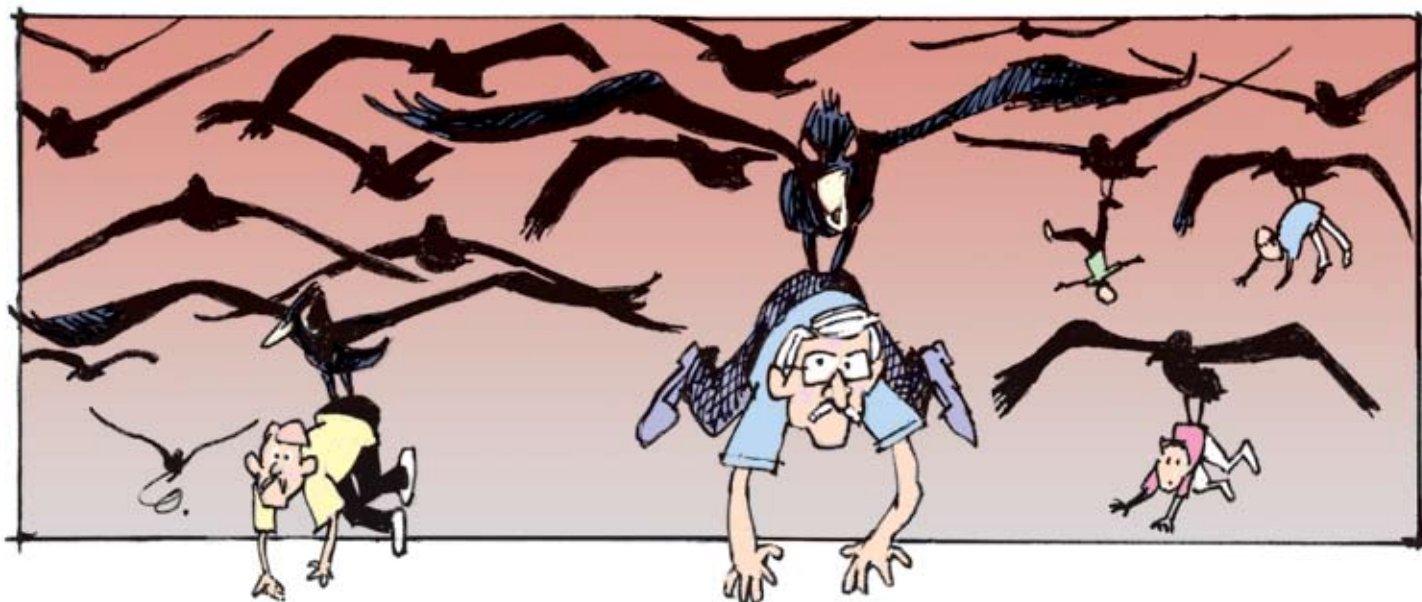


Animal Revolt



One small step for mankind, but a real bummer for generations of frogs.

→ Robert E. Horseman, DDS

ILLUSTRATION
BY CHARLIE O.
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“Today,” the instructor explained, “we will coat a rotating drum with some lampblack, attach some electrodes to a frog’s leg and observe what happens when we apply 40,000 megavolts.”

It was shortly after that I became a semi-supporter of animal rights groups. Physiology labs have been doing this sort of thing for ages, and all that ever happens is that the frog’s leg predictably twitches when the current is applied. The fact that a record is made on the rotating drum in the name of science, does not justify the indignity in the slightest.

The only thing more traumatic from an apprehensive frog’s point of view would be that the experiments take place in a French lab under the supervision of a cordon bleu chef.

You could look at that drum until your eyes bled and come to only one conclusion — duh. One small step for mankind,

but a real bummer for generations of frogs who, if my worst fears are realized, will someday arise and wreak their vengeance on all of us who participated, albeit unwillingly, in these seemingly irrelevant experiments.

