



# PAWPRINTS



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Welcome to the second year of PAWPRINTS. I am grateful to our sponsor, Merial, and also to the American Veterinary Medical Association for the ongoing determined commitment to reach people who have pets. I hope you find PAWPRINTS interesting and informative.

Our PAWPRINTS guarantee: Love your pets, and they will love you back

### ABOUT THE EDITORS

**Steve Dale** – Editor-in-Chief. The 2002 AVMA Humane Award winner. Steve is a contributing editor for *USA Weekend*, and the author of *My Pet World*, syndicated in over 100 newspapers by Tribune Media Services. He's heard on *Pet Central* Saturday nights, 6:00 p.m. heard on WGN radio (or [www.wgnradio.com](http://www.wgnradio.com)). His syndicated radio shows are *Steve Dale's Pet World* and *The Pet Minute* with Steve Dale. Steve's also a TV regular appearing on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *National Geographic Explorer* and various Animal Planet shows. He lives with his Devon Rex cat Roxy; Lucy, a miniature Australian Shepherd; Chaser, a Brittany, and Cosette, a Northern blue-tongue skink. Steve's website is [www.stevedalepetworld.com](http://www.stevedalepetworld.com).

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## America's Trendiest Dogs: Size and Spunk Matter



By Steve Dale

The trendiest dog breed in America is the French Bulldog. In 2005, this compact-sized bulldog increased 25 percent over their 2004 American Kennel

Club registration numbers. What's more, this spunky character with bat ears has skyrocketed an astounding 305 per cent in registration numbers in the past decade.

"Over all, the trend is for smaller breeds," says Darlene Arden, author of *Small Dogs, Big Hearts*, (Howell Books House, New York, NY, 2006; \$19.99). "Let's face it; we have a nation of aging baby boomers who are downsizing their lives and their dogs."



French Bulldog

Specifically, what is it about the French bulldog? "Well, they're small (18 to 28 lbs) and they're clownish," says Lisa Peterson, director of club communications for the American Kennel Club, the New York City based registry of purebred dogs. "They don't require much grooming, and they're great city dogs. Frenchies need only moderate exercise, and they're a good choice for senior citizens." The French Bulldog is the 38th most popular breed.

The second trendiest dog is also 43rd most popular dog breed, called the Havanese. While many people still haven't even heard of this relative of the Bichon Frise, it's increased 22 percent since 2004 and an incredible 282 percent since 2000.

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## MERIAL MUSINGS

### Lyme Disease is a Real Lemon: It's Nasty



You have probably heard of Lyme disease - one of the "newer" diseases affecting people in the United States. Or you may know someone affected by this insidious, debilitating disease.



As diseases go, Lyme disease is new. But new is not better. Lyme disease is spread by ticks and is caused by bacteria that enters through a bite from a tick. This bacterium (*borrelia*) has the nasty habit of setting up shop in the joints and other tissues of the host it

infects - and it can be a lifelong infection!

Lyme first started out as a very regional disease. In fact, the disease is named for where the first known outbreak occurred, Lyme, Connecticut. Since then, however, it has spread across the United States. While areas like the Northeast and the Upper Midwest (Minnesota, Wisconsin) certainly have a higher incidence of Lyme disease, the disease has been reported in all 50 states. Lyme even occurs in major metropolitan areas.

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## Heartworm Widespread Among Hurricane Pet Refugees

An estimated 40 to 60 percent of the pets displaced by Katrina are likely infected with heartworm, a potentially fatal, mosquito-borne illness. As those animals were adopted around the country, they're potentially also spread the prevalence of heartworm disease. More than ever, pets need to be protected. Dogs, as well as cats require protection.

In their recent survey with Merial, the American Heartworm Association (AHS) found that in 2004 more than 250,000 dogs and cats tested positive for heartworm infection across the United States in 12,000 veterinary clinics surveyed. Heartworm occurred in all 50 states. While this disease has recently been receiving greater publicity, the AHS

has been fighting heartworm for over 30 years. Sadly, the prevalence of heartworm disease hasn't changed all too much since the previous survey was conducted in 2001.

