

Tomato's Family Values



Tomato is one of the Best Friends TLC Cats (they need lots of extra Tender Loving Care.) He's been writing regularly to our Guardian Angels, who help take care of the medical needs of the TLC cats and dogs. But this month he's persuaded the editor to give him his own column in the magazine, so he can talk to even more people!

A little bird just told me that all opinion-makers have an opinion about family values, and that it's one of the important topics of the day.

So here are the five things I value most in a family:

First, soft cuddly people. The thing I value most in a family is soft cuddly people who know where to scratch. Personally, I like being scratched behind my ears and under my chin.

Second, good food and treats. Good food, and lots of it, is a major family value. And I especially value an extra treat in the afternoon.

Third, naps in laps. I really value nice comfy laps. They're soft, warm and there is a good chance that whoever's lap you sit on, they'll scratch your ears too, thereby reinforcing Family Value Number One.

Laps are quite complicated to arrange because not only do you need a nice person who will sit still for a while, you also need a chair for them to sit on.

Fourth, a friend in need is a friend indeed. Having some best friends is something to value too. My best friends are my roommates Dottie and Buster, Tammy the greyhound who comes and plays with me, and Diana and Judah – the people who look after me. (P.S. If you're reading this, Diana and Judah, I do **not** particularly value yukky medicines, shots, or having my temperature taken.)

And fifth, a wonderful big family to value. Best Friends is my family, and what's a family without aunts and uncles who write in and send nice treats and come and visit too. So here's to all you wonderful folks who are part of the best family of all.

So, as you can see, I'm a pretty lucky cat, 'cause I have everything on that list, and then some.

And thanks for reading my column, because after all what's a famous columnist without readers?

Lots of love from Tomato. 🐾



Tomato the Cat was only a few days old when he was found in a trash dumpster and brought to Best Friends. Now he's clawed his way to the top of the publishing world, to answer four-footed questions.

You say Tomato . . .

Dear Tomato, I am a three-year-old tabby and white cat and I live in a house with three other cats and three dogs and we all have a great time. I am writing to ask if you know why humans are so keen on poop-scooping? Don't get me wrong, I really like the clean trays, but they even go out in all kinds of weather to scoop up after the dogs in the back yard with special tools. Please fill me in on this strange human habit.

PUZZLED PUSS

Dear Puzzled, Tell me about it! The people here at Best Friends are scoop-crazy. I was puzzled myself until I read an item in a recent issue of this very magazine about how they're making moose droppings in Maine into jewelry and how they bottle reindeer stuff in Norway and sell it. The answer, Puzzled, is that there is obviously big money in poop! As important parts of the production team, you and I deserve a raise. 🐾

Heard it on the vine

By Tomato the Cat

Hi, you lovely animal lovers! I'm Tomato the Cat, and I've just been offered my very own regular column in Best Friends Magazine.

Here's my bio:

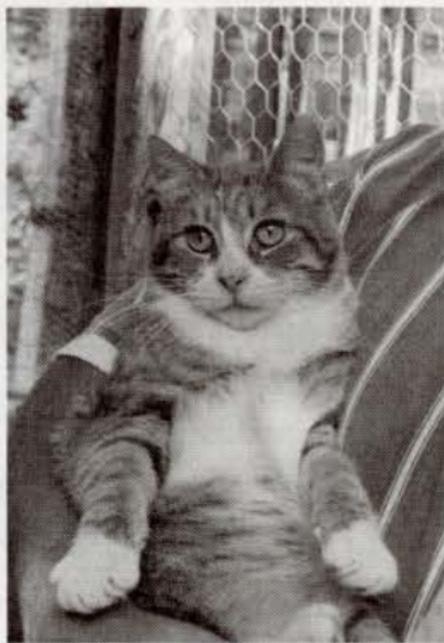
I was found in a trash dumpster when I was too young to write columns, and I still have some leftover sneezes, so I have to take yukky medicine every day. My vet says I have writer's block too, which is apparently incurable. (Some of them also say I talk too much. Such are the tribulations of us creative types.)

Anyway, I graduated in journalism from the TLC Cat Club, of which I am one of the founding members, and for the last year I've been writing special news reports to Guardian Angel members who help take care of us cats and dogs who need extra medical care.

See you next month. Lots of love from Tomato. 🐾



Heard it on the vine



The Treat Season

By Tomato the Cat

Hi! Tomato the Cat here, with my monthly column on life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Having never written anything in October before, I asked my good friend Frederick the Great Basset what October means. Fred is real smart: he said October is from the Latin word "octo" meaning the eighth month. He added that October was invented by Pope Gregory XIII, who used to make calendars and chants.

Now, any kitten who isn't polydactyl (meaning too many toes) can count to eight right there on his front paws, and I figured out pretty quick that the eighth month isn't October, it's August. So much for deep-thinker Fred!

Then it hit me! (*P.S. exclamation points in my columns mean "walking on tippy-toes with tail straight up and rubbing side of head against nearby ankle and chirring"!!!!*) October is the beginning of Treat Season, which runs officially from Halloween to Easter, which is right next to Pass-over so everyone is covered.

Treat Season starts slowly and doesn't really get up to speed until late November, but then it's nothing but treats and presents and leftover treats and new treats when the leftovers are gone. I guess everyone just wears out by late spring and declares summer vacation from treats.

Summer has holidays, which are fun too, because people come to Best Friends to see me, but it's the nonstop nibbling of Treat Season that really makes winter worthwhile.

I can't wait for Treat Season. Maybe we could even start on Columbus Day. Fred says that Columbus was an Italian explorer who discovered tomato catsup. That doesn't seem like much to celebrate, but Fred could be wrong. After all he thinks October is the eighth month!

Tomato the Cat lives at the Best Friends TLC Cat Club for kitties with disabilities, where he enjoys complaining about having to take "yukky medicine" for his chronic "sneezles."

Editor's note: What Fred actually said was that Columbus is popularly credited with discovering America, which is where tomatoes, and many other food items previously unknown to Europeans, were first discovered. Tomato, a great talker, is not a good listener. . . 🐾

The best month ever

By Tomato the Cat



Hi, Tomato the Cat here!

I've come a long way since my days as an unwanted kitten. Tamale and I were found in a garbage bin! Now I've got my own column in the best animal magazine going, and I'll bet that the not-very-nice person who left Tamale and me for goners doesn't have nearly as good a job as me.

