



Study proves dog ownership improves your health

Tid Bits

By Michelle Padovan

Dogs promote good health

People who own dogs are healthier than non-dog owners or cat owners, a British psychologist said. Dr. Deborah Wells told the British Journal of Health Psychology, dog owners tend to have lower blood pressure and cholesterol, partly due to regular walking. Her study said on average, dog owners did not suffer as many minor ailments or serious medical problems, the BBC reported.

Wells, of Queens University in Belfast, said dogs could aid in the recovery from heart attacks and give early warn-

ing of an approaching epileptic seizure. "It is possible that dogs can directly promote our well-being by buffering us from stress, one of the major risk factors associated with ill-health," Wells said. People who own dogs are healthier than non-dog owners or cat people. That's nothing new to us dog owners.

Peru's Hairless Dog now guarded against extinction

They may look a little kooky with their hairless bodies and yellow coloured Mohawk hairstyles, but this ancient breed is now protected. Instead of being used as guard dogs, the Peruvian Hairless is guarded within Peru's ancient archaeological sites along the coast. The government has worked in bringing the breed back from the brink of extinction. The government decided to safeguard these dogs and ordered that at least two dogs should be housed within archaeological sites.

Help CatRescue and Sponsor a Kitty

CatRescue needs you to help them in sponsoring a 'place' for abandoned and neglected cats and kitties. They estimate it costs a minimum of \$38.00 per month to provide basic care for each rescued cat in their time to build a bridge between rescue and rehome. The fully tax-deductible donation can be a monthly direct debit payment. We think this is an excellent idea and if you got 16 of your workmates to contribute even two dollars a month, you would be helping a cat in need. Email kd@catrescue.com.au or ring 9011 6053.

The Violence of the Lambs

From the workshop and animatronic gadgetry of those Kiwi's from Weta Workshop comes a new full-length feature 'Black Sheep'. The story centres around a New Zealand sheep station where an experiment in genetic engineering goes horribly wrong. Killer sheep come to life and wreak havoc on unsuspecting locals. In a country with 40 million sheep, this movie is sure to change your view of the fluffy little creatures. The movie is being showcased at the SXSW film festival in Austin, Texas, and hits New Zealand cinemas in late March and is destined to screen here shortly thereafter. Get the Flock out of here! www.black-sheep-themovie.com

Dogumentary to debut this Easter

You've seen Animax's great images within these pages. Now is your opportunity to see the photographic and portrait magic in a new exhibition titled 'A Dog Called It'. The exhibition features a range of mutts, cross breeds and pure breeds-from rescue dogs to tiny pups.

4th-15th April daily from 10am to 4pm at the Palm House, Royal Botanic Gardens, Mrs Macquaries Road, Domain, Sydney



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Coffee with a conscience

The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has helped produce a shade grown, organic coffee from plantations in Central Columbia that the Cerulean Warbler—a declining songbird that nests in North America—depends on during the winter.

The Cerulean Warbler is North America's fastest declining neotropical, migratory songbird—loss and fragmentation of its wintering habitat is a major reason why its population is down 80% since 1966. ABC is working to reverse this trend by bringing shade grown coffee benefiting birds and local communities, to market and by raising funds to conserve the warbler. Shade plantations and the forest reserve may be their last chance at reversing the negative population trends among these birds.

Life expectancy has almost doubled in Japan—for cats and dogs

A study on pet health trends in Japan has shown that longevity for cats has jumped from 5.1 to 9.9 years and dogs has bounded from 8.6 to 11.9 years. Researchers attribute the jump to better health care, vaccinations, a more balanced diet and the newer trend of allowing pets to live indoors.

It's a sign of Japan's growing obsession with companion animals. Japanese families now have over 23 million pet dogs and cats which far exceeds the number of Japanese children under 15, which is estimated at 17.45 million for 2006.

Two UK Zoos report 'virgin births'

Self-fertilisation has been recorded in a species for the first time and this has scientists puzzled. The Guardian reports on what seems to be the reptilian equivalent of a 'virgin birth', giant Komodo dragon lizards at two zoos in the UK have laid eggs without having mated. Four of the eggs at London zoo have hatched; another eight at Chester zoo are due to hatch within weeks.

Self-fertilisation has never before been documented in this species. "We've ruled out any potential father," said Richard Gibson at the Zoological Society of London, who has been monitoring the progress of the fatherless baby lizards at London zoo. It is now believed that Komodo dragons are able to switch ways of reproducing to deal with a shortage of suitable mates. This may give these mighty reptiles a distinct survival edge. Komodo dragons are natives of Indonesia and only 4,000 remain in the wild, 1,000 of which are female.

Dogs help literacy skills

A new program that started in Cincinnati enlists the help of dogs to improve literacy in classrooms. The presence of a pooch helps relax children that are ordinarily shy or self-conscious about reading. The program is in its early stages at primary level yet already within five years of implementing it, the schools have recorded an improvement in reading scores.

