

# A Tootle!

Guess what? We finally went on a Sunday afternoon tootle again! And I finally got off my high horse and deigned to join the others on the tootle! For once, I got to take my favorite (and only) dog Rocky so he wouldn't have to stay home alone all afternoon. His companion Maggie left us a few weeks ago due to cancer that forced us to call the vet and have her put to sleep. I think Rocky has taken it hard, since he has never been an "only dog" and misses his friend.



Seven of us spring chickens, in our sixties and seventies, piled into two cars, to drive over to Sawtooth campground, where Sir William and Lady Jan had seen enough wildflowers to make it worth the trip. Three



of the seven had never seen Sawtooth before and so were looking forward to new scenery and plentiful wildflowers.

I'd had my doubts about the wildflowers, knowing how sparse they have been here at home. But Sawtooth, located on the north slope of Goat Mountain Pass (as you travel Hwy 247 to Barstow), is at a higher elevation, and during the winter rains, we could see that these mountains got more rain than we did. So I was hopeful, but one must always take what Sir William says about things, multiply it by 3 and divide it by 2, subtract 50, and then divide it by 5.4, and maybe you'll get the likelihood that what he predicts may be true!

Rocky wore his harness and leash and followed quietly along as we walked along the flat field before entering "Wildflower" Canyon. As we walked higher on the slope, the rocks got bigger and the brambles got sharper. We had to go down and up a deep ravine, leaving one person behind whose

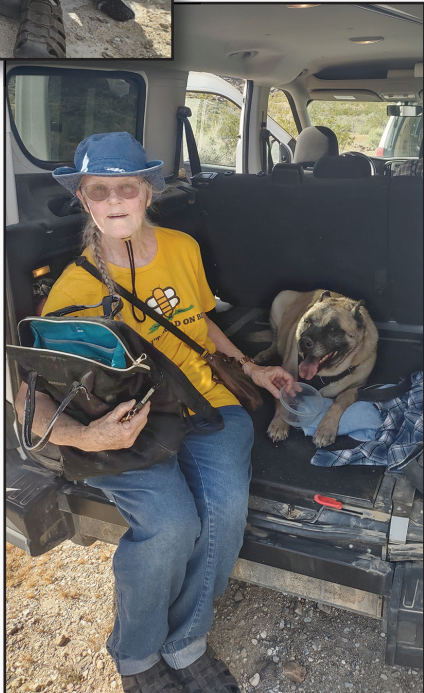


knees were not up to that climb. Pretty soon we were picking our way across a narrow path and up tumbled rocks, hoping that no rattlesnakes were just now awakening.

Were there any wildflowers? Well, yes, here was one yellow one, and there was another white one, and oh, there was a bunch of the orange Desert Mallow a little way off. You could actually see those orange bunches dotting the hillsides all around, almost in profusion as they apparently were the only flower to flourish in this particular spring rain pattern. Oh, yeah, if you'd have brought binoculars or a microscope, you could see the tiny white or yellow flowers underfoot.

I was concerned about Rocky and his feet, since he's 11 and mostly sits around the house now, so when the path became steep and required climbing over slippery rocks, I declined to take him further. The others continued on to find some wildflowers, so they say.

I took Rocky back, but didn't want to go the way we came, so what did I do? I took him down the ravine/wash, thinking it would be smooth and sandy. Haha-hahahaha. It was all big boulders thrown tightly together. It was no better than the path up to the wildflowers! What an idiot! But my little doggie steadily descended those boulders without slipping, following my spoken instructions best he could. We made our way



over to the path and rejoined our "stranded" friend as we waited for the others to return.

Oh, yeah, as we returned, we passed that yellow flower again.

Now wasn't that an exciting tootle?? I'm sure you can hardly wait for another suspenseful chapter.

*Linda Grummel*

## It's time again for the annual "Stella Awards"!

For those unfamiliar with these awards, they are named after 81-year-old Stella Liebeck who spilled hot coffee on herself and successfully sued the McDonald's in New Mexico, where she purchased coffee. You remember, she took the lid off the coffee and put it between her knees while she was driving. Who would ever think one could get burned doing that, right?



That's right; these are awards for the most outlandish lawsuits and verdicts in the U.S. You know, the kinds of cases that make you scratch your head. So keep your head scratcher handy.

### Here are the Stella's for this year:

**SEVENTH PLACE** — Kathleen Robertson of Austin, Texas was awarded \$80,000 by a jury of her peers after breaking her ankle tripping over a toddler who was running inside a furniture store. The store owners were understandably surprised by the verdict, considering the running toddler was her own son.

**SIXTH PLACE** — Carl Truman, 19, of Los Angeles, California won \$74,000 plus medical expenses when his neighbor ran over his hand with a Honda Accord. Truman apparently didn't notice there was someone at the wheel of the car when he was trying to steal his neighbor's hubcaps.

