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The Probe, Issue 45 - August 1984

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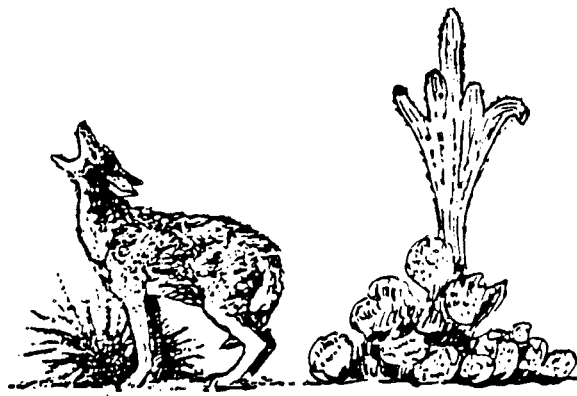


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THE PROBE



National Animal Damage Control Association

No. 45

August, 1984

NEWS FLASH !

Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) had announced that the House would hold hearings on HR 1797, the anti-trapping bill, on June 18th. Although hearings have been scheduled for the past 9 years they have never been held because wildlife groups have maintained that nothing new has been added to the picture since the tear-jerking performance by Mary Tyler Moore and other prominent, but not necessarily knowledgeable, characters in 1975. Well, you can put up your pencils, boys, as the word has come through the hearing has been indefinitely postponed, but keep your pencils sharpened.

The strychnine hearings have been put back to accommodate EPA. They have a new lawyer who is supposed to familiarize himself with the case but I am willing to bet he won't let the facts confuse him. The Washington meeting is set back to October 15th and the date of the field meeting in Rapid City, SD will be determined at that time.

It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress.

GOVERNMENT FEED TROUGH

We always knew the politicians loved to partake of the government bounty furnished by the taxpayers, but now it seems that the front end of the horse can eat just as heartily. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) may be forced to reprogram funds from its already sparse wildlife and range management programs to feed feral horses. Because of the overly-protective feral wild horse and burro law, BLM may have to steal from deprived native wildlife to sustain excess feral animals that it cannot dispose of legally.

Federal law prohibits BLM from selling excess horses for slaughter. The only alternative is to sell the horses or give them away for non-slaughter uses. The 'market' can't absorb the number of horses that should be removed from the range each year (whereas you can shoot elk and antelope when their numbers get too high). BLM currently has 2,800 horses in pens it can't get rid of. It costs more than \$8,000 per day to feed these animals and BLM is running out of hay money. Congress has not demanded that native wildlife be fed, but it requires a proper diet for the feral horses. BLM's wildlife program is already in the hole \$500,000 so other renewable resource efforts will probably be tapped to feed those walking ten-eighty stations.

This sorry situation emphasizes the need for Congress to amend 'Wild Horse Annie's' folly. Senator James McClure (ID) introduced a bill last year to permit BLM to humanely dispose of excess feral horses when they could not be sold or given away for other purposes, but like so many other 'hard' decisions facing Congress it is being put off in hopes the problem will go away. Thanx to OUTDOORS NEWS BULLETIN 38:10:3 (1984).

Reader, suppose you were an idiot; and suppose you were a member of Congress, but I repeat myself.

ASTM PUBLICATION STP 817

The AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TESTING AND MATERIALS has just published another book relative to ADC research. This is the collection of papers that were given at the Vertebrate Pest Control & Management Materials meeting in Monterey, CA, 1982. While these papers deal mainly with test protocols for ADC techniques, they contain valuable field data and should be in a good ADC library. I haven't space to review the many good papers in the publication, but I found Bob Schmidt/Ron Johnson's BIRD DISPERSAL RECORDINGS, Merson/Byers/Kaukeinen - POISONING HAZARD TO BIRDS FROM BROADCAST RODENT BAITs, Ashton/McCumber/ W.B.Jackson - COMPARATIVE FIELD TESTING OF RODENTICIDES, Morris/Proctor/Kaukeinen - TOXIC WICKS, Franz/Padula - GLUEBOARDS, Fagerstone - CENSUSING GROUND SQUIRRELS, and Fagre/ Howard /Barnum/Teranishi/Schultz/Stern - COYOTE LURES particularly interesting. The titles

of the papers are listed below:

COMPARISONS BETWEEN VERTEBRATE PEST CONTROL MATERIALS - Salmon/Lickliter
 EXPLOITABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEOPHOBIA AND FOOD AVERSIONS IN ADC - Reidinger/Mason
 BIRD DISPERSAL RECORDINGS - Schmidt/R. Johnson
 ENHANCEMENT OF AVIAN REPELLENTS WITH SENSORY CLUES - Bullard/Schafer/Bruggers
 ESTIMATING BIRD DAMAGE TO RICE - Otis/Holler/Lefebvre/ Mott
 EVALUATING BIRD REPELLENTS ON FRUIT - Tobin/DeHaven
 COMPARISON OF BIRD REPELLENT SEED CORN TREATMENTS - Heisterberg/Otis
 PRIMARY POISONING HAZARDS TO BIRDS FROM BROADCAST BAIT - Merson/Byers/Kaukeinen
 PREFERRED BAIT FOR QUELEA CONTROL - Shumake/Gaddis/Garrison
 OUTDOOR PENS FOR RODENTICIDE EFFICACY TESTING - Ashton/McCumber/ W.B.Jackson
 COMPARATIVE FIELD TESTS COMMENSAL RODENTICIDES - Ashton/ Jackson /McCumber
 TASTE QUALITIES OF RODENTICIDES - Stewart/Reidinger/Mason
 DEVELOPMENT OF TOXIC WICKS FOR RODENT CONTROL - Morris/Proctor/Kaukeinen
 EVALUATING RODENTICIDE EFFICACY - Spaulding/ W.B.Jackson
 FOOD CONTAINER RESISTANCE TO NORWAY RATS - Gahn/LaVoie
 EFFICACY OF GLUEBOARDS IN TRAPPING MICE - Frantz/Padula
 SIMULATED BURROW SYSTEM FOR TESTING FUMIGANTS - Elias/Savarie/Hayes/ Fall
 RAT DAMAGE TO WHEAT IN BANGLADESH - Sultana/Brooks/Poche
 VISUAL COUNTS FOR CENSUSING GROUND SQUIRRELS - Fagerstone
 PLOT OCCUPANCY FOR POCKET GOPHER ABUNDANCE & DAMAGE - Anthony/Barnes
 FIELD EVALUATION OF RODENTICIDES IN INDIA - Mathur/Prakash
 DEVELOPMENT OF COYOTE LURES - Fagre/ Howard /Barnum/etc.
 SELECTION & DEVELOPMENT OF PREDACIDES - Savarie/ Connolly
 BEHAVIOR OF FERAL DOGS AND CONTROL IN ALASKA - Gipson

These proceedings can be obtained from ASTM, 1916 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Good breeding consists in concealing how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of the other person.

COMPUTER RATS

While I am tempted to put these in the same class as mortar termites, the Japanese claim that computers make noises that attract rats. In fact the third largest cause of computer failures in Japan are reputedly by rats. They have the agile roof rat there who apparently enjoys invading computer rooms to gnaw on cables, urinate on connectors, and wreck general havoc on printouts. Because these are generally intermittent failures they are hard to detect.

Research indicated the rats were attracted to computer rooms by the ultrasonic hums given off by computer power supplies which may make the rats think they are made by other rats. The studies reported frequencies around 24 Khz were particularly beguiling. One of the countries leading rat catchers, Ikari, has built a trap of an ultrasonic sound generator programmed to make simulated squeaks. A powerful vacuum generator, activated by the approaching rat, sucks it up into a chamber that gasses it with carbon dioxide, disinfects it, and gift wraps it for subsequent disposal.

There are a couple of problems. As the trap is so large it will have to be installed when a building is under construction. They hope to have it in production by the end of the year. Thanx to NEW SCIENTIST, 102:1412:23 (1984)

I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.

SOUND OFF !!