Faith, who looks after all the animals at Best Friends, says negative thoughts like this can come back around and bite you, so after I think rude things I make up for it by thinking of nice things, like having special treats, getting my ears scratched, and what happens in November.

The best month of all. November just happens to be the best month of all for the animals here at Best Friends.

First there's the Los Angeles Benefit Party at a beautiful ranch in Malibu. There's nothing like meeting beautiful and famous people, and being cuddled by them. My colleagues Rabbit Redford and Rabbit DeNiro want to go to Los Angeles and be "discovered." And Freddie G. Basset says they might even win an Oscar. I don't know what he means, because Oscar is just a grumpy old cat who lives with Francis, our rescue director.

Then there's another party that goes on for a whole week right where I live. It's called Utah's Week for the Animals, and the Governor has signed an official proclamation for it. After all the good stuff in schools and animal hospitals, and after people like me get to be on TV, there's a big benefit dinner for the animals in Salt Lake City at a place called Trolley Square.

I had to wake up Freddie G. again to ask what a trolley square is, and he said a trolley is an old-fashioned train.

"Why have a party in an old railroad yard?"

Fred said there aren't any more trolleys, and it's now a big plush shopping mall where you can buy lots of treats, and have a nice dinner and take home a doggie bag, too.

And, as if all that isn't enough, there's Thanksgiving, which is Mollie the Pig's favorite day ever.

Freddie G. Bassett says he wants you to have the best Thanksgiving ever. And I want to say thanks for reading my column and making me a famous columnist. 🐾

Guardian Angels



Happy New Year!

By Tomato the Cat

Hi, you lovely Guardian Angels! Tomato the Cat here, wishing you all a very Happy New Year.

It sure is going to be a happy new year for all the dogs and cats and horses you've met on the Guardian Angel page this year. A few weeks, sometimes months, of special care and lots of TLC treatments make all the difference. I was a tiny kitten in a big trash can myself, so I know what it's like. And to think I have my own column in a magazine now. Someone certainly waved their magic wand over me!

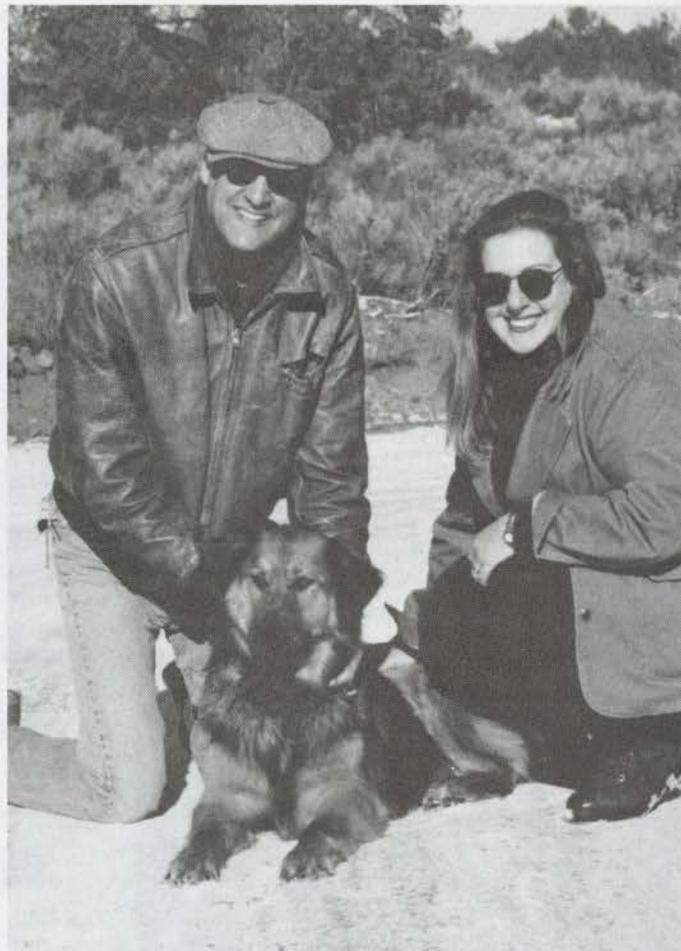
Outbreak! You know that I'm always thinking about how I can get into the movies, and one of our Guardian Angels, Wolfgang Petersen, is directing the big new movie about a big bad virus. Well, we almost had our own movie this month over at Dogtown. One of the new arrivals had a big bad bug called distemper, and David, who runs the clinic, put the whole place on Red Alert, just like in Star Trek.

He says he's very thankful for all the Best Friends Guardian Angels when things like this happen, because we have a really good clinic, and all the equipment to diagnose things quickly, and get the problem sorted out. And that's when you can see how taking all those boring precautions with new arrivals really pays off. I prefer "oubreaks" in movies to those in real life.

Tommy finds a home! Remember Tommy? Joanne Howell and Tom Kirshbaum rescued him off the streets of Flagstaff, Arizona, from some young people who were shooting at him with pellet guns and trying to run him over with bicycles and ATV's. Tommy was not at all well and could barely even walk, let alone run away from these thoughtless people. (The whole story was in the 1994 Holiday Newsletter to Best Friends members.)

Here at the sanctuary he received special treatments, good food and vitamins, and lots and lots of extra special TLC! Soon, his legs were doing much better.

When Richard and Jessica Behrman, visiting Best Friends from Berkeley, California, met Tommy, it was love at first sight. He spent a few evenings at their guest cottage here at Angel Canyon, and now they've adopted him. Tommy is on his way to their home. And they're all going to live "happily ever after..." 🐾



Tommy, with his new family. A real happy ending!

Would you like to be someone's Guardian Angel?

Every day, dogs and cats like Tommy are brought in to the sanctuary. They've been badly abused or neglected and they need immediate and urgent attention. Every wonderful, happy ending, like Tommy's, is a triumph of kindness and love in a world which can so often seem cold and empty for these sweet little innocents.

All this care and attention is made possible by the generous gifts of Best Friends Guardian Angel members who helped build the clinic, fill it with state-of-the-art equipment, and ensure that little guys like Tommy will have a new life to make up for everything that went before.

If you'd like to be a Guardian Angel to these little sweethearts, please just fill out the form inside the front cover of this magazine. Thanks, and God bless you for caring.

Guardian Angels



Bobby and the Art Gallery

By Tomato the Cat

Hi, you lovely Guardian Angels! It's me, Tomato DaVinci!

