

Save the Mice!



Disney's 4-foot simulation with its annoying voice and ill-fitting shoes has been no help at all.

First of all, let me state that I am not now, nor have I ever been, a member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals although I subscribe wholeheartedly to its goals.

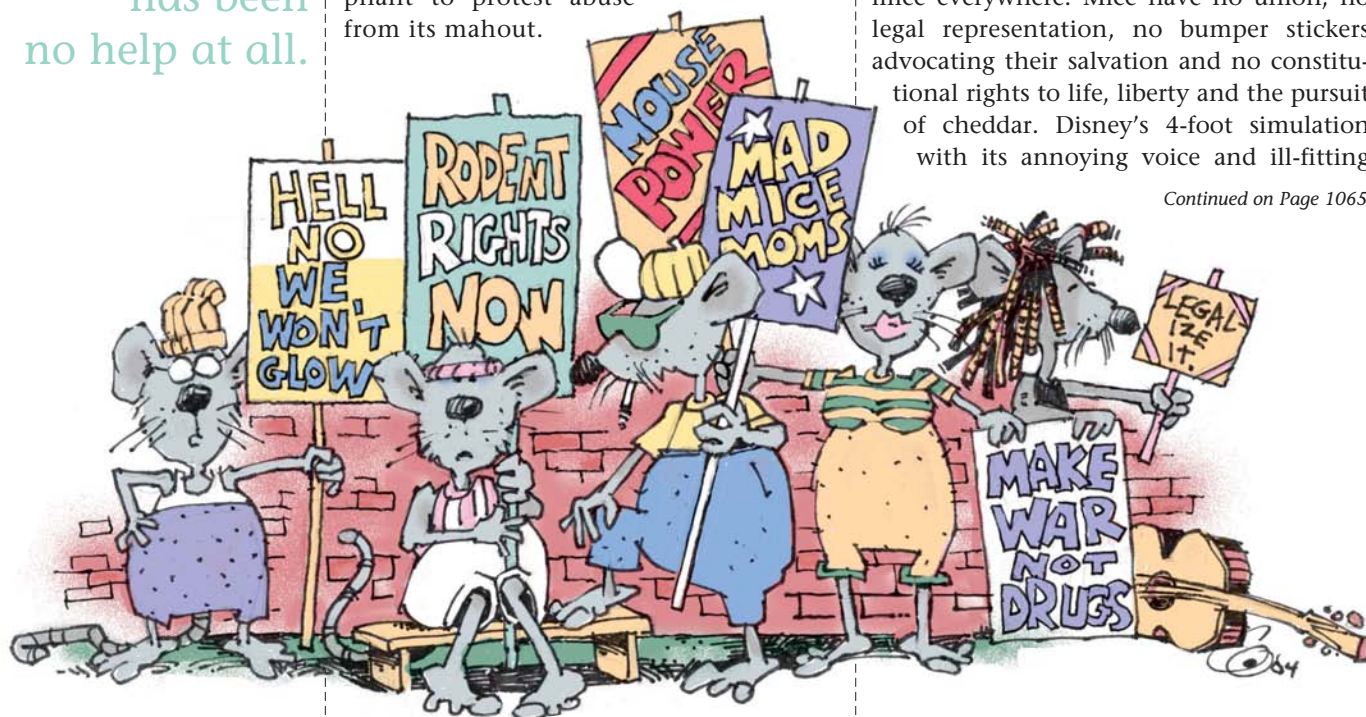
I believe animals, if left to their own volition, would rarely race around a track just for the fun of it even if they thought the rabbit was not bogus. I think they barely tolerate anyone straddling their spines whether it be jockey, cowpoke or lady in over-stuffed dressage gear. Jumping through flaming hoops would be met with lofty disregard as would be pulling heavy plows, or wearing ludicrous outfits and jeweled collars.

So I'm with PETA on these issues, but opt out when zealous members charge into a ring to terminate a staged dog fight, cock fight, or chain themselves to an elephant to protest abuse from its mahout.

