

Bob's Corner

A four-legged hobo began showing up on our back deck one day, and we felt pity for him. After awhile we named him "One-Eye" because, well ... one of his pretty green eyes was missing. It didn't look as though it had been done surgically.

At first we thought that this seemingly wayward adult might have a home and was just taking advantage of our hospitality. Apparently we have signs stuck to our backs that read, "Sucker." But after asking around the neighborhood it became apparent that el gato was among the homeless.

"One-Eye" looked scruffy, but feisty, leading us to conclude that this tomcat was not afraid of a fight.

His black coat sometimes was matted, and he had a few obvious battle scars. Our hairy adoptee didn't always come around each day. But most mornings this broad-headed stray critter, with a sometimes baleful look, would be relaxing outside our dining room French doors waiting for us to fill a dish (his dish) with cat food. Of course, we obeyed.

It took awhile, but eventually he allowed us to gently pet his head. One day we graduated to his back. He seemed to enjoy the attention, but only for so long. At his feline discretion he'd saunter away and hide under the deck. But he'd return for more food, and petting on his terms, often more than once daily.

He used our deck more than we did, and especially liked lounging on Jan's chaise lounge and soaking up sunrays. What a life. Free food, nice bed. Accommodating humans. Jan tried to get him to come in the house numerous times, and he'd go as far as the stoop, but no farther.

Maybe he was concerned about our somewhat abnormal indoor cats, the famous mom-and-son attack team of "Maui" and "Bubba." Don't really know why he wouldn't take the last step. He just didn't. So they never had contact except through glass.

Time came that "we" (Jan) decided "One-Eye" should be neutered and get the proper inoculations, especially if he was going to be our Official Outdoor Cat. So we managed, with a bit of conditioning, to get him inside a pet carrier after first putting his food in it for several days. Then we had only to close the door, and head for our veterinarian, Dr. Dan Fiske & Co.

"One-Eye" wasn't real happy about his vet visit, but he was docile enough. I got to hold him and scratch his ears during the preliminary exam. He especially enjoyed my giving his ears a good scratching. We made an appointment to pick him up later that day after his surgery.

Awhile later we got a phone call from the vet's office. A blood test had determined that "One-Eye" was afflicted with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), also known as "cat AIDS." There is no cure, and the disease is extremely contagious through blood and saliva transfers. Like in male cats that fight a lot. Like "One-Eye."

FIV-infected kitties often will suffer from anemia, seizures, and gum and mouth infections. It's not transferable to human beans. Now what? Should we keep him and hope he doesn't infect others, meanwhile hoping that he won't die a lingering painful death.

In conscience, can't do that. Jan and I spoke briefly and tearfully on the telephone. "One-Eye" already was anesthetized; a decision had to be made. We decided on euthanasia, the Big Sleep. It was not easy to speak the words, but we did.

Now our backdoor visitor is in kitty heaven. And even now, nearly two weeks later, we still get a bit teary when we think of good ol' "One-Eye," who had become a cautious friend. He just wanted a home, some food and TLC, like the rest of us.

But somewhere along the line, whoever had his mom neglected to spay her. So another feline offspring was on his own, and had to die because some human was too lazy to take responsibility to do the right thing. Makes me angry. And we miss him. Wish I could scratch his ears again.

Cats are intended to teach us that not everything in Nature has a function.

- Unknown -

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters written solely to this newspaper are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered.

Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.

On Social Security From Peter DeFazio Member of Congress

(Editor's Note: The following is part of a letter sent by Rep. Peter DeFazio in response to a letter from Cave Junction resident Edna Gibson, submitted for this column.)

Thanks for your message in opposition to President Bush's plans to privatize Social Security. We are in complete agreement. I have long been opposed to undermining Social Security via privatization.

Although critics of Social Security claim the program is going "bankrupt" and is in "crisis," the report from the Social Security trustees proves otherwise.

Demographic changes (a growing number of retirees, fewer workers, and longer life-expectancy) create manageable challenges for Social Security. However, the program is fundamentally sound and can remain so for the next 75 years and beyond with relatively minor changes.

Currently, Social Security is collecting more in payroll taxes than is needed to fund benefits for today's recipients (70-cents of every dollar in payroll taxes collected is paid out immediately to current beneficiar-

ies). These excess payroll taxes are credited to the Social Security Trust Fund and then invested in government bonds that pay interest to the Trust Fund. It already has assets of more than \$1 trillion, which will grow to around \$6.6 trillion by 2027.

