



20TH CENTURY FOX PHOTO

Jim Carrey stars as Mr. Popper, but it's his feathered friends who got the star treatment.

## Carrey's hot, but his penguins are cool

**J**im Carrey may be the star of "Mr. Popper's Penguins," the family film that was released Friday, but his avian co-stars might have gotten better treatment on set.

In the film, Carrey plays a successful Manhattan real-estate agent whose apartment is overtaken by six Gentoo penguins — they're smaller than Emperor and King penguins and have distinctive white patches over their eyes. Gentoos generally breed on Antarctic islands, but these "actors" came from a Montreal facility and were monitored by Central Veterinary Associates, a network of animal hospitals based in Valley Stream with clinics in Great Neck, Bayside, Forest Hills, Far Rockaway and Belle Harbor.

**Dr. John Charos**, CVA's director of avian and exotics medicine, was one of the vets who regularly visited Steiner Studios in Brooklyn, where the movie was shot over the winter, and monitored the Gentoos' health and care. Named Mr. Black, Mr. Red, Mr. Gray and so on after the colors of their wing bands — "It was like a **Quentin Tarantino** movie," Charos says — the Gentoos stayed in something better than a movie-star trailer. They had the run of a large cooling facility equipped with a Jacuzzi (kept at a penguin-pleasing 35 degrees) and were constantly cleaned by staff (fungi and foot sores are a common penguin problem).

Talk about pampered. "A refrigerator truck would pick them up," Dr. Charos recalls. "They'd go from their cooling environment into the truck, which would drive about 100 feet over to the set."

This may be the Gentoos' last brush with fame; they're scheduled to retire to a facility in China.

— RAFAEL GUZMAN