

Anderson Afield

Animal rights extremists sometimes cause harm

By JOHN M. ANDERSON

Near the school of veterinary medicine of a midwestern university, horses wander the streets, jeopardizing themselves and motorists. In a fresh water marsh of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Preserve on the outskirts of New Orleans, thousands of nutria face starvation as they consume the last shred of vegetation. These unfortunate animals are victims of well-intentioned (?), misguided, ignorant and dangerous humans. There are over 300 groups of such people. They claim they are concerned with the "rights" of animals other than human.

On the apparent belief that it's cruel to use horses to teach students of veterinary medicine how to care for sick or injured animals, they smash the locks and turn horses loose. With wild enthusiasm, they shout, "We've set these animals free!" On the mistaken notion that "nature" governs all wild animals, they sue the National Park Service to prevent the NPS from trapping and removing the excess hordes of starving nutria. They think trapping cruel, but starvation is not.

Admittedly, before the white man's axe and plow altered their habitat, the bison, pigeons and all other native animals got along fine. The herbivores fed on vegetation; the carnivores fed on the herbivores. The little fish fed on algae and plankton; the big fish fed on the little fish. Ospreys, eagles, otters and Indians fed on the big fish.

But we can safely assume there were occasional droughts, floods, lightning fires and hurricanes that destroyed the habitat and caused the death of many plants and animals in some localities. There's an old saying that nature heals her wounds. I submit, however, that this is only true of wounds resulting from natural causes such as wind and weather, earthquakes, volcanoes, and the all-powerful streams that carve valleys and transport sediment from place to place.

Nature cannot recover from man-made disasters such as acid rain, insecticides and other poisons that pollute the air and water, including the oceans. When man imported nutria from South America and turned them loose in Louisiana, the big rodents began to destroy the marshes. When man dug canals and made other changes in the brackish Louisiana marshes the muskrats moved in from the north and east. In other words, the

Louisiana marshes did not evolve with muskrats and nutria. Muskrats and nutria do not "belong" in those marshes; they are there because of man-made changes. They are not well adapted to that environment. Consequently, their populations exhibit violent fluctuations. They build up to crisis levels, destroy their own food supply, and starve.

The marsh owners, be they federal, state or private, try to keep these herbivores in balance with their food supply through trapping. But the self-appointed saviors of animals are determined to prevent any and all attempts to control populations of any wild animal by any means.

