

Bob's Corner

It seems that our smallest cat, Charlie, the black-and-white maniac who makes noises like a velociraptor, is trying to injure me. The only reason I say this is that he keeps pushing stuff onto my head while I'm sleeping.

Just the other day he leaped from the bedroom cat tower onto a wall shelf, and then onto our headboard, which contains numerous open cubbyholes, and pushed over a 12-inch-tall glass bottle (empty). Fortunately I was only half-asleep because of all the racket he had been making as he raced around the house like a crack-addled critter. So when I heard, and actually sensed to some degree, that a heavy bottle was headed to my head, I covered my melon.

Actually, his aim was off, so the bottle only plopped near my skull, thereby avoiding a clunked cabeza. However, several other times he has pushed a shallow basket off the headboard top shelf. Charlie's bombardments have only grazed my head, and I'm learning to sleep lightly. Also, the basket is slowly disappearing because before he bulldozes it to targets below he treats it as prey that needs biting and ripping.

And speaking of prey, Jan made him a toy. It's a small Ziploc bag with a wad of paper inside. Charlie loves it. He likes to attack it and throw it about. He also enjoys carrying it around as it dangles from his sharp little cat teeth. Ah, the thrill of the kill.

Charlie seems to be offended by anything upright. Either that or the photos of our family, including my grandmothers and aunts, have learned to fly.

Then there's midnight black Flint "Flinty" Eastwood. We had an under-bed drawer open one morning, and then didn't see Flinty the rest of the day. We figured he was in one of his hiding places, like in the garage or behind a curtain. We went to bed and heard mewing noises, which we were sure came from one of the several outside cats that have adopted us because of the food placed on the back deck.

Went to sleep and awoke early the next morning, as the mewing sounds resumed. Turned out that the mighty black had gotten into the drawer while it was open, and then gotten right comfortable inside the bed platform. When we rescued him, he made a beeline for the litter box. Whew!

Flint is an interesting guy; he believes in a share-and-share-alike philosophy. Especially when we have food on our plates. He has no problem coming directly to our meals and insisting that he be given some of whatever we're eating. He'll even take salad. If we don't share quickly enough, he uses his lighting-quick claws to snag a morsel. Or he'll simply stick his face onto the plate for a quick bite. Spoiled kid.

Bubba Big Foot, all 16.5 pounds of him, is still the king cat around the house, although sometimes he and his mom, Maui, get into some battle royals. And sometimes Flint and Charlie get into play fights, even though the latter is about half the size of Flint. This results in little tufts of cat hair scattered about the room.

Cats are intriguing creatures. I just wish one wasn't stalking me. Oh well, what can you expect from fur snakes?

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.

'Thank you' submissions are not accepted as letters.

Shotguns his solution to any door-kickers From Ellis Couron Cave Junction

Because of the vote on the levy coming up, a lot has been said in letters to the editor regarding the safety of the citizens if the levy fails. I am not going to vote for more money for any levies because I have not liked what the county commissioners have done with our money.

I've written several letters regarding the waste of O&C funds for large salaries, swimming pools and the like, and asked if those monies could not be set aside for problem times like the present.

But to today: When the levy fails, the thing to do is to buy a good used, small-caliber shotgun like a .410 or 16-gauge pump or semiautomatic. I also recommend birdshot, not buckshot, because small pellets could only injure.

Get instruction on how to safely use any weapon. Keep your doors locked, and be ready when someone kicks in your door.

A broken door or point of illegal entry would serve as your evidence of a crime. If and when law enforcement shows up, tell the officer that you were afraid for your life and shot to protect yourself.

Word will quickly get around that breaking and entering is not good for one's health.

County budget proposals leave much to be desired From John Bowler Kerby

I've spent a few hours reading, and trying to under-

stand, the recently published Josephine County budget.

What I have read leads me to believe that the commissioners have not stepped up to the plate and offered the choice they promised. With the levy the budget matches their statements, but if the levy does not pass the budget fails to offer the promised alternative: a much-reduced government working with the available money.

I question the whole approach the commissioners have taken to "level 1" -- what to do if the levy does not pass. Yes, the commissioners have made the necessary cuts to services, but they have not extended those cuts into the internal structure of the county government.

When I examined that part of the budget I saw employee reductions consisting almost entirely of eliminating the lowest-paid employees and cuts to training and equipment maintenance and repairs. I didn't see the across-the-board reductions that I expected.

The level 1 option reduces services without corresponding reductions in the county governmental structure. Most obviously the commissioners themselves are still employed full time with the same compensation package of \$104,000 each as if the levy passes. Salaries and benefits for the administration -- the board of commissioners, chief operating officer, chief financial operator and their assistants -- amount to more than \$1 million. This figure is the same regardless of whether or not the levy passes.

The level 1 budget is a stopgap measure. The commissioners seem to be anticipating that money will come from somewhere so that the cuts can be reversed. I believe their hope is that either federal money will come through or, if not, that the voters will be

sufficiently frightened to approve a second levy proposal on the November ballot. To make this a self-fulfilling prophecy they have given us a budget that results in an unsustainable top-heavy county government.

If the levy fails let's try working with the money we have. I would like to see the commissioners and the sheriff take on this challenge by proposing new public safety districts with independent elected directors.

These would provide police patrol services at the level each community desires and pay the county for jail and

services used. Meanwhile, the county should work to truly reduce the size of its government and to produce a balanced budget. I don't think we can get to this by passing the levy: I think that with the levy passed the will to make such major reorganization to our government will evaporate.

I'm not inclined to vote if I'm not given a real choice. I don't support the levy, and as of today I plan to withhold my vote. I advise anyone wishing to defeat the levy to do likewise, since for it to pass, 50 percent of registered voters must return ballots.

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Weather Watch

Cave Junction

Wednesday, May 9

Sunny with some clouds



High--76 Low--40.

Thursday, May 10

Partial sun and pleasant



High--74, Low--40.

Friday, May 11

Some clouds and sunny



High--74, Low--42.

Saturday, May 12

See above



High--77, Low--39.

Sunday, May 13

Increasing clouds in the evening



High--78, Low--40.

Monday, May 14

More sun, still some clouds



High--76, Low--43.

Tuesday, May 15

Clouds with chance of t-storms and rain



High--73, Low--42.