

Tips and Topics

A FEW months ago in this column we mentioned the late Arthur Brisbane, a great writer who arose from the ranks. It is stated that he was a natural born pet hater and without a sense of humor. He knew much in this world, but I wonder what he knew about the great beyond. Our pets are still with us, Arthur is gone. It pays to remember the wild birds during the winter months.

* * *

We have been advised that a rule has been suggested to the AKC, which would permit a person disqualified to dispose of dogs. This is as it should be, as no dog would ever break a rule of the AKC and they should not be penalized for the errors of their owners. As it is, the country is continuing to be filled with pure bred dogs that cannot be registered. Which cannot help those who have registered stock.

* * *

1937 will be the best year in dogs since 1928. The only drawback will be that there seems to be no outstanding breed. The Boston we will have with us always and the Cocker is fast gaining in favor, but none can ever gain the popularity of the police dog and the chow of a few years back. Ten years ago nearly every pure bred dog was registered and had a ready market. Today not one out of 25 is registered. That cannot help the game.

* * *

What the dog industry needs (I said "industry") is two registering and show governing clubs . . . COMPETITION will do more to bring back the life blood than any other stimulant. What would base ball be without a world series? Many of you will scoff at the idea, but it still remains an idea.

* * *

Carotene is the trade name of a product . . . it is claimed to be rich in Vitamin A, which builds resistance against colds. Many human medicines now contain this ingredient.

* * *

The fancy is fast taking to the "one spot" type flea killers, at first it was thought that it was just another flea killer, but three years have proven it to be of the best. One can that contains rotenone will go much farther than ordinary flea killers. This prod-

uct will also kill lice, roaches, bed bugs and many plant pests.

* * *

Pullman, Wash. — Mrs. Henrietta Burkowsky died, leaving a \$31,000 estate to care for a pet dog and cat as long as they live. These pets will receive excellent care and have their life prolonged as long as possible . . . It might be well for all of us to remember our pets in our will.

* * *

Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana have no dog shows. This area covers 583,905 square miles, with a population of 2,672,956.

* * *

We thought of starting a home for aged dog breeders, but can't learn at what age a dog breeder becomes interested in a home.

* * *

It is dangerous to give a dog human medicines as many contain strychnine and other poisons in sufficient quantities to cause death.

* * *

Here are some figures that amused me when passed out a few days ago. In 58 years the AKC has registered 1,120,000 dogs and it is claimed that some 650,000 of them are still living . . . I say it is impossible, and not 200,000 are living. To even bring these figures about, the average life of a dog would have to be about 21 years, and it will not reach 7 years. In the same figures it states that the value of the American dogs is 60 million dollars . . . and each dog is valued at \$95 . . . the dog population of America is not less than 15,000,000 dogs, so figure it out . . . it costs to support these dogs, over a million five hundred thousand dollars daily. But figures are figures.

—By the Reporter Who Gets Around

Deer Mice

There are not ten square feet of snowy ground around my house where you cannot find the tracks of field mice. But it is less often that I come on the spoor of the deer mouse, or white-footed mouse, for much of the winter he naps away. He is not too sleepy to skip about, under the icy winter's moon, to some new and better 'ole when he feels the impulse. But I certainly did not expect to receive a visit from a couple — a married couple, I take it—of deer mice.

The bright eyes of my five-year-old boy espied them, and once again it was in the window embrasure of the basement. So far that window embrasure has attracted or entrapped twelve salamanders, one unidentified snake, one shrew, one meadow mouse, seven leopard frogs, and the two pretty little deer mice. Like the meadow mouse, they ran in and looked about, then scooted back nervously and hid in the snow, putting their heads out presently to get another look at these human monsters.

It is easy to see where they get their name; the soft white underparts and the dainty white feet, the alert ears, the delicate face and big, gentle, wary eyes are all deerlike, and in vivacity though not in quaintness of appearance they surpassed my lamented friend the meadow mouse. As we killed the meadow mouse by overfeeding him with Camembert, our method now is to put cheese where the mice can smell it but not get at it. This keeps them running and performing in plain sight. But we give them a plain wholesome diet of sunflower seeds such as we keep for the birds. — Donald Cubross Peattie in Chicago Daily News.



**PREMIUM RIBBONS, ROSE-
ETTES, BADGES AND SILVER
TROPHIES for ALL PET SHOWS**

Send for Catalogue and Samples

E. G. STAATS & CO., INC.
MT. PLEASANT, IOWA





Small Animals

Behind the Scenes: Mouse Fanciers Interviewed

By "CYMRU"

MOUSE fanciers will, no doubt, be glad to learn something of the methods of the leading breeders in this country; and the following entirely fictitious account of recent visits to some of these, will not only edify, but also astonish him, or her.

