



Ho, ho, ho! Plastic Santas?

By Teresa Platt, Executive Director, Fur Commission USA

Ho, ho, ho! Santa Claus is coming to town! But this year, according to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and fashion designer Oleg Cassini (inventor of the talking watch), Santa will abandon his fur-trimmed wool garments. Santa will wear synthetics to keep warm while charging through the sky exploiting reindeer. Oooops. Perhaps next year Santa will abandon animal power in favor of petro-chemical solutions, such as diesel, for fueling his sleigh, completing the leap from natural animal-based products to politically correct ignorance.

From acrylic to modacrylic to polyester, polymers, monomers, nitriles and acrylonitriles, HSUS believes that all these non-organic, man-made chemicals will help Santa make an evolutionary jump to a “kinder, gentler,” albeit more polluted, world.

Cassini states, “Fur is the most ancient part of the human culture, [from a time] when humans had to protect themselves against the cold and they had to kill to eat. But we are not at that stage anymore. We can choose a different way. Evolution has permitted us to look at new horizons.” (*HSUS News*, Fall 1998). Cassini calls his new fake fur “Evolutionary Fur” because, in common with HSUS and many others, he believes modern, urban, civilized, moral man has evolved beyond killing in order to live, that we don’t need to kill animals anymore. We can all live, bloodshed free, on grains and vegetables, wearing synthetics. Can’t we? Shouldn’t we?

The Basics

Although much has changed in the last million years, some things have remained constant. Water, undrinkable salt water to boot, still covers 75% of the Earth’s surface. About 10% of the land mass - or just 2.5% of the planet - can support agriculture to feed and clothe us. The other 97.5% of the planet can support grazers and predators and birds and fish, animals which consume what are to us inedible plants and animal life and convert them to food and clothing for our use - but we must kill the animals to reap these benefits.

HSUS is working hard to make all animals off-limits for human consumption, to ensure that humans abandon the life found on 97.5% of the Earth’s surface. That vision means that we will not comfortably eat cake. With their populations off limits, animal stocks will naturally peak and crash in endless cycles, negatively impacting the environment with each turn, as mankind stands by and freezes or starves to death. That is the reality of nature.

Political Correctness Can Kill

Politically correct choices advocated for the blind by the clueless can even kill you. A recent report published in the *British Medical Journal* of a study done in the freezing cold of Siberia, found that about 40,000 more Britons die each winter than in summer, a fact the authors attribute to inadequate winter clothing.

In Yakutsk, Siberia, the world’s coldest city, temperatures routinely fall to minus 40°C - cold enough to cause frostbite in minutes. Yet there is no increase in winter death rates. Contrast this with Britain where deaths rise as soon as the temperature falls below 18°C. Notably, deaths begin to occur when people do not bundle up warmly for short stints outdoors, such as waiting for buses.

Inhabitants of Yakutsk put on an average of 4.26 layers of clothing before venturing outside, one of which will be a fur. And there is no rise in deaths exhibited in winter. A whole generation of Britons, meanwhile, may now be paying with their lives as the PC price

for giving up fur.

The lesson to be drawn from this research is simple. Humans survive better in cold weather when they wrap up warmly, and fur is a first-rate natural insulator. But when the story broke in the British press, Independent correspondent Jeremy Laurance provided “another solution to the British problem of excess winter mortality. Get the buses to run on time”! PC but clueless.

Leaving the Building

In a personal communication with Teresa Platt of FCUSA, retired Animal Liberation Front spokesman Dave Wilson stated, “I strongly feel that in order to save every living being on this planet, we must change the current system. Our survival depends upon it. We don't need heavy winter coats. We have cars and live in heated houses. This certainly isn't the Stone Age.”

Well, Dave, sooner or later we have to leave the building. And we are as dependent today as we were in the Stone Age on animals for food and clothing - all 6 billion of us and counting. The only difference is that modern man generally hires others to do his killing, behind closed doors, out of sight. Even vegetarians, who oppose the direct harvesting of animals, are unwittingly supporting the taking of ani-

mal life in the production of food and clothing. Agriculture is the leading cause of wildlife habitat loss worldwide, and hundreds of millions of animals die in crop fields each year to pesticides and at harvest time. So much for cruelty-free pasta and veggies.

To survive we need access to more than the 2.5% of the Earth's surface that can support agriculture. We need land and seas teeming and heavy with life. The fur trade, domesticated and wild, gives animals and animal habitat real economic value and is a vital component of ensuring abundance of animal stocks, healthy habitats and a sustainable harvest.

Modern, urban, civilized, moral man must recognize himself for what he really is: the human animal. Man is the only animal that appreciates and values the rest of the world's animals. Man is the only animal able to manage and domesticate, the only animal capable of applying a moral code in his treatment of other animals.

But a plastic-coated Santa spewing diesel fumes? For the Earth's sake and our own, let us hope it never comes to pass!

I can't wait to welcome Rudolf and his fellow reindeers pulling Saint Nick in his fabulous red wool suit with ermine trim. And I hope Santa brings me a full-length fur coat and fur-lined leather boots. I've been a very, very good girl. Ho, ho, ho!