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Lab method deodorizes a skunk-afflicted pet

Paul Krebaum reports from Lisle, Ill., on an apparently good method of "de-scenting one's pets."

For several years, he says, his group has been using alkaline hydrogen peroxide (30% H₂O₂, 6M NaOH) to scrub hydrogen sulfide from waste gas streams in the laboratory. This reagent, he says, also works well for destroying excess thiols in dilute aqueous solution.

Some time ago, Krebaum says, a colleague announced that his cat had "had a rather unpleasant encounter with a skunk." The colleague had tried the standard remedies (for example, tomato juice), but the cat was still too rank to be let into the house. Because skunk spray is composed mainly of low molecular weight thiols, Krebaum says, he suggested that the cat be bathed in a version of the lab's alkaline hydrogen peroxide reagent. The colleague reported the next day that the stuff had worked like magic, and the cat was back in the house.

Krebaum says the formula (for pets) is as follows:

- 1 qt 3% hydrogen peroxide (from drugstore).
- ¼ cup baking soda (sodium bicarbonate).
- 1 teaspoon liquid soap.

The bath should be followed with a tap water rinse.

Gin maker thinks 18th century processes best

Adrian Daane sent from Newnan, Ga., a paean to Gordon's London Dry Gin that he found in AirUK's in-flight magazine, *Flagship*, for August-September. Naturally, Gordon's is all natural. "No chemical elements have ever been used in its 200-year history of manufacture. ... Chemistry may have led to progress in many fields. But the Gordon's distillers believe that the natural processes used in the 18th century are still the best."

Alexander Gordon, a Scotsman, established the first Gordon's gin distillery in 1769 in London, according to *Flagship*. Success evidently came quick-

ly, and British naval officers helped spread the word of the "delights" of this beverage throughout the world. Gordon's was sold almost entirely in casks until 1919, when the company started selling bottled gin through retail outlets. The company appears to be big on tradition. One of its currently operating copper stills came on-line during the reign of George III.

Gordon's recipe "is known only to a privileged handful of people," *Flagship* reports. It may be revealed, however, that it includes some 30 herbs and spices. One is reminded of a beverage called May Queen once described by the fifth Earl of Ickenham (a P. G. Wodehouse character), at the time masquerading as a psychiatrist, as follows: "Its full name is 'Tomorrow'll be of all the year the maddest, merriest day, for I'm to be Queen of the May, Mother, I'm to be Queen of the May.' A clumsy title, generally shortened for purposes of ordinary conversation. Its foundation is any good dry champagne, to which is added liqueur brandy, Armagnac, kummel, yellow chartreuse, and old stout, to taste. It is a good many years since I tried it myself but I can thoroughly recommend it to alleviate the deepest despondency."

Spelling with elements

Scott Mitson of Honeyville, Utah, writes that he has found 12 elements that can be spelled using only elemental symbols. They are the following:

ArSeNiC	KrYpTOn
AsTaTiNe	NeON
BiSmUTH	PHoSPHoRuS
CArBON	SiLiCoN
CoPPER	TiN
IrON	XeNoN

"Is this already known?" Mitson asks.

Department of obscure information

- Design speeds of modern U.S. highways range up to 70 mph.
- U.S. sales of chewing gum totaled \$1.33 billion in 1991. •
- The average adult inhales 440 cu ft of air in 24 hours.