I do suffer guilt pangs, especially since my own record of animal abuse is tarred with such incidents as putting my granddaughter's prized gecko out in the patio for some fresh air only to have it succumb to heat stroke during the four hours I was sorting out the Sunday newspaper. I was also particularly unresponsive with a thoroughbred Burmese cat afflicted with cataclysmic halitosis. These incidents have weighed heavily upon me until recently when I saw a chance to seek absolution for my lack of compassion.

In a belated attempt to make up for the fact I once fed baby mice to a corn snake to facilitate the passage of one of my progeny through high school biology with at least a C, I have taken up the cudgels on behalf of mice everywhere. Mice have no union, no legal representation, no bumper stickers advocating their salvation and no constitutional rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of cheddar. Disney's 4-foot simulation with its annoying voice and ill-fitting

Continued on Page 1065



Continued from Page 1064

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What mice do have are scientists. It doesn't take much imagination to visualize a morning roster at a typical laboratory.

Senior Mouse: "Gentlemen, and ladies, since this is an equal opportunity extinction program, all those in Group A, the Alzheimer Program, please form an orderly line and proceed to Elan Pharmaceuticals in Dublin, Calif. Those in Group B, the Tooth-Buds-in-the-Kidney Program, count off by twos and check in at Guys Hospital in London."

Group B Spokesman: "If it's all the same to you, we would like to be transferred to the Exercise Pill Experiment."

Senior Mouse: "Sorry, it's full up. I might be able to get your people into the Recreational Whack-a-Mouse Program, however."

Group B Spokesman: "Uh ... we'll get back to you on that."

Senior Mouse: "OK, then. All the Propulis Anti-decay Group C personnel queue up for the bus to the University of Rochester. Group D, you are expected with your Adidas gear for the Exercise Pill Program at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Be certain you have your waiver of liability form with you. You people in Group E, stop climbing the walls over there and proceed to Rutgers University. Check in with Dr. Allen Conney for another round of caffeine injections."

Leftover Mouse: "What about us?"

Senior Mouse: "Because you remaining mice have exhibited the highest IQs

and have recorded the fastest time in the maze, you have been chosen to participate in the newest program. You ..."

Leftover Mouse, interrupting: "May we inquire as to the nature of this uh, opportunity?"

Senior Mouse: "Certainly. It also will take place at the University of Texas. Dr. Steven McKnight, chairman of the biochemistry department there wants to genetically engineer two of your genes, namely NPAS1 and NPAS2, to see if he can cause you to become psychotic. If he is successful in driving you nutzoid, he may be able to figure a way to treat schizophrenia in real people."

Leftover Mouse: "I see. And what's in it for us?"

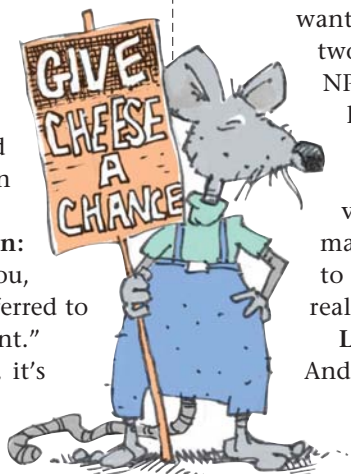
Senior Mouse: "You get a warm bed and 4 grams of Cheez-Whiz daily. Also a nice write-up in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Maybe a note of sympathy to your folks thanking them for your sacrifice in the name of science."

Leftover Mouse: "Sacrifice?"

Senior Mouse: "I meant contribution."

And off they go, noses twitching, little rodent hearts beating a bongo rhythm. Meanwhile, the PETA bunch is off throwing red paint on fur stoles and wringing their hands over conditions at puppy mills.

Wake up you animal lovers, lest someday we arise to find the wee cowerin' timorous beasties are an endangered species, a shock comparable to discovering there is not a single mattress sale in progress anywhere. **CDA**



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