



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

## Humor at the Speed of Life

James Kazad — (Remembrances of life before COVID)

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, lead 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.

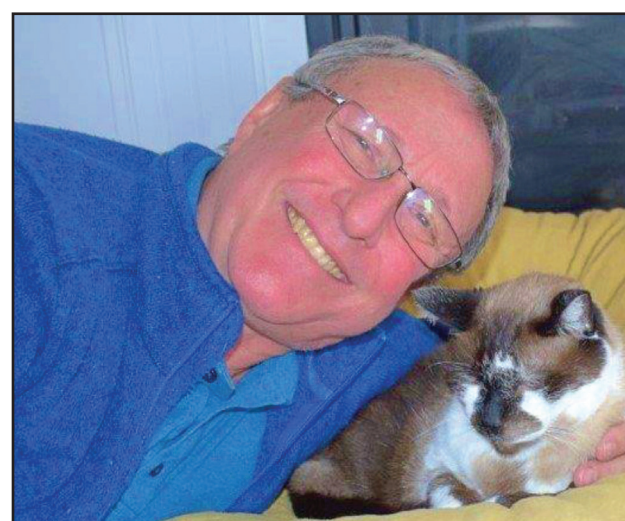
In the meantime, we have already begun planning for next year, when we'll try to coax our cat to move high enough on the tree that we can use her as a top ornament...



## Pet Tips 'n' Tales

By Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

### Wayne's World of Pets



**Wayne and his kitty, Sasha, share their opinions about the world of birds.**

Meet my fascinating new cousin, Wayne! We live 3,000 miles apart — but Ancestry DNA introduced us! Our animal loving gene runs deep as he has also dedicated his life to animal welfare.

Wayne and his wife, Kate's, lives changed when they bought two Zebra finches "just for pets" who "present-ed" them with eggs. The couple researched a \$7 book on how to raise their feathered babies and a few months later they had 35 Zebras — birds that is.

They had dived headfirst into the world of feather crazy.

They bought a green-cheeked Conure parrot, then another and another then switched to cockatoos. They had a big home and filled the basement with 30 species of birds, 100 parrots. It was a noisy house with baby birds that needed around the clock feeding every two hours. One African Grey they acquired had its previous owner's English accent. But in a few weeks, the bird sounded exactly like Wayne, frustrating Kate who never knew who was talking.

"After a few years, I was president of our local parrot club and VP of the Parrot Association of Canada," said Wayne.

Birds kept the couple on their toes.

"We had to change their cage locks because they learned to let themselves out. One day, we found four pairs of Goffin cockatoos who had escaped, then flown into each other's cages. They changed mates to the ones they preferred and started laying eggs."

Never underestimate the intelligence of parrots, Wayne said, who believes it often outweighs those of humans. One African Grey had an incredible vocabulary and used words correctly in conversation.

One bird took after their cat, Sasha. The cat flew past one of their dogs and batted it for good measure, not understanding where the attack came from — or maybe he was tagging the dog to help him out like a running race?

"Then one day, Niagara Falls Bird Kingdom Zoo's curator phoned asking me to be their Senior Keeper. I soon advanced to their Curator," said Wayne.

It is Canada's largest Avery and the largest free flying indoor aviary in the world. It has a half million cubic feet with 400 birds. They would go wild with El Nino or when the barometric pressure rose indicating the rainy season.

"I named EVERYTHING 'Fluffy' just for fun. We had a very tame bearded dragon that sat on my shoulder," Wayne said.

Her name? Fluffy, of course!

The bird-eating spider that was the size of a dinner plate?

Yup: Fluffy!

"While banding birds of prey like eagles and falcons, we had to be careful as they would drive their talons through our arms," said Wayne.

And a fun fact: Did you know that when you hear an eagle's cry on TV or a movie, it is not an eagle as the directors deem a Red-Tailed hawk's screech more majestic? An eagle sounds like a crow/seagull combination.

