

How smart is your dog?

Test of canine cunning tells if your elkhound's an Einstein

By CARL STODDARD

Muffin isn't a bright dog, says Kathy Coon. In fact, Muffin is a rather dumb cocker spaniel.

Muffin might not like that assessment. But if Muffin has any smarts at all, she won't argue with the woman known as a leading authority on canine intelligence.

Ms. Coon, a child psychologist in Baton Rouge, La., has written a book called "The Dog Intelligence Test." With the test, says Ms. Coon, you can discover if you own a brilliant beagle or a dim-witted Doberman.

"The test gives you an inexpensive way to spend an evening," she said. "And you can see if you have a Gomer Pyle or an Einstein."

Her own dog, "a potential obedience school dropout" named Daiquiri, was among the first to take the test. Daiquiri, the test revealed, is sort of so-so in the brains department. But even that was better than expected, Ms. Coon said.

Daiquiri was the impetus for "The Dog Intelligence Test." She had done a lot of not-so-bright things around the

Coon's house and friends and neighbors had taken to calling Daiquiri "the world's dumbest dog."

SUCH TITLES did not set well with Ms. Coon, so she set out to fashion her own intelligence test based on her training as a psychologist. Before she was done, she and her researchers had tested more than 700 dogs. Out of that study, they developed not only the final version of the test that appears in the book, but also a set of scales that will tell you how smart your dog is compared to the general dog population and in comparison to its own breed.

The first five tests are variations on the old shell game, with doggie treats hidden under three cups. These help determine the dogs' memory or attention span. It doesn't take long to administer these tests—for good reason. According to Ms. Coon, the aver-

age dog has an attention span of 15-30 seconds.

Our test dog was Muffin, six-week-old Cocker Spaniel. Muffin soundly flunked the first five tests. In test six, which calls for the dog to retrieve a treat from a overturned shoebox, Muffin did better. But test seven, with the shoebox partly closed, Muffin flunked again.

In test eight, a ball is thrown under a desk chair and the dog must figure out where the ball has gone. Muffin figured that one out immediately.

IN TEST nine, a towel was placed across a doorway and Muffin was called to the other side by her owner. Intent of the test was to see how well Muffin could react to a new situation. Muffin reacted swiftly.

The last test was easy. Muffin was wrapped in a towel and then given 15 seconds to escape. Muffin escaped in 14 seconds, proving that she is no Houdini among dogs.

The test is scored on a scale of one to 10. The average dog achieves a score of about 5.7. Muffin was able to chalk up a score of four. You can see how she rated, based on this scale developed by Ms. Coon.

•Zero to two: "Your dog is very dumb."

•Three to four: "Your dog is dumb."

•Five to seven: "Your dog is average."

•Eight: "Your dog is smart."

•Nine: "Your dog is very smart."

•Ten: "Your dog is brilliant."

Don't be surprised if your dog comes out less than brilliant. Less than two per cent of the dogs tested proved to be brilliant. You might also take comfort in knowing that less than two per cent are very dumb.

A NUMBER of interesting facts popped up as a result of the tests. Male dogs tested slightly smarter than females. Ms. Coon said. Mixed breed dogs and pure breeds showed little difference in intelligence.

Differences were found between the various breeds. Chihuahuas were found to be very dumb. The smartest breed, according to test results, is the standard poodle. But, says Daiquiri's owner, don't put too much stock in those test results, which were on tests with 20-25 dogs in each breed.

"I was surprised by the variability," she admits. "But I do not at all think it was definitive. I don't want people to take it seriously."

Some chihuahuas may be downright brilliant, she said, while a standard poodle could be as dumb as a sleepily cucumber. What it all amounts to, she said, is that dogs must be judged individually.

Her book sells for \$2.95 and is available in the Detroit area.



Kathy Coon holds a relaxed Muffin for 30 seconds (above left) and then releases the dog to search out the treat hidden under one of the plastic cups (above right). Muffin, a young cocker spaniel, failed this portion of the test. But when asked

to leap over a towel held across a doorway, Muffin proved to be a champ. The tests are designed by Ms. Coon to determine a dog's memory and ability to adapt to new situations. The entire test can be administered in about 20 min-

utes and requires only a few easily obtained items. Results of the test may not qualify your dog for a college scholarship, but it may give you a better understanding of your dog's abilities. Ms. Coon said.

Staff photos by Gary Friedman

Cartoons by Mike Scovel and Ted Ohtari

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

***GOTTA START** out with this little ditty for all you folks who just can't wait for the weekend or retirement. Consider **POLLY GADSBY**. She worked for 36 years—a record. She started at age 9 and wrapped elastic for the same company until the age of 95 in 1932.

***KNOW A HIDDEN** Holbein or a would be Warhol? The Farmington Area Arts Commission is sponsoring its annual Artist in Residence program to honor excellence in the arts among persons living in the Farmington and Farmington Hills area. Deadlines for nominations is May 25. Nominations should include letters with information concerning the artist's work and other facts pertinent to the nominee's qualifications. Nominations can be mailed to Artists in Residence Committee, Chairman Herb Henry, 34043 Schulte Drive, Farmington. The winner will be announced on June 11 during a ceremony at Mercy Conference Center.