While on the miracle of sound, there is a new device on the market that warns "most types of animals" of an approaching vehicle. This is attached to the bumper of a vehicle and emits ultrasonic sound waves that cannot be heard in the vehicle but warn animals. The device starts working at 30 mph and can alert animals up to 400 yards away. (Wonder if it will confuse police radar?) The manufacturer (SAV-A-LIFE, Inc., PO Box 1226, New York, NY 10025) claims it is reducing animal collisions with vehicles by more than 80%. (I wish I wasn't such a skeptic - I really do miss not believing in Santy Claus) Thanx to OUTDOORS NEWS BULLETIN (3/9/84)

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

THE WRONG WAY TO CUT BUREAUCRACY

The Administration is pressuring the USFWS and other agencies to use more contracting with outside groups as suggested by Office of Management and Budget. As Dr. Raymond Johnson, retired USFWS, points out - with only rare exceptions contracted programs are deficient and inferior unless the contractors are closely supervised. This practice would also "...destroy the cadres of incomparable talent and dedicated expertise that are unique in many federal agencies." The tendency is to create "...short-lived, profit-oriented, incompetent private groups that have little prospect of achieving professional and financial stability." Thanx to Mike Fall & OUTDOORS NEWS BULLETIN, 5/18/84.

It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: Freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them.

LETTERS TO YE ED

Your recent note in THE PROBE (#44) about postal employees in Albuquerque dumping bulk mail has prompted me to get a request off to you. I've apparently missed #41 since I've been a member and if you have an extra copy I would appreciate getting one. Thanks. I do really enjoy THE PROBE. It's one of the few things that come in the mail that I read from front to back with pleasure. And while I'm writing, the

enclosed article came from the WASHINGTON POST about wild animal/people conflicts in big city settings (this was another account of an urban trapper like the clipping Dr. Pratt sent me from the ATLANTA CONSTITUTION). There's nothing new in the article, as the problems never do change. Everyone likes wildlife and wants it around as long as someone else's property is being damaged. I really don't think that mentality will ever change. At any rate, hope you enjoy the article (I did and hope to write a story about it too) as much as I enjoy THE PROBE. (And I thank you, Jeff, for those kind words). Jeff Horwath, USFWS, Alexandria, VA.

I checked into the errors on the MIS figures Mr. Stair pointed out several months ago, but forgot to send them to you. The last PROBE jolted my memory. The reported loss of bighorn sheep was a result of miscoding and value error. Those bighorn sheep were really 'chickens'. The error on poultry losses was due to one value error on a card which valued turkeys at \$800 each! Most errors of this type are caught and corrected before they get too far. Last year we only reviewed the county roll-ups of supplement data for errors, which makes some errors hard to spot. This year we are going through each of the 5,000 plus supplements searching for errors which should improve the accuracy.

On another subject, we certainly appreciate your fine work with NADCA. We always look forward to receiving the PROBE to see what is going on with ADC around the country! Thanks again for all your efforts. (Can't stand two compliments in the same month) Gary Nunley, USFWS, San Antonio, TX

I spent two weeks back in Washington working on Section 7 biological (illogical) opinion for prairie dog control and the black-footed ferret. EPA has requested USFWS to reevaluate its older biological opinion regarding the use of fumigants (CO gas cartridge, aluminum and magnesium phosphide) for controlling prairie dogs. They now contend that non-jopardy was based on the small quantities of fumigants used on small tracts of land being too expensive to use on a large-scale basis. EPA has decided there is 'new evidence' that points to the danger of fumigants to ferrets. A draft from the Office of Endangered Species would all but eliminate the use of fumigants for prairie dogs. After meeting the OES people responsible, I was definitely aware of the seriousness of our problems in ADC. We did get a revised draft (which I didn't see). We had to compromise in many areas, but considering the original OES draft, I think the formal opinion will be more favorable for the use of fumigants. We will definitely want to keep on top of this because EPA will undoubtedly use this opinion during the upcoming strychnine hearings. Tom Hoffman, USFWS, Albuquerque, NM.

By trying we can easily learn to endure adversity. Another man's, I mean.

