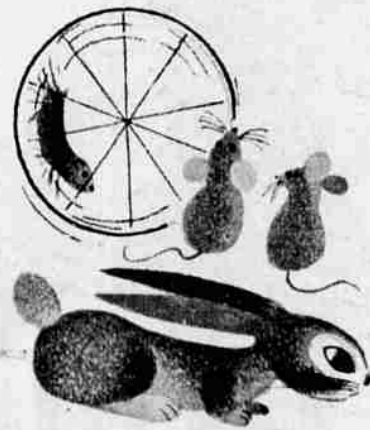


Daddy has a pet peeve

by Dick Emmons



OUR FAMILY, I am overjoyed to state, is just entering the Goldfish Stage. I hope we never outgrow it.

We are fresh from the Hamster Stage and not far removed from the Rabbit Stage, both of which left the two adults in our family with permanent mental scars.

For reasons I am not entirely able to understand, our three children have strong feelings about animals. What they feel strongly is that they should bring them home.

This was the case with Jennifer, a darling brown-and-white hamster with a rare nocturnal talent for noisily chewing up the newspapers in her box. I don't know if you have ever tried to sleep in the same small house with a paper-chewing hamster, but it is not an experience that leaves you fresh and ready for the forthcoming day.

Jennifer was the pet of our 10-year-old, Ann, who acquired her one day from a small confederate whose mother had ruled that the hamster must go. Ann took possession ecstatically on condition that the former owner was to have full visiting privileges, including Picking Up and Patting rights.

We agreed to the arrangement before we realized that Jennifer was a creature of late hours. After a few nights of her crunching, we put our foot down—unfortunately missing Jennifer.

"Let's trade Jennifer in on something that sleeps at night," I suggested one red-eyed morning.

"How about a Great Dane?" Ann asked enthusiastically.

I shook my head.

"A spider monkey?"

My wife shook her head vigorously.

"What would you say to a set of matched goldfish?" I cried. Before Ann could protest, I was out the door and on the way to the office. I brought the fish home that night and I want to testify publicly that I believe we have found the solution to the pet problem. Goldfish don't chew papers at night, track mud through the house, or claw at the furniture.

Naturally, we did not arrive at this state of relative bliss without trial (the hamster) and tribulation (the rabbit). In addition, I remember in a cold sweat the evening an otherwise rational neighbor proudly brought our six-year-old twin boys a pair of white mice.

"I'm gonna name mine Sugar!" Davie squealed.

"Mine's Salt!" Dickie yelled. "Build us a cage, Daddy!"

My wife groaned. "By all means build them a cage! Ugh! I can't stand the things!"

As I tried to explain later to my wife, it was the first time in my long and colorful career that I had been called upon to build a mouse cage and, what with one understandable miscalculation and another, Sugar and Salt escaped their new home almost as soon as they were in it.

"EEIOUCK!" my wife screamed as the little white pets blurred across the kitchen floor. She leaped up on a counter and sought the safety of the refrigerator top.

"Catch mine, Daddy!" Dickie yelled.

"No, get mine first!" Davie howled.

I started on a dead run into the living room in pursuit of one of the escapees, unhappily tripping over a lamp cord and plunging that part of the house into semi-darkness.

"Help! Murder!" my wife shrieked.

"They're under the couch!" the boys squealed. Using Commando tactics and a long-handled corn-popper we keep around for just such emergencies, I was able to trap Sugar and Salt before my wife went out of her mind.

The upshot of the incident was that the boys were allowed to keep the mice in an escape-proof cage in the basement fruit cellar, which was locked and bolted. Under these adverse conditions, the twins soon lost interest and we gave the mice away a few days later—to some people who had not sent us a Christmas card last year.

But we're all set now with our goldfish. Long may they swim!

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1. There will be six separate weekly contests, each with its own set of prizes. You may enter each contest as many times as you desire, using either the entry blank published in FAMILY WEEKLY or a reasonable facsimile.
2. All entries for Contest Number Two must be received by midnight Thursday, August 6. Entries may be mailed on post cards if desired.
3. The prizes for Contest Number Two are: 1st Prize—Trip for two to Brazil via Varig Airlines, with stay in Rio at the Hotel Gloria. 2nd & 3rd Prizes—RCA Whirlpool Washer-Dryers. 4th & 5th Prizes—Westinghouse Electric Ranges. 6th & 7th Prizes—Mercury Outboard Motors. 8 to 15—Nesco Electric Rotisseries. 16 to 23—In-Sink-Erator Disposers. . .

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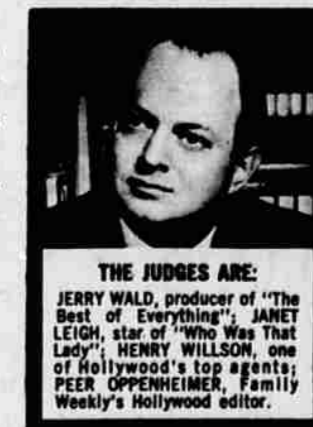
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The Rules (continued)

24 to 39—Airex Fishing Sets. 40 to 59—Seth Thomas Wall Clocks. 60 to 89—American College Encyclopedic Dictionaries (2 Vols.). 90 to 119—Westclox Wrist Watches.

Entries will be judged on the basis of originality and aptness of thought. Judges' decision is final. In case of ties, contestants will be required to write a statement about FAMILY WEEKLY. All entries become the property of FAMILY WEEKLY and none will be returned. Entries must be the original work of contestants and must be submitted in their own names.

Contest winners will be notified as soon as possible. The six contests are open to all residents of the United States except employees of FAMILY WEEKLY, its affiliated companies, its distributing newspapers and their families. The contests are subject to all Federal, State and local regulations.



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Entries for Contest No. 2 must be received by midnight Thursday, August 6.

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