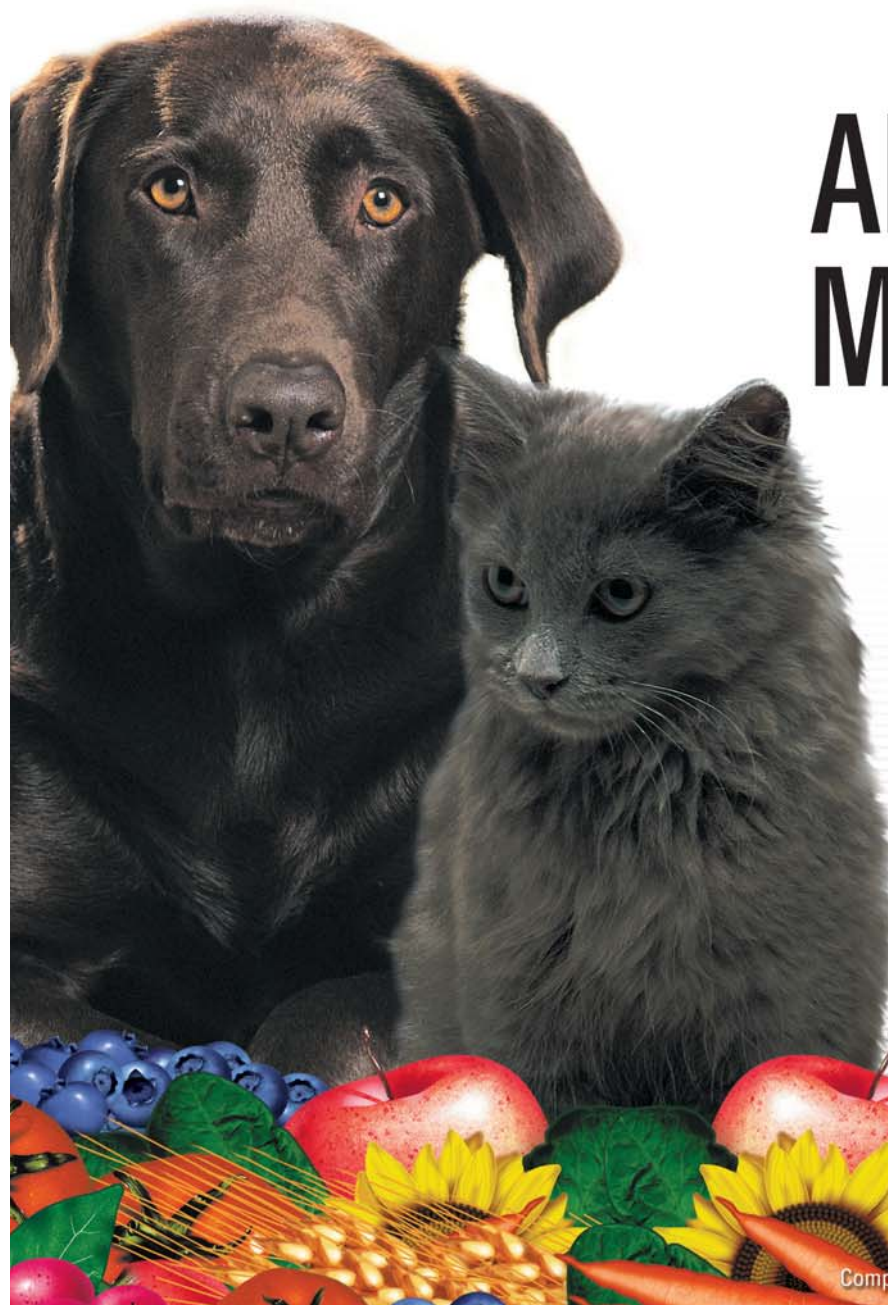
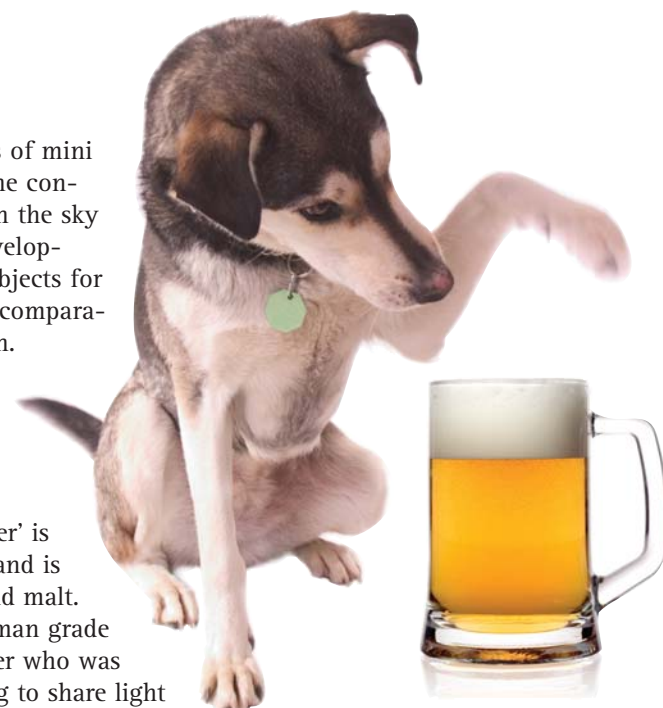
Can Cats hold the key to improved vision?

A group of Abyssinian Cats could hold the key to restoring sight to people who are robbed of vision by retinal diseases. The University of Missouri has a cohort of cats that suffer with a hereditary condition that slowly causes blindness. This makes them ideal subjects to test a silicon microchip that could restore vision.

The microchips are packed with thousands of mini solar cells, turning light into electricity. The concept of bionic-vision isn't just Sci-Fi pie in the sky as over 23 devices are currently under development by scientists. The cats make good subjects for vision experiments because their eyes are comparable to human eyes in size and construction.

'Kwispel' is Dutch for wagging a tail

It's also a new beer brewed exclusively for dogs by a small Dutch brewery. 'Kwispelbier' is marketed as "a beer for your best friend", and is made from a concoction of beef extract and malt. The beer is non-alcoholic and made of human grade ingredients. The creator is a pet-shop owner who was reported in the Associated Press as wanting to share light refreshments with her dogs after a day of hunting.



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