

Evil Humors

by Jack Swenson

My friend is in the hospital; I give him a call. He hurt his leg falling down some stairs. Tore the tendons above one knee. He's on pain pills, and he's talking goofy. I can't understand a word he says. I tell him I will call him later.

I hang up the phone, and it rings. It's a neighbor. He asks if our lights are out. Ours aren't; his are. That happens from time to time. Sometimes it's the other way around; we don't have power, and he does.

I look out the window and see one of our cats in the backyard. He just had all the hair on his body shaved off. They call it a "lion cut." He's an old Main Coon, and he can no longer keep himself up, so we had to give him a shave to get rid of the mats.

The cat is sitting on the patio staring off into space. He's ashamed of himself. He knows he looks funny. I feel guilty for cutting off all of his hair, but what could we do? He was so bound up he could hardly walk.

My wife has the night sweats. She still smokes, so when she gets up in the morning she coughs and coughs. She can't sleep, and she's tired all the time. I worry about her health. I do as many of the household chores as I can, but there are certain things I can't do. I can't cook, for example. And I can't wash and dry her clothes. I have no idea what combination of settings she uses for the washer.

I worry about the state of the nation, too. Now the nutcases are throwing bricks through the windows of offices of elected officials. Sarah Palin's got a chart picturing office holders in the crosshairs of a rifle scope. There's a militia down South somewhere that's got an armored car and a .50 calibre machine gun.

Right wing talk show hosts are celebrities. The John Birch Society co-sponsored a recent GOP event.

I blame it all on evil humors. Something's leaking. I go into our garage and sniff. I dig a pipe wrench out of my tool box and put it on my workbench so it'll be handy if there is an earthquake and I have to go outside and turn off the gas.