HERE'S A FREEBIE

Uncle Sam's private printing concern just sent me a propaganda release that it felt sure I could not resist telling you all about. They are putting out a new bimonthly listing of all new and revised Government books and periodicals for sale by the GPO. The publications are listed alphabetically by subject. Well, it is free so I'll waste my twenty cents and keep you posted if anything shows up. If you want to increase your own junk mail collection you can get your name on the list by writing: US Government Printing Office, Stop: MK, Washington, DC 20401.

Heaven goes by favor; if it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.

TEXAS TALL TALES

DFA Milt Reimers was asked to remove his equipment from a Travis County ranch because they were bringing in guard dogs. Two weeks later he was asked to return. Coyotes were killing angora kids and the dogs wouldn't stay in the pasture.

Armadillo lovers beware ! Seven cases of human leprosy have been reported from persons handling armadillos all from Victoria area in Texas. This is apparently confined to the coastal area as armadillos over 100 miles from the Gulf are a 200 to 1 shot of being infected.

Glynn Riley reports he's seen everything in the tree hugger line but a gal in Mills County really carries it a bit too far. She brings out barrels of meat scraps to feed her pets - vultures. Glynn saw about 30 black and turkey vultures perched on the top of her house (I'll that roof had distinctive whitewashing), "If I had been anywhere else, I would have thought someone was dead in the house. I guess the dears were just waiting - - for their friend to pass."

Bruce Leland reported 2 cases of calf predation by black vultures. In the first the rancher helped a newborn calf to escape but it was missing both eyes and soon died. In the second, 15 were attacking a newborn calf and cow. The cow tried to chase them off but they started to snap at the cow's genital organs. The rancher scared the birds off but not before the calf was dead. He described the whole ordeal as a scene from Hitchcock's THE BIRDS. Lifted from TEXAS TRAPLINE, May 84

Our Heavenly Father invented man because he was disappointed in the monkey.

DO IT YOURSELF ADC

Home kits for ADC can be expensive. In Dowsby Fen, England, a Nigerian do-it-yourselfer found out the hard way. He was having trouble with moles in the lawn of his country cottage so he decided to poison the varmit. As moles are nocturnal animals, he waited until dark and then switched on the lights of his Jaguar limo to light his way to the mole hole.

The car stalled so he had to start it again, but in the process he knocked it into reverse. It lurched backward and crashed into the wall of his cottage. The crash shattered his fuel tank, the gasoline ignited, and he watched both car and cottage go up in flames. He is quoted as saying, "I was lucky to get out alive. I couldn't even call the fire department because the flames burned through the telephone cable. I have never set eyes on a mole, but this one has been driving me insane. I still want to see that mole dead. Now I will pour a ton of concrete over the lawn and forget it." Thanx to John Maestrelli & SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE for 5 May 84

Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed.

NEW MEMBER

Our only new member since the last issue is:

Dr. James E. Knight, Wildlife Ext. Spec., NMSU, 5408 Wilt, Las Cruces, NM 88001

There is a lot to be said in her favor, but the other is more interesting.

ONE FOR OUR SIDE

According to the Federal Register, the US Fish & Wildlife Service has suddenly changed the status of the Utah prairie dog from 'endangered' to 'threatened'. Now a maximum of 5,000 animals can be taken annually under a permit system between June 1 and December 31 in parts of the Cedar & Parowan Valleys, Utah. They must have been eating on some legislator's ranch. Thanx to Don Spencer & FR 49:104:22330-22333

The holy passion of friendship is of so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring a nature that it will last through a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money.

DEBATE OUT OF BOUNDS !

That's the headlines in the Australian press as they protest the US Fish & Wildlife Service's withdrawal of its proposed delisting of the red, eastern and western gray kangaroos from the endangered species list. Understandably our Australian friends are very unhappy with this turn around as kangaroo exports represent a nice cash flow. They blame the small but vociferous U.S. 'kangaroo lobby' having a disproportionate influence on an administration grasping at straws to redeem their poor environmental record. The USFWS claims that the Australian Government misled them, reporting 32 million kangaroos were present in the country and later revising this to 19 million. In the all too typical USDI bureaucratic fashion of ignoring expert testimony in favor of emotional appeals, they choose not to wade through scientific evidence presented by such a respected zoologist as Dr. Gordon Grigg ('Roo Harvesting, AUSTRALIAN NATURAL HISTORY, 21:123-129, 1984).

