

Animal Tales (Some a little fishy)

EXCERPTS

Movie Lovers

Do you like going to movies? Did you know opossums do too? One of them had a plan to sneak into the Ocean Boulevard United Artists Theater. In April 1950, Mr. Opossum learned it was his last chance to see two daring, shocking films dealing with forbidden themes — Emile Zola's "Passionnelle: a tale of illicit love" showing with the second big feature, "Torment: a study of sex and sadism." He didn't have enough cash for a ticket, and worried he wasn't old enough to be allowed in to see these adult films anyway, so he made his entry early in the morning before the ticket takers arrived. He spotted an inviting chair, climbed up on it and waited. Unfortunately, the movies didn't begin for some time and bored (but still wanting to see the films) he slumbered.

As fellow movie goers arrived, Mr. Opossum was spotted and police were called. At first Mr. Opossum thought it was because he had snuck in without a ticket, or because he was too young to know about sex and sadism, but then he decided he was being discriminated against because he was a marsupial. Didn't they know his breed was the only marsupial species in the United States? But the police didn't buy the "I am special" story and started to poke at him. He decided they must have seen the second feature, for their sadistic prodding dislodged him from his seat. He dropped to the floor, decided not to run and instead stiffened and started "possuming."

It was a good act, but the police weren't convinced. Cautiously, they picked him up, wary of sharp teeth and deposited him on the floor of their police car. They took him to the flood control channel where the ardent movie fan was placed on the ground. Sure enough, Mr. Opossum was still alive and ran off to seek welcoming friends. He had learned a lesson. At the theater he had settled in one of the more expensive loge seats, where he was discovered. Next time he would purloin a less desirable chair, but he didn't know if he would be as interested in one of the new films — "Nancy Goes to Rio" with Jane Powell and Ann Sothorn, but the second feature starring Roddy McDowall, "Killer Shark," sparked his interest. Perhaps he would sneak in again.

Raining Frogs

A bizarre occurrence happened in Long Beach on October 2, 1916, when thousands of frogs dropped with the rain from clouds above Long Beach. No one in town could identify the variety, which were brown, with white spots.



Today the description seems to match the Columbia spotted frog, an aquatic amphibian which is widespread from Alaska to Washington. But how did they get to Long Beach? Were they picked up in a storm and transported hundreds of miles? All Long Beach folk knew was they had to watch their step since it was impossible to avoid the frogs on sidewalks without stepping on them.

For several nights the frogs' croaking kept many residents awake. Their odor also became a bit much. Eventually the frogs were gathered up by cleaning crews and disposed of, but the mystery remained. How did this strange phenomenon get to Long Beach?

Next time you visit Long Beach's Aquarium of the Pacific, ask them. Perhaps they can offer a more scientific answer, other than a UFO inadvertently picking them up and dumping them before landing at the alleged UFO base off our coast!