Last month I read in Best Friends Magazine about a new book called "Why Cats Paint." The article was very interesting, and I decided that we have

lots of great cat artists at Best Friends Catland, so why not open an art gallery at Benton's House, the new home for the not-so-mobile "TLC" cats.

Then I met our new friend Bobby, and it's going to take quite a bit to get him painting properly. He came from near Phoenix, Arizona, and his legs are on sort of backwards.

Well, you can imagine how everyone at the TLC Club just fell in love with Bobby. Benton gave him instant membership, which is a guarantee that he'll be one of the first cats living in Benton's House – probably before me. (sigh)

Bobby's biggest new fan is Bruce Dean, who became Bobby's Guardian Angel when he arrived in a big truck to deliver a load of super spiffy cat furniture from "Cats Are In" in Scottsdale, Arizona, for Benton's House. Bruce and Bobby really fell for each other, and Bruce said he wanted to make sure Bobby got the best treatment he possibly could.

It'll take some time for Bobby to get his feet on properly again, and then maybe I'll ask him to try doing a painting for my new gallery! 🐾

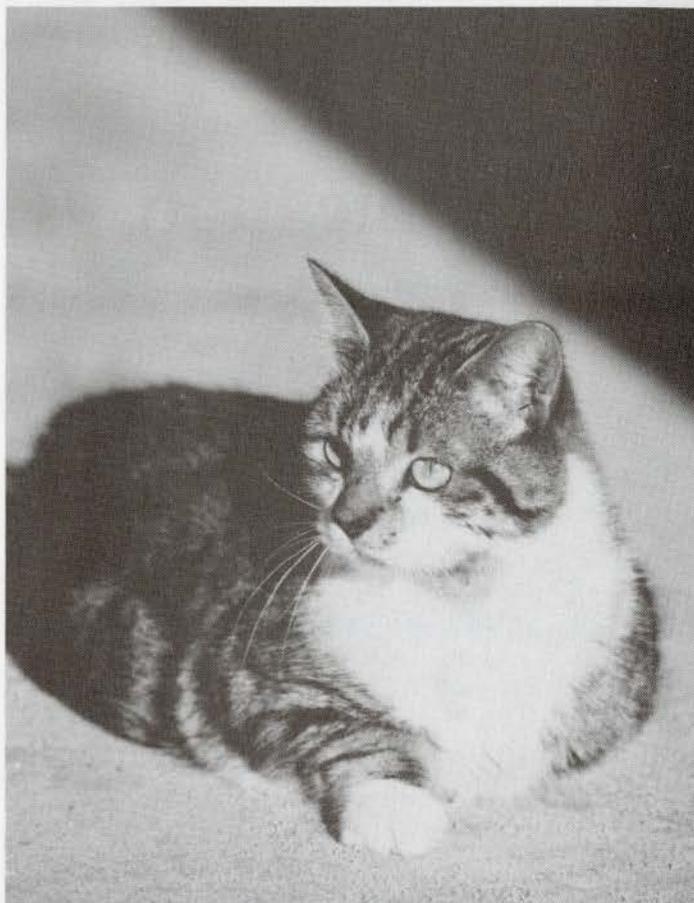
Tomato's famous follow-up stories

Remember Tika the Pomeranian last month? This pretty lady had been being punished by her people for not being housebroken, but it turned out she had a birth defect.

She'd been rescued by Friends of Animals, treated as much as possible by two kind veterinarians, and brought to Best Friends where she'd have a good place to stay.

Well, in part two of the story Tika goes to visit our nice friend and leading holistic veterinary specialist Dr. Joanne Stefanatos down in Las Vegas. The doc treats her with wonderful magic potions for a week, and says Tika is ready to go to a good new home.

Tika stays in the reception room of the clinic, so she can charm the visitors. When two Great Danes came in, it's love at first sight – and second and third. Their person falls in love with Tika, too, and Dr. Stefanatos pronounces it the perfect match. Now they're all living "happily ever after." 🐾



Bobby doesn't have his legs on properly, so he became an instant member of the TLC Cat Club!



Two Great Danes fell in love with Tika!

Guardian Angels



Snow White and the Seven Wives

By Tomato the Cat

Tomato the Cat is the official investigative reporter of the Best Friends TLC Cat Club

Hi, this is me, Tomato, on the left, and over on the right you can meet my new friend, Snow White.

In the interests of journalistic integrity I will admit that there aren't *seven* wives, but there are *some* wives, and it seemed like such a good title after I'd read about the fairy tale Snow White.

The real Snow White here at Best Friends was rescued by a group of nice doctors' wives who incorporated as a humane society when they found out that horrible things were happening, like animals being "put down" each weekend at their local county pound because no one could be bothered to go and feed them.



Snow White is everybody's favorite new Guardian Angel dog.

Anyway, Snow White didn't stand a snowball's chance in summer of being taken care of 'cause she can't even open her mouth. It's stuck where it is, which is open just a teeny bit. The vet says that's because her head was injured when she was a puppy. Anyway, the nice doctors' wives got together and arranged for Snow White to come to Best Friends and join the TLC Dog Club.

Snow White has to stay cool in summer, because she can't pant very well, but she can eat okay, so long as she has the right food. She just uses her paw as a spoon, throws her head back a bit, and swallows. She says it's easy!

She's very happy to be at Best Friends and is making lots of new friends already. I've never met a dog quite like her, although one of my best friends is Tong the cat, who only has half a tongue and needs some help too.

Faith, who looks after all the dogs, says Dr. Allen is thinking about trying some special surgery for her, but that she will have a good life no matter what.

So, that's the scoop from me and Snow White. Have a great month, and I'll see you again soon. 🐾

Dogs and cats like Snow White, who need special medical care and attention in the Best Friends TLC Cat and Dog Clubs, are taken care of through the kindness and generosity of the Guardian Angel program.

Guardian Angel memberships are the "magic wand" that provides the funds for the sanctuary clinic, special medical needs and the very best care we can offer.

Thanks to their Guardian Angels, these little guys whose luck seemed to have run out, can be brought back from the brink, and live "happily ever after."



Cargo had had a great show career, but was close to dying when Isolde Nettles, a Best Friends member in Tucson, Arizona, took him under her wing. It turned out that Cargo wasn't eating, because of a bad tooth problem.

A kind veterinarian in Phoenix volunteered his services, and Cargo is now recuperating from his sore mouth, learning to eat again, and gaining weight.