First, I paid a visit to a well known Mouse man, who, in his enthusiasm for the Mouse Fancy, imported some specially fine mice from England. As the weather was rather cold, I found his mice were wearing little coats—those of the English ones being marked with the Union Jack, and those of mice born in this country, with the Stars and Stripes. He pointed out that it was important to be able to distinguish between the two kinds, as he found those born in the United States were better "mixers," the bucks making up to the does from the moment of meeting. On the other hand, the English bred bucks were decidedly standoff-ish, and, for the first few weeks, until they felt they had been properly introduced, took little or no notice of the does. Once the ice had been broken, so to speak, they grew much more cordial, and their hitherto rigid politeness merged into something of the nature of friendliness.

A man of enquiring turn of mind, he is now trying to produce a black mouse with pink eyes, but confesses there seems to be some unknown factor, which, for the moment, baffles him. He showed me, however, a black buck, rather bad tempered, which he had been feeding for two days on oats soaked in red ink. Though it was a little early to predict results, he was confident he was on the road to success, as the mouse, though, for some reason, it had become even more bad tempered, had blood in its eye, which he attributed to the effect of the red

ink. In trying to show me this mouse, he was bitten several times; and, though I may have been mistaken, there seemed to me to be a distinctly red tinge in his own eye, as he very generously slipped the mouse in my coat pocket, as a gift.

Before I left, he insisted on my having a meal, the chief course being composed of a mixture of oats, canary seed, white millet, and hemp, the top being lightly sprinkled with linseed. The effect of this combination is one I shall long remember, and the next few hours on the train passed pleasantly in the extracting of the seeds from between my teeth, and under my pl—, that is to say, from under my palate. By the end of the journey, I was able to speak quite clearly again, and the seeds were consumed by the mouse in my coat pocket. As a result of this diet, the blood after a few days, disappeared from his eye, and our cat now finds him quite tolerable to live with, his squeak being worse than his bite.

On arriving at the home of the next fancier, I found him, though a Scotsman, very modest, so much so that he begged me not to mention his name, as he has a horror of appearing in print. I will, therefore, only say that the name is quite historic, being enshrined in the ancient Scotch song, "Auld Lang Syne." His method of feeding were, in my experience, unique. Each mouse was fed separately by hand, one oat at a time, and I noticed on several occasions that where a mouse, at the end of his meal, had eaten only a portion of the last oat, the remainder was fed to the next mouse. In this way, he was able to avoid any waste of food, and over-feeding; and by means of records going back many years, was able to

show that, in feeding an average stud of mice, there was a saving of over three cents a month. This, he said, though it might appear insignificant, was not really so, as in only ten or fifteen years, anywhere between three and five dollars could be saved.

I was, I confess, much impressed by this careful attention to details, apparently trivial, yet actually of the first importance. On my suggesting that this method of feeding must be somewhat lengthy, he readily agreed it took a little longer, but had found that by beginning directly after breakfast, he was able comfortably to complete the feeding of his stud before supper time. The results, he claimed, and I think, with justice, more than made up for the little extra care and time involved.

While I was watching his mice eat Scotch thistles, which he is able to get for nothing, there emerged from the oat bin something which, at first sight, I took to be some kind of gigantic rat. It proved, however, to be nearly human, and the reader can imagine my delight when I realized I beheld the celebrated Prof. Titch, about whom I had read so much — I had almost said, too much. He explained he was on a short visit to his friend — and biographer — and that the reason for his sudden appearance from the oats was that he had, earlier in the week, carelessly dropped some vitamins, dating from the Neolithic period, and had spent two days at the bottom of the oat bin, before he was able to locate them.

He then said goodbye, and any regrets there may have been at our parting were doubtless on his side. Incidentally, I noticed that the mice squeaked with a Scotch accent, and that one or two gave a very fair imitation of the bagpipes. On hearing the latter, I said I must be going; — but our fancier like all true Scots, generous to a degree, insisted in spite of my protests, on my taking two sample oats, which, he assured me, were the correct kind for mice, as the kernel could be eaten

without at the same time consuming the husk.

At first I supposed these to be a new variety of oats, but discovered they were ordinary oats, which, before being fed to the mice, had the husks removed, these being stuck on again with Scotch glue. As I left, he very kindly let me have for fifty cents, a book published at a dollar, which he had compiled on Fancy Mice. As, on opening this, I found it to be written in Gaelic, which I was unable to read, I returned it to him. In thanking me, he remarked that, curiously enough, this had been his experience on a number of occasions; since, though he had sold several hundred copies, nearly everyone who had bought one had returned it, sometimes, he admitted, with protests, but these he felt he could ignore. As a consequence, out of the original edition of a hundred, he still has left ninety-five copies, the other five having, somewhat carelessly, been sold to Scotsmen. I thought it unnecessary to enquire if he had returned any of the money, and could not help remembering how the depression, after reaching Scotland, had remained only a short time, and then departed hurriedly, feeling even more depressed than it had done on its arrival.