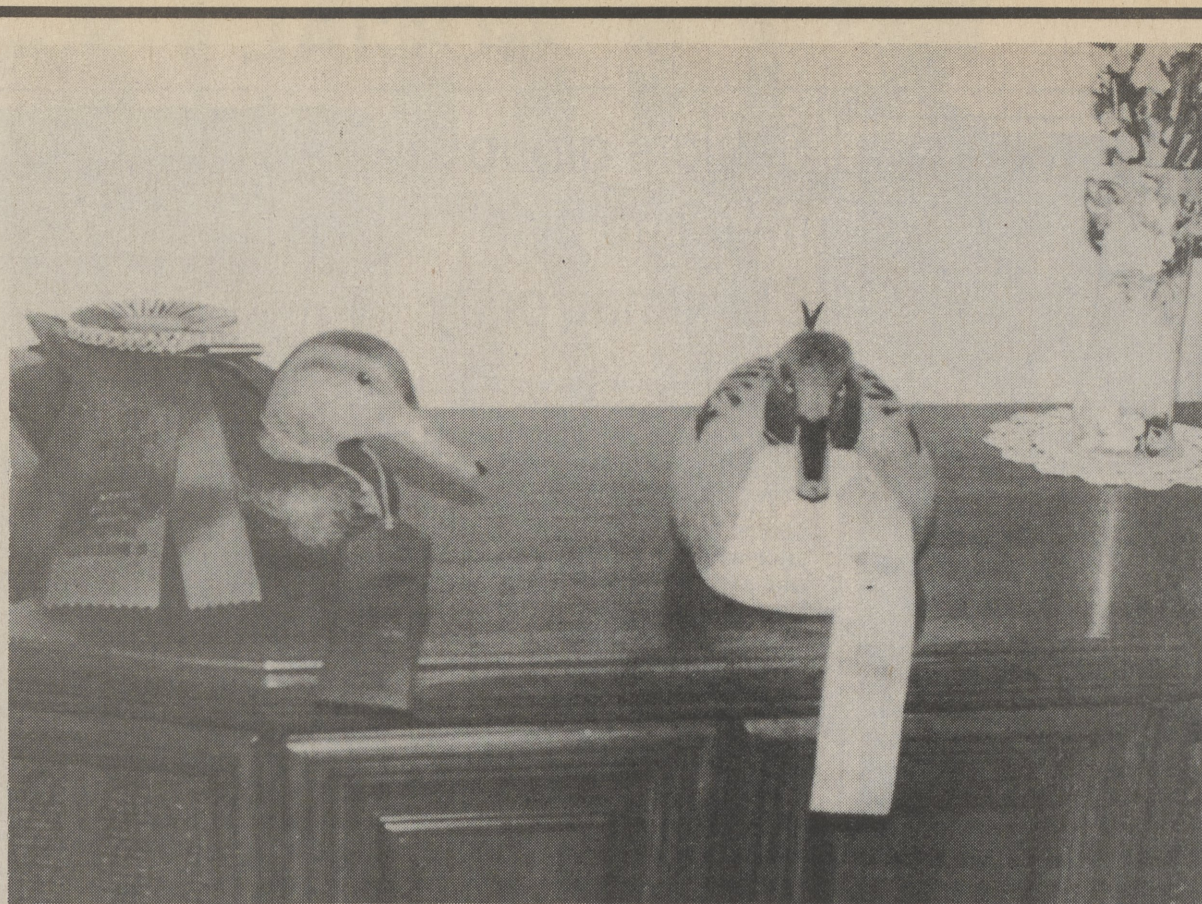
They also try to prevent scientists from suing white rats or any laboratory animal for research in medicine, nutrition, or genetics.

As a nation, we are finally aware that we are losing about 40 square miles of Louisiana marsh per year due to salt water intrusion. But we are also losing several square miles due to "eat-outs" caused by muskrats and nutria.

In contrast to the out-of-place muskrats and nutria, the bison and the grasslands that fed them evolved together. The bison did not stay in one place long enough to destroy the vegetation. In order to conquer the red man, the white man did away with the bison which the Indian used for food, shelter, and clothing. In substituting cows for buffalo, the white man fenced in his cattle and put more of them on the range than the grass could support. Consequently, much of the West is so badly overgrazed it will take years of proper management for it to recover.

If the animal rightists and other humaniacs would turn their attention to south land and wildlife management, instead of turning horses loose and suing the National Park Service, all animals, including humans, would be better off. As a young veterinarian friend said to me, "I'm in this profession because I love animals and want to keep them healthy. But because of the antics of the animal-rights activists, in the long run, thousands of animals are going to suffer needlessly. I sometimes wonder if their concern for animals is genuine. I suspect what they really want is control over the lives of people."

John M. "Frosty" Anderson was Director of the Wildlife Department of the National Audubon Society from 1966 until his retirement in 1987.



PRIZE WINNERS - Richard Disque's carved wooden ducks won three prizes including Best of Show at a show held recently in York. Disque has been carving for two years. (Photo by C.M. Denmon)

Disque's ducks are prize winners

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

Richard Disque of Dallas exhibited his handcarved ducks in the 1989 Pennsylvania Wildlife Arts Festival in York and came home with three ribbons, won by his entries in the Waterfowl division of the show. More than 30 carvings were entered in that division of the festival in which hundreds of entries were exhib-

ited in the various divisions.

Disque won first prize and Best of Show for a Black Mallard Duck, and third prize for a Pin Tail Duck. He has won four ribbons in the two shows he has entered since he began carving less than two years ago.

Winning the Best of Show moves Disque up from the Novice Class to Amateur Class.

He entered a Carolina Wood Duck in the Festival but it did

not win only because the small white spots which appear on the front of a Carolina Wood Duck were not positioned to turn the duck's head.