Guardian Angels



Helping the over-snoozy

By Tomato the Cat

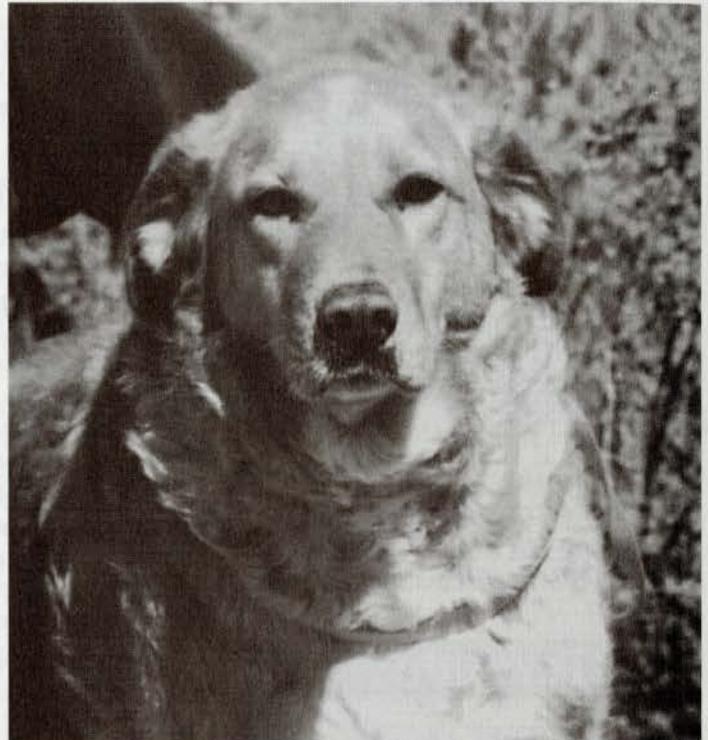
Hi, this is me, Tomato, with this month's big scoop on overweight, under-active pets.

No, I'm not talking about my co-editor, Frederick the Great Basset, who snoozes his way through every column that "we" write. Anyway, Freddie G. has been reading up on political correctness and he says he isn't lazy - he's just "activity-challenged." He says I must be "shutting-up-challenged," since I can't stop talking.

Anyway, to get back to the point, I'm talking about the dogs here at Best Friends who are hypothyroid and require daily medication.

David Maloney, manager of the Best Friends Clinic, says hypothyroid is when your thyroid is under-active. Everything starts to slow down, you can lose your hair, your skin goes funny, and you gain weight.

David's pretty proud of the fact that our Guardian Angels have made it possible for us to do our own in-house testing,



Sleepy Cy woke up to some good news about his thyroid.

so we can see if there's a real problem, instead of being just like Freddie G. and wanting an extra long snooze.

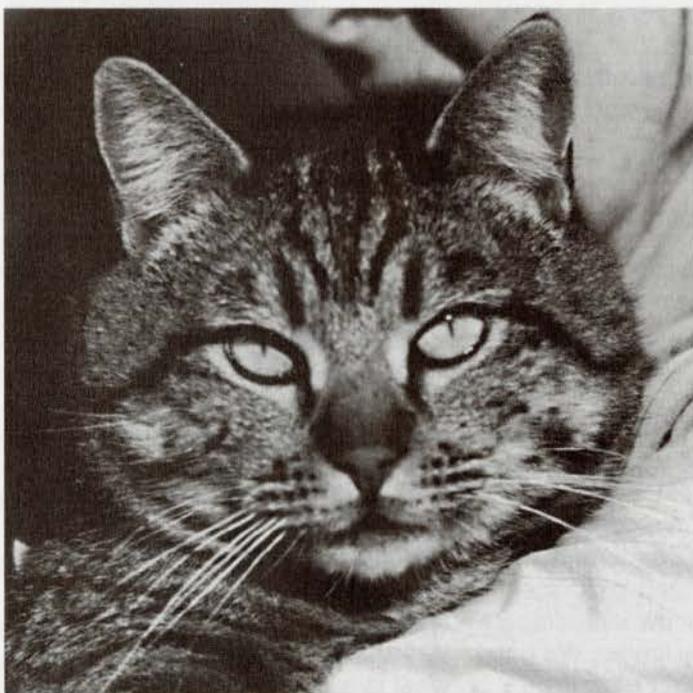
Sleepy Cy seemed like a slightly overweight Golden Retriever who spent his days hiding under the doggie condo, not showing much interest in anything at all. Then he started losing some of his beautiful hair, and that's when Faith and David thought there might be more to this than meets the eye.

Sure enough, it turned out that Cy had a very slow thyroid, which certainly explained why he could never lose any weight or didn't feel much like playing with his buddies. It only took a bit of daily medication to slim him down, fill him with renewed vigor, and begin to restore some of his wonderful hair!

I guess that goes to show that sometimes it's better *not* to let sleeping dogs lie! 🐾

Left: How Itchy became a Guardian Angel himself. You can imagine that with a name like Itchy, this kitty had quite a skin problem when he first came to Best Friends. I won't go into all the gruesome details, but with lots of medicine and TLC, it was all cleared up quite soon.

Now, Itchy is one of the biggest, strongest and healthiest cats at the sanctuary. He even played Guardian Angel himself by donating a bit of his life-giving blood to kitties in urgent need when they first arrived. Thanks, Itchy, you're a real pal!



Guardian Angels



A lesson in being unflappable

By Tomato the Cat

Hi, it's me, Tomato, and I'm in total shock!

You try and make sense of this: at five o'clock every

evening, the cat people make sure all the cats are indoors. No wandering around outside at night. Mr. and Mrs. Guess Who, the neighbors, are just waking up in their big nest on the other side of Angel Canyon, and they don't have a nice staff of people to serve them dinner each night like we cats do. So they go looking for a "take-out" dinner (as in "who shall we take out tonight, dear?")

In case you haven't guessed who yet, these two unflappables are great horned owls, and nobody wants them taking me out, otherwise there'd be nobody to write this page of the magazine.

So, anyway, here I am one morning sitting down to write my magazine article, when Tammy the Greyhound comes racing over from our clinic with the news that one of Mr. and Mrs. Guess Who's relatives, an injured great horned owl boy, has just been brought in. He is sitting right there in surgery, looking a bit bewildered, while Dr. Allen, the vet, puts his wing back together for him.

"Dr. Allen does *what*?" says I.

"He's very beautiful. He's a male. They're smaller than the females," says Tammy.

"How nice," says I.