The bottom line is that even using conservative economic and demographic assumptions; payroll taxes, in combination with the Trust Fund, are sufficient to pay 100 percent of promised benefits through at least 2042, nearly four decades from now.

Even after 2042, Social Security will never be "bankrupt" in the sense that it couldn't pay any benefits whatsoever. Because future workers will still be paying into the program after 2042, even without any changes whatsoever, Social Security will still be able to pay 75 percent of promised benefits after 2042.

Despite contrary rhetoric, by siphoning money from the current program to fund private accounts, the president's plan to privatize Social Security actually makes the projected financial challenge facing the program worse, not better.

Political affiliation From Richard Strohl Cave Junction

William Reed's arguments ("Illinois Valley News," March 2) regarding Catherine Austin's letter is off base and demands a response.

Apparently, Reed has fallen into a tragic mindset that places political affiliation above common sense.

Sunshine Week campaign counters fed FOIA hostility

In the interests of free and open access to public records, this week has been declared Sunshine Week by organizations including the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.

"Never has the freedom of information (FOI) been under greater siege," said Peter Bhatia, executive editor of the Portland "Oregonian," and former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

"The open hostility to FOI flows from Washington and the Dept. of Justice," said Bhatia. "The actions in our nation's capital are mimicked more and more on state and local levels.

"It is our fundamental responsibility as journalists to be agents for the public on these matters and to fight every day to keep access open and information flowing.

"It has never been more necessary than it is today," he concluded.

In a poll conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs for Sunshine Week, it was found that seven out of 10 people are concerned about government secrecy.

The poll found that more than half of Americans believe that government should provide more access to its records.

Seven percent are either "somewhat concerned" or "very concerned" about government secrecy. Nearly as many felt that access to public records is "crucial" to good government.

The results come amid growing debate about openness at all levels of government since 9/11.

One would have to be blind not to notice all the flags since 9/11; the blatant, yet secretive human abuses that have occurred recently, including Guantanamo, Abu Guraub, Afghanistan and throughout Iraq. And to announce that women's rights have not been attacked is laughable when this administration has consistently cut and withdrawn aid for birth control and sex education.

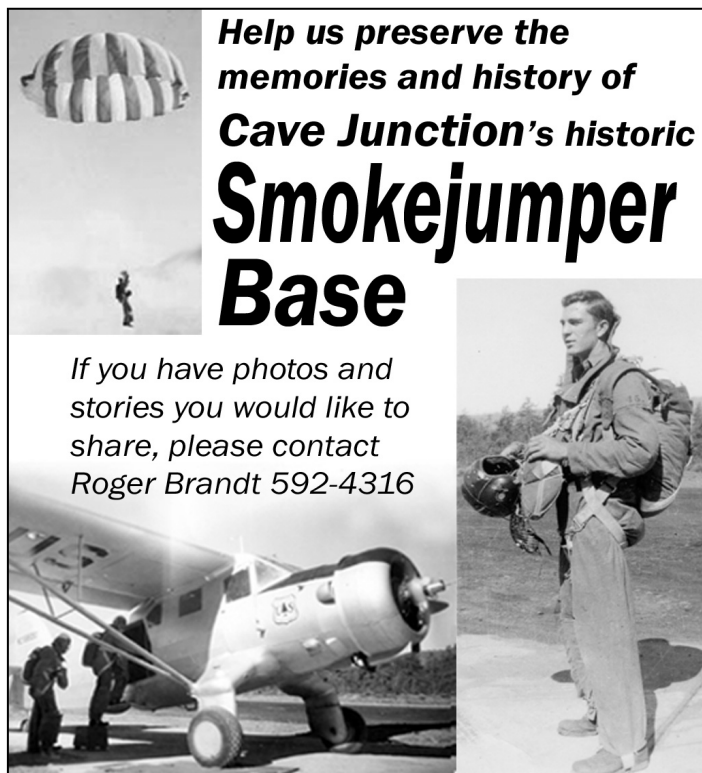
The women's right to choose has been under attack since 2000. Six major corporations control 90 percent of all mass media and now broadcast more opinion than fact. "Homeland," an expression proudly used by

1930s Germany, is another blatantly obvious emotional term to used to inspire a patriotic theme.

If Reed really thinks that we are living in the good ol' U.S. of A., he is not keeping his eye on reality.

When our country spends close to \$500 billion annually, more on defense than the rest of the world combined, and now wants to abort Social Security for its own citizens in favor of privatization, something is wrong. Individuals, not the federal income tax, pay for Social Security and Medicare.

(Continued on page 3)



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