

Teaching that old cat new tricks

In my house lives a cat. She's quite an old cat, and actually celebrated her 15th birthday on Halloween night.

Pounce is her name, and it could be said that she's a bit strong-minded— putting it mildly.

She's the only cat I've ever taken to a vet to be told "Well Ted, she really is a mean cat."

Well, more accurately, she was referred to as a miserable b---h, which is strange considering she's NOT a dog.

Another time, I asked a vet about having Pounce de-clawed, since she's wreaked havoc on the furniture in the house over the years.

The vet looked at me with that cold expression reserved for child molesters, saying, "I wouldn't recommend having a cat her age de-clawed— it would be much too traumatic."

(When I suggested that euthanization might be a helluva lot more traumatic, my comment wasn't really too well received.)

Like most seniors, Pounce doesn't embrace change. When one of my daughters' boyfriends presented her with a kitten a few years back, Pounce became really miffed by the invasion of her turf, resulting in marked territory, ripped furniture and wallpaper, not to mention a whole lot of hissing and spitting.

But, since that same kitten went out one night never to be seen again, (we assume she became wolf fodder,) Pounce has become semi-civilized, almost to the point of even being congenial.

But she has one habit that is annoying.

Being a long-haired cat, she leaves a trail of fur on most furniture she sleeps on. Her most recent target is the loveseat in the den.

Years ago, we purchased a cat's basket for her to sleep in, but the one episode of placing her in it was immediately followed by her turning her nose up at it, never to return to it again.

So it's been used to store magazines.

Needing a challenge in my life, I decided that years after the fact, I'd convince Pounce that it was her idea to sleep in the basket.

A
TED
BIT



Ted Brown

This cat is obsessed with sleeping in confined areas. Leave a cardboard box out, or a shopping bag, and sure 'nuff, she'll curl up in it. Just don't tell her she has to.

Approaching the basket issue the same way, I set it in the den earlier this week, strategically placed in a nice warm sunbeam.

I even casually tossed a couple cat treats in the direction of the basket, which was haphazardly lined with a couple of old towels.

Amazingly, one treat landed in the basket. I then left the room.

Pounce watched me with an air of suspicion, and finally decided closer observation was in order. She wandered close by the basket, and decided a treat wasn't that threatening.

She ate one, then another, and finally one in the basket. She didn't stay there more than 30 seconds, but I could tell she was taking inventory for future reference. I then moved the basket.

Wednesday night, as my daughter and I watched TV, Pounce wandered past us, and crawled into the basket for about five minutes.

She was hooked, I could tell.

Thursday morning, I smiled as I saw her curled up in her new nest.

I'm pretty sure she figures it's her idea, and I ain't about to tell her otherwise. And I suspect she'll continue to use the basket as a bed, so long as I'm careful of one thing.