I said goodbye—not au revoir—with much the same kind of feeling, poorer, it is true, by fifty cents, but how rich in memories! Should this article in some way slip past the Editor, I may be encouraged, at some future time,

to recount further experiences with other Mouse fanciers. At the moment I feel those I have already undergone will satisfy me for a considerable time, especially as I am still engaged in recovering seed from my sinus passages. I am glad to say that the

black buck, apart from taking possession of the cat's sleeping box, rejecting fiercely the two oats, and showing marked hostility at the sight of a bottle of red ink, has, in all other respects, proved himself to be a friendly little fellow.

Fancy Mice and Rats for Exhibition

An Absorbing Hobby

By R. W. FERRIER

BY the time these notes appear in ALL-PETS, I shall know whether the Mouse and Rat classes at the Boston Cat Club show this month were a success or not. This has been one of the greatest opportunities ever offered mouse and rat fanciers: to hold an exhibition in conjunction with such a famous organization as the Boston Cat Club, and I hope when I reach the showroom I shall find fanciers have risen to the occasion, and sent in some of their best mice and rats. Although the classes were arranged under difficulties, seldom has there been such an array of prizes offered, and this is due mostly to the fact that the Boston people took a tremendous interest in giving us a chance to stage a really fine mouse and rat show. It will be no fault of theirs if we failed to respond, but entirely our own.

Readers of ALL-PETS know that for over a year I have been stressing the breeding and exhibiting of fancy mice and rats as one of the very finest of hobbies. It demands care, skill, and thought, for any hobby that is purely mechanical is hardly worthy of the name. In no other fancy is there the same number of varieties as are found in mice and rats. Think of having some forty kinds of mice, and twenty in rats, to breed and improve, and experiment with to your heart's content; consider the small cost of feeding a hundred or two of mice, and ask yourself if you can imagine any other livestock which can give you all these advantages.

The other day, Dr. Paul A. Witty, of Northwestern University, was quoted as saying that adult Americans have only four ways of amusing themselves: radio, newspapers, movies, and bridge. These all have their place in life, but I cannot imagine myself pursuing any of them steadily as a hobby. After all, what is a hobby? It is surely some pursuit

with which we can fill in a part of our leisure time; and, as there is every indication that we are now reaching the stage in which people will be able to enjoy more leisure than has been possible in the past, it would seem all the more necessary that they should be encouraged to take up a hobby which will give them the needed relaxation, and be a source of ever increasing pleasure and interest. We are usually prepared to pay something for the joy our hobby brings us. For years, photography has been one of my hobbies, but I have never made any money from it, and never expect to do so. Some years ago in Cuba, I did score a "Scoop," in taking photographs of a bridal party, where the professional photographer who had been engaged for the job failed to produce one good picture. As however, I had married the bride and groom, who were personal friends of mine, I sent them all the enlargements of the wedding group, and the wedding cake, free, as a gift. It cost me something to make these, but I got in return a tremendous amount of pleasure in knowing that but for this there would have been no record of this particular wedding, as the bride and bridegroom left for England the same day. Similarly, in breeding fancy mice: though I have sold a good many to other fanciers, it doesn't worry me in the least if I do lose a little money on the mice, as the pleasure I get from breeding and trying to improve them more than compensates me for what it costs. On the other hand, this pleasure would be still greater, as I know from my former experience as a member of the National Mouse Club, of Great Britain, if I were able to exhibit my mice more frequently; for it is only in this way, by comparing our stock with that of other fanciers, on the show bench, that we get the greatest enjoyment,

MANATEE MOUSERY



FANCY MICE ALL COLORS

Make fine pets.
Need little care and feed.

