

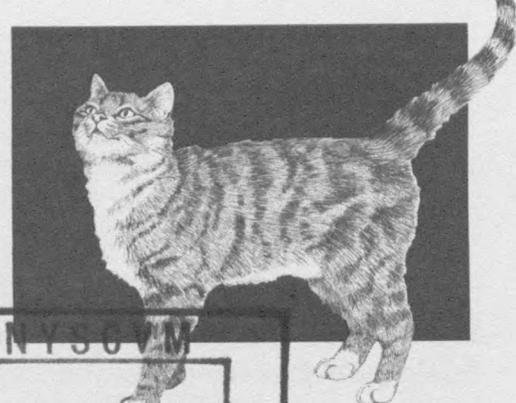
---

# Perspectives On Cats

NEWS LETTER

A Newsletter for Cat Fanciers  
From The Cornell Feline Health Center

Summer 1993



---

## Vacation Options for Your Cat

June E. Tuttle, B.S.

Each year thousands of Americans take vacations during the summer. Most people are adept at planning their trips by making reservations at campgrounds or motels and mapping out their itineraries. However, most people aren't as conscientious when it comes to planning their pet's vacation.

### Cat-sitter

Having a responsible and reliable neighbor, friend or relative care for your cat is usually the best vacation option for your cat. This is especially true for older cats because they are less tolerant of changes in their environment.

Cat-sitters should be informed as to your cat's feeding and watering schedule, instructed on cleaning litter boxes, and advised on daily monitoring of you cat's health. Before leaving on your trip, provide the

sitter with a list of emergency phone numbers and written care instructions.

### Boarding Facility

If you decide on a boarding facility, you might ask your veterinarian to suggest reputable local boarding facilities. However, if he/she is unable to, then contact local cat owners or breeders for their recommendations. Also, the American Boarding Kennel Association (4575 Galley Rd., Suite 400-A, Colorado Springs, CO 80915) can provide a list of member kennels that board cats. Try to narrow your selection to cat-exclusive facilities. Once you have a list of possible facilities, you should make an appointment to visit each one before making any boarding arrangements.

During your visit of the facility, be aware of excessive noise from a nearby highway or airport. Loud noises can be especially traumatic for cats that are accustomed to a quiet environment. The facility should be free of any offensive odors that may come from overcrowding or uncleanliness. Adequate ventilation, light and temperature control in the boarding facility are equally important to a cat's health.

Before final selection, talk to the manager about their requirements and ask questions. Do they require a health certificate and current vaccination records? What do they feed the cats? If necessary, are they willing to feed a special diet? Also, will they administer medications if your cat requires it?

(continued on next page)

---

### Inside this issue ...

*Vacation Options for Your Cat* page 1

*Mail Bag* page 4

*Honor Roll* page 5

*Breeders' Seminar* page 6

*Purr-fect Gifts* page 7

---

A change in environment, especially being confined to a cage, can be very stressful to a cat. You can lessen the mental trauma for your cat by providing it with a familiar object, such as a toy or bedding. Remember to give the facility manager the name of your veterinarian and phone number in case of emergency.

### **Traveling with your Cat**

The best advice is not to travel with your pet. However, if you decide you must take Fluffy on your vacation you should plan carefully to ensure that the journey is safe and pleasurable for both you and your cat.

Just as you pack your suitcase for your needs, you should also pack for your cat's needs. Items should include dishes, food, litter box, litter, a sturdy pet carrier, leash, harness, identification tags, toys, and health certificates.

If you are staying at motels, campgrounds or rental properties, check to be sure that they allow pets. Many places do not allow pets. There are various travel guides, such as "Take Your Pet USA" (Artco Publishing, 12 Channel St., Boston, MA 02210), that provide information on hotels that accept pets. Also, find out if there are any travel restrictions in the states or countries you will be visiting. Certain states, such as Arizona and California, have agricultural inspection stations that will require proof that your cat is current on vaccinations and is healthy. Many foreign countries impose quarantines on animals arriving in their countries. Finding out about restrictions after your arrival can ruin an otherwise well-planned vacation.

