

ANNIE'S MAILBOX

Wandering eyes bother upset wife

Dear Annie: My husband and I have been married for 21 years, and we have five wonderful children. "Tom" is 50, and I am 39.

In the past few years, Tom has developed an annoying habit. He openly ogles attractive women and young teenage girls. I can understand one glance, but he stares. After we walk past, he'll look over his shoulder to get the rear view.

Later in the day, he will sometimes remark that I should wear this or that revealing outfit, tone my muscles more, dye my hair a specific color or lose weight. Mind you, I am a size 4. Tom says he finds skinny women with large breasts and tattoos a turn-on. I don't look like that.

I have told Tom that his newfound habit is hurtful and disrespectful to me. It makes me feel that I'm not pretty enough and gives the impression that these women could easily steal him away.

It embarrasses me so much that I don't want to go anywhere with him. We no longer take evening walks, and forget about restaurants.

When I tell this to Tom, he becomes angry and often yells at me. He insists he's doing nothing wrong and has no intention of stopping. He says I'm the one with the problem, and that I'm jealous and spoiled.

Is he right? Do I need to change? Is this the proverbial male mid-life crisis? Why doesn't he care how much it upsets me? He could at least not do it when I'm with him, but he won't.

— *Unhappily Married to an Ogler*

Dear Unhappy: Many men have these thoughts, but Tom seems to have lost the ability (or willingness) to censor his actions in public. Ask him to get a complete physical to make sure his "new habit" isn't being exacerbated by a medical condition. If he is simply behaving like a toddler in a candy store, you must decide whether you can ignore his boorishness. Most women find this behavior pathetic and obnoxious, rather than seductive.

Dear Annie: Another family gathering is coming up, and my husband and I find ourselves becoming tense, as usual.

My husband has two sisters who think it's great fun to catch mistakes people make and then ridicule them. They do it under the guise of good-natured teasing, but it comes across as mean-spirited. His other siblings are kind and considerate, but the family sticks together and would never tell these two to knock it off.

My husband is getting older and has become a little forgetful. He is a target of their ridicule, and he hates it. He pretends to be a good sport, but he has confided in me that this treatment bothers him a great deal.

I hope these sisters will recognize themselves here and try to be kinder, although I know few people see themselves in the column.

— *The Outlaw*

Dear Outlaw: Take one of these sisters aside privately and say, "I know you care about your brother, but he's sensitive to the fact that he's getting older. When you make fun of him, it hurts him terribly because you are his family and he loves you. I know you don't mean to cause him pain, so I hope you will keep this in mind."

Rest assured, some day the shoe will be on the other foot.

anniesmailbox@comcast.net



Kathy Mitchell & Marcy Sugar

IN THE SADDLE

Keeping falling leaves away from horses

As the hot weather begins to cause leaves to dry up and begin falling long in advance of autumn, remember that some leaves that drop but that are not completely dry can be poisonous to horses.

Since fall is a good time of year for planting, be sure to design your landscape to keep future falling leaves away from your horses.

Dropping leaves of Prunus species, which is mainly composed of "pitted" fruit trees but also some shrubs, are the biggest culprits. The wilted leaves contain cyanide, a deadly toxin. Symptoms of cyanide poisoning in horses include: Shortness of breath, frothing at the mouth, dilated pupils, convulsions, bright red mucous membrane and finally, "blind staggers" — the thrashing panic of a suffocating horse.

It is best to remove Prunus species trees from around your horses. Watch also for leaves that blow across your yard.

Prunus species include: Cherry, Plum, Prune, Peach, Nectarine, Almond, Apricot, Chokecherry and some laurels. Both fruiting and flowering (ornamental) Prunus trees and shrubs have cyanide in their leaves when wilted. Once the leaves are completely dry, they pose no threat. Wilted red maple leaves produce a similar toxin, however, these trees are not common locally.

Treatment should occur within three hours of ingestion for the best chance of survival. This is a veterinary emergency. Call your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your horse is suffering from cyanide poisoning.

Other plants to keep out of your yard include milkweed (a common weed), foxglove (Digitalis), and the ornamental shrub oleander. All contain high levels of cardiac glycosides which can cause arrhythmia and cardiac arrest.

Oleander, in particular, is highly toxic; one ounce of oleander leaves can kill a 1,000 pound horse! Fortunately, this plant is not particularly palatable, but a hungry — or bored — horse WILL eat oleander and could die suddenly. With prompt treatment, the horse has a good chance of survival.



Valerie Zera



WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE

As of Aug. 30, California has only reported one equine case of West Nile Virus in an equine, occurring in L.A. County. L.A. County officials have reported about one-quarter of 2011's WNV human cases, dead birds and mosquito samples, although one about one-tenth of the WNV-positive sentinel chickens statewide.

For those who keep or take their horses into areas that are not subject to a winter freeze, you should discuss with your veterinarian the need for a second West Nile Virus immunization.

