

Antidotes for Antis by James A Swan

Author "In Defense of Hunting"

Being a victim of 'animal rightists' is no fun; but to win the battle for hunting, get the law on your side, be creative and have some fun.

Recently I attended the "The Price We Pay" conference in Washington, D.C., produced by the National Animal Interest Alliance.

The purpose of the program was to spotlight the monumental damage that has been done by animal rights "humaniacs" to law-abiding, researchers, educators, sportsmen, wildlife managers, restaurateurs, rodeos, circuses and breeders who treat animals in a humane and compassionate way.

Since 1986, the Environmental Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front have pulled off more than 10,000 incidents resulting in more than \$100 million in damage.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg when you consider the millions that have been spent on legal fees, the countless costs when hunts like Ontario's spring bear hunt get canceled, the pain and suffering of victims of attacks and threats, the loss of cultural identity and livelihood by native hunters, nuisance animal attacks, harassed workers at circuses, zoos and rodeos, increased costs for security and even the starvation of native peoples when legal hunting is outlawed.

I'm sure that you are aware that there were extra security precautions for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Did you realize that the most security was needed to protect the rodeo, which was part of the Arts and Culture Festival.

The reason was that animal rightists attacked the rodeo with an international assault of letter writing, a billboard campaign, celebrity spokespeople (Scott Hamilton and others) and protests, including one man who chained himself to the doors of the International Olympic Committee headquarters in protest of the rodeo.

More than 300 law enforcement officers were called to action to protect the rodeo at the Games. Bob Costas, why didn't you report that?

Not surprisingly, the FBI has declared eco-terrorism the No. 1 domestic terrorism priority, according to Michael Gallagher, the head of the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operations Unit in Washington, D.C.

The good news

Fortunately, some good things are being done about this international issue on many fronts.

In 2003, for example, the FBI established a special task force to unite all efforts to combat domestic terrorism.

The Internal Revenue Service is investigating People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals for donations made to individuals and groups associated with terrorist activities. If you'd like to find out more about what is being done to combat this group of grandstanding hate-slingers, check out the Web site of the Center for Consumer Freedom and their related Web sites www.animalscam.com and www.activistcash.com.

These programs target the specific groups, document what their leaders are saying and reveal how these so-called charitable organizations have spent the millions they raise by stereotyping, stigmatizing and propagandizing people.

You also may know that fur farmers, tanneries and department stores that sell fur have received threats and been targets of arson, bombs, fires and animal releases. And don't forget the folks who wear fur in public and have had their clothes sprayed with paint and have been assailed with threats and insults.

The fur-farming industry has stood its ground, and it's paying off. It has created a version of the "Neighborhood Watch" crime-fighting strategy of residential areas that trains people to network, develop close ties with law enforcement and prepare and plan to prevent attacks. And it's working!

Fur sales have gone up 40 percent since 1998, despite the fact that animal-rights groups are raising in excess of \$100 million a year to put them out of business.

In Great Britain, where the Blair administration came to power with an agenda to ban hunting, the Countryside Alliance has not only blunted the anti-hunting forces, it has demonstrated enormous grass-roots support.

In 2002, it organized the Liberty and Livelihood March on London that attracted 407,000 marchers to stand up for the rights of people who live close to the land. It was the largest peacetime march in England since WWII.

In addition, Countryside Alliance held a vigil on Parliament Square, lit 7,000 beacons across the United Kingdom and conducted 15 rallies and six marches that collectively have involved more than a million people.

When your back is against the wall, people do fight back.

The Countryside Alliance has said to the government that if hunting were curtailed, civil disobedience would follow.

As a guide for Countryside Alliance members who may want to commit civil disobedience in support of rural lifestyles, the Alliance has said that it would only support people:

- 1.) When the only law they break is the unjust hunting law itself (not being reckless or lawless).
- 2.) If they submit to trial and punishment for their alleged civil disobedience, and not try to escape capture.
- 3.) When their issues create no inconvenience to the general public.

In addition, the Alliance also has found occasion to use the power of "the naked truth" to win the media war, according to Simon Hart, chief executive of the Countryside Alliance.

On one occasion, when the Alliance wanted to draw attention to a petition they were going to deliver to Parliament, an attractive young female foxhunter delivered the document to parliament on horseback while topless.

Simon says that they got a full-page coverage in The Sun, which reaches 10 million people. In addition, the young woman sold her story to the British Press, which made her enough money to pay off her college loans.

Humor often is one of the most potent weapons for the truth.

The eccentric magician-comedians Penn and Teller are taking on the animal-rights crowd. Be sure to watch their show April 1 at 10 p.m. on Showtime. It will be re-aired April 8 at 10:30 p.m.

The lesson that seems to emerge from all this is, simply put, "success is the best revenge." ■

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