When staying at a hotel be sure to inform the housekeeping staff of your cat, and ask that they wait until you return before entering your room. Using "do not disturb" signs on the door will help to reinforce this message. Whenever you leave your room, place your cat back in the travel carrier or enclose it in the bathroom. But before leaving, be sure to provide a bowl of fresh water.

### *Car Travel*

Unlike dogs, most cats detest riding in the car. For some cats just the trip from home to the veterinarian's office is enough to cause considerable stress. Cats, like people, can develop motion sickness. Before starting out on a long drive, it is advisable to test your cat's tolerance to travel by trying short trips. If traveling is too traumatic, at least you will find out before your vacation and you can make alternative plans. Your trip will be much more enjoyable if your cat is leashed-trained. Usually this takes time and patience to train a cat to a harness and leash, but it does pay dividends. A leash provides a safe way to exercise your cat during rest stops on the road. If your cat is unfamiliar with pet carriers, let it explore the carrier on its own, with the door open and then closed.

For safety reasons, keep your cat confined. This prevents it from distracting you or getting under foot (e.g. under the brake pedal). Choose a comfortable-sized pet carrier (one that is large enough for the cat

## *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: Fred W. Scott, D.V.M., Ph.D*  
*Assistant Director: James R. Richards, D.V.M.*  
*Editor: June E. Tuttle*  
*Secretaries: Sheryl A. Thomas, Gwen Frost,  
Marsha Leonard*

©1993 by Cornell University on behalf of the Cornell Feline Health Center, College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY 14853. All rights reserved. Permission to reprint selected portions must be obtained in writing. Cornell University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer.

Printed on recycled paper.



to turn around) or if you have a minivan or station wagon you can partition off a section for your cat which can include the litter box. Secure cat carriers so that they do not fall or tumble off a seat if you brake or turn suddenly.

Never leave your cat alone in a vehicle for too long. Also, while traveling provide adequate ventilation. Heat stroke is a deadly consequence if these precautions are not taken. Remember that if it is hot for you, it is even hotter for your cat since they are less tolerant of heat. Also, short-nosed cats (e. g. Persians), asthmatic cats, or overweight cats are especially prone to heat stroke.

### *Air Travel*

Before making airline reservations find out their requirements for pets. Usually there is an extra fee charged for pet travel. Choose an airline that hand carries your pet to and from the plane. Otherwise your pet may end up on a conveyer belt with luggage. Some airlines allow cats in the cabin, provided that they are in a carrier that fits under the seat and that they are well-behaved.

When selecting your flight plan try to take as direct a flight as possible to avoid long lay overs or numerous connections. There will be less chance that your cat will miss a connecting flight or be exposed to extreme conditions out on the tarmac.

Your cat should be current on all vaccinations and in good health. If your cat is easily excited or stressed you may want to discuss the option of tranquilization with your veterinarian. Also ask his recommendations on holding food before travel. The usual recommendation is not to feed a pet for six hours before a flight. However, water should be available to your cat before and during the flight.

Be sure to have your identification tag and feeding instructions securely attached to the pet carrier.

## *Tips on Choosing a Cat Carrier*

Remember that the cat carrier is your cat's temporary home while traveling. Therefore, you will want to choose one that meets the following guidelines suggested by *Pet Veterinarian* (January/February 1992 issue).

- Be sure the carrier is large enough for the cat to stand up and turn around.
- The walls should be strong and waterproof.
- Be sure there is adequate ventilation. Three sides of the cage should have vents.
- The carrier should have sturdy handles for baggage personnel to handle.
- The carrier should provide a water dish that is accessible from the outside, so water can be added when needed.

Suppliers of carriers meeting these specifications include pet stores, breeders, boarding kennels and airlines.

