

Possible Wildlife (redux)

by WAYNE CRESSER

There was no way around it. I would have to write her a letter, since it's been my experience that people find something off-putting about my face. My expressions. I don't know, I have a face that will undermine my intentions every time. My intentions are good. I think they always have been. But I can recall my daddy telling me more than once, "Reg, wipe that look off your face or I'll wipe it off for you."

That always puzzled me. One time, he got real mad when I passed my hand over my mug and changed my expression from a frown to a smile.

Jennifer, the gal in the apartment upstairs had complained already to Charlie, our landlord, about my "attitude", after we had what I thought was a harmless chat concerning who should bring which trash barrels to the curb the night before the city comes to empty them.

Charlie told me all about it on the phone and added that he wasn't about to mediate this kind of stuff between grown-ups. Basically, as I understood him, he was washing his hands of it.

Now not being a man of the pen, I really had to think about what to say, how to say it. I chewed my fingernails raw over it. Eventually I reached the point where I thought I had something I could leave on her door, in an envelope of course, and afterwards, sleep like a baby.

Here it is:

Hello Jennifer

Figured I would leave this note on your door because I remember you mentioning it as a preferred method of communication, and I find it a good modality too, since it is less subject to innuendo. That being said, I'd like to clear up some things. The barrels and recycling bins that I have left recently in front of the garage are items I have personally purchased, either through replacing old ones or acquiring them anew out of necessity. The latter due to damage

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caused by the city trash haulers, whose carelessness can cause mayhem, especially in the cold and brittle winter months, as you may see.

Normally, I keep my waste containers in the garage to avoid enticing wildlife, but as of late, I have not. Thus, for reasons unknown to me, you assumed they were communal in nature but somehow individual in responsibility. Allowing their continued use by you and my efforts week after week to remove the residual waste left in them, was only ever an unspoken, albeit unrequited, courtesy. Traditionally second floor tenants have facilitated their own trash removal, and I believe it is now time to return to that course of action.

*You will find the barrel and recycling bins that until now **upstairs tenants** like yourself have always used behind the garage. In one instance, a previous tenant experimented with keeping them on the deck next to their (now your) back door. This caused a problem when some raccoons, skunks and a fox were found lingering on and around the premises (separately, of course). I even attempted to install a rudimentary gate to quell the nuisance, but it did nothing to discourage them. Hence, I realized why these things have always been placed behind the garage.*

So, in the spirit of establishing a courteous process going forward and to avoid confusion, I shall keep all my containers in the garage during the week. Also, I will turn on the flood lights for you on Thursday nights to deter any possible wildlife from rummaging around back there, should you be late in arriving home and therefore late in moving the trash out to the street for Friday pickup.

Hope this finds you well,

Best,

Reg downstairs

P.S. Something I learned once. If you mist the interior of the containers with an ammonia solution periodically, it can be an effective deterrent to possible wildlife.

Postscript: What can I say? It's been two weeks and I have seen the barrels go back and forth from behind the garage to the street. I have smelled the mist in the morning, and it is intoxicating.