When the adventuresome couple retired, it took them six months to rehome their birds. Now they opt for a quieter hobby collecting silent fossils which they donate to museums. They did adopt a royal standard poodle, an Afghan, and a Siamese cat. These pets sleep a lot, not like the birds.

Also, there is not much room on their bed at night, but the house is much quieter without 100 squawking birds!

**TIPS:**

- Migratory birds eat insects. Wayne is not a fan of bug zappers. "Insects make our environment healthier," said Wayne. "Encouraging birds and bats is wise as they consume more bugs than any bird zapper and they need the fuel for flying and their babies."

- Wayne cautions against bird buying without education as they often get aggressive as they age or are in their breeding season. "Research bird breeds before you purchase or adopt," suggests Wayne. "The best family birds are budgies and cockatiels as they are inexpensive and don't live 90 years."

## Fundraiser for Singing Creek Education Center continues

Singing Creek Educational Center (SCEC) provides unique and immersive experiences for children of all ages, and their families.

This year, due to COVID, the non profit has taken a huge financial hit and is making an appeal to the community to help keep the doors open with a fundraising campaign.

Details are online at [www.charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/keep-the-doors-](http://www.charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/keep-the-doors-open-for-singing-creek-ctr)

[open-for-singing-creek-ctr](http://www.charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/keep-the-doors-open-for-singing-creek-ctr)

SCEC is located inside the historic Dr. Snapp House in Cottage Grove, and enjoys a special relationship with the Golddiggers and Prospectors Club that owns the house.

"We are so fortunate to be located in Cottage Grove, where there is a big community focus on history," says Karen Rainsong, the Executive Director.

With a mission to

inspire appreciation of local history through hands-on education, SCEC provides year long programs including homeschool, summer camps, school field trips, in-classroom presentations, outdoor school, and evening "Homestead Arts" classes.

Many of its students return year after year for the engaging programs and events that focus on local history. This year they launched

a new summer camp about Opal Whiteley, which featured nature studies and journaling.

Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law and each donor (over \$50) will receive a special thank you gift in the mail. Gifts include handmade quilts and can be seen at [www.singingcreekcenter.org/thank-you-gifts](http://www.singingcreekcenter.org/thank-you-gifts).

To learn more visit [www.singingcreekcenter.org](http://www.singingcreekcenter.org) and click the link to the fundraiser.

## Prospectors, Gold Diggers Club appeal to public for assistance

Most Grovers know the Prospectors and Gold Diggers Club for its famous Miners Breakfast on The Mountain during Bohemia Mining Days, or its unique Christmas Bazaar in the historic Dr. Snapp House on South River Road.

Or maybe its hosting of the Old Schoolmates Breakfast each August.

Or the annual scholar-

ships it provides to Cottage Grove High School graduates.

The club also maintains the historic house year-round showcasing early medical practices in Cottage Grove and hosts the Singing Creek Educational Center's history-focused activities for kids.

Club Secretary Alice Nowicki said the COVID-19 restrictions

prevented these significant annual fundraisers from happening this year.

"For 60 years, the Prospectors and Gold Diggers club members have worked to preserve our local history and fulfill our mission to 'prospect better things for Cottage Grove,'" Nowicki said. "We hope the community responds generously to our re-

quest for end-of-the-year donations so we can meet our organization's basic needs in 2021."

Send a tax deductible contribution to P.O. Box 415, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Make checks and money orders payable to Prospectors & Gold Diggers Club.

For more information call Alice Nowicki at 541-942-6148.

## LORANE COUNTRY NEWS

CONTRIBUTED BY  
**LIL THOMPSON**  
FOR THE SENTINEL

governor's guidelines.

Lorane Grange will return to meeting the first Thursday of the month in February.

- CAL students return to distance learning classes Jan. 4, 2021.

Good luck in school in the new year.

- This year is coming to an end. Tonight is New Year's Eve. Take time to look back over the year and count your many blessings.

It's been a long, strange year, but most of us made it through. So, Happy New Year to everyone! Here's hoping 2021 brings more joy, laughter, good health and lots of family time.

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