



The First Lady takes son John, Jr., for a ride on Sardar, a gift from the president of Pakistan. Caroline is riding her pony Macaroni.

From the White House:

“Please, No More Pets!”

By MARYA SAUNDERS

Jackie celebrates her 34th birthday today, but she probably won't get an animal as a gift; like the rest of her family, she loves them—but enough is enough

MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY celebrates her 34th birthday today, and the White House has a request:

“Please, send no pets!”

But don't feel snubbed. Just about the same message was sent by the State Department recently to King Hassan of Morocco. The King, about to leave for his first official visit to the United States, was terribly disappointed. He had just ordered a small gray pony, its mane plaited with the Moroccan colors of red and green, as his present for the Kennedys.

“It's our policy not to accept ‘live gifts’ for the family,” Pamela Turnure, Jacqueline Kennedy's press secretary, explained. “If we hear somebody intends to send one, we write immediately saying we cannot accept it. Any animal that arrives without advance notice is watered and fed. It may even be kept overnight to make sure it's in good health, but then it is given away.”

So many “live gifts” have been sent to Caroline and her mother that for a while the White House was running the risk of being turned into a zoo. There had to be a clamp down. Not only was it swarming with animals, but some of the more mischievous ones were leading the First Family into undignified adventures.

Debbie and Billie were a pair of hamsters that managed to gain admittance to the Executive Mansion before rules were tightened. On their second night there, they discovered how to break out of their cages. They created quite a stir when the President stumbled on them in his bathroom. They disappeared again the next night, and President Kennedy found them under his bed.

Actually, the President himself might be responsible for starting the influx of animal gifts to his family. On Nov. 24, 1960, a little girl in

Palm Beach, Fla., gave President-elect Kennedy two ducks. He carried them home on his plane to give Caroline for her third birthday.

On Nov. 25 John, Jr., was born ahead of schedule. With all the excitement, John, Sr., did not neglect his ducks. In a press interview giving details of the birth, Pierre Salinger, the President's press secretary, also reported the ducks were doing fine and were at home in the bathtub.

Last year Caroline's canary, Robin, died despite the best care. Funeral services held on the lawn were attended by Caroline, her mother, and a few of Robin's close friends. He was buried, at Caroline's request, near the play area. Two parakeets, Maybelle and Bluebelle, are the only feathered friends currently in residence.

As a boy, President Kennedy's first pet was a Newfoundland. Mrs. Kennedy's first childhood pet was a Scotty. It was natural, then, that the first pet they bought Caroline was a dog—a dignified Welsh terrier named Charlie.

CHARLIE REIGNED as sole Kennedy canine for some time. But when Nikita Khrushchev gave Pushinka to Mrs. Kennedy, Charlie had real competition. “Have you met Pushinka?” Caroline would ask White House callers. Then she'd explain that the pet's mother was the famous Russian space dog Strelka.

It didn't take Pushinka long to establish herself as the President's problem pet as well. She first embarrassed the President by running away. Next, White House physicians became alarmed when the President broke out in a rash and started to sneeze. It was discovered that JFK was allergic to dog hair—and Pushinka had a full and fluffy white coat.

Banned to the far reaches of the White House, Pushinka coexisted with Charlie on the



Pushinka, the daughter of Russian space dog Strelka, was sent to the White House (with passport) as a gift from Khrushchev.

lawn and in the flower room. Her next problem was just a matter of time. On Dec. 7, 1962, the United Press reported, “Patter of litter feet due in Capital . . . Pushinka has been examined by veterinarians, and the signs indicate motherhood.” The report continued, “The father? All signs point to Charlie.” Later a discreet announcement was made. Pushinka had had a nervous breakdown and was in Walter Reed Hospital for treatment. Poor problem-prone Pushinka had lost her puppies.

When she recovered and returned home, another newcomer was vying for position as “top dog” in the animal kingdom on Pennsylvania Avenue. Joseph P. Kennedy had given his daughter-in-law a German shepherd named Clipper (pronounced Clippah). But Pushinka last month regained status by becoming the proud mother of four puppies.

If it were up to Caroline, the New Frontier would be something like Noah's Ark. When she was introduced to the astronauts, she looked at each one carefully. Then obviously disappointed, she turned to Lt. Col. John Glenn and asked, “Where's the monkey?”

Caroline has two ponies, Macaroni and Tex, who sometimes graze on the White House grass. She and John, Jr., were each lifted astride a pony when scarcely a year old.

It is unfortunate for Caroline that the White House has had to clamp down on the size of its menagerie, and the Woman's National Press Club has recognized the Kennedy dilemma. A song in their 1963 show which annually spoofs politicians had Caroline lamenting:

“If Dad was a plumber we'd live in a house
As private, as private can be,
Just Mama and John, Macaroni, three dogs,
Two monkeys, one father, six turtles, and me.”