**FIFTH PLACE** — Terrence Dickson, of Bristol, Pennsylvania, was leaving a house he had just burglarized by way of the garage. Unfortunately for Dickson, the automatic garage door opener malfunctioned and he could not get the garage door to open. Worse, he couldn't re-enter the house because the door connecting the garage to the house locked when Dickson pulled it shut. Forced to sit for eight, count 'em, EIGHT days and survive on

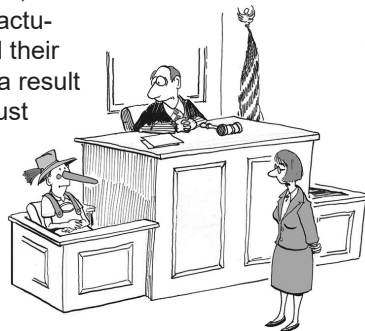
a case of Pepsi and a large bag of dry dog food, he sued the homeowner's insurance company claiming undue mental anguish. Amazingly, the jury said the insurance company must pay Dickson \$500,000 for his anguish. We should all have this kind of anguish.

**FOURTH PLACE** — Jerry Williams, of Little Rock, Arkansas, garnered 4th Place in the Stella's when he was awarded \$14,500 plus medical expenses after being bitten on the butt by his next door neighbor's beagle - even though the beagle was on a chain in its owner's fenced yard. Williams did not get as much as he asked for because the jury believed the beagle might have been provoked at the time of the butt bite because Williams had climbed over the fence into the yard and repeatedly shot the dog with a pellet gun.

**THIRD PLACE** — Amber Carson of Lancaster, Pennsylvania because a jury ordered a Philadelphia restaurant to pay her \$113,500 after she slipped on a spilled soft drink and broke her tailbone. The reason the soft drink was on the floor: Ms. Carson had thrown it at her boyfriend 30 seconds earlier during an argument.

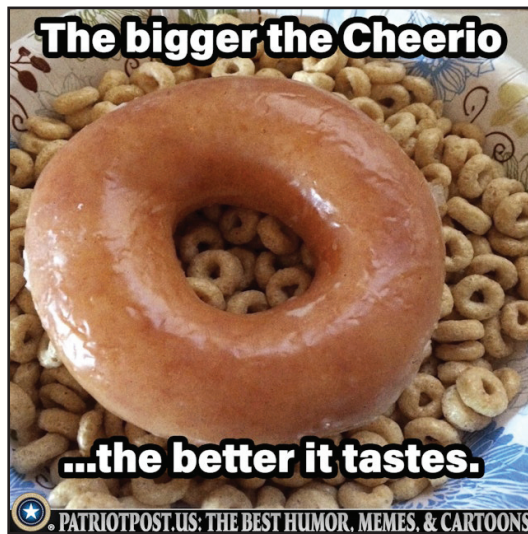
**SECOND PLACE** — Kara Walton, of Claymont, Delaware sued the owner of a night club in a nearby city because she fell from the bathroom window to the floor, knocking out her two front teeth. Even though Ms. Walton was trying to sneak through the ladies room window to avoid paying the \$3.50 cover charge, the jury said the night club had to pay her \$12,000....oh, yeah, plus dental expenses. Go figure.

**FIRST PLACE** — This year's runaway First Place Stella Award winner was: Mrs. Merv Grazinski, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who purchased a new 32-foot Winnebago motor home. On her first trip home, from an OU football game, having driven on to the freeway, she set the cruise control at 70 mph and calmly left the driver's seat to go to the back of the Winnebago to make herself a sandwich. Not surprisingly, the motor home left the freeway, crashed and overturned. Also not surprisingly, Mrs. Grazinski sued Winnebago for not putting in the owner's manual that she couldn't actually leave the driver's seat while the cruise control was set. The Oklahoma jury awarded her, are you sitting down? \$1,750,000. PLUS a new motor home. Winnebago actually changed their manuals as a result of this suit, just in case Mrs. Grazinski has any relatives who might also buy a motor home.

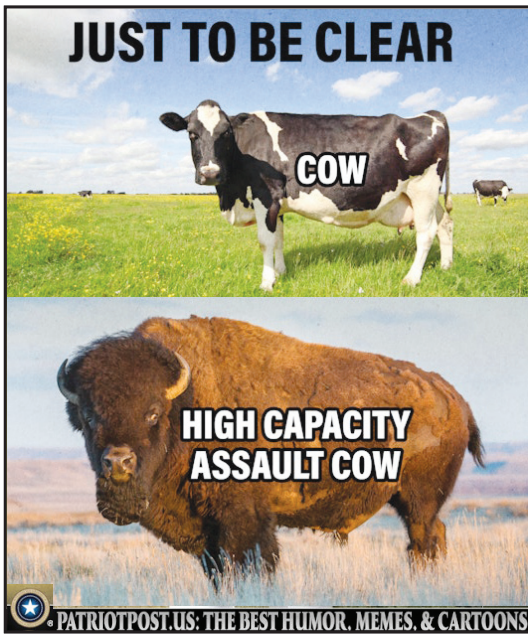


"Perhaps you would like to rephrase your last answer."

## On The Lighter Side . . . from the Web



A new device for people who get offended quite easily



Me as a parent trying to hide my snacks from the unemployed lazy people in my house.



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