

COMMENTS OF RUSTY SIVILS TO THE FBFC BOARD, AUG. 16 2018

I want to comment on the problem of rats at the Co-op. Rats can be a serious problem, and the conventional way to deal with them is to kill them. We demonize rats for the same reasons that the European settlers demonized wolves and Native Americans—first because they needed to exterminate them for economic reasons, and demonizing them made that easier, and also because they needed some entity onto which they could project the evil that they felt within themselves. Today it's not considered appropriate to demonize wolves or Native Americans, or even communists, but we still have rats, Moslems and terrorists. Rats however don't deserve to be demonized any more than these other groups—they are just trying to survive in the only way they know how in the niche they have evolved into. They are not malicious or aggressive, they are just hungry. They are of course a nuisance, and we should find a humane way of dealing with them. There are only two such ways that I know of—one is a product developed by a company in Arizona (Senestech)—a food pellet or liquid that is supposed to keep the females from ovulating permanently. It's supposed to be nontoxic to other animals and according to their website it cuts fertility by 57% after three months. (I have not been able to find out how much it costs yet, but their phone number is 928-779-4143). This is not perfect of course, but it may be as effective as extermination, and more humane. Killing as a solution is unworthy of us as humans or as co-op members. Rats are, after all, our cousins. We all evolved from a small rat-like animal that was one of the few mammalian survivors of the fifth great extinction sixty-five million years ago.

We have another connection with rats as well. It's little known that many, perhaps most, rats are reincarnated food co-op board members—and managers! We should bear this in mind when dealing with them.

I welcome any comments or questions at 242-6073