

Bob's Corner

All this talk about our current home menagerie has put me in a mind mode of memories about pets through the years. Back in the Olden Days, my family lived on Hyatt Street in the Linda Vista section of San Diego, and I recall having a gold fish and a hamster, although not simultaneously.

Unfortunately (for the fish), I was too young to understand about the need for gilled critters to stay underwater. My experimenting with "fish out of water" was fatal (for poor Goldie). The hamster, who was unnamed, escaped from his cage, and then darted outside when my Mom opened the back door, eliciting several shrieks (from my Mom, not the hamster.) Some time later, my Dad recaptured the rodent, and I think he (the hamster) was given to a neighbor.

A few years later, we acquired a bow-legged, oddly shaped Chow. He was the runt of the litter, and I named him Yankee Clover, having stolen the name from my Mom's perfume bottle. Yankee and I had some great adventures in the canyons that then existed in Linda Vista. He used to follow me to Chesterton Elementary School too, and my Mom would have to trudge there to get the pet. The canyons are all filled now and covered with houses and stuff. After we moved to Dunlop Street, some nasty person made up stories about Yankee, and we had to take him to the Humane Society. Too bad. I loved that little guy.

On Dunlop, maybe to make up for the loss of Yankee, my Dad got me a white rabbit. That was a mistake, as all he wanted (the rabbit) was to get outside. We had little room in the house, so the bunny was relegated to a small space between the refrigerator and the kitchen counter. Mr. Bunny was not happy, and kept crashing against the chunk of plywood that served as his cell door. I don't remember what happened to the carrot chomper. Maybe he was given to a neighbor?

We've had a Google number of cats and dogs, especially when we lived in rural Poway. Uncaring folks would dump unwanted felines and canines nearby, and quite a few managed to escape becoming coyote entrees; then live with us.

Also in Poway, we had a terrific Standard Poodle named "Sheba," several other dogs that were mostly insane, plus a donkey and two Shetlands; and we raised rabbits, chickens, and a milk goat. We also had a white rat and a tarantula. Fortunately, as I have herpetophobia, none of our children or their friends brought us any snakes. But we did have some lizards as temporary guests. I don't mind them; it's snakes that creep me out.

If you have pets, you'll need vets, which can lead to debts and sometimes nets. But the happiness they bring lessens the sting. And that's enough rhyming and alliteration for this week, except to say that we enjoy the features of our creatures. Sorry.

Possibilities of layoffs at RCC studied

Administrative staff at Rogue Community College (RCC) have been meeting since August to evaluate suggested staff and program cuts necessitated by a decline of nearly \$2 million in state funding from fiscal year 2006 to FY '08.

Some faculty and staff members have received "unofficial" layoff notices, the college announced, in advance of the anticipated June 30 cut-off date.

"We have great concern for our employees and want to provide as much notice as possible," said RCC President Peter Angstadt, "so staff members can plan for their future."

Official notice of layoffs will be issued this month, after which faculty and classified staff will have 30 days to comment and discuss alternatives, the college said.

RCC is facing a 10 percent reduction in staff and faculty positions, due to low enrollments, and has said it will furlough the diesel technology degree and electronics programs. College officials also are considering a reduction in the number of days the college is open.

The budgetary crisis stems from the increased expense of personnel costs, utilities, fuel, materials, and services, as well as a state funding formula that uses a "rolling average" of current and past years' enrollment. Low student numbers during the 2001-2002 recession still figure into the funding RCC receives from the state, Angstadt said.

Even though there has been a 12.3 percent upswing in enrollment this year from last, the student full-time enrollment is down more than 900 from 2000-01.

The recent upturn in enrollment, according to Angstadt, "reflects a continuing demand for RCC services."

The previous decline in students, Anstadt believes, was a result of reduced offerings and increased tuition due to budget cuts.

RCC is working with legislators to enact changes in the allocation formula, especially the stipulation that locally raised property tax revenue be sent to the state for redistribution throughout the state community college system.

"RCC is one of a number of community college districts with a high level of support through local property taxes," said Dr. Kevin Talbert, board chairman.

"The unfortunate consequence of the state board decision (to include all property taxes in the state community college support fund for redistribution) is that Southern Oregon taxpayers end up subsidizing other community colleges..."

As a result, Talbert emphasized, Rogue Community College is left with fewer general fund dollars and higher tuition costs.

Should the state improve the funding picture for community colleges, Angstadt said, staff would be recalled.

"(We) may not know until June what the state-wide level of community college support will be," he concluded.

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.
- Malcolm Forbes -

Letter 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.

"Thank you" submissions are not accepted as letters.

Still hanging out; he cites two more
From William Schneider
Cave Junction

They hung Saddam in late-December. Big deal.

There should have been two more bodies dangling: Charles Taylor, of Liberia; and Omar Al Bashir, of Sudan, whose regimes are responsible for much of the terror happening in Africa. Between 2003-2006, 400,000 dead and more than 1 million displaced.

Terror far more heinous than a clean gassing of the multitudes of Kurds. Saddam's acts are almost clinically sterile compared with what is happening in Africa.

Rather than go into detail, I urge that we become informed as to the literal Hell-on-Earth that is Sudan and other places on the continent where gold and diamonds are awash in blood, and babies are thrown into fires while mothers are raped and hacked to pieces with 15-cent machetes made in China, and child soldiers shoot their parents and siblings with AK-47s (made in China and Russia).

Where the Jangweed ride through villages hacking and shooting anything and anyone while rounding up girls for sex slaves and boys, 5-, 6-, 9-, 12-years old for soldiers, whose first acts are to shoot their parents, in many instances. All under the guidance and watchful eyes of some world leaders who are not dangling with Saddam, but still carry on their terror as I write.

Family values? War on Terror? Empty echoing rhetoric.

When we think of diamonds and gold let us remember Africa, littered with the corpses of hundreds of thousands of our fellow human beings. When we pray in our churches, maybe ask what is our share of responsibility by the money we spend and things we don't do for the suffering of others not so far away.

If we saw it down the street, a baby being hacked to death while its mother is being unmentionably abused and tortured, would we still

gaze dreamily out the window thinking about how righteously religious we all are? American the Beautiful. Family values and all.

It is happening down the street and just across the ocean. A few hours away by jet. A few hours away. Not far, far away. Close enough

to almost touch. As close as, say, Iraq.

As of this writing, as far as I know, Omar Al Bashir still runs Sudan. I am not sure of the status of Charles Taylor. I believe he is still a free man, or should I say monster. Not hanging with -- but still hanging out.

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