

Bob's Corner

By popular demand, this week's hoopla will address our quartet of house critters, which provide untold amounts of joy, hairballs, front-yard surprises, and hairy furniture and clothing.

We had to take Maui the mostly Siamese mother cat to our veterinarian last week because a tooth was sticking out of her mouth. In an odd way. We don't know how the tooth, which we think was an incisor, got loose, but I have some ideas. All of them are related to being chased by her totally handsome 16-pound son, Bubba. I think she probably ran into a wall or bonked her face on one of two cat towers that have somehow been installed in our casa.

Oh, by the way, she's OK; we just have to watch for infection, which is easier than it sounds. Ever tried to get a cat to let you check its mouth voluntarily? Scary.

We quite often awaken with either Maui or Bubba perched on our bodies, usually on our chest or in the bladder area, which is sure-fire way to get us up. Also, Jan and I are sometimes given the feline honor of them curling up at our backs. Also, this usually involves them taking a slurpy, jostling kitty bath. Interesting.

Rocky the barksy (he's a Pomeranian) is our smallest creature, and sometimes Bubba looks at him like prey, especially after he's had a short haircut (Rocky, not Bubba). Rocky only weighs about half of what his distant cousin the cat weighs. Rocky likes to sleep with us, but we make him go to the foot of the bed because neither of us can stand his death breath. He'd like to sleep between us, but it's just a bit nauseating. He also snores a lot, and it's intriguing, sometimes sounding like an orchestra tuning up. Something like that.

Bingo the dingo (mixed breed terrier, Australian shepherd and whatever) likes to "pretend chase" the cats. They're never sure if he's serious. We make every attempt to ensure that Bingo knows the cats are off limits, but he can be sneaky. If we call him on it, he just gives us an innocent, "Who, me?" look and then goes somewhere and hides. A dead giveaway.

We enjoy our pets, finding them entertaining and friendly, although not necessarily in that order. I have to admit though, that watching Bubba chase Maui up a cat tower and then have one of those rapid-fire cat paw fights is an intriguing event. Especially because such incidents cause Maui to hiss and spit like a trouper.

Haven't had any midnight surprises on the carpet recently, and that's always good news. I hate it when I have to make a special effort to wash between my toes.

Well, gotta' go this week, doggone it. It can be a dog-eat-dog world, and that's not the cat's meow.

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.

Get in the swim From Bea Thompson Selma

One of the best-kept secrets in the county is the beautiful public pool in Cave Junction. It's far nicer than the pools in Grants Pass.

Amazingly, it rarely is crowded. Unfortunately, unless more people realize what a gem it is, it probably is not going to stay open in future years. This year, generous donations have allowed the pool to offer open swimming.

Thirty-two people have shown an interest in aerobics classes, so it is looking good that two aerobics classes will start in July; at noon and 5:30 p.m. The fee will be \$75 or free with a membership.

People can sign up at the pool anytime from 1 to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. A schedule of swim-

ming classes will be offered starting in July if enough people show an interest. The pool telephone number is 592-3990.

I hate to let out the secret, but I guess that I would rather share the pool with a few more than have no pool at all.

Purple alien invaders From K. Stone O'Brien

My ex-favorite flower, spotted knap weed, resembles a bachelors button. I thought it was a native wild flower, but it is an alien invader from Europe.

Meadows that once had a few knap weeds with beautiful purple blooms mixed with our abundant native wild flowers were stunning with so many colors. Now those meadows are nothing but spotted knap weed, stunningly beautiful.

But no other flowers -- just knap weed. Now it's found its way into our forests and woods, and guess what? It squeezes the life out of little tree seedlings too (future forests).

I was tempted to let it grow here at my home. It's a real pretty flower, but it's so invasive, to a point of

squeezing out all other plants. And a single plant produces up to 1,000 seeds. Worse yet, the dry vegetation it leaves when it dies is extremely flammable, more so than native plants and grasses.

This stuff has got to go. Pulling it up by hand seems to work the best. It's especially easy after a recent rain, as you get the roots when the ground is moist. Pouring boiling water on it works, as does keeping it mowed or weed-whacked to its crown.

You can spray chemicals (yuck), but better plan

on several applications, as this weed is tough. I find that it is easy to uproot by hand, and as a result we have less every year.

The bad news is that I see it cropping up all over our valley. If not controlled it may some day be our state flower, as it will have squeezed the life out of all the rest.

For more information on spotted knap weed, and how to get rid of it, or how to get involved with tree-planting riparian areas in Illinois Valley, contact the Forestry Action Committee at 592-4098.

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Unborn murder victims focus of Anderson bill

The Oregon House has passed legislation to allow prosecutors to charge the killers of pregnant women for two deaths: one for the mother, one for the child.

HB 2020, co-sponsored by House Speaker Karen Minnis and Rep. Gordon Anderson, gives unborn children who are the victims of assaults (as the result of assaults on their mothers) standing under Oregon law. Currently, 30 other states and the federal government have similar laws.

Anderson, who authored a similar bill in 2003, said, "As a grandfather, I can understand the grief and sense of loss a family would go through with the loss of an unborn child. We must protect mother and child when a criminal heartlessly snatches life from either or both."

"HB 2020 recognizes what we all know to be true: when a pregnant woman is killed, two lives are lost," said Minnis. "When a pregnant woman is killed, her family is traumatized not just by her death, but the death of their unborn child or grandchild."

HB 2020 establishes an unborn child as the legal victim of a crime that results in harm to the unborn child -- whether the unborn child is killed or seriously injured.

The bill includes exceptions for legal abortions and for acts committed by the mother. The bill also states that it is not a defense to prosecution if the defendant did not know, or could not reasonably have known, that the woman was pregnant.

In addition, the bill creates the crime of assault of an unborn child and classifies the crime as a Class B felony punishable by a maximum prison sentence of 10 years, a fine of up to \$250,000 or both.

A person commits this crime if they knowingly cause physical pain to the mother of an unborn child without the mother's consent, and by causing physical injury to the mother; which causes serious physi-

cal injury to the unborn child or causes the unborn child to be born prior to 37 weeks gestation and the child weighs 2,500 grams or less at the time of birth.

Rep. Linda Flores said, "This bill is needed in Oregon. Just 18 months ago, a pregnant Oregon City woman was brutally stabbed. She lived, but her baby died. Her attacker could only be charged with assaulting her. He should have also been charged with killing her baby."

This bill is commonly referred to as the "Laci Peterson Law" because it was drafted in response to the murder of Peterson and her unborn son, Connor.

Anderson originally drafted this bill following the murder of Kerry Repp of Central Point after her former husband was acquitted of her death. HAB 2020 passed the House easily with votes from both sides, but it faces a real test in the Senate, Anderson said.

He added, "Our laws now support the mother's choice to abort a baby, so why shouldn't our laws equally support the mother's choice to let a baby live?"

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(Classified ads & uncomplicated display ads can be accepted until Noon, Monday with an additional charge.)

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