People still clearly aren't understanding the need for heartworm prevention, apparently even among some veterinarians. "Each year, dogs and cats die needlessly from complications of this very preventable disease," says Dr. Tom Nelson, DVM and President of the American Heartworm Society. "By following our guidelines, which are based on the latest, ongoing research conducted around the world, pet owners and veterinarians can feel confident they are providing the best care for their pets."

Sometimes people know about the dangers of heartworm, but they just don't believe it will happen to their pet, or they forget to give their pet the preventive medication.

The AHS announced their new guidelines in 2005 to help veterinarians educate pet owners and manage heartworm disease. The guidelines for both dogs and cats are posted at [www.heartwormsociety.org](http://www.heartwormsociety.org), along with a protocol for treating these relocated pets. Highlights include the recommendation of annual testing, retesting when switching products, and support of the recommendation for year-round prevention.

— *Authored by the American Heartworm Society*

## Will Parrot Recall His Jailbird Owner, and More Oddities

By Steve Dale

Whether I'm at a swanky cocktail party or walking the dogs, people ask me questions. Some are repeat questions that I get all the time. Others are rather, shall I say, unique. Here are a few examples:

**"What's your name, jailbird?"**



**Q:** Will my macaw remember me when I get out of jail?

**A:** Parrot memories aren't too different than our own. The question isn't so much will your bird remember; it's will he care?

If you're sprung in a matter of months, after a few days of adjusting, your relationship with your bird buddy will pick up where you left off. However, if we're talking ten years or more of incarceration; well, just as your friends will move on with their lives, so will your feathered friend. He'll remember you all right, but he will have bonded with a new 'human flock.' So, don't be disappointed if he sticks up his beak at you, you're simply no longer relevant. It's proof that crime doesn't pay.

**Q:** Why do dogs dig at the floor or at their beds before they lie down?

**A:** Your "Fluffy's" ancestors had to make their own sleeping arrangements, and might have burrowed in the ground (for warmth and comfort), or even created a pile of leaves and

other debris to catch 40-winks on. What's more, many dogs like to dig anytime, anywhere, for any reason just because it feels good.

**Q:** Are dogs and cats really saying different things with their versions of barks and meows; and do parrots communicate topics depending on their squawks?

**A:** Absolutely! As I write this, my cat, Roxy, is looking out the window "talking" to birds going by. Oddly, this vocalization sounds like a bird tweeting. I guarantee in about an hour, when our kitty gets hungry, we'll hear a clearly demanding meow which means, "I want my food, and fast!"

We live in a condo building, yet I can tell what's going on in our hallway by what the dogs are "saying." Some barks are like a question, "I know someone is there, who is it?" Other barks tell me, "Hey, pay attention, I can smell neighbor Karen - our favorite person in the world is there."

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## Six Corny Pet Jokes

- 1 I have an American Legion dog. He stops at every post.
- 2 My dog is an Arctic explorer. He goes from pole to pole.
- 3 One idiot was elected dogcatcher. He knew that he was supposed to catch dogs - but at what?
- 4 My dog's nose is flatter than a pancake. He got that way after chasing parked cars.
- 5 He called his dog Seiko. He was a watchdog.
- 6 A dog saw a sign that said 'Wet Paint.' And he did.

## Lyme disease *Cont'd from pg.1*

Dogs vacation or spend weekends in woody areas or where there are summer homes, and return to the concrete jungle with a tick or two. The infected ticks drop off in city parks and joyfully continue their life cycles there.