There is no monetary award given with the ribbons since this would move Disque into the professional class and he does not consider himself a professional. His Black Duck has won in both shows, Little Silver, N.J. and in York.

Indian summer draws boaters to Harveys Lake

By SCOTT A. DAVIS
Post Staff

Winter could be felt in the air around Harveys Lake early this past week with temperatures falling to the mid-40's, but later in the week and into the weekend the area experienced Indian Summer.

Temperatures rose well above the mid-60's average and landed at a comfortable 75 degrees. Boaters flock the lake during the weekend to take one last ride before putting the boats away for the winter months.

"I thought a few weeks ago ended my boating for this year," said Mechanicsburg resident Thomas Bilko as he put his boat into the lake waters Sunday. "This sudden temperature change was a welcome feeling."

Bilko, and many like him, had packed their boats away for the cold winter months to come. The sudden blast of warm air took many by surprise, and they were not about to allow the warm weather get away without one last ride.

"I just could not pass up this wonderful weather," said boater Patrick Metral. "This Indian Summer offered one last chance to enjoy the summer before the snow sets in. I did not expect to be out here since last month."

Metral and Bilko both agreed the weather change was quite a surprise. Bilko explained that the wet summer the area experienced gave him the impression the winter would be fast coming and hard hitting. "I expected snow this week. Today is as warm as most of the summer was," Bilko said.

Election day meals at Grange

The evening meal will be served starting at 4 p.m. It will be Chicken and Biscuits, mashed potatoes, Hubbard squash, homemade applesauce, peas, cole slaw, and apple or pumpkin pie. Donation for the dinner is \$5.00.

Election Day, November 7, Mountain Grange No. 567 at the junction of West Eighth Street and Bodle Road will be serving food all day including soup, wimpies, hot dogs, and meatball hoagies.

Jackson Township woman files suit against Allen's Subs Corp.

An alleged breach of contract has led a Jackson Township woman to file a \$20,000 lawsuit against Allen's Subs.

Lucille Parker, 1730 Sutton Road, Shavertown, filed the lawsuit against Allen's Subs International Corporation, 275 Mundy Street, Wilkes-Barre, at the Luzerne County Courthouse.

Parker claims she entered into a sub-franchise agreement with the defendant for \$20,000 on July 6, 1988. Parker stated in her suit the defendant has breached the agreement.

Parker is asking the courts to grant her a \$20,000 judgement plus interest and costs.

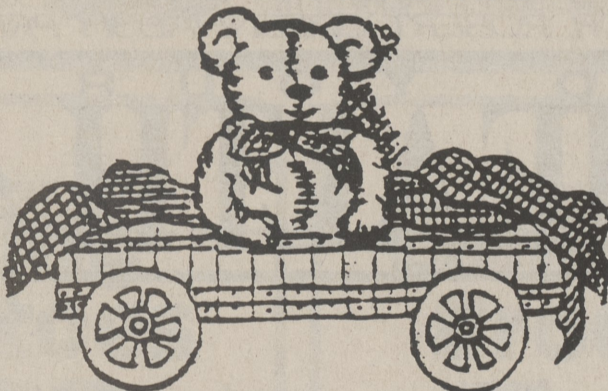


Nursery students open Children's Museum

Children of the Wyoming Seminary Nursery classes recently opened their very own Children's Museum with a reception for parents at the school in Forty Fort. Located in the Mural Room of the School, the museum will feature students' projects which they would like to share with the rest of the school. Students will act as guides, explaining the exhibits which will change about every week.

Seen with the opening exhibit on "The Ocean" are Angelo Medico, Dr. Juan Gaia and son Benjamin, Shavertown; Leah Budin, Trucksville; Steven Brown, Shavertown; Kasey Rodriguez.

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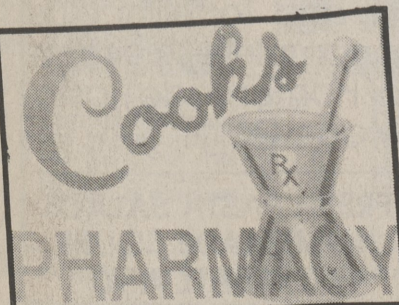
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