The feeding instructions are especially important for long trips, such as going from coast-to-coast or abroad.

### **One Last Reminder**

Remember, that advance planning will make your vacation more enjoyable for both you and your cat. ■



## Mail Bag

*Q. I have three Korat cats. There are two issues concerning cats which have always interested me, neither of which I have ever seen dealt with in any publication. I hope you can enlighten me.*

*First of all, my cats do not appear to recognize themselves or me when I hold them up to a mirror. They might put their paws against it or just ignore it. The same goes for television. Is it because they know that it is not real? Have there been any scientific studies conducted on this issue?*

*Secondly, my cats appear to enjoy classical music, particularly if it is Bach, Handel or Mozart. Is there a part of a cat's brain that is capable of appreciating music? Again, I wonder if any studies have ever been done on this subject.—A.W., Illinois*

A. The questions you pose are very interesting ones. Cats probably do not recognize themselves in mirrors. The only non-human animal that appears to do so are higher primates that will notice in a mirror a spot painted on their face and attempt to remove it. Cats usually do react to their image in the mirror when they first encounter it, but then habituate or learn to ignore it because it does not smell like a cat. Cats should be able to see images on television. Having three dimensional or binocular vision does not preclude two dimensional or monocular vision. You can prove this for yourself because you have binocular vision. If you cover one eye you can still see monocularly. Cats also have color vision which is based on two visual pigments, but it is different enough from our color vision which uses three pigments that they would not see images on TV as colored. Laboratory cats do react to life-size silhouettes of cats as if they were real cats.

Does music soothe the savage...cat. As far as I know there have been no experiments on the effect of

music on cats or on the musical preferences of cats. There are parts of the cat's brain that react to sounds, of course, but not specifically to musical ones. My impression is, like yours, that they appear to be more relaxed when the music is pure in tone and melodic rather than dissonant, but the cat may be reflecting my own responses.

*Q. I have a 7-year-old male cat that eats too much dry cat food and has dark teeth from it. I took him to the veterinarian for his annual vaccinations and the veterinarian suggested that my cat's teeth should be cleaned, but that will require anesthesia. Do you think this is necessary? What will happen if we are not going to do this? —A.F., New York*

A. Dental disease is common in cats. Some cats, as some people, seem to be more prone to mouth diseases than others. Excessive tartar formation with resultant gingivitis is one of the most common causes of oral disease. Interestingly, cats that eat exclusively dry foods tend to have less tartar build-up than cats eating other types of food. Maybe if your cat had been eating canned or soft-moist foods, the problem would have been worse than it is now. At any rate, the necessity to perform dental procedures is not unusual, and most 7-year-old cats will require at least a thorough teeth cleaning and polishing, usually at least yearly but more often in some individuals. Depending on the severity of disease, even extractions or periodontal procedures may be necessary. Of course, anesthesia is necessary for any of this work. Most veterinarians feel that it is very important to perform some blood tests and perhaps a more involved diagnostic work-up prior to anesthesia, particularly in middle-aged to older cats, to assure safety.

*(continued on page 8)*

## *Honor Roll*

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following friends of cats and cat clubs who gave \$100 or more during the past three months in support of the Cornell Feline Health Center's studies and programs. We also extend a sincere "thank you" to everyone who contributed, but who are not listed. Your continued support is vital for the continuance of the Center's studies and programs. If you would like information on special funds you can donate to, or general information on giving, please contact our office at (607) 253-3414.