Yes, it is tragic to see someone's life affected by Lyme disease; but believe it or not, this disease is a bigger threat to your dog than it is to you. Dogs are arguably more susceptible than people; people rarely like to crawl through bushes and they're not as low to the ground where ticks live. Dogs' thick coats can easily hide the tiny ticks that carry Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is notoriously difficult to diagnose. Some dogs have only the mildest of symptoms, which doesn't lessen the severity of the disease. Many dogs infected with Lyme disease are lame, have stubborn fevers and/or various other clinical signs—only your veterinarian can be the final judge. Many of these symptoms can be incorrectly attributed to other diseases. For example, a veterinarian might just assume an older dog with lameness is dealing with arthritis. For every positive case of Lyme disease in dogs there may be scores of cases that go undiagnosed or are incorrectly diagnosed.

For all these reasons, prevention of Lyme disease is crucial. Many veterinarians recommend the use of a Lyme vaccine, and tick control is a good idea (ticks transmit other diseases as well).

Be sure to ask your veterinarian for information about how to prevent Lyme disease in your dog. You wouldn't want Lyme disease; you certainly don't want this to happen to your best friend either.

-- Scott Vande Griend, DVM

## America's Trendiest Dogs *cont'd from pg. 1*

The Havanese is a breed on the fast track, but Arden doesn't like it. "Be very careful about where you get trendy breeds from," she cautions. "You know they're trendy and then so do unscrupulous breeders and puppy mills."

The Havanese popularity can be attributed to its hypoallergenic properties. In truth, no breed is completely hypoallergenic - but many people can live with a Havanese with little, if any issues. It's a small dog (7 to 14 lbs). Havanese come in many different colors.

The third most trendy dog is larger (30 to 50 lbs), and even more problematic. Arden simply responds, "Oh no" when she learns it's the Border Collie. "That's nice," she offers sarcastically. "I can see it now, the wrong people getting the wrong dog. Border

Collies are very active dogs who need a job. Rescues will be overwhelmed with border collies who people just can't handle"

Peterson attributes at least a part of their 20 percent hike over 2004, and their overall recent escalating numbers over the past decade to the interest in the dog sports such as agility (an obstacle course for dogs) and flyball (a relay race for dogs), in which Border Collies tend to excel. Border Collies are now number 55 in popularity, up from placing number 60 in 2000.

The fourth trendiest breed has been among the Top 10 dogs in America since 1995. The Yorkshire Terrier is now the third most popular dog breed and downright fashionable.

Celebrities like Lindsey Lohan and Paris Hilton tote their tiny dogs around in hand bags. Arden doesn't hold back her views, "It just makes me want to throw up," she says. "These are living, breathing animals not accessories. And the fact that fashion editors are buying into this is sad."

The diminutive (5 to 7 lb.) Yorkie increased 9 percent in popularity in 2005 compared to 2004.

The fifth most trendy breed is a kind of shepherd called the Belgian Malinois, which enjoyed a 15 percent gain. Still not overwhelmingly popular, this slightly smaller than German Shepherd-sized breed (60 to 65 lbs.) is number 87 on the AKC chart,

up from 97 last year. "It's one of the dogs used by law enforcement," says Peterson. "But also it looks like the shepherd-mix you might have grown up with and that's comforting."

Of the 154 AKC registered breeds, the least trendy is the Pekingese; it fell the greatest percent in popularity - more than any other breed - down 21 percent. It's hard to explain, the Peke is a small dog (8 to 14 lbs), and quite portable; they are inactive, perfect for apartments and older folks. They do have a coat that requires a lot of grooming.

"Some can be pretty testy with strangers," Arden says.



*Havanese*

Peterson has no real explanation. "Sometimes these sorts of things are a matter of changing tastes," she offers. The poor Pekingese tumbled to the 48th most popular dog breed, down from 38 last year.

Other breeds that lost the most ground in 2005 are the Afghan Hound, also down 21 percent; the American Cocker Spaniel, which dropped 12 percent and the Rottweiler declined 9 percent.