Dr. Grigg points out that singling out the harvesting of kangaroos as a threat to the survival of a commercial species is a definite misjudgment of the real situation. The recent drought which was one of the worst in the continent's history reduced the Western Gray population 45% and the Reds 41%. However, kangaroos have lived with droughts for centuries. They adapt by lowering reproduction during drought years and when the rains come are able to show an annual rate increase of 25%. Records show that in the good years from 1978-81, the numbers of kangaroos increased steadily despite legal harvests of 1-2 hundred thousand animals (plus an unknown illegal kill).

Another little recognized biological fact is that with the emotional expenditure given the saving of these commercial species, little attention is being paid to the habits and needs of the other Macropods (smaller kangaroos and wallabys). So while the 3 species are probably the most abundant and secure of all kangaroos, comparatively little is known about the others. Dr. Grigg suggests that 'conservation' would be better served by directing the limited funds towards more critical situations in kangaroo land.

Also he points out that commercial kangaroo shooting is economic-dependent. Large harvests are only taken when the numbers are great. There is considerable opposition to the kangaroo industry on moral grounds, particularly of killing any animal. As in this country, Dr. Grigg states the proponents of this argument are usually vegetarians who avoid leather and feather products, "...they are consistent but very much in the minority."

The final point the U.S.A. seems to overlook in our 'holier than thou' stance is the kangaroo is as much a national emblem to Australia as the bald eagle is to the U.S.A. and they are guarding against its disappearance. Who has done the better job? Face it - we don't have 19 million bald eagles left. As a member of their legislative body pointed out, "...the harvest of black bear in Alaska (is) 13,000 out of a population of 35,000 to 50,000. The estimated harvest of cougar in Texas is 200 out of a population of only 500 - and we have Americans telling us not to cull kangaroos! Frankly, I think they have a bit of a hide." As the 1984 quota for kangaroos is 8.9% of the estimated population, I bloody well right think they have a beef. Thanx to B.V. "Bunny" Fennessey, CSIRO, Canberra, Australia.

Its about wimmins rites. i have red a guid many letters rit by wimmin in yur paper, and i vow things is cummin to a offal staitte when they is aloud to carri on at them raitts. this cumms of so much skoolin for gals. they wants to be eqil to us men.

AN EPIZOOTIC OF RABIES

Alan Beck (NATURAL HISTORY, pp 7-11, July, 1984) writes about raccoon rabies raging in the mid-Atlantic region and spilling over into the dog and cat population. Sporadic cases of rabid raccoons began to appear in central Florida in 1953 gradually moving up the southeastern states. By 1982 a clear pattern of an epizootic was seen in the mid-Atlantic region - West Virginia (43), Virginia (645), Maryland (118), Pennsylvania (26), and D.C. (5). The 837 rabid raccoons in 1982 totaled 1,608 in 1983. The outbreak continues unabated with more cases in nonraccoon species also being reported. Cat and dog cases, particularly the former, are increasing. While fox and skunk are a serious potential, the 22 cases in groundhogs, 2 beaver, and 2 opossums are unusual as these species are rarely considered rabies vectors.

This outbreak appears to have jumped from the South due to the import of 165 Florida raccoons by a hunting club in 1977, 2 of which were found to be rabid. Through mid-May of this year the disease has not spilled over into the human population, but summer is the time of greatest danger. A single human death from rabies is considered unnecessary and unacceptable. Rabies is better prevented than treated. Surveys have shown that 87% of infected dogs were owned and 87-90% of them unvaccinated. There is evidence that to prevent rabies outbreaks, 70-80% of the dogs should be immunized. Unfortunately, interest in rabies vaccination programs fluctuates in direct proportion to the number of reported cases - an all too human trait. The costs associated with the present outbreak in just 3 counties in Maryland was over \$1 million in 1982.

Raccoons are a greater threat to dogs and therefore to people, than skunks, foxes, or bats even though there are more reported cases among the latter species. Raccoons thrive in urban and suburban areas on the supplies of garbage. They are better tolerated than skunks and fox and are more apt to kept as pets.

