



Ned
Hickson

Your home's underbelly is no place to be manly

There comes a time in every man's life when he must set an example for his son by crawling under the house to fix something. This must be done with apparent fearlessness even though he knows whatever needs fixing is going to be located in the darkest corner of the home's underbelly, probably behind a spider web the size of a commercial fishing net.

Many years ago, I used plywood to seal up the underside of our home and stop what I suspected were nightly "rave" parties hosted by our

cat. These parties generally started around 11:30 p.m. and were held directly beneath our bedroom floor, where it sounded like 20 cats playing "Twister." Naturally, I had no choice but to break up these parties by getting out of bed and shoving our 60-lb. Labrador headfirst through the crawl space in our closet floor.

My point is this: Sealing things up stopped the cat parties. Unfortunately, it also turned the crawl space under our home into a frightening black void where, thanks to evolution, a species of hairy, sightless, spider-like rodents with large fangs and the ability to mobilize telepathically has nested, colonizing into the hundreds.

Possibly even thousands. I know this because I've shined a flashlight down there and — this is not an exaggeration — I'm pretty sure I saw something move.

It was this thought (along with how I might turn a butane lighter and a can of my wife's hair spray into a flame thrower) that came to mind a few years later as my son and I stared into the dark opening of our crawl space.

"Is Mom making you go down there?"

"Of course not," I said. "As man of the house, it's my duty to do things no one else wants to do."

My son thought about this a minute. "But Mom tells you what those things are, right?" "Pretty much," I said, then

dangled my feet over the opening.

"What are you going to DO down there?"

I explained that one of our bathroom outlets wasn't working, and I thought it was because something had chewed through a wire.

"What chewed through it?"

Even then at age 11, my son wasn't ready for the truth, which was that hordes of slobbering, milky-eyed creatures were waiting in the dark, excreting a web-like substance from their bulbous posteriors and communicating with each other telepathically that a 180-lb. Happy Meal was about to be served. So, to preserve my son's innocence, I made something up.

"Probably a squirrel did it," I said.

His expression relaxed as he handed me the flashlight, then offered a final piece of advice. "If a squirrel lets you pet him, he probably has rabies."

"Good tip," I said and eased down into the crawl space.

Moving on my hands and knees toward our bathroom, it wasn't long before I had passed the point of no return. This, of course, is when my flashlight decided to blink out. Throttling it with both hands, I shook it back to life just long enough to illuminate the area above me — including a dead squirrel dangling from an electrical wire by its teeth.

Sure, in retrospect, attempting to defuse the situation by screaming uncontrollably may not have been the "manly" thing to do. However, I credit that mind-numbing howl with scaring off the spider-rodent creatures long enough for me to dislodge the squirrel and repair the exposed wire.

Unfortunately, in all the commotion, I also dropped my wife's hair spray — which means I'll have to go back.

But only if she makes me. 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.

'Lucia di Lammermoor' comes to City Lights

Opera Preview By JUDY SCHWARTZ

One of opera's most beloved works, "Lucia di Lammermoor," will be on the big screen at City Lights Cinemas on Wednesday, May 25, with a performance at 6 p.m. An encore presentation will follow on Saturday, May 28, at 11 a.m. This is the third in the six-part 2015-16 opera series from London's Royal Opera House.

Written by Gaetano Donizetti in 1835, the opera is a perfect example of the "bel canto" style of singing. "Bel canto" (beautiful singing) was introduced in Italy in the 17th century and characterized the works of

Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti. The 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries were considered the bel canto era, which then lost favor with the advent of the Germanic style of operatic singing, typified by the works of Wagner.

"Lucia" is a "dramma tragico" (tragic opera) in three acts. The libretto is loosely based upon Sir Walter Scott's historical novel, "The Bride of Lammermoor." The story focuses on the emotionally fragile Lucia Ashton who is caught in a feud between her own family and that of the Ravenswoods.

The setting is in the Lammermoor Hills of Scotland (Lammermoor) in the 17th century. Lucia has fallen in love with Edgardo Ravenswood, her brother Enrico's sworn enemy. Enrico is plan-

ning to marry his sister to the wealthy Arturo Bucklaw, whose money will allow Enrico to keep his ancestral home. Betrayed by her brother into thinking Edgardo has been unfaithful, she marries Bucklaw, but at the wedding Edgardo returns and is furious with her.

The action that follows is filled with violent tragedy, anguish and ultimately death. "Lucia" has some of the most glorious music written in opera along with an eerie, sinister and heartbreaking mad scene — probably the most famous in the operatic repertoire. Historically, the "Mad Scene" has been a vehicle for sopranos who can technically and expressively master the demands of this piece, among them Joan Sutherland and Maria Callas.

