



Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn W. Watkins

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Too Selective An Appetite Is Dangerous for Survival

There are of course other reasons, but one very important one that accounts for the world's exploding human population is the fact the human animal is omnivorous, and will eat anything and everything, flesh or vegetable, while those poor unfortunates that are monophagous, have become so specialized in their food requirements they will starve to death because of one specific food.

In this living world there are at least two that are truly omnivorous — man and rat. Rats will probably outlive all other four-footed on this earth, except some of the domestic animals, the reason being their wide and lengthy range of food. Both will, can, and do, eat anything, vegetable or animal, that grows, swims, flies, crawls, runs, or walks.

Those animal species that have survived are those whose food preferences are adjustable. Too much specialization can be disastrous. Very definitely nature made a mistake when she created creatures that must depend on special foods; a few are so restricted they can subsist only on one or two kinds.

The vegetarians of course will not eat meat; neither will the true carnivores eat vegetable matter, but even these two classes of animals are painfully selective. A carnivore will eat anything of flesh, or the vegetable eater will eat any sort of vegetation. The bear, a carnivore, will eat berries; a dog will eat certain plant materials.

Anti-Survival

This somewhat limited specialization is not so potentially dangerous as that which restricts an animal's food to a specific item. There are several of these, and all are constantly on the anti-survival list. Always they are balanced on the knife-edge.

One of the lowly ones is the silkworm who cannot be fooled into eating anything except the leaves of the mulberry tree. A shortage of that particular tree equals a resultant shortage of silkworms. Even more pathetic is the plight of the cunning little Koala bear of Australia. It is one of the marsupials, related to our opossum, which will eat only the leaves of the eucalyptus tree. Without that one specific kind of food the little things wither away and die. Already their range is restricted, almost as much as their diet requirements, as many areas of the trees are being destroyed.

Final Doom

The destruction by accident, design or disease, of large areas of common eel grass in tidal flats or ponds, will spell final doom to brants, a duck-like form of wild geese, for without eel grass on which to feed the birds' numbers decline.

The only survival insurance these animals have, whose diet specialization demands a specific food, is the continuance of that one food. The necessity, desire, or ability to eat anything and everything, will assure the continuation of that particular species. Those with too selective an appetite can look ahead to pretty hard times; they are sadly out of balance on the biological teeter-totter.

Homes Director to Speak at Meetings

Miss Elda Russell, executive director of the Albertina Kerr Homes in Portland, will address a meeting of Medford public school teachers at Hedrick Junior High school Sept. 3.

She also will speak at a combined meeting of the Rotary and Lions clubs at noon Tuesday.

Miss Russell has been in charge of the Albertina Kerr Homes for the past fifteen years. Albertina Kerr Homes is a multiple service agency operating the Albertina Kerr Nursery, Louise Haven for Girls and Juvenile Clinic. The agency also houses for children in a home-like program and is licensed to place children in adoption.

Albertina Kerr Homes serves from 400 to 500 children yearly, many of whom are from Jackson county. Thirty-four hundred days of care were given Jackson county children last year by Albertina Homes.

Albertina Kerr Homes receives support from United Funds throughout Oregon including the United Crusade of Medford and the Ashland-Talent United Funds.

The Albertina Kerr homes was the recipient of a bequest of \$400,000 from the estate of the late John R. Golin.

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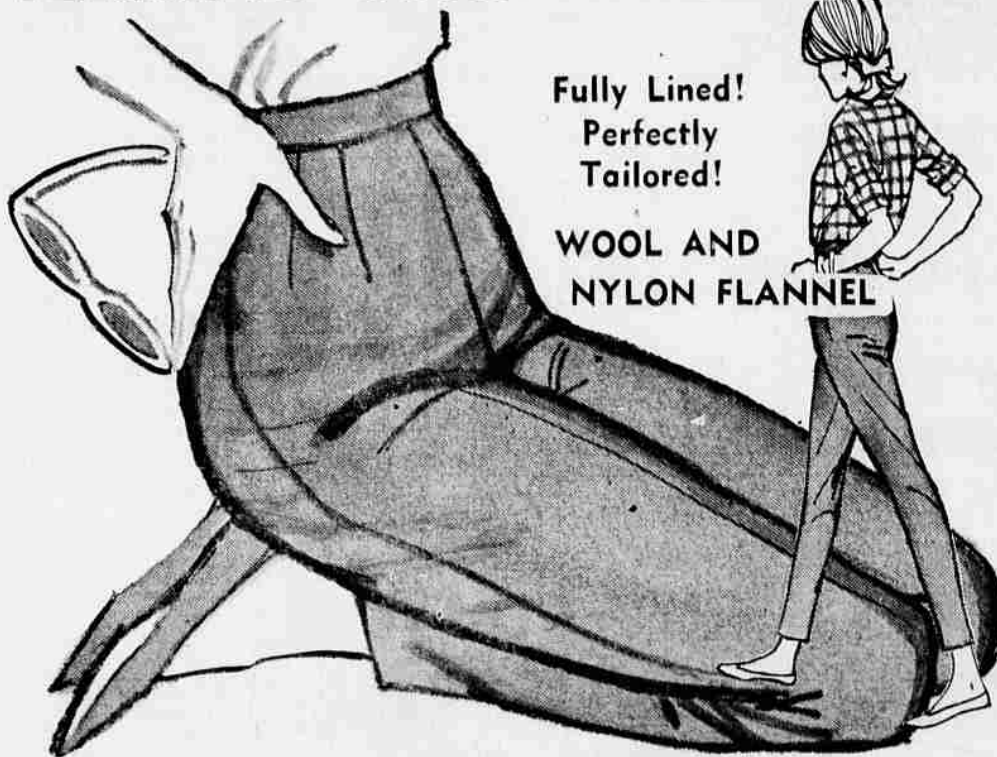
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Sizes 4 to 14

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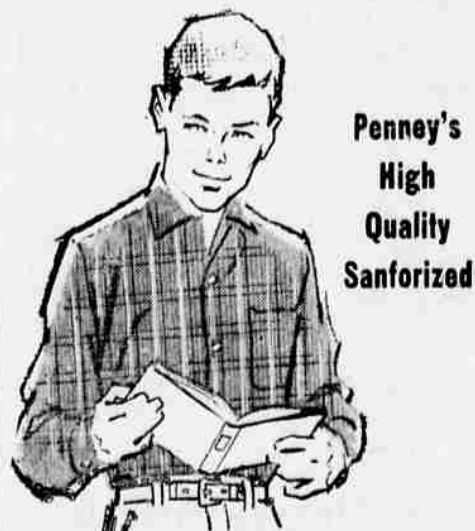
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