



Ned Hickson

Don't forget the cat when taking down your Christmas tree

For our family, packing up the Christmas decorations is never easy. Not only because it means the official end of the holiday season, but also because it means it's time to pry the cat out of the Christmas tree.

What makes this process especially difficult is **sap**. You see, it's not until after spending the better part of December attached to the

mid-section of our tree that our cat realizes she can no longer retract her claws.

A few years ago, this actually resulted in a front page story in the *National Inquirer* under the headline:

Holiday Tree sprouts CAT TUMOR!

It's not like we haven't tried to keep this tragedy from happening. In fact, we've even taken our cat to a pet psychologist, thinking that maybe she suffers from a traumatic experience that is somehow triggered by the site of Christmas trees — such as

an unresolved conflict with a strand of tinsel.

After six weeks of therapy (equal to eight years in cat time), the only thing the doctor was able to tell us for certain was that our cat had been Shirley MacLaine in a previous life, which, according to him, isn't all that unusual.

In short: He had no explanation for her behavior.

This, of course, led to my own — admittedly less scientific — diagnosis, which is that our cat is just freaking crazy. This forced us to take drastic measures this year in

hopes of avoiding another appearance in the tabloids.

To achieve this, we came up with the idea of spraying our entire tree with WD-40.

Initially, this seemed to be the answer as we watched our cat slide down the trunk and into the water bowl. But as we soon discovered, while WD-40 kept our cat out of the tree, it also kept any ornaments from staying on for more than six seconds.

This left us with a handful of desperate ideas, such as moving one of our stereo speakers under the tree and

playing "Dogs Barking Jingle Bells" 24 hours a day.

That idea was dropped pretty quickly.

After six barks, to be exact.

We also toyed with the idea of decorating a dogwood tree, the logic being that a cat wouldn't go near a tree with the word "dog" in its name.

That suggestion was nixed after realizing we'd first have to teach our cat to read.

What all of this is leading up to is something you've probably already guessed, which is that, once again, the Christmas tree in our living

room will remain there until it is completely brown and withered, and the sap has weakened enough that our cat can safely be detached.

In the meantime, we have already begun planning for next year, when we'll try to coax our cat to move high enough on the tree that we can use her as a top ornament.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com.

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Deadline tomorrow to apply for city committee positions

Would you like to see more public involvement in the City of Florence to make sure your voice is heard? Would you like to make a difference and help contribute to the goals and objectives of the city as a whole?

Then consider applying for one of the open positions on one of the city's committees. The deadline for applications is tomorrow, Dec. 31.

These positions offer citizens an excellent opportunity

to volunteer their services on significant matters.

The following boards and committees are currently filling vacancies for varying term lengths, with positions set to begin Feb. 1, 2016.

- Audit Committee - 1 open position
- Budget Committee - 3 open positions
- Environmental Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) - 3 open positions
- Florence Urban Renewal

Agency (FURA) - 2 open positions

- Florence Urban Renewal Budget Committee - 1 open position
- Planning Commission - 2 open positions
- Transit Advisory Committee - 4 open positions (1 for a high school student)

Applications are available at Florence City Hall, 250 Highway 101, and can be downloaded from the city's website www.ci.florence.or.us.

City Hall is open Monday through Friday; 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.

All qualified persons are encouraged to apply.

For details regarding the duties and responsibilities of these bodies, residency requirements of applicants, term lengths or any other questions, contact City Recorder Kelli Weese at 541-997-3437.

Applicants will be interviewed by the City Council on Jan. 13 and 14, 2016.

Water from 1A

HWPUD is coordinating a water truck to deliver water to the reservoir in the area.

"We have a few folks calling us about water usage," Neville said. "The neighborhoods have already reduced water usage by

25 percent in just one week. It's been a good effort."

The water curtailment includes prohibiting the outdoor use of water, adding no new connections to the lines, filling household washers to capacity and notifying the PUD immediately of a leak.

HWPUD will send a letter to

area residents with more detail about the curtailment and water shortage.

"This is part of running a water district and living on the coast," Neville said.

He was hopeful about the response from residents.

"We really do have a great community here," he said.

Residents who are unsure of their water usage or would like help in reducing usage can call HWPUD at 541-997-2446 or go to www.hwpud.com.

Follow Chantelle on Twitter @SNews_Chantelle. Email her at cmeyer@thesiuslawnews.com.

Port from 1A

The port received an estimate that a Phase II Environmental Impact Study

would cost between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

At one time the property housed a boat repair facility.

Commissioner Terry Duman asked if the port had the \$40,000 to \$50,000 in the current budget to do the tests.

"We do not have that money," McClure said. "And we don't know if we need to do that."

Don Wilbur told the board that he had discussions with

one other individual that had "expressed serious interest in the property. The only difference in our contracts is you folks (the port) have it at no interest and he would pay prime plus two."

Caputo expressed concerns over the port's responsibilities to taxpayers.

"My concern is I definitely want to protect the voters," he said. "I want to make sure that property is not contaminated."

We owe it to our voters not to spend any of the port's money unwisely. We probably should have more time if we are going to look at the environmental (issues)."

Wilbur said, "A level II (Environmental Impact Study) would probably kill the deal for everybody."

Commissioner Duman suggested the board continue negotiations with the Wilburs for one more week to try and reach an agreement.

McClure reminded the board that there was currently no signed agreement and the earnest money agreement had not been signed by either party.

In other business, the port agreed not to renew a one-year listing agreement with Berkshire Hathaway for the 40-acre Pacific View industrial property that will expire on March 31, 2016.

The board approved a motion by commissioner Duman to allow Berkshire Hathaway to be realtor of record only for the 40-acre Pacific View parcel and no other port-owned property.

The board also voted to extend McClure's interim manager contract until Feb. 1, 2016.

Follow Jack on Twitter @SNews_Jack. Email him at jack@thesiuslawnews.com.

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Subscribe to the Siuslaw News before December 31, 2015 and you will receive our new 2016 Community Calendar

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