

2023 SLA Humorous Story Contest Entry – Grant Miller and Virginia Fiocchi

House Pets or House Pests?

One afternoon several summers ago, I was busy on the deck that affords us our great view of Sacheen Lake. But wait, first I have to go back in time to our first encounter with a Pacific Tree Frog.

As happens nearly daily, the first full season we enjoyed our cabin I was on our deck with my small DeWalt leaf blower clearing the fallen debris from the trees that shade our place in paradise. I noticed a rather large lump in the crack between the decking and the fascia board for the deck. Upon further inspection, I noted a small frog nestled into the crack! I loved frogs, snakes and lizards as a kid and my wife loved frogs! What a find! I quickly got my wife to come out to see our newest neighbor! We enjoyed our new friend and decided we should better understand what it was. Using our ever-present internet-capable cell phones, we quickly learned our new friend was a Pacific tree frog.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_tree_frog). Did you know that they have a toxin on their body? (<https://thepetentusiast.com/pacific-tree-frog-care/> ... this link will mean more before the story is over).

Over time we had many frog sightings on our deck; we became very careful of where we stepped! My wife loved the sightings of the tree frogs and was very protective of them. After some time, they started climbing into our electric BBQ or hanging around it since it is up against the wall of the cabin on the deck. We had developed a fondness for seeing our little forest friends; but we had to be careful when we BBQ'ed as we certainly didn't want to cook one or run over one when we wheeled our BBQ out into the open for a freshly cooked steak! I have never seen frog legs and steak on a menu so I also didn't care to start a new fad; besides, remember the toxin on their skin and my wife's fondness of the frogs?

Back to the story ... one afternoon I was on the deck busy (cleaning or repairing or ...) and we were having an encounter with one of our tree frog friends on the deck. My wife came outside and we talked about our friend as we were admiring it. She said something that I interpreted as: "Do you think the frogs could be house pets?" Having had pets and knowing that in retirement I wanted travel-freedom, I emphatically said: "No, they can NOT!" My wife was taken aback by my strange response! I gave her a funny look and she said: "No, I said do you think they can be house pests, not house pets!" She was concerned that since they crawled into the crack between our outer wall and decking that they could enter and make themselves "pests" in our cabin, for example, jumping out of a cupboard when you least expected it!

So although there are pet enthusiasts that have Pacific tree frog pets (link above), we will have no such pets or pests inside our little cabin on Sacheen Lake! But we love having them OUTSIDE!