Even more horrendous were those hours in zoology labs where I was forced at gunpoint to dissect not only a frog, but an acanthus shark and, God forgive me, an actual cat. When you have an assortment of amphibian parts scattered over your desk, fingers slimed with what passes for frog blood and realize that from all this will come no major boost to your dental career, you know that you will never watch Kermit again with any peace of mind. No wonder he claims it’s hard being green; man, it’s downright fatal!

The possibility that animal experimentation may return someday to bite us

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DR. BOB, CONTINUED FROM 390

was illustrated a few years ago in a movie directed by a rotund English director named Alfred Hitchcock. His film, called “The Birds,” was pitched for weeks prior to its premiere with the ungrammatical, but chillingly prophetic warning that “The Birds is coming!”

And they did, too. Millions of black-birds, ravens, crows and gulls, setting aside for the moment whatever avian jealousies that had divided them, banded together to terrorize an entire town and one hapless inhabitant, Tippi Hedren, in particular.

It was not a pretty sight as the madened creatures darkened the sky, speckling targets of opportunity below them and dominating the soundtrack with their demands that a government *of* the birds and *by* the birds would be *for* the birds and should be implemented immediately. I forget exactly how all this ended, except that the birds’ agents were alarmed to observe their clients colliding at speeds exceeding 200 mph, making the likelihood of a sequel very iffy.

Tippi Hedren emerged disheveled, but otherwise intact, to eventually become “den mother” to lions, tigers, leopards, and cougars at the Roar Foundation’s Shambala Preserve near Acton, Calif. She loves wild animals — birds, not so much — and will be most remembered for making it less onerous for women with comical names like Tuesday Weld, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tipper Gore to appear in public without embarrassment.

A jihad of birds is one thing, but an even more ominous possibility is the growing discontent evident in the canine population. For years, dental research involving dogs has been providing us with valuable information, none of which explains why they find it necessary to urinate so indiscriminately and how they can display so much unconditional affection to really bad persons.

From the dogs’ point of view, no amount of stick throwing, scratching behind the ears, and succulent cans of Kennel Ration is going to make up for their discomfiture in the laboratory. Dogs are acutely aware of the unfairness of not being given opposable thumbs on their paws. Because of this anatomical oversight, even doorknobs that represent freedom to them become objects of unmanageable high-tech machinery, necessitating humiliating, and obsequious toadying.

It would not surprise me to learn that death squads of Rottweilers, Dobermans and pit bulls have been secretly formed to recruit Poodles, Yorkies and Beagles with the goal of plotting our comeuppance.

What’s worse, one of our own, Lytle S. Adams, a dentist from Pennsylvania in the early days of World War II, had a brilliant idea to bring the Japanese conflict to an early conclusion. He’s the one who came up with the notion of attaching small incendiary bombs to bats and dropping them out of airplanes to start the mother of all fires in Tokyo.

Considerable thought and \$2 million of the taxpayers’ money went into this scheme. After a couple of years of bat sitting and the formation of guano-intensive policing details, the War Department was ready for a test run at an air base near Carlsbad, New Mexico, with little dummy bombs.

The kamikaze bats, who discovered too late that their names were on the duty roster, were refrigerated to stop their whining, then the bombs were attached and the whole frigid flock flown in a B-26 to 5,000 feet for the test.

Alas, most of the bats, too groggy from their involuntary hibernation, augured straight in and died on impact. Back to the drawing board. Finally, in 1944, after a fire accidentally destroyed some of our own warehouse facilities by bats with a poorly developed sense of allegiance, the project was canceled.

The legends that are passed on by bats from one generation to the next, fix the blame for this whole fiasco squarely on the dentist who initiated the idea. That was 64 years ago during a Democratic administration. Bats today hate dentists and are solidly Republican.

Understandably, our relations with the animal kingdom are tenuous at best, and now that we’re waging all-out war on the viruses and bacteria that hang out like homeless squatters in our offices, we will have managed to antagonize nearly every living species.

Watch your back. ■■■■