



Tall Tales from the Editor

Burning tale or Tail of woe

The local meteorologist reported that an incoming cold front would be the coldest weather we've had in five years. By Montana standards our cold front would be a winter heat wave, but here in Applegate, Oregon, that meant "colder than hell." (Where did that term come from, anyway? I was under the impression, from my childhood Sunday-school days, that "hell" was exceedingly hot, not cold. Very confusing!)

When the cold front hit, my bride Sioux had her laptop computer set up on the kitchen table and a candle burning in the center of the table. Sioux was explaining to me why the candle was necessary. "The smell relaxes me. And the flicker of the candle gives me a feeling of warmth." I think "feeling" is the operative word.

Sioux always says she likes to multitask, but trust me, that is very open to interpretation. While she was using the computer and gazing at the candle, she also was baking twelve-dozen cookies for the annual cookie exchange party the next day. Cookies were stacked all over the kitchen—on the counters, on the window ledges, well, everywhere. Why? Because Sioux made up her own recipe to use up my frozen apple pulp left over from this past fall's apple pressing. So as calculations go, her twelve-dozen cookies turned into at least fifty dozen. I should have hired a U-Haul to help her get them to the party.

Our two Border Collie/McNab dogs, older Utah and five-month-old McGee, were keeping warm by the stove. McGee had just had every guy's nightmare surgery a few days prior to this baking fiasco. That's right, we did our civic duty and had him neutered. The thought makes me want to cross my legs—tightly! Poor McGee had to wear one of those awful plastic cone-shaped headgear contraptions. We had to refrain from calling him "Queen Elizabeth"—you know, like from the sixteenth century. Since he could see only straight in front of him with this new trendy headgear, he constantly was running into everything in our tiny cramped kitchen quarters.

I was sitting at the kitchen table enjoying a nutmeg-laced eggnog with my buddy Jimmy Bean, when our niece, Chloe the cat, and all her luxurious long calico hair decided to join me at the table. I was having this very philosophical conversation with her, querying who she thought she was jumping up on the table. Apparently she knows and looked at me as if I were one step below retarded. I had to be persistent, "This is a no-no. Off the table, Chloe!" She sprawled out, fastened her gaze on me and swished her tail. I turned to say something to Sioux, who was unloading

another twenty-five dozen cookies from the oven. Man, do I love the smell of baking cookies, but suddenly there was a strange burnt stench in the air. When I turned back to the table, Chloe was swishing her tail again, but this time it was through Sioux's "relaxing" candle. Chloe was on fire! I yelled something like, "Sioux, our kitty is on fire." Well, maybe I really yelled, "Holy smoke, we have a flaming grimalkin." Actually I can only take Sioux's word that I yelled something like that as I was lunging for the flaming Chloe, who was running around emitting deafening cat screams. Chloe was only mildly singed, and actually was running away from mad dog McGee in his Elizabethan collar, who thought this was a new game as he was crashing and turning over everything in our scrunched-tight kitchen—you know, the one with cookies on every conceivable horizontal space. In all the bumping and upheaval, Sioux, of course, dropped some cookies, but old Utah helped her by scarfing them up as fast as they hit the ground, while I rubbed my hand up and down Chloe's tail and extinguished the flames. Burnt cat hair filled the air as the soot particles drifted around the kitchen and alighted on some of the dozens and dozens of cookies.

As I was grabbing Chloe, I had a vision of her running through the house and the entire place going up in flames. I wasn't sure our homeowner's policy covered flaming feline tail.

Chloe fared quite well, and is just missing several tail hairs and one of her nine lives. McGee learned that "cat on fire" is not an inside game, and Utah learned that with patience, his Mom would most likely drop something yummy while she is multi-multitasking. This time Utah was especially content as his bounty was at least two month's worth of cookies gleaned from the kitchen floor. Sioux still had plenty of cookies for the cookie exchange and apparently no one complained about the "fuzzy" icing on some of the cookies. They must have had a delicious organic flavor, probably from my apple pulp.

As for me, the few moments of burning tail has given me many days of just laughing out loud. We all need to laugh and it better be hearty and out loud or we may drown in a melted glacier of tears. As we look upon the smoldering ruins of the financial world on Wall Street, you and I will pay the price for their napalm lies, government-sanctioned theft, blatant hypocrisy, and benign neglect by our one-party political systems. Yet the streets are quiet and I don't know why.

The Editor, J.D. Rogers
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Address Opinion Pieces and Letters to the Editor to:

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Dear Editor:

Rauno Perttu's article in the winter issue of the *Applegater* about his wife, Jan, having the dreaded Alzheimer's disease is such a personal heartrending account of what they have been through and are facing. It's bad enough when the disease attacks the elderly but it should never happen to one so young.

There are so many terrible diseases throughout our world. It almost discourages one from knowing which ones need the most financial support. Cancer has always been a top-priority which is now being treated with more hope of recovery.

When Parkinson's disease suddenly attacked my brother and my son-in-law's father, as well as a very dear friend several years ago, it became very difficult to accept the "no cure" verdict.

It will be a wonderful day when the "cure" verdict comes to those like Jan. So many diseases have disappeared just in my lifetime. Hope and cures are on the way. It doesn't stop now.

Evelyn Williams, Jacksonville, Oregon

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