"It's part of the new Feathered Friends raptor rehabilitation program," says Tammy.

"The *what* kind of refrigeration program?" says I. (I actually heard Tammy perfectly well, so this is just poetic license.)

"Sharon and her crew went and picked up Mr. Little Guess Who from someone's backyard," says Tammy. "He was flapping around on the ground and couldn't go anywhere."

"Very reassuring," says I.

"They gave him special fluids and wrapped his wing to stop it from getting worse. They were worried his shoulder might be dislocated, too. But Dr. Allen says it's fine. He just finished putting pins into the wing to straighten out the break and allow it to heal properly. It all took about an hour on the operating table, and the Doc says it all went fine, and that if the wing heals properly over the next few months, Mr. Little Guess Who will be able to go home and be let out near where they think his nest is."

"How far away is that?" says I.

"And Sharon says Mr. Little Guess Who has been very calm about his whole ordeal."

"How nice for him," says I.

"Yes. She says that's unusual for an owl. She told me it must be because he knows we're here to help him."

Help him?!

Tammy the Greyhound went off to find a treat at that point, so that was the end of the conversation. I almost didn't write this article at all afterwards, but journalists have to be objective. So I've summoned up all my detachment, and I've written it. But I don't mind telling you lovely Guardian Angels that you've gone way past the call of duty in helping the animals this month. And I hope that if Mr. and Mrs. Guess Who ever meet Mr. Little Guess Who, they'll remind him that one good turn deserves another.

They owe me. 🐾



Mr. Little Guess Who gets a wing-check from David Maloney and Sharon St. Joan at the Best Friends Clinic.

Guardian Angels



Interview with the tripod

By Tomato the Cat

Hi, it's me, Tomato, reporting live from Benton's House where I'm trying to interview

Blackjack, our racing enthusiast at the TLC Cat Club.

"Excuse me, Mr. Blackjack!" He just raced away down a passage. "Mr. Blackjack!" He just disappeared through a cat door and has gone outside. "Blackjack! For *!@#s sake, come here. I'm trying to interview you for Best Friends magazine!"

I was going to ask Blackjack what it's like only having three legs, but he'd probably say something silly like: "It's better than being a person and only having two." Or: "It's better than when I had four." That's actually true. When Blackjack came to the TLC Cat Club seven years ago, one of his legs was really yukky and rotting away. He couldn't race around at all like he can now.

Losing a front leg is a bit harder than losing a back leg, because more of an animal's weight is supported by the front legs. Your new tripod will need a bit of time to adapt, but no matter how old, they'll be up to their old tricks in no time. A few tips:

Elevate the eating and drinking area with a box, stool or other raised surface, as bending down will be quite difficult in the beginning.

Keep all exercise relatively moderate and on a flat surface if possible. It's important not to overwork the good leg before it's become accustomed to the added weight and balance change. If your dog enjoys swimming it's a great activity for overall endurance.

Balance will be a problem at potty time for a rear tripod. You can help by supporting under the midsection with a towel draped from one side to the other.

Avoid weight gain. Extra weight puts extra strain on the single leg.

Give lots of love and encouragement, but don't make a big fuss; animals don't seem to know what a handicap is unless we tell them!

Maybe I should try interviewing D.B. He's a longhaired tortie who arrived with a very bad leg. Trouble is, he doesn't seem to know that he's missing anything. And there's Mimi, a black domestic shorthair who wandered in to the sanctuary a couple of years ago with her front leg on backwards. It just hung there, giving no support to the rest of her body. Now she's got three really good legs. I asked her if she felt she was missing anything, and she said she's missing a catnip toy so she can't stop to answer any questions.

Maybe I'll go over to Dogtown and interview Shamus the dog. Shamus is on the Dogtown council, and he's a really big cheese over there so he might not have time for an interview. He's a giant black Labrador mix who was found with his front leg mangled in a coyote trap. I'm sure that was no fun, and there was no question in the vet's mind that he had to have that leg taken right off. Shamus doesn't give way to anyone, no matter how many legs they've got.

Perhaps I could talk to Buzzle. The editor of this magazine looks after her, and I've got an in with him. Buzzle is an old Belgian shepherd who suddenly developed a big "thing" on her front leg, and the Doc said "Off with her leg!" – just like the Queen of Hearts in "Alice in Wonderland." (Well, he didn't really say it like that, but he took it off anyway, right here in the Best Friends Clinic, just a few weeks ago. Buzzle was up and hopping around the first evening after her surgery.)

There are at least a dozen more dogs and cats here at Best Friends who have only three legs. But it seems like none of them has anything much to say about it, even in an interview with a famous reporter like me. 🐾



Sandy the tripod says **Three** is his lucky number!

Guardian Angels



Interview with the vet

By Tomato the Cat

"Hi, Dr. Allen, it's me, Tomato! Would you mind answering a few questions for *Best Friends* magazine?"

Dr. Allen, the Best Friends veterinarian, is just passing by the Wild Cat Catteries. I'll sneeze as he goes by, even though I've had my yukky medicine this morning. (If you're practicing to be a journalist like me, here's a tip: You can always get a vet to stop by sneezing.) He stopped! Ha!

Spay Day. "Dr. Allen, how many spay/neuter surgeries do you do on an average Spay Day?" (Spay Day is when people come from all over the local area for the low-cost program at Best Friends.)

"You can always get a vet to stop by sneezing."

here at Catland this morning to check some of the kittens who have just come in, including one who arrived without a front paw.

Later on, he'll be taking his portable X-ray machine down to the horses so he can check on a bone problem.

At Dogtown, Victor the Dogfather was getting his teeth cleaned this morning. He's a bit old and creaky these days and can't keep chasing other dogs around, so he needs bright shiny teeth to give the other dogs one of his little "smiles."

"When animals get old, it's the same as when people get old," says Dr. Allen. "Things start to crop up that you have to catch early and deal with so they don't become a big deal. General maintenance, along with the spay/neuter outreach program, is what my job is all about here at the sanctuary."

It's a wonderful thing. (*Looking for a good sound bite now.*) "Why do you donate your time to the Best Friends Clinic, Dr. Allen?"

"It makes you feel good. Donating time is something everyone can do. There is always some local group that needs your help. And veterinarians have the unique ability

He says he does a surgery almost every 20 minutes, and that he and Carragh and David (his clinic assistants) generally do up to 45 in a day.