"No matter which breed you choose, I hope you don't make the decision just on what the fad breed happens to be," warns Arden. "All breeds have certain attributes which may or may not fit your lifestyle."

In descending order, here are the American Kennel Club top ten dog breeds (based on 2005 registration numbers):

- 10) Miniature Schnauzer
- 9) Shih Tzu
- 8) Poodles (all varieties, toy, miniature and standard combined)
- 7) Boxer
- 6) Dachshunds (all size and coat varieties)
- 5) Beagle
- 4) German Shepherd Dog
- 3) Yorkshire Terrier
- 2) Golden Retriever
- 1) Labrador Retriever

## Cont'd from pg.1

Margaret H. Bonham – Editor. An award winning pet book author; her current titles include *The Complete Guide to Mutts*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Labrador Retrievers* and *Introduction to Dog Agility*. She lives in Colorado, where she is owned by several Alaskan Malamutes, Alaskan Huskies, a German Shepherd dog and a cat. Margaret's website: [www.shadowhelm.net](http://www.shadowhelm.net)

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## FEATURED WEBSITES:

American College of Veterinary  
Behaviorists

[www.dacvb.org](http://www.dacvb.org)

American Kennel Club

[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

American Veterinary Medical Association:

[www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org)

American Heartworm Society

[www.heartwormsociety.org](http://www.heartwormsociety.org)

Cat Writer's Association

[www.catwriters.org](http://www.catwriters.org)

Centers for Disease Control: Lyme Disease

[www.cdc.gov/healthypets/diseases/lyme.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/diseases/lyme.htm)

Tick-Borne Diseases

[www.dacvb.org](http://www.dacvb.org)

Feline Health: Dr. Susan Little

[www.catvet.homestead.com](http://www.catvet.homestead.com)

Dog Writer's Association of America

[www.dwaa.org](http://www.dwaa.org)

Good News for Pets

[www.goodnewforpets.com](http://www.goodnewforpets.com)

Morris Animal Foundation

[www.morrisanimalfoundation.org](http://www.morrisanimalfoundation.org)

Petfinder

[www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)

Play Find the Pit Bull

[www.pitbullsontheweb.com/pitbull/findpit.html](http://www.pitbullsontheweb.com/pitbull/findpit.html)

Toy Dogs - Darlene Arden

[www.darlenearden.com](http://www.darlenearden.com)

Westminster Kennel Club

[www.westminsterkennelclub.org](http://www.westminsterkennelclub.org)

Steve Dale

[www.stevedalepetworld.com](http://www.stevedalepetworld.com)

[www.petworldradio.net](http://www.petworldradio.net)

## Will parrot *Cont'd from pg2*

Parrots are most amazing. They don't only "parrot" what we say; they often understand. When one reader's bird said 'TV,' it meant the same as if you were to say, "Look and watch what's on." Even birds who can't or don't mimic people, in fact, do say volumes. They squawk questions, make demands and offer commentary. In time, they even train their people to get the gist of what they're saying.

**Q:** I've heard that dogs and cats can cry real tears. Is this true?

**A:** There's no doubt that cats and dogs do have the physical capacity to shed tears. Now, whether there's a correlation between tears and sorrow is a matter for debate.

We know our companion animals have feelings. But can we push our pets to teary meltdown? Literature offers accounts of weeping pets, and some veterinarians report seeing this phenomenon. Many vets say they've treated

animals for an entire career without ever needing tissues to wipe away tears. I can report receiving dozens of letters from readers over the years, relating to stories of crying pets. And, I believe my readers.

**Q:** When in bed, my hedgehog sometimes spits and drools on his quills. Isn't that odd?

**A:** One may argue that what's odd is who you want to share your bed with. I'm all for cuddling your four-legged companion - but, ouch! When hedgehogs like a

scent, they create foamy saliva and then wipe the scent all over their quills and/or on an object, it's called self-anointing. It's one way hedgehogs developed of smelling like their surroundings and hopefully fooling predators.