Please continue to protect the human members of your family from this potentially deadly virus. Report neglected, stagnant water where mosquitoes could be breeding to the Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District at (661) 942-2917. If you find freshly (fluids and organs must not be dried out for testing) dead wild birds that seem to have died for no reason, call (877) 968-2473 or report online at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Valerie Zera's articles have appeared in several California equestrian publications. She is a member of Backcountry Horsemen of California; Equestrian Trails Inc. and a supporter of Antelope Valley Trails, Recreation and Environmental Committee. Write to her care of the Valley Press, P.O. Box 4050, Palmdale, CA 93590-4050.

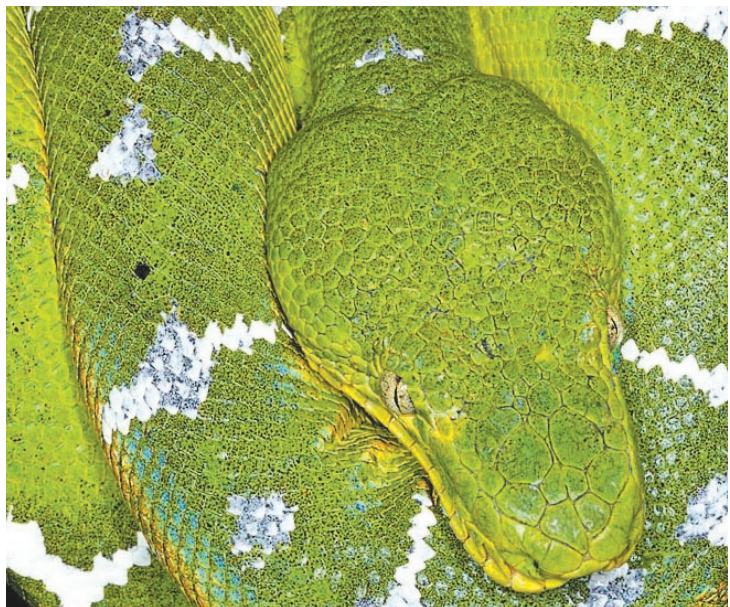
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RABIES UPDATE

Most years, eight to ten cases of rabies are found in Los Angeles County, almost all in bats. This year, 21 cases have been detected so far, all in bats. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health warns to be especially wary of bats seen flying during the day, or on the ground. Call the L.A. County Department of Animal Care and Control at (661) 940-4191 if you see a suspicious bat, dead or alive. Do not attempt to pick it up by hand.

A rabid bat was found in Palmdale in an airplane hangar, and six have been found in the Santa Clarita Valley. Please make certain that your animals are properly vaccinated against rabies. Rabies virus is deadly to all mammals — including humans — unless treated rapidly after exposure.

Speak to your veterinarian about the advisability of immunizing your horse against rabies. Horses that are taken into areas with a high occurrence of rabies in the local wildlife are most at risk. A veterinarian who works for one of the major vaccine companies told me that fall is a good time of year to vaccinate against rabies since we give so many other vaccines in the spring.



A boa lies coiled in anticipation.

Bob Jensen

CREATURES FROM PAGE B7

set forth by the Herpetological Society and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council.

A fundraiser at 6 p.m. on Saturday will benefit the council, which is a nonprofit organization that promotes responsible pet ownership and animal welfare among other related issues.

The fundraising event is free and includes a live auction, hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

In addition to the Friday night preview gala, the NARB Conference and Trade Show runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at the Anaheim Convention Center, 800 West Katella Ave.

Two-day passes are \$15 for guests ages 13 to adult; children ages 6 to 12 are \$8; and children younger than 6 are free.

A VIP badge for \$50 allows guests entrance to the 5 p.m. Friday preview including refreshments and entrance to the convention show one hour early on Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets are available for purchase online and at the door.

For details, email info@narbc.com or visit www.narbc.com or www.reptileconference.com.

lrth@avpress.com

ANIMAL SHELTER



Miss Stash is a 2-year-old female/spayed Tortoiseshell Calico cat who was surrendered when her owner became terminally ill. Miss Stash is at the Lancaster Shelter at ID A4327981, where all kitten/cat adoptions are two-for-one through the summer.



Boyd is a 2-year-old male/neutered Chihuahua mix. He walks well on a leash and gets along well with other small dogs. Find Boyd at the AV Pet Adoption Center at ID A4309866.



Star is a 7-month-old male/neutered Queensland Heeler Mix who would make a great hiking or running buddy. Star is at the AV Pet Adoption Center at ID A4323062.

You can find the perfect pet for your home at two locations: The Lancaster shelter, 5210 West Ave. I, is open noon to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday; and the AV Pet Adoption Center, 42116 Fourth St. East, Lancaster, inside Canine Country Club, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sundays.

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This Week's Pet
Jackie is our Jack Russell-Chihuahua mix; she is going on 7 yrs old. — S. Smith

Pet of the week!
Do you have a photogenic pet? Send us a photo of your pet and they just may appear in our "Pet of the Week!"
Please include your pet's name, your name, and a brief description of what makes your pet funny, unique or just so adorable.
Photos may be in black & white or color and must be no larger than 8" x 10". Digital photos accepted (300 dpi preferred). Photos will not be returned and will remain the property of the Antelope Valley Press. Please send to P.O. Box 4050, Palmdale, CA 93590-4050 or email to cfletcher@avpress.com.
Keep an eye out for "Pet of the Week" every Friday in Valley Life!
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