***THE FARMINGTON MUSICALS** is trying to raise money for a piano which will be donated to the Farmington Hills Library on Twelve Mile. The only problem is that they're unsure where the piano will be kept. Seems the library was built to insure readers some peace and quiet. That's nice, but all the sound-deadening material in the building hinders the sounds of music. Of the last musical event conducted in the Twelve Mile branch, one Musicales member says: "You could hardly hear the French horn. But you could hear the saxophone because he played right into the audience." Obviously, not everyone believes silence is golden.

***A BETTER SOUND** can be heard at Clarenceville's Louis Schmidt Auditorium, 2015 Middlebelt, Livonia. On May 21, **WOODY HERMAN** and his young Thunder Herd will appear in concert at 8 p.m. Warm up will be by the Northville High Jazz Ensemble at 7:30 p.m. There will be a celebration in honor of Woody's 65th birthday. Come early and sign the birthday card in the lobby of the auditorium. Tickets are \$5 and \$6 and are available at Hammel Music, Livonia Mall Record and Tape, Marty's Records in Birmingham and Rocky's Records and Tape on Telegraph in Detroit.

***SWING YOUR PARTNER.** The Fancy Farmers of Farmington are having a graduation gala square dance at 8 p.m. at the Farmington Training Center, Warner and Thomas. **BRUCE LIGHT**, caller, and **KAREN DZIEGIELSKI**, round dance caller, will be featured.

***TERESA KUZINSKI** of Farmington garnered herself some musical honors by being awarded the Senior Music Award and named to Mu Phi Epsilon at the 1978 Olivet College honors convocation. She is a senior majoring in vocal music performance.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kuzinski. The awards are given to those students who have shown superior musicianship and have made outstanding contributions to the music department while maintaining high academic standards.

***A TWO-DAY** conference dealing with the problems of alcoholism in the home and work place, sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism, Greater Detroit Area, is scheduled for May 19-20 at Cobo Hall. Information concerning registration for the two-day seminar or the recognition banquet on Friday evening can be obtained by calling the National Council on Alcoholism, 273-5500.

***APPLESAUCE, ANYONE?** It's in good supply at local food markets across Michigan, according to the Michigan State Apple Committee. Not only is it abundant, but it comes sweetened or unsweetened. Unsweetened means that no artificial sweeteners or additives have been added. Calorie-conscious consumers can check the label for this information. There is also a chunky style applesauce. It features chunks of apples in the sauce.

***OTHER FRUITS** will be featured as the American Wine Society conducts a program on tasting of Sebastiani varietal wines on May 19 at the Heritage Inn, 14700 E. Eight Mile at 8 p.m. Featured speaker will be **TORKILD NIELSEN**, the Michigan representative for the Sebastiani Wineries of Sonoma, Calif. and a Farmington Hills resident.

***HEY MOM,** get the family to take you out for breakfast on your day, May 14. The Novi Rotary Club will hold its annual Mother's Day family pancake breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon at the Novi High School commons. Ten Mile and Taft in Novi. Advance sale tickets are \$2 for adults, \$1.25 for children under 12 and \$6 for the family. For further information, call Gene Pisha at 349-1669 or 333-8900.

***OFF TO Cincinnati** in July will be physicians **FRANK McDEVITT** and **RICHARD KNIGHT**, both Farmington osteopaths, as delegates to the American Osteopathic Association's House of Delegates. They were chosen at the annual post-graduate conference of the Michigan Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons at the Detroit Plaza recently.

***WATERGATE-MANIA.** Legend has it that Queen Elizabeth I gambled with loaded dice. It's hard to know who to trust.

Remember, drop us a note to **INSIDE ANGLES**, P.O. BOX 63, SOUTHFIELD 48037.

Olivet honors Ms.

Kuzinski

Teresa Kuzinski, of Farmington, made the Olivet College Academic Achievement list for fall semester. She is a senior majoring in vocal music.

Hildebrand makes list

Karen Elaine Hildebrand, of 28250 New Castle, Farmington Hills, is named to the dean's list at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio for the winter quarter.

Perry wins scholarship

Kevin Perry of 23380 Glenbrook, Farmington Hills, placed fourth in the state in the Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition. A senior at Harrison High School, Perry won a Gold Key and a \$500 scholarship for his honor.

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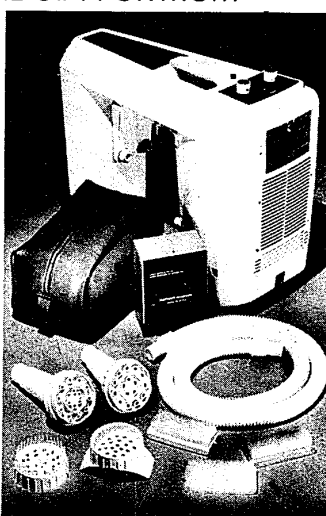
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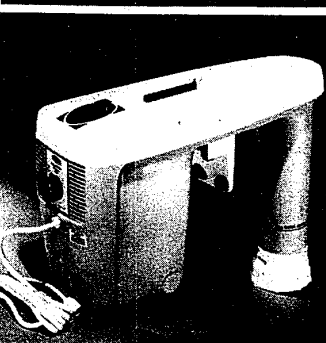
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MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY... MOTHER'S DAY IS MAY 14.

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