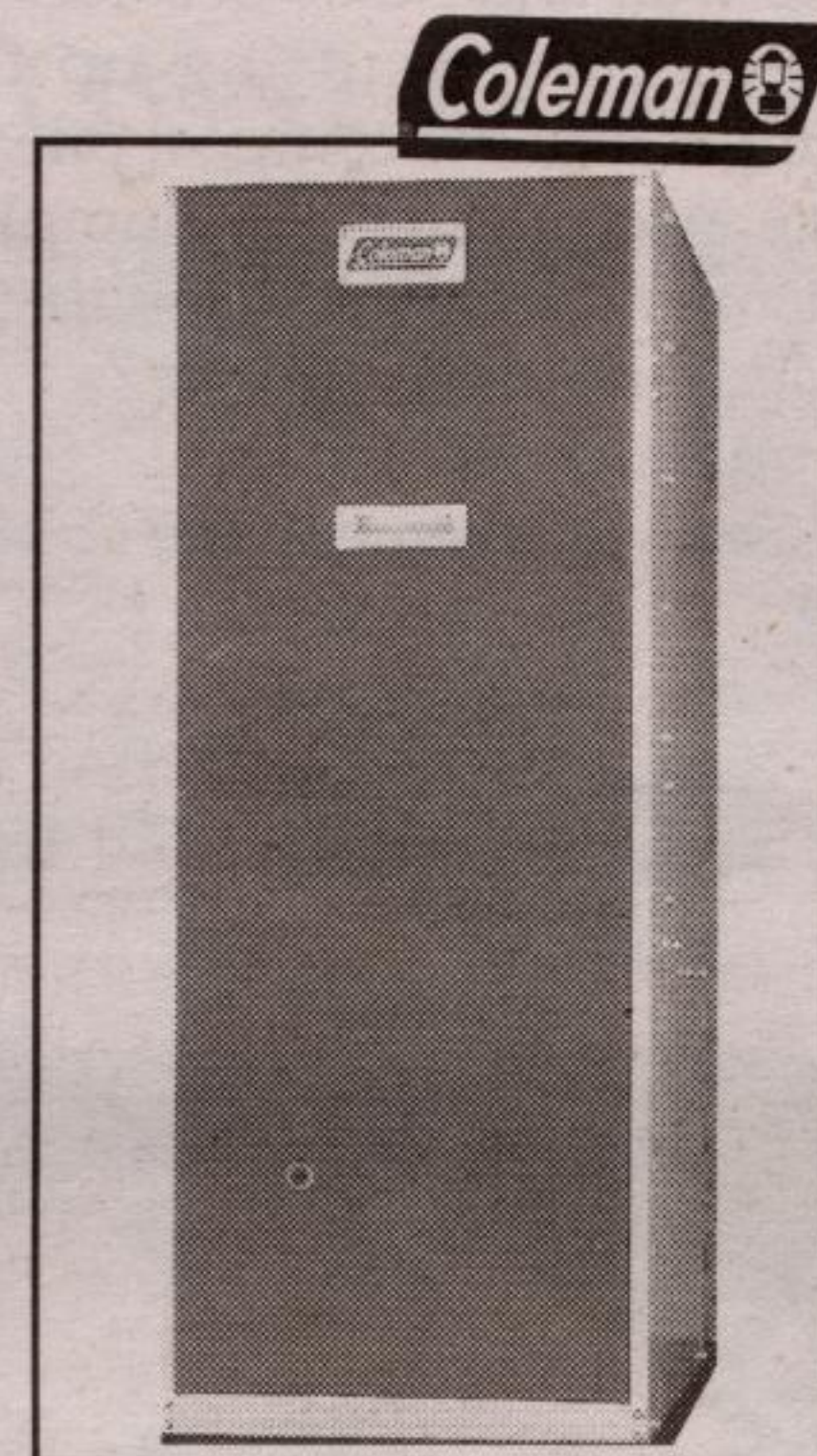
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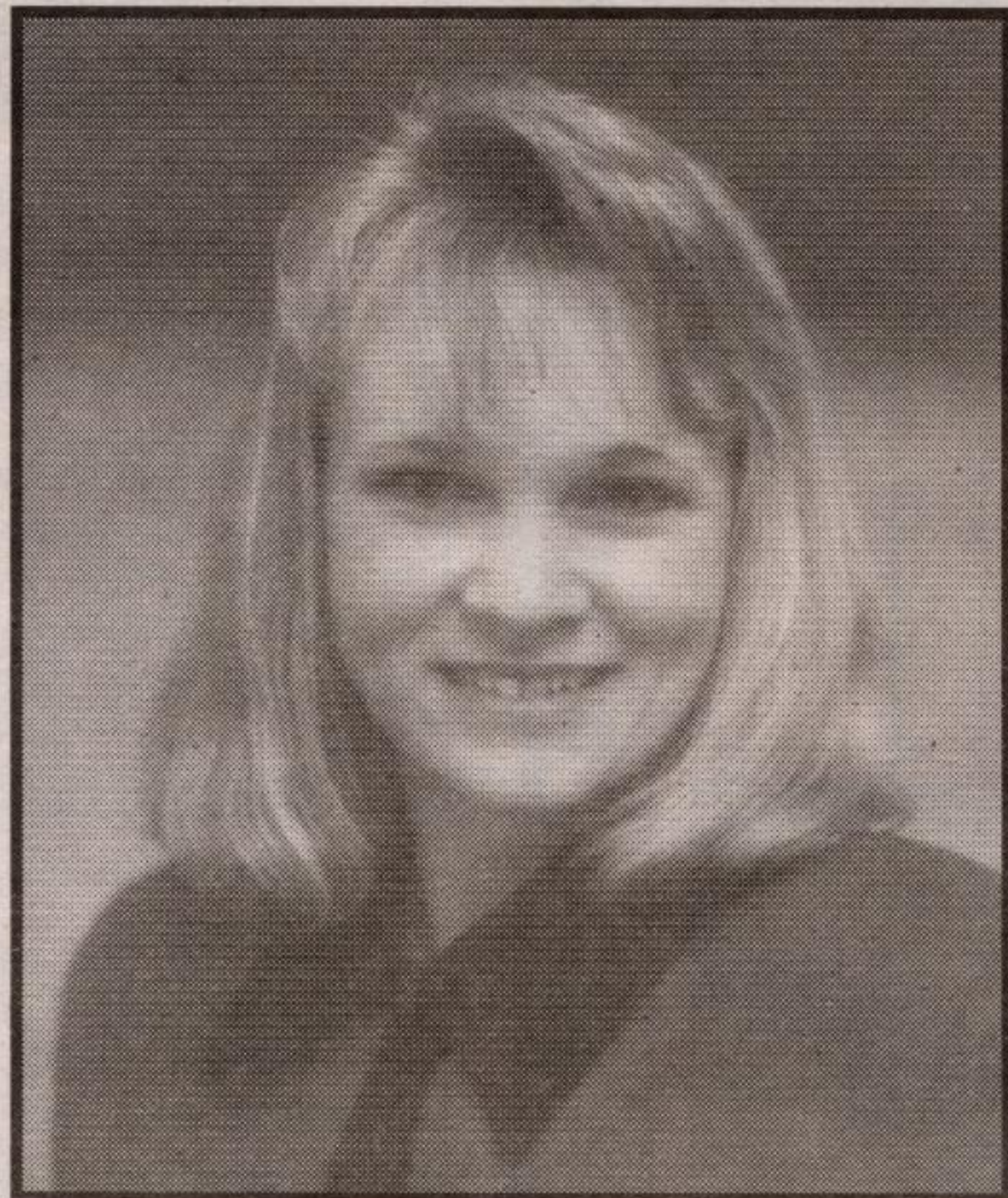