Howard Jones

324 Central Street
PALMETTO -- FLORIDA

and are able to estimate what kind of stock we are producing. So I do urge every mouse and rat fancier to breed to definite standards, such as the American Mouse Fanciers' Club, is now in a position to issue, and exhibit at every possible opportunity in the future. Don't start with the idea of making a lot of money from breeding fancy mice, since you will probably be disappointed anyway; but take up the hobby and be prepared to spend a little money on it, for the sake of the enjoyment you will derive from it, if you breed with the definite idea of being a regular exhibitor. If you simply breed mice and don't exhibit them, where is the particular interest? There isn't much point in simply BREEDING mice or rats, unless in your breeding you are working to a definite standard, with a view to the improvement of your favorite varieties. You may have the finest fancy mice in the country, but how are you going to prove it unless you exhibit them, and win occasionally? This is the way the mouse and rat fancier ADVERTISES his stock; and, if in spite of all I have said, you are still looking to make some money from your mice, then to exhibit is the only real way to do it. Once your stock becomes known as winning on the show bench, you will find a good demand for it, not at \$10 or \$15 a hundred, but from \$2 and \$3 a trio, and up. Where would the dog, cat, rabbit, cavy, and cage bird fancies be today, unless their members had organized shows and exhibitions all over the country? The American Mouse Fanciers' Club is ready and capable of doing the very same thing for the mouse and rat breeders, but only if these will join the Club, and support classes whenever they are available. This is the only way—there is no alternative—in which to put our fancy on a level with other livestock, and to convert it from one in which a great deal of aimless breeding is going on, to one which will attract many who hitherto have regarded the fancy as one fit only for small children. We are out to get on our side not only beginners but also experienced fanciers in other branches of the livestock world; and once they see that, just as they are able to breed and exhibit mice as they do their dogs, cats, etc., in accordance with standards, we shall find the breeding of fancy mice and rats being taken up by people all over the country.



The Water Snake

By H. ELLISON MITCHELL

THESE are to be found sunning themselves on derelict timbers and sometimes in the dead grass bordering the swamp or stream or under the shade of an overhanging bush at the edge of the water . . . thick bodied, fat and heavy, with a variation of colors . . . some bright copper-colored, others dull and lusterless . . . all have coarsely keeled scales and are wonderful swimmers.

Along the far southern rivers and in the lagoons and bayous the Water Snake thrives, and three or four will be found on nearly every overhanging bush where, at the least fright they will dive into the coffee-colored water to re-appear again with just the head protruding above the surface some little distance away.

With the exception of the deadly Water Moccasin, (in some localities called Cotton-Mouth Snake, Cotton-Mouth Moccasin, Water Rattler, etc.), all the water snakes are harmless. They make strange and interesting pets when kept in captivity.

The Brown Water Snake, largest and heaviest of any water snake in the United States, is the commonest along the Santee and Savannah rivers. This snake is found from Maryland to Florida and westward through Louisiana. Although the largest of the lot the writer finds this snake most afraid of man and hardest to tame; refusing to eat and becoming very nervous when handled.

The Red-Bellied Water Snake, also very abundant and of large size, has two variations in color: some being found almost all dull black on the back and sides with a dull, red-spotted belly; other are reddish-banded with a distinct red ground color all over while the belly is very gaudily marked with bright vermilion spots and blotches.

The Water Snake gives birth to very large litters. The writer has had red-bellied Water Snakes give birth to over sixty young snakelings. Within a few minutes they were shedding their first skins and looking after themselves. This snake makes

a hardy and intelligent reptile pet, readily eating the toads and frogs which the writer fed almost daily. They are also fond of fishes. While on a collecting trip through the Santee river lowgrounds in South Carolina the writer secured more of these snakes than any other.

The Banded Water Snake, rarer than the others, resembles the above snake in many respects. The body is covered with distinct bands, wide across the back and narrowing on the sides. The belly is also prettily marked something similar to the Red-Bellied Water Snake.

The Copper-Bellied Water Snake, almost as fast on land as in water and often found quite a distance from water, is one of the most graceful and beautiful of all the water serpents. The head is long and quite red. Its eyes are large and bright and the body a uniform reddish-coppery color to the tip of the tapering tail. The belly is even richer and almost vermilion. These snakes are also a big attraction to a reptile collection, are all feeders, hardy and active.

Although a great part of their life when in a wild state is spent in the water, these snakes will thrive well if kept in a good large cage, the bottom of which is covered with straw or dead grass and there is a fairly deep pan of water sufficiently large to enable the serpent to coil comfortably within.

There are many serpents that will make far more affectionate pets than some dogs. The Water Snake is one, the Black Snake is another, the King Snake is a third. The writer could tell of many an instance to prove his assertion. He has had Water Snakes come out of their opened cage, crawl a little distance over the ground, carefully take a toad from his fingers and return again to their cage to devour it. He has had Black Snakes, of their own volition, come out of their cage, crawl over the floor to where the writer was sitting, reading coil in the warmth of his lap to sleep. He has even had a deadly Water Moccasin, fangs and poison intact which he has many times picked up by the middle of its body and kissed it upon the lips without it ever attempting to bite. He has petted this same snake and allowed it to crawl over his person and around his neck without the least attempt to show anger.

You may call this a foolhardy deed, but reader, the writer knew that the