

Valley Angler  
PETA  
by Bill Thompson

Generally I go out of my way to avoid controversy when writing this column. Fishing is all about having fun. I will admit that fisherman can be opinionated and I once said that just about every angler's ultimate goal was to become a certified curmudgeon. My long suffering wife will be more than willing to assure you that I have achieved that goal. At the risk of upsetting a few apple carts, I hesitate to bring up the subject of PETA.

PETA, as you may be aware, stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. These are the jolly folks who go about throwing red paint on movie stars who insist on wearing fur coats. Most recently, I believe, they have switched to flour. Other movie stars, those who can't afford or are allergic to fur, have embraced their cause. A few, including Khole Kardashian, have taken to posing naked to advance the movement. The poster of Khole is rather tastefully done and features Ms. Kardasian nude with the caption: "Fur? I'd rather go naked". My question is, who is Khole Kardashian and what does she do other than pose naked? The naked thing is quite a popular way of protesting with PETA. In Europe they have recently held nude news conferences and held an event where the participants ran in the nude to protest bull fighting and the running of the bulls in Pamplona. I would guess that Hemingway probably rolled over in his grave.

PETA recently partitioned Ben and Jerry's to stop the use of cow's milk in their ice cream and switch to human milk. Ben and Jerry respectfully declined the suggestion.

While researching this article I visited PETA's website. As you may guessed they offer all kinds of things for sale like T shirts adorned with slogans promoting the cause. The most notable item was the PETA coffin. I didn't go to the bother of looking into the details, but I would venture a guess that it is not fur lined.

The thing that prompted me to write about PETA is their latest effort to convince children and the feeble minded to think that fishing is evil. According to PETA fish shall no longer be known as simply fish. The new politically correct term will be "Fish Kittens". The reasoning is that no one would hurt a kitten much less impale one on a hook. Sounds a little over the top, but it is all true. All of this would be hilarious if it wasn't just as scary. On the fishing page of their website, which is clearly aimed at children, there are cute little stories featuring cuddly little fish who all meet an untimely demise at the hand of an evil fisherman. There is also a place where you may voice your objection to hunting and fishing to the U. S. Wildlife Service. And, as long as you are there, you might want to pick up a cute T shirt for your daughter with the inscription, "Fish are friends, not food".

It is easy to dismiss all of this as just the work of a few foolish people with just too much time on their hands. Guess again, these folks are able to raise millions of dollars a year to further their cause. Aside from the few who are willing to bear all, they do manage to attract movie stars and other notables to their side and these people do have an impact. If this were not enough in Europe they have managed to gain a certain amount of political clout. Recently the Swiss Bundestag passed a sweeping bill on animal rights. Apparently nude protesting has caught the eye of European politicians. Among other things it is now illegal to simply flush your unwanted and unloved goldfish down the drain. The "Bowl-

kitty” must, by law, be rendered unconscious and humanly dispatched before flushing. Closer to home, they also banned the “intent” to practice “catch and release” fishing. It is no longer permissible in Switzerland to go fishing with the idea that you might release a fish. PETA disciples believe that anglers are torturing fish or at the least humiliating them. How Swiss game wardens intend to enforce this is beyond me. As one writer put it, “A lot of anglers are going to have slippery hands”.

I would hope that most Americans are not as gullible as the Swiss, but you never know. Each year we become more urbanized and farther removed from the origins of our food. With the help of hundreds of films personifying and depicting animals as cute and cuddly critters it is not hard to imagine our own congress passing a similar law. Thank goodness we have U-Tube and Sara Palin pardoning turkeys to remind us where our food really comes from.

In the interest of keeping things the way they are I will be staging my own protest this evening and I urge all right thinking person’s to join in with me. Tonight when I go home I am going to have a cheese burger for supper. Hopefully, the cheese will be made from cow’s milk. Just one thing, if you plan on joining in with me, keep your clothes on.

See you on the river.