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Friday, 11/10/06

## Books help explain pet's unique personality

By SYLVIA SLAUGHTER  
Staff Writer

If a new Lab puppy soon will be sitting in your lap or an aquarium tops little Joe's holiday wish list followed by his cry for a kitten, you have a pet-friendly family.

To welcome that long-awaited Lab, the knitter in the family might want to greet him with a coat of many colors.

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Animal lovers that you, little Joe and the rest of the clan are, you still might need to increase your knowledge of both pup, finned and furry friends.

You might want to increase your pet-care library, too.

Here are some animal-inspired books destined to inform, entertain and enchant.

### Million-dollar question



enlarge

Most pet owners wonder why their pets act the way they do. Whether your pup drinks out of the toilet or your cat always seems to land on its feet, animal behavior fascinates many.

Reach Sylvia Slaughter at [sslaughter@tennessean.com](mailto:sslaughter@tennessean.com) or at 259-8053.

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"Do Cats Always Land on Their Feet?" (HCI, \$12.95) by Marty Becker and Gina Spadafori, has one long subtitle: 101 of the Most Perplexing Questions Answered About Feline Unfathomables, Medical Mysteries and Befuddling Behaviors.

Like its companion book, "Why Do Dogs Drink Out of the Toilet?" information from this little paperback will make a cat-lover the life of the party. Other

questions, of course, are tackled too, including the perennial — do cats have nine lives?

Go forth to the hors d' oeuvres table armed with one answer for now: If a cat doesn't always land on its feet, it certainly intends to.

"Cats" contains a little trivia and a lot of practical information.

**For the family 'purl'**

"Doggy Knits" (TFH Publications, \$17.95) by Anna Tillman, a how-to book, includes more than 20 designs, with the knitting projects ranging from those for the novice knitter to those for the more advanced knitter.

The instructions include directions not only for doggy sweaters but for raingear and legwarmers for your new Lab or for any other Rover you might love.

Please remember that some doggie foster families might welcome a sweater to help keep the canine guests in their homes warm this winter.

**All the little fishes**

"Freshwater Aquarium Problem Solver" (TFH Publications, \$9.95) by David E. Boruchowitz anticipates the problems little Joe (meaning Mom and Dad, too) could have with the new aquarium under the tree this Christmas and teaches new aquarists how to solve them.

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Boruchowitz should know the remedies: He lives on a farm in New York state with his family and not one, not two, but more than a dozen aquariums.

"Problem Solver" isn't written for a small child; however, the author shows what the child can learn by tagging alongside the adult fish keeper.

He even urges the adult to explain to the child why feuding fishes can't be punished or taught not to fight.

### **Glamorously catty**

"The Complete Cats in the Sun" by Hans Silvester (Chronicle Books, \$35) showcases, as the title suggests, cats in the sun, napping ever so peacefully under the Grecian skies or leaping and creeping along the sands. The backdrop is the picturesque Greek Cyclades Islands, where strays abound. Some controversy exists over whether Silvester's book is a morally accurate representation of the large stray cat population in the islands. But there's no question his evocative photos of these the well-fed, well-kempt felines do represent the photographer's love of his subjects. The book is enchanting.

The photography in the book cries out for a coffee table in a cat lover's home.

### **Best of breed**

"Labrador Retrievers" (TFH Publications, \$9.95) by Nikki Moustaki is proof positive that the Lab is one of, if not THE, favorite dog in America.

The author writes that Labs and kids go together like peanut butter and jelly.

She also writes that Labs are excellent retrievers, quick learners and high-energy animals that could play fetch the entire afternoon.

Moustaki covers every aspect of the Lab's life, from puppyhood to positive training.

She reminds prospective pup parents that Labs who live in the city need long daily walks and frequent romps in the doggie park.

Though Moustaki has nothing but praise for the Labs, she doesn't own one. She owns two Schnauzers. But a dog lover is a dog lover, no matter the breed curled up at her feet. •



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