### Donor(s)

Dr. Curt Benyei, Connecticut  
 Miriam Bergen, New York  
 Belinda Camean, Maryland  
 Michael and Adrienne Deutsch, New Jersey  
 Ann Draper, New York  
 Feliners - Silver Lining Memorial Fund,  
 New Hampshire  
 Judith Forsythe, Illinois  
 Mr. and Mrs. Norman Greenauer, New York  
 Alice B. Gutzzeit, New York  
 Susan M. Harrigan, Illinois  
 Linda E. Henderson, Illinois  
 Jane Henle, Pennsylvania  
 Mary Henle, Pennsylvania  
 Mr. and Mrs. George Johnson, Indiana  
 Jessie L. McGilless, Oklahoma  
 Helen Shepard, New York  
 Alyce Swartz, New Jersey  
 Rebecca Teter, Ohio  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Valance, Virginia  
 Rosalyn A. Vermeulen, California  
 James T. Wall, Virginia  
 Mary Vail Wilkinson, Connecticut

### Gift Description

General Donation  
 In memory of "My lovable five"  
 In memory of Shumway  
 In memory of "Jasmine" Carver  
 Pumpkin Draper Memorial Fund; In memory of Mittens  
 Cardiomyopathy Research

General Donation  
 General Donation  
 In memory of Squeakie-girl  
 In memory of Prince  
 In memory of Hazel  
 Camuti Memorial Fund  
 Camuti Memorial Fund  
 In memory of Margaret Johnson Anderson and Ming  
 General Donation  
 Camuti Memorial Fund  
 "Sunday" Swartz Memorial Fund  
 General Donation  
 In memory of Fuzzy Wuzzy  
 In memory of Mabel  
 In memory of Cat  
 In memory of Purr Box, Prometheus, Friendl, Lizzie  
 and Boy Cat and in honor of Dr. William Lovers and  
 Dr. Richard Koven

### Contributing Member(s)

Marianne Krasnow-Davis, France  
 Donald Lomb, New York  
 Malcolm R. Schade, New York  
 Mary Sullivan, Virginia

### Cat Club(s)

Capital Cat Fanciers, Inc., Maryland (FIP Research)  
 Carolina Sophisticats, South Carolina  
 Carolina Top Cats, North Carolina  
 Catskill Cats Cat Club, New York (William Ledoux Memorial Fund)  
 Houston Cat Club, Inc., Texas  
 Janesville Allbreed Cat Club, Inc., Illinois  
 Mason Dixon Maine Coon Fanciers, Maryland (FIP Research)  
 North Central Florida Cat Club, Florida

### Bequest

The estates of Eleanor and Alexandra Dushane of approximately \$115,000 will be used for feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus anti-sense project, feline reproductive disease project and studies on feline obesity.

# Comprehensive Seminar for Cat Breeders

Cornell University • Ithaca, New York • August 14–15, 1993

## Program

In response to numerous requests from cat breeders and others who work with cats, Cornell University is again presenting a two-day *Comprehensive Seminar for Cat Breeders*. This intensive course is designed for cat breeders, veterinary practice staff members, and other people with a serious interest in cats. It will be taught by faculty members of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, plus a distinguished veterinarian with an all-feline practice. The seminar is co-sponsored by the Cornell Feline Health Center, the Cornell University Office of Veterinary Continuing Education, and Cornell University's School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions.

## Topics to be covered include:

- Infectious Diseases of Cats
- Clinical Genetics
- Oral/Dental Problems
- Feline Pediatrics
- Cat Nutrition (including Nutrition-Related Cardiomyopathy and Nutritional Issues Pertaining to Breeding)
- Panel Discussion on Ethics of Cat Breeding and Breeder-Veterinarian Relations
- Cattery Management

## Faculty

Program instructors are faculty and staff members of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University: **Dr. John E. Saidla**, Director, Veterinary Continuing Education; **Dr. James R. Richards**, Consulting Veterinarian and Assistant Director, Feline Health Center; **Dr. Arleigh J. Reynolds**, Instructor, Department of Clinical Sciences. They will be joined by **Dr. Betsy Arnold**, a distinguished veterinarian with an all-feline practice.

## Accommodations

Rooms have been reserved at the following locations: Best Western University Inn, (607) 272-6100, \$45 single/\$55 double; Sheraton Inn, (607) 257-2000, \$64 single/\$71 double; Howard Johnson Lodge, (607) 257-1212, \$50 single/\$60 double; Ramada Inn, (607) 272-1000, \$63 single/double. The above reduced rates are available if, when you make your reservations, you mention the program by name.