Taking care of all the animals. But spay/neuter is not all Dr. Allen does. He's over

to do something even more important – to spay/neuter an animal so it doesn't contribute to the high euthanasia rate."

"What's a euthanasia rate?"

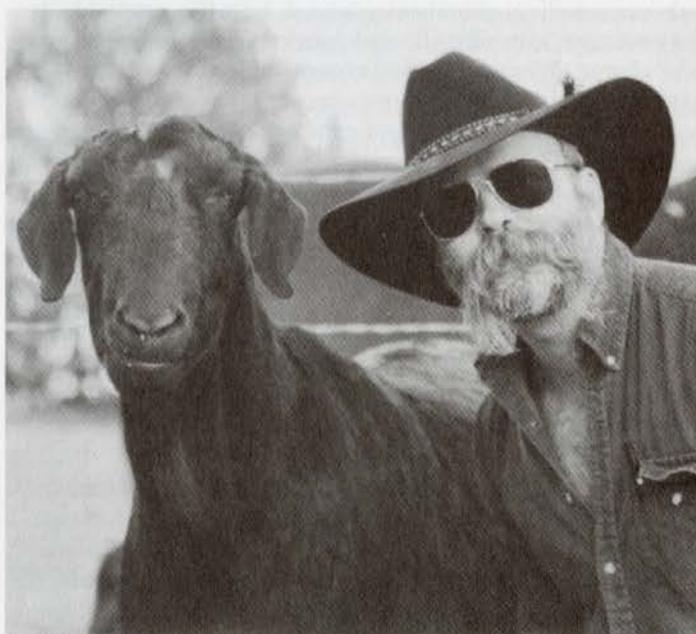
He changes the subject. Did I say something wrong?

"Why did you pick Best Friends as your charity?"

"They have their goal clearly defined, and everybody works toward that goal very harmoniously. It is such a pleasure to work in a place where everyone cooperates all the way down the line, where the attitude is one for all and all for one, and the bottom line is the humane treatment of all animals. Best Friends is a place where we're doing something positive and seeing the end product of our efforts."

Three elements, plus one. Dr. Allen told me that Best Friends has the three elements that are needed to successfully cut down on the big number of unwanted dogs and cats in the country: a low-cost spay/neuter program, a no-kill sanctuary and an educational program. "I think you cannot have any one of those factors working independently of each other and still have a successful outcome."

He didn't mention the fourth element: a nice vet like him! 🐾



Dr. Allen tries out for the look-alike contest with Goatie.

Best Friends Guardian Angels

Guardian Angels are Best Friends members who help provide for the clinic, extra medicines, and the special medical care of animals who come to the sanctuary needing urgent medical attention.

If you'd like to be a Guardian Angel to your furry friends here, please see the inside front cover.

Guardian Angels



The Maytag Girl

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
investigative reporter.

Why are cat people so secretive? Maytag has been here at Best Friends for over two months, and whenever I ask about her I'm told, "Oh no, you can't write about her yet."

Whatever happened to freedom of the press?

"It has nothing to do with freedom of the press," says Diana. (*Our chief cat lady seems much more interested in protecting the cats than in protecting our First Amendment rights.*) "It's just that Maytag isn't ready yet to have her photo taken."

“Diana seemed more interested in protecting the cats than in my First Amendment rights.”

Well, that's all right, says I. We can just leave her photo out.

"I still don't think you should write about her," says Diana. "It was a horrible story, and she's by no means all better yet."

Off the record. Well, says I, we can do this entirely

off the record. Plus, I can refer to you as "a high-level source at the TLC Cat Club" and I won't even mention who the people were that put her in their washing machine to give her a bath. (*There, now I've said it, so I might as well go on. Publish and be hanged, or whatever it was the famous newspaper guy said.*)

So here's the story: We first saw this little cat a week after someone at her home had thrown her in their washing machine to give her a bath. Nobody in the family had even taken her to the vet afterward. Pretty bad, huh?

"She was a real mess when we brought her in," the high-level source at the TLC Cat Club told me. "Her eyes were glued shut and swollen, and her fur was beginning to come out in gobs. Her ears had been burned, too, and the eartips were beginning to come off like autumn leaves."

It's E.R. at B.F. The emergency team at Best Friends swings straight into action in a case like this, and Maytag, as she's now known, was put straight into intensive care at the TLC Cat Club.

I'll bet you didn't really think she was going to make it, says I to the high-level source. So tell me, off the record, of course: How is she doing?

"She's doing really well. All her old burned skin has come off and been replaced, and her fur is just beginning to grow back in. But she actually *looks* worse than ever, with hardly any fur, and her skin black and blue and red all over."

Yuk.

"True beauty is not just skin-deep, Tomato," says my high-level source, beginning to wax a bit poetical (that's always a signal that you're getting to the heart of the story.) "Maytag is going to be like Sinjin one day."



Maytag seems headed for fame.

Sinjin, as you'll probably remember from the first brochure we ever sent you, is the legendary one-eyed furry pirate who rules the cat kitchen. He was lying in someone's driveway and they called Best Friends to complain about "a cat who wouldn't go away."

Sinjin couldn't even get up when the E.R. team arrived from here.

(*He still won't get up, ten years later, but that's because he's the laziest cat you ever saw. Furry pirate, indeed! Whatever happened to truth in reporting?*)

Anyway I'm now getting way off the point, which is that you don't have to be beautiful to be popular. And Maytag seems headed for fame and acclaim quite soon, too.

So, when you see her on the back cover of this magazine, just remember you saw the story in *this* column first. 🐾

Best Friends Guardian Angels

Guardian Angels are Best Friends members who help provide for the clinic, extra medicines, and the special medical care of animals who come to the sanctuary needing urgent medical attention.

If you'd like to be a Guardian Angel to your furry friends here, please see the inside front cover.

Guardian Angels



The great St. Francis cover up

By **Tomato the Cat**
– Best Friends
investigative reporter.

Tammy the Greyhound, my chief investigator, races up to me one morning, and announces: "I'm really onto something, boss."

Tammy is always onto something. This dog is well-known for investigating the pockets of unsuspecting visitors. If you're afraid of being investigated, stay away from Tammy.

"I've just been over at Dogtown, and there's a cover-up going on."

"What are they covering up?"

"They're covering up St. Francis."

"Why would they want to cover up St. Francis?"

"Beats me, Boss. But that's what I heard them say, with my own ears. 'Better cover it up,' they said. And then they began the cover-up."