Beck points out attempts to immunize wildlife have not been successful. Killed vaccines in baits do not give the degree of immunity needed. Live vaccines which do, pose the risk of causing the disease in nontarget species such as rodents (Bill Jackson points out this group is a questionable threat).

Rabies is cyclical and the current outbreak may subside without much human injury. He recommends immunizing and supervising pets, enjoying wildlife from a distance, and taking the proper steps in handling bite incidents. "Raccoon rabies may be all the rage now, but it is just one of the many perturbations that go along with being an animal among animals." Thanx to William B. Jackson, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH

A man delivers a single brutal "Goodbye" and that is the end of it. Not so with the gentle sex - I say it in their praise; they cannot abide abruptness.

CUTE LITTLE ANIMALS, BUT -

The ritzy city of Del Mar (CA) has been recently plagued by an invasion of black and white pussy cats. Apparently grading and construction in a large development on the city fringes has disrupted their peaceful home life. Skunks nesting in garages, taking up residence in basements where their body odor is picked up in air conditioner units, tearing into lawns, frisking with domestic cats, and robbing vegetable gardens is not all that great fun. A Councilman is reported as saying, "There's not a lot the city can do unless it reaches some sort of crisis level. You can't outlaw skunks." Disneyland comes in contact with the real world. Thanx to Bob Schmidt, UC-Davis, CA & THE CALIFORNIA AGGIE, 11 July 1984.

Never run after your own hat - - others will be delighted to do it; why spoil their fun?

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE LOST THEIR RIGHTS

Winona Richardson, 70 and founder of the New Hampshire Animal Rights League, died recently. According to her will, her 11-year old cat was put to sleep, cremated, and buried with her. The cat was in a good healthy condition at the time. Didn't anyone think about its "rights"? Thank to THE TRAPPER, p12, June 1984.

It used to be a good hotel, but that proves nothing - I used to be a good boy.

THIS PUBLICATION IS INTENDED AS AN INFORMAL NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF NADCA. IT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL DECLARATION OF NADCA POLICY OR A CONCENSUS OF OPINION IN ALL INSTANCES.

YE ED - William D. Fitzwater

My thanks again to Mark Twain for being our guest humorist.

Bunny Fennessey also enclosed a column from the CANBERRA TIMES (2 Dec 83) written by their "resident satirist". It was too long so this may lose something in the translation:

Dear Mom and Pop:

Hope you can read this as I have to write with my left hand as my right is broken. We had a fantastic time since we arrived in Sydney. Saw the Opera House and the cuddly Australian animals. That's when the koala bit me. I panicked because I thought the doctor said I was 'going to die' but he was only asking if it happened 'today'. I'm getting to understand the language better now. It is really not that much different from English (that will hit a responsive note in anyone who's had to cope with 'Strine').

On our first night in Sydney we ran into a bunch of 'dinkum' Aussies who had been celebrating Australia II's win in the America Cup. They were drunk as skunks, but everything would have been okay if Leroy hadn't mentioned that goddamned keel. Things got pretty nasty, but the good news is that dental care is really cheap here compared to home. Anyway, Sydney was great. Even the taxi drivers who spoke English went out of their way to take us the long way round so we could see everything.

We got to know the airport in Sydney real well. They called a lightning strike in the baggage room and the pilots wouldn't fly because the air controllers had let an emergency medical flight in at a time the stewardesses were holding a 4-hour walkout. After two days in the terminal we got our flight to Canberra. We tried to get a refund, but were told there were no refunds for Americans. Something to do with Reagan's foreign policy, I guess.

Canberra is like Washington, but without people or buildings. It's so clean and

and pretty. We went to the House of Congress and walked into a demo against our boys in Grenada. Everything would have been okay if Leroy hadn't decided to exercise his democratic right to free speech. He thought Australia was a free country. I didn't mind the fruit and stuff but when they started hitting us with the placards, we got out.

