

Trabing

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# Mostly about People

By Wally Trabing

Good evening.

I hate to bring up gophers at this hour, but you'll forgive me because I know of a new method of eradicating these evils of all roots.

You sit down and write them nice letters and tell them to go away.

Me kidding? Not I.

Last week I talked to two people in San Lorenzo Valley who do this.

One is a woman on Lazy Woods drive near Felton who asked that her name not be revealed. It's not that she doesn't have faith in this technique. It's just that she's afraid someone will think her crazy, that's why.

About two weeks ago she wrote the following note and stuffed it about a foot down a hole with a stick:

"Dear Mr. Gopher,

"I'm trying so hard to have a flower garden. Would you take your activities someplace else where it won't matter?"

She signed the note formally, the way she did her voting registration and marriage license.

Then she did the most important thing of all — she thought positive.

And it worked. The gopher left the flower garden and came up in the middle of her lawn.

"I guess he didn't think the lawn mattered," said the woman. "It's a rather poor lawn."

So three days before I phoned her she wrote another note and stuck it down the lawn hole. It was shorter, but still pleasant, and explained that what she real-

ly meant was the empty lot next door.

A man who lives up the block a ways was impressed by all this and asked her to help him with a mole problem.

Not knowing how to write braille, she had to refuse.

The real coup de pied behind this hieroglyphics for brainwashing gophers is Ellaine Shannon, co-owner of The Purple Edge, the arty flower shop near Felton.

An old hand at gopher-writing, she listed several rules that must be followed.

1. Never be sarcastic. Like "gopher away."

2. You have to honestly feel that the note will be read.

3. The note must be constructive. For example it must suggest a better alternative, and some advantages at the new location — such as being free from traps, water hoses, etc.

4. Crumple the note. Do not fold it, because the quarters are rather limited.

5. Never feel superior to the particular gopher you are dealing with. It might reflect in the note.

You may feel superior to other gophers, however.

I, for one am impressed with gopher writing. But at our house we do not have a gopher problem. We have a stray cat.

So after talking with Mrs. Shannon I came home and wrote a note in my best cat-ligraphy.

"Dear Tom;

"I appreciate your interest in our back yard and in Sugar, our own cat, but in as much as you two seem irreconcilably incompatible, would you mind terribly moving your Armageddon to Mission street — or better yet, to the University of California site?"

"Last night your tryst was particularly sudden. I awoke to find the hair on my chest standing straight up and all six feet four of me two feet off the bed.

"Of late I find that I can only cat nap.

"P.S. I understand the Johnsons, three doors down, have just recently let their cat sleep outside — a real looker."

Well, I placed the note on the back fence, but it didn't work, so I checked with Ellaine Shannon and she said:

"Of course it didn't work. You have to write nine notes."

I am doing this now, scratching out one sarcastic phrase after another.

At first I thought that Mrs. Shannon was the originator of this method of pest elimination, but it seems to me that I read something about it being tried over in Africa.

They tried to cut down on the gopher population on one of the large game reserves, but had to give it up.

The ostriches were disappearing instead.

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