Tammy and I have investigated the cover-up, and here's the whole story:

It began well over a year ago when Guardian Angel Freda M. called our editor and said, "Michael, I want to donate an extra \$100 for the older dogs."

"That's really nice of you," said the ed.

"It's for a statue of St. Francis," said Freda, "to put outside the Old Friends Home, to help heal the animals."

Well, I definitely believe in prayers and miracles. When I first came here as a tiny kitten I was so sick that no amount of yukky medicine on its own could have made me better, so it has to have been all those nice prayers from Guardian Angels like Freda.

My colleague Sherlock Holmes, another great investigator, used to say, "When you have eliminated the impossible (yukky medicines on their own), whatever remains (nice healing prayers and lots of TLC), however improbable, must

be the truth."

Back to St. Francis: Faith Maloney and Freda decided that since the Old Friends Home isn't finished, the statue should go outside the clinic. But our skeptical catalog experts concluded that it would take a miracle to find a big statue of St. Francis for \$100!

It was, in fact, months later, on a visit to Denver, Colorado, that a staff member happened to see a perfect four-foot-tall St. Francis statue in a store window, and at exactly the right price. (The sighting was indeed declared miraculous by Dogtown's Conclave of Canines.)

We still had to get the statue here, but a Best Friends member from Denver calling in to say they were coming to visit was quickly persuaded to bring St. Francis with them.

So, finally the statue arrived and was placed on a pedestal outside the clinic. But the worst is yet to come . . .

The baptism of the saint.

If you're planning on standing outside the clinic all day, totally motionless, it doesn't make much difference to Sheriff Amra and the guys at Dogtown whether you're a saint or a fire hydrant. Either way, you can expect to be baptized and re-baptized many times over.

As soon as the saint took up his new position outside the clinic, the dogs took up their positions, too.

And so it was, to get back to the Great St. Francis Cover-up, that Tammy the Greyhound heard Faith Maloney say:

"Better cover it up (at least until we put a big fence around the statue)." 🐾



"The sighting in Denver was declared a miracle."

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Guardian Angels



Catnapped

You could call it Daisygate – but there's no Daisy in sight!

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends investigative reporter

If you're a Best Friends Guardian Angel you probably got a letter from our editor a month or two ago, telling you about Daisy the cat who was "on her way to Best Friends" from Japan. But Daisy never arrived! Why? What happened? Our investigative reporter tells all in this exclusive report.

As Daisy the Cat winged her way across the Pacific Ocean, little did she imagine she was about to become the subject of a live abduction.

As an investigative reporter I am well aware of safety problems at the nation's airports. But who would have thought that an incontinent, intercontinental kitty would become the target of a real-life catnapping by a Guardian Angel intent on making sure she lives "happily ever after"?

"Someone should have known that Daisy would be abducted."

When summer vacation comes around, a big business moves in to use the school for business conferences during the summer. Little Daisy, as the kids have called her, doesn't know much about business ethics, so she wanders into what is now the board room and – well, you can imagine what happens when a nice incontinent kitty settles into some nice, comfy executive chairs. The execs are horrified, and Daisy is banished from the premises.

Judith tries to find Daisy a new home, but is running out of options fast. So she calls Faith Maloney at Best Friends on the other side of the Pacific to see if there's any chance of Daisy becoming part of the TLC Cat Club.

The story begins at the American school outside Tokyo, Japan, where Judith H. is a teacher. A stray kitty with nerve damage in her back is wandering around outside, and Judith is encouraging the kids to be kind to her and take care of her. The kitty is incontinent, so they have to be careful with her indoors.

With Benton's House just completed, and a lot of TLC kitties with disabilities moving in there, Faith is able to report that we have extra space at Catland.

"Great," says Judith. "I'll buy her a ticket to San Francisco if you can take her from there."

The scene is now set for the catnapping to begin.

It just so happens that Guardian Angel member Barbara K. is visiting the sanctuary on vacation from San Francisco while these arrangements are being made for Daisy.

"I can pick her up," says Barbara, "and then send her on to Best Friends."

Barbara is well-known for her soft spot for kitties needing a little extra TLC, so *someone* should have known right then and there what would of course happen as soon as Barbara picked up Daisy at the airport!

Anyway, Daisy arrives in San Francisco. (This just happens to be the same day that our editor is writing to all of you about how "Daisy will be at the sanctuary by the time you receive this letter.")

The days pass. . . First, Barbara decides that Daisy needs to see the vet. The vet says Daisy needs more tests.

Barbara calls up the sanctuary to say she's bought some special diapers for Daisy. ("They're so cute.")

Soon a photo arrives of Daisy wearing her diapers. ("We're just waiting for the results of the latest tests.") Next, Barbara reports she's taking up one of the carpets at home. ("It'll be easier for Daisy that way.")

Finally, weeks later, the catnapping is complete, and Barbara calls Faith to offer to adopt Daisy permanently.

Barbara and Faith are, of course, delighted. Daisy is delighted, too.

And our editor is groaning. ("But I've just sent out a letter telling everyone she's on her way to the sanctuary.")

P.S. You can send my Pulitzer Prize to Tomato's Investigative Reports, TLC Cat Club, Best Friends, Kanab, Utah, 84741. 🐾



Barbara K. and Daisy.

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Guardian Angels



Hello? Is that Mrs. Pulitzer?

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

The phone had not exactly been ringing off the hook at Best Friends Catland after I invited Mrs. Pulitzer to send me one of her prizes for my stunning report on Daisy, the incontinent, intercontinental kitty, last month.

“Why do you think she hasn’t called?” I asked my chief investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound.

“Maybe she’s a dog person,” said Tammy. “I’ve reviewed your last four reports, boss: three of them were about cats and the other one was about a statue. Anyway,” she added, “it’s Mr. Pulitzer who gives out prizes, not Mrs.”

“Are you suggesting,” I asked, my whiskers collapsing in disbelief, “that Mrs. Pulitzer might be awarding prizes based on factors other than journalistic excellence? I’m an investigative reporter. I can’t cater to the fickle whims of public speciesism.”

“I completely agree,” said Tammy. “A journalist like you should always focus on the public interest, not on winning a Pulitzer Prize.”

“So what kind of dogs do you think Mrs. Pulitzer would be most interested in?” I asked.

“Dogs from New York.”

“Dogs from New York??”

“New York is the media capital of the world, boss.