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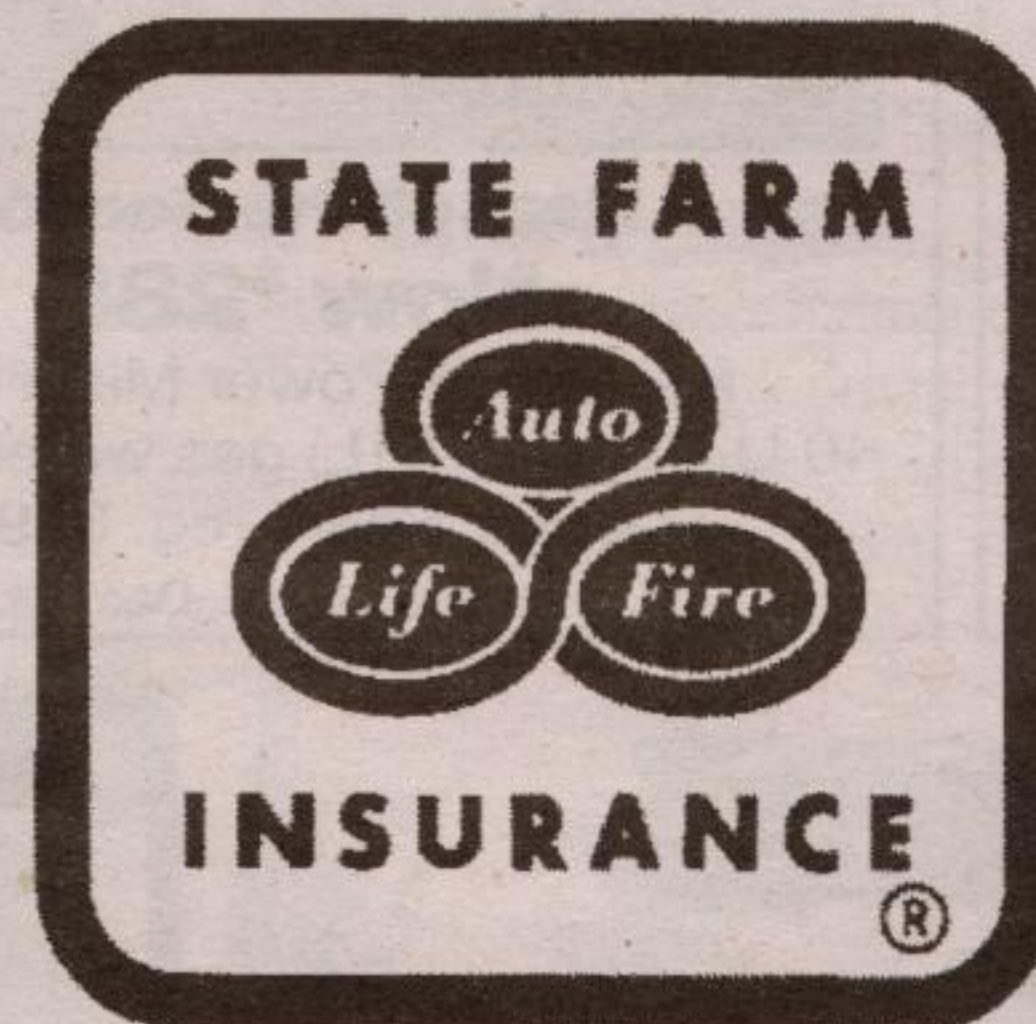
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