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Sunday May 12, 2024

Fowl Play

By Jerry Zezima

I have a bone to pick with the slobs who have been dumping chicken bones and other garbage on our front lawn. But make no bones about it, I will catch these birdbrains because my wife, Sue, and I recently installed a home security system to capture their fowl deeds.

This is the latest poultry problem I have had to cackle — sorry, I mean tackle — because it brings up the eternal question: What came first, the chicken or the egg?

The yolk was on me after Sue found a chicken egg in our backyard last year and I scrambled to find the hen that laid it. Some unknown humans in our neighborhood have chickens, one of which apparently flew the coop and used our lawn as a shell station.

I never did track down the fine feathered fiend. Nor do I know who owns the rooster that goes “cock-a-doodle-do!” at all hours of the day and night.

But I do know that some greasy-fingered individuals who have a taste for chicken keep tossing their bones on the same patch of grass out front.

The latest batch contained a clue: In a pile of used napkins and, yes, chicken bones was a receipt from a nearby grocery store.

Playing both detective and investigative reporter — I can see myself starring in my own TV show, “CSI: Chicken Scene Investigation” — I drove to the store, showed the crumpled receipt to assistant manager Danielle Hayes and asked if the store has cameras.

“Yes,” replied Danielle, “but we can’t show you the tape of the people who bought chicken here. We can only show it to the police.”

So I went to the local cop shop and spoke with Officer Quilty — she declined to tell me her first name — who said, “If you want to catch these people, get a camera.”

That’s when Sue called our alarm company and arranged for a technician to install a security system that not only would catch the sloppy scofflaws red-handed (or red-winged) but would also show the license plates of the vehicular maniacs who routinely blow through the stop sign in front of our house.

“We also want to catch the squirrels and rabbits that have been pilfering the flowers and veggies in my wife’s garden,” I told Dean Cameron, who came over to set up the cameras. “Maybe we can have them arrested, too.”

“My parents have groundhogs in their yard,” Dean said.

“Do they have security cameras?” I asked.

“No,” Dean replied. “They’re too stubborn.”

“How about you?” I wondered.

“I live in a third-floor apartment,” he said. “Unless someone has a 35-foot ladder to get in, I don’t need cameras. If I had them, they would catch my dog either sleeping or bullying my cat.”

Dean’s dog, a 7-year-old Corgi named Clementine, would eat clementines or even chicken.

“She’ll eat anything,” he said. “My sister got me high-security garbage cans because she used to turn over the garbage and eat everything in it.”

“Your sister?” I said.

“Clementine,” answered Dean, who installed four cameras on the outside of the house, including a doorbell camera at the front door.

“We used to have a doorbell, but it never worked,” I told him.

Dean also put cameras above the garage door (to catch chicken-bone dumpers), on the side of the house (to catch hungry squirrels and bunnies) and in the back (to catch any pregnant poultry that may want to lay another egg).

“You’re all set,” Dean said when he was finished.

“Thanks,” said Sue. “Now we can catch the jerks who blow through the stop sign. I just saw one. We can give the tape to the cops and get a piece of the fines. That way, the cameras will pay for themselves.”

“And if we catch those slobs who dump chicken bones in the yard,” I added, “it will be a feather in our cap.”

—Jerry Zezima

Jerry Zezima writes a humor column for Tribune News Service, which distributes it to newspapers nationwide and abroad. He is also the author of seven books, *Leave It to Boomer*, *The Empty Nest Chronicles*, *Grandfather Knows Best*, *Nini and Poppie’s Excellent Adventures*, *Every Day Is Saturday*, *One for the Ageless* and his latest, *The Good Humor Man: Tales of Life, Laughter and, for Dessert, Ice Cream*, all of which are “crimes against literature.” He has won eight awards from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists for his humorous writing.