

Cat Calls

Straying too far for comfort



Our cat missed her curfew last night. Again. She's normally inside by the time we go to bed, but these balmy summer evenings are the call of the kitty-wild to Dear Pussy (not her real name).

Wifey and I tried and tried to call her in, but she ignored our coaxing. Maybe you heard us – or some other equally desperate cat owner – stage-whisper hissing out into the darkness, “Psss psss psss, kitty kitty kitty, psss psss psss!”

Wifey, who has to get up earlier than I do, gave up and went to bed. I was too worried.

Big raccoons nest in the spruce tree behind our house, and a raccoon could easily shred a little cat. What if Dear Pussy tried to cross the street? Late-night speeders might, at best, be looking out for cop cars, but are not likely scanning the road for black and whites of a much smaller scale.

I pushed the screen door open and tried again, *psss-psss-psssing* for all I was worth. Nothing. At least no snarling raccoons. Or screeching tires. Or worse. If I was going to wait up for Dear Pussy, I'd need some distraction. I switched on the late edition of *The Rachel Maddow Show*. My favorite commentator's brilliant news analysis might at least ward off dire imaginings of feline catastrophe.

Rachel recounted how President Obama has yet to overturn Don't Ask Don't Tell, pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or undo the Defense of Marriage Act. Is he straying too far from his campaign promises? How many Obama supporters does it take to coax him back to what he pledged to the LGBT community? Are my president and my cat beyond retrieval? Do I have enough audacity of hope?

Eventually, Rachel, in all her Rhodes Scholar dykey handsomeness, bid me goodnight. I clicked off the TV and barefooted onto the back deck. “Psss-psss-psss, kitty kitty kitty, psss-psss-psss.”

At last, Dear Pussy came prancing up the back steps as if it had just occurred to her that she'd prefer to spend the night in the comfort and safety of her own home with the people who pet her and groom her, buy expensive organic kibble and pay the vet bills; and where she has access to fresh water, scratching pads and, even better for claw sharpening, our furniture. Not that I'm resentful. She trotted right past me as if there'd been nothing to worry about, scampered through the door and curled up on our cushy sofa (AKA the *homosectional*).

I stayed outside a little longer. A shimmering moon rose over the rooftops. The warm night air soft on my skin, I breathed in the perfume of blooming jasmine, nicotiana and heliotrope – along with the wafting aroma of a neighbor's midnight toke.

Silence. No summer mowers, blowers, roofers or street-repair noise. The night was utterly quiet – all except for the soft rasp of a distant train whistle, and some other poor shmo calling, “Heeeeeeeere kittykittykittykitty!” into the night.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow stays up past her bedtime in Eugene, Oregon.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NO MORE POLLUTION

I am against giving Seneca a permit to build its wood burning power plant. I do not consider this operation sustainable.

It requires 32 tons of wood products per hour. Where does all that wood (“mill waste”) come from? Especially now with construction and lumber sales down, there is no guarantee that Seneca will not burn freshly cut trees to keep the operation going. Yes, trees are renewable, but Seneca's practice of clear-cutting and spraying petroleum-based herbicides and fertilizers is not sustainable.

They also will burn slash — but it is important to keep slash in the forest, just like it is important to keep dead trees in the forest in order to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

The predicted emission of 500 tons of air pollutants and toxins will add to the already super polluted air that comes to Eugene from the west. It is harmful to our health and adds to global warming. Not sustainable!

Instead of using food and forest products to create energy, we *must* reduce our energy consumption!

Our leaders must courageously come forward and educate us about the perilous situation we and our world are in and provide guidance how to conserve energy and increase efficiency so everyone can find ways to ease into a new way of life, a sustainable way of life.

Lora Byxbe
Eugene

BIZARRE TASER USE

Last week as I was loading my two small children into the car in my somewhat quiet neighborhood, I witnessed what I thought to be a bizarre occurrence. Apparently, there was an intoxicated young woman going from door to door looking for a child. A concerned neighbor called the Lane County Sheriff's Office.

When the enforcement arrived, they began to give chase. The woman in question could not have been more than 120 lbs. max, and she was wearing flip-flops. The officer

was never more than five feet behind her at any given moment and surely could have grabbed her had he picked it up a notch. Instead, they fired a Taser. I mean really. I have seen bouncers subdue women in bar fights with less force.

I was stunned and saddened to see that the officers involved felt the need to use such excessive force in this case. I, for one, did not feel threatened by this woman. It is sad to see they were.

Oona Lee
Eugene

MISSING THE ELEPHANT

The recent article (8/6) on the high unemployment rate in Oregon was incomplete. Its focus on durable goods (generally from big biz) and the rainy day fund (politics), though not particularly wrong, completely missed the big reason (the 1,200 pound gorilla in the living room).

To quote Winston Churchill: “Some regard private enterprise as a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look upon it as a cow that they can milk. Only a handful see it for what it really is — the strong horse that pulls the whole cart.”

The simple fact is that Salem is a small-business killing machine. I personally know of multiple examples of small businesses being mercilessly executed by dogmatic Oregon voters using their lackey bureaucrats as henchmen (examples: the absurd linking of the minimum wage to the CPI, the suffocating land use laws, the tax-the-rich mentality, the hatred and subsequent vilification of apparently all natural resources businesses).

Therefore, so long as the majority of Oregon's I-5 corridor voters continue to be idealists following the clueless, then Oregon will never be much more than an economic backwater, third-tier state.

Grant Roberts
Corvallis

UNFAIR DISADVANTAGE

I've heard so many good reasons for a single-payer health plan. But I've rarely



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