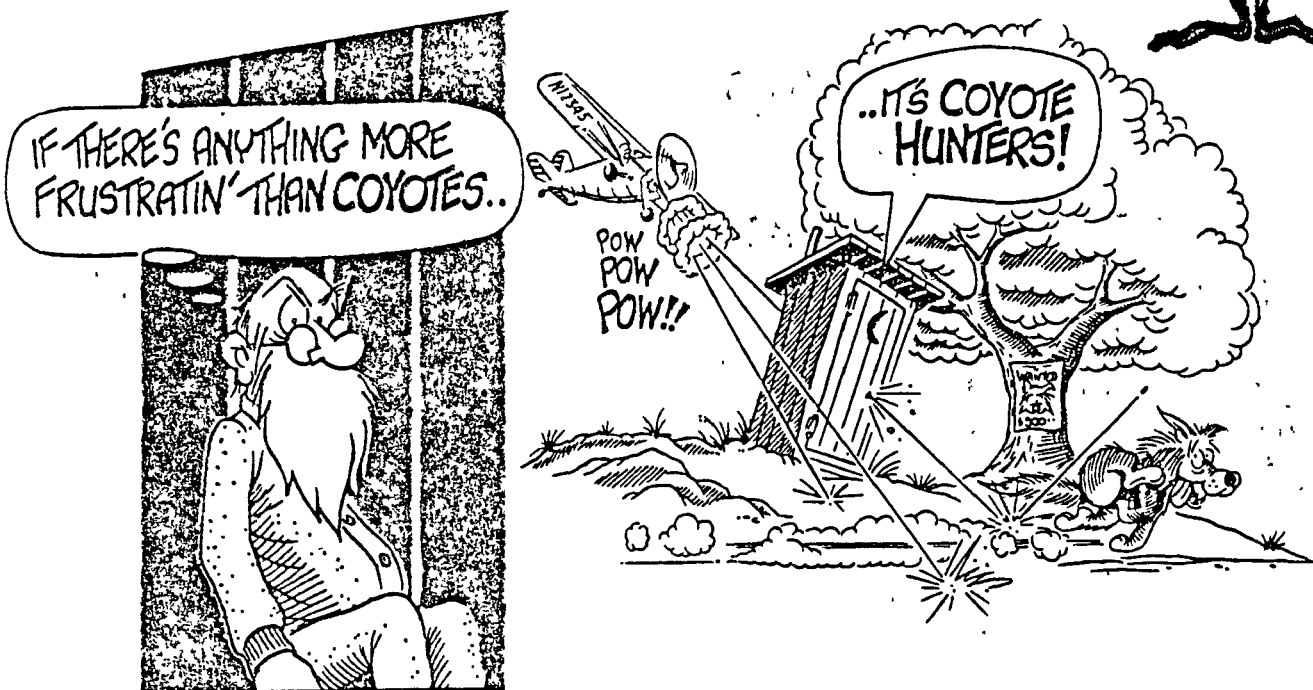
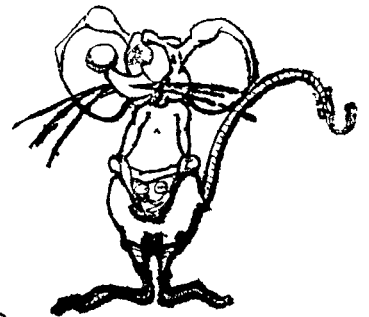
We thought Melbourne would be different as its more British than Sydney and quieter. They didn't tell us about Victoria's socialist left when they booked us tickets. At the State party congress they passed resolutions that Fidel Castro would have seconded. We were relieved to get to Adelaide. Here we had a nice time except when we went to an insurance office to ask for directions. Suddenly a bunch of hard hats or builder's labourers as they call them in Australia stormed the building. Leroy got pushed through a glass door. They thought he was the manager and his American accent only made it worse.

We loved Perth. Leroy bought an Australia II T-shirt and kept his mouth shut. We were out sailing when the US Fleet came in and nearly got drowned in the anti-nuke demonstration. We went to the Radical Lesbian Feminist Collective for Universal Peace and Sisterhood. That's where I got my arm broken. Leroy is in traction in another ward. Must close now, they want to change my drip.

Alan Fitzgerald

I love a country and people who can laugh at themselves. Adios,

4/12



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