## Program Charge

The program charge is \$285 and includes tuition; course materials; a formal Cornell University certificate of completion; continental breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday; unch and dinner on Saturday; lunch on Sunday; and refreshment breaks. Persons whose cancellations are received in writing by July 30 will receive a full refund. Cancellations received after July 30 are subject to a \$100 cancellation fee. Substitutions may be made at any time before the program begins. Program costs may be tax deductible.

## Travel Planning

Participants should arrive by 8:30 a.m., Saturday, August 14. The program will conclude by 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 15.

## Further Information

### Comprehensive Seminar for Cat Breeders

Cornell University  
B20 Day Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853-2801  
Telephone: (607) 255-7259  
Fax: (607) 255-8942

## Registration Form/Comprehensive Seminar for Cat Breeders

Please print or type:

Name (as you want it to appear on certificate)

Nickname (as you want it to appear on name badge)

Mailing address (to appear on participant list)

( )  
Day telephone

( )  
Evening telephone

Please indicate your payment preference:

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ made payable to Cornell University in U.S. dollars and drawn on a bank located in the United States.

Charge my Visa or MasterCard for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .

Account number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify  Visa  MasterCard)

Cardholder's signature

Cardholder's name (please print)

Registration should be submitted as soon as possible since enrollment will be limited. Send this form, along with payment or charge authorization, to: *Comprehensive Seminar for Cat Breeders*, Cornell University, Box 217, B20 Day Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-2801; Fax (607) 255-8942.



## Mail Bag

(continued from page 4)

As with people, if proper procedures are not performed when necessary, tooth loss and progressive gum disease will result. Other types of oral problems including painful cavity-like lesions in the teeth called "cervical line lesions" or "neck lesions," eosinophilic granuloma lesions, or oral cancers can occur in cats, so regular oral examinations performed by your veterinarian are essential to insure comfort and good health.

*Q. I am writing about my 3-year-old Maine Coon spayed cat. About three months ago she started pulling her fur from her tail, near the anal area. My veterinarian ruled out a medical problem and suggested it was behavioral. She prescribed a mild sedative for one week to try to break the pattern. It worked as long as she was medicated. However, she went back to pulling her fur out after the medication ended. The veterinarian suggested changing her diet and we put her on a Hill's special diet. That didn't work. Now, three months later the pulling continues. Can you suggest something that will end this behavior?—S.W., Massachusetts*

**A.** Hair loss (alopecia) is common in cats with skin disease. Your veterinarian will probably extract some of the remaining hair and examine it under a microscope to determine whether or not the hair is falling out or if the cat is simply pulling it or chewing it off.

Occasionally some painful condition, such as anal sac disease or disorders of the urinary tract or neuromuscular system, can cause a cat to pull its hair out over the area of discomfort. However, the most common cause is some form of itchy skin. Many times the skin appears perfectly normal.

Some cases may be the result of a behavioral cause of hair-pulling known as "psychogenic alopecia." Diagnosis of psychogenic alopecia is reached less commonly now than in years past. With diligent diagnostic efforts, itchiness is found to be the cause in the vast majority of these cases. Since many causes of itchiness exist, be prepared to investigate both internal and external parasites, ringworm, and hypersensitivities such as flea bite hypersensitivity, allergic inhalant dermatitis (atopy), food hypersensitivity, etc. If all of these other causes can be excluded, then psychogenic alopecia should be considered. If the reason for the neurosis cannot be found and corrected, tranquilizers and other types of medication have been used with variable success to treat these cats. ■

**If you have a question you would like answered in this column, please send it to: POC Mail Bag, Cornell Feline Health Center, 618 VRT, Ithaca, NY 14853.**



Cornell Feline Health Center  
Cornell University  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Ithaca, New York 14853