looking for a special way to say thank you to your veterinarian, consider a special personalized 8x10 parchment certificate. For contributions of \$25 or more the Feline Health Center will send a personalized letter and certificate to your veterinarian. For more details call our office (607)253-3414.

## Holiday Safety

(continued from page 1)

\* Prevent your cat from drinking water from the tree stand by covering the stand with a tree skirt or a converted plastic gallon container (cut container in half; cut hole in the center of the bottom half for the tree trunk to fit through; then cut a slit from the center hole to the edge of the container to provide easy access for watering.)

\* Keep toxic holiday plants such as English holly, Jerusalem cherry, amaryllis, and Christmas mistletoe out of your cat's reach or territory.

### Holiday Foods

\* Avoid feeding holiday table foods to cats. These foods are high in calories and fat, and low in protein. Feeding of such rich foods can cause vomiting and diarrhea. A healthier alternative is to treat your cat to tasty morsels made for the feline palate. Specialty cat treats can be purchased at grocery or pet stores. ■

## Looking for that "purr-fect" gift? Look no more ...

*The Cornell Book of Cats* is a welcomed addition to any cat owner's bookshelf. It contains a wealth of information within its 435 pages, from *aging* to *zoonotic diseases*.

To order a copy send your name and address with \$30 (make checks payable to the Cornell Feline Health Center) to cover the cost of the book and shipping/handling charges. As an added convenience, you can call in your order and pay by Visa or Master Card. For phone orders call (607) 253-3414.



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