Some sopranos perform the scene "come scritto" (as written) adding minimal ornamentation to their interpretation. Most sopranos add ornamentation to demonstrate their technical prowess, as was the custom in the bel canto period. This involves adding trills, turns, runs and cadenzas.

This opera is not to be missed and is filled with some of the most beautiful music ever written. The Royal Opera House cast is headed by Diana Damrau, Charles Castronovo and Ludovic Tezier.

For more information, contact City Lights Cinemas. Tickets are \$19 regular, \$15 City Lights members and \$10 students. All programs are available for high school screenings; contact City Lights for details.

Florence Chamber seeks board member nominations

The Florence Area Chamber Board of Directors is currently taking applications to fill three 3-year vacancies on its Board of Directors.

Applicants must be in good standing as Florence Area Chamber members, having paid their dues and actively participated in Chamber activities or committees.

All board members are expected to support the Chamber's mission to "champion the future of the greater Florence community as an innovative leader in economic vitality and active lifestyle..." and goals by helping to recruit new members, supporting special events and actively engaging in commit-

tees and programs.

The board meets the third Thursday of every month at 7:30 a.m. at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St.

For anyone interested in being considered for a board seat, applications are available for download at www.florencechamber.com, or email bettina@florencechamber.com to request a form to be emailed.

Deadline for applications is May 20.

Nominees will be announced May 25.

Chamber members will be allowed to make their selection online until June 10.

For more information, call 541-997-3128.



BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY
HomeServices

Northwest
Real Estate

(541)997-6000

www.RealEstateFlorence.com



LOVE YOUR
HOME
\$50,000 SWEEPSTAKES

In partnership with:

LOVE IT
OR LIST IT



Win \$50,000 for a Home Update!
from Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

AND we're also giving away 12 weekly
prizes of \$2,500! Contest ends June 17, 2016.

Enter for a chance to win at
LoveYourHomeSweeps.com

No purchase necessary. Enter once per day. See contest rules for details.



PRICE REDUCTION

Newer custom home on private .47 acre lot in upscale Heceta South. Trex deck with large front & back porch. Bonus room
2 Bdrm + den, 2 Ba 2005 sqft
\$369,000 BH7232 ML#16297575



NEW LISTING

Country living close to the beach
3 Bdrm, 2 Ba 1344 sq ft
\$269,900 BH7226 ML#16151925



PRICE REDUCTION

Enjoy gated community living. Room for all your treasures. Spacious living room. Formal dining room or use as family room. Bdrms at opposite ends of the house
3 Bdrm, 2 Ba 1620 sqft
\$179,000 BH7077 ML#15491034



NEW LISTING

Palm Harbor immaculate custom home. 38' x 45' garage w/RV parking & bonus craft/hobby workshop. Lots of upgrades
3 Bdrm, 2 1/2 Ba 2469 sqft
\$425,000 BH7230 ML#16361676



NEW LISTING

Wooded lot with native vegetation. Manufactured or stick built. Close to Sutton Lake
.49 acre
\$35,000 BH7227 ML#16646489



PRICE REDUCTION

Motivated seller to cash or prequalified buyers. Beautiful home inside & out. Upgrades throughout in this 3-5 bdrm very clean & neat home. 2 car garage & RV parking
3-5 Bdrm, 2 3/4 Ba 1756 sqft
\$214,900 BH7197 ML#16567076



PRICE REDUCTION

Recreational lakefront on Collard Lake .47 acre, old growth trees, seasonal creek, warm southern exposure. Canoe, kayak, paddleboat, swim, fish & picnic!
\$65,000 BH7098 ML#15124919



NEW LISTING

Build your dream home on this beautiful lot in subdivision of fine homes. Common area for Ocean & River enjoyment
.25 acre
\$79,900 BH7192 ML#16125632



NEW LISTING

2 Houses on 1 lot!
3 Bdrm, 3 Ba, 1823 sq ft AND
2 Bdrm, 2 Ba, 984 sq ft
\$359,000 BH7213 ML#16568583

Florence Branch | 1875 Hwy 101 | Florence, OR | (541) 997-6000 | www.RealEstateFlorence.com

© 2016 BHH Affiliates, LLC. An independently operated subsidiary of HomeServices of America, Inc., a Berkshire Hathaway affiliate, and a franchisee of BHH Affiliates, LLC. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices and the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices symbol are registered service marks of HomeServices of America, Inc.®

DEADLINE FOR PRESS RELEASES IS EVERY MONDAY AND THURSDAY BY NOON. EMAIL PRESSRELEASES@THESIUSLAWNEWS.COM.