They have the New York Times and Time Warner, and even Ted Turner now. If you want to get your Mrs. Pulitzer to sit up, you should do a dog story from New York. It just so happens that we just had two dogs flown in from New York.”

“From New York? How come they came here? There are more shelters in New York than you can throw a stick for.”

“Wait till you see the one called Doc. He’s a real old geezer. I mean, ancient! He’s entirely over the hill. I mean fossilized! He’d been found by a nice actress but she just couldn’t take care of him and couldn’t find him a home.”

“An actress in New York?” I repeated. “Do you think this would play on Broadway?”

“You should really see him, boss. I mean, he makes Methuselah look young. He can’t see much, and he’s pretty deaf. His back legs don’t work, and he schnuffles all the time. Even the other dogs at the hospice say he’s too old.”

The “hospice,” by the way, is for really ancient dogs who are quite small and are not long for this world. It’s a special home that’s looked after by our education person, Nathania Gartman. The old folks there get to have mushy food, lots of love and extra nice blankets!



Doc gets his daily cuddle.

“How long is he going to be around?” I asked.

“Not long, probably,” said Tammy. “But that’s the point. You see, you have this really ancient geezer from New York who was living on the street and nobody wanted or could deal with there, and so he comes all the way here. And now he’s having the time of his life, probably for the first time ever. I mean, he’s really living it up.

“And he’s got this whole thing about the laundry basket. He just loves climbing into the doggie laundry basket. It takes him about 15 minutes to scramble his way into it, but then he’s absolutely delighted, and he snuggles down and goes to sleep for the next 18 hours.

“Then he wakes up and gets to go out. When he comes in again he gets a big cuddle, has more mushy food, goes out again, comes in again, schnuffles around some more, plays with the other old geezers and then starts gearing up for his next assault on the laundry basket.”

“Upon reflection,” I said, thoughtfully, “I think I shall indeed cover this important story.”

“Of course,” Tammy continued, “you could always do another expose on why Benton’s House wasn’t called Tomato’s House. I’m sure that, in the great tradition of your species, you’ll be entirely objective – as always.” 🐾

“What kind of dogs would Mrs. Pulitzer be most interested in??”

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Guardian Angels



This is a re-creation

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

My investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound, says she's sure you would like to know what *really* happens in an exciting rescue drama, like they do in *Rescue 911*.

"The thing about those re-creations on TV, though," I explained to Tammy, "is that they're all done with actors. The people are actors – even the cats and dogs are actors."

"But Nibbles the cat was actually rescued by actors and movie people," said Tammy.

"How did they know he was going to be rescued?"

"They didn't, Boss. They were *doing* the rescue!"

"That's out of the question," I replied. "A good director would never allow that."

"It wasn't a movie; it was real life. And Maria P. is a real director's wife and she does everything she can to help animals. She helped rescue Nibbles."

"I had no idea they did real rescues these days. I thought they were all on TV or in virtual reality."

"Well, the people who first saw Nibbles could barely believe that it was real life. He looked terrible. He was wandering the streets of Burbank, in California, and people were even saying that he must have escaped from some terrible kind of science fiction laboratory. His face ... well, I'll skip the details, but he looked like something out of *The Elephant Man*. So, the Best Friends Hollywood team swung into action like it was a real *Emergency, 911*."

"Just like on TV?"

"It took days and days to catch him. He's a feral cat, and even though he was very ill he was still very clever. Your friend Julie R., who does the celebrity interviews for this magazine was out every night trying to catch him."

"Julie rescued him? Maybe she could rescue me. And then interview me."

"Anyway, there were actors and actresses and producers and directors, as well as schoolchildren and people from all over Burbank all crawling around under bushes and hiding behind their neighbors' houses at night trying to rescue Nibbles. But Nibbles was a canny kitty, and he wouldn't even go into a special humane trap."

"So what happened?"

Ashley T. the actor was hiding near a bush where Nibbles had been seen, and when Nibbles ran out one evening, Ashley just reached out and caught him."

"Wow. That will look really good on the big screen."

"It wasn't a movie, Boss. *Not a movie!* And there won't be any photos, either. It was a real rescue. They got Nibbles into a cat carrier with some really nice treats in it, and rushed off to the vet."

"Well, if they've already rescued him we're going to have to do a re-creation."

"He's a zillion times better now, but he still looks pretty awful. When Julie started treating him before he came to best Friends, she said she couldn't even see his face. It was buried behind huge great growths and horrid things. You had to search for his eyes and his nose and his mouth."

"Well, I was rescued from a garbage pile when I was a little kitten, but I can still hardly imagine what Nibbles must have felt like."

"You can interview him if you like," said Tammy. "He's here at Best Friends now, and he's just joined the TLC Cat Club. He's feeling much better, and looking much better, and one day he's going to be a real celebrity."

"A star is born!"

"Come to think of it, Boss, he's a real re-creation now!"



This is a re-creation of Nibbles by a professional actor at Best Friends.

“Nibbles looked like something out of a really bad movie.”

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Guardian Angels



The cat burglar

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

“There’s been a break-in at the food bank in town,” said my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound.

“That’s appalling,” I replied. “You’d better call the police at once and tell them to take another bite out of crime.”

“This is a very clever criminal, Boss,” said Tammy. “He’s a cat burglar. He was spotted by a Helping Hands volunteer who chased him out of the building. Then he broke back in again and the volunteer says she had to board it up to keep him out.”

“I should hope so, too. What’s the world coming to if cat burglars can break into food banks just because they’re hungry. Next thing we’ll have dog burglars breaking into Fort Knox.”

(Fort Knox, in case you didn’t know, is the big food storage building over at Best Friends Dogtown. None of the dogs would ever dream of breaking

into it. They don’t need to: a group of them tunneled in once, and nobody had the heart to seal up the hole. Now they just take turns at wandering in after hours for a private nosh.)

“Has the burglar been arrested?” I asked Tammy.

“Yes, Boss. The food bank staff were pretty miffed that a hungry and homeless cat would be breaking in and damaging stores of bread and cereal that had been donated to them for charity. So they boarded up the windows and screen doors and blocked up the holes where the burglar might be getting in. But Simon – that’s his name now – managed to tear off the boards and broke in again. So the food bank called Best Friends to see if we could arrest him.”

Tammy described to me how Kate, who runs the local

Best Friends feral cat rescue program, showed up at the food bank to find the offending kitty burglar sitting on a sofa. The volunteer was indignant. (“That sofa was donated for people who need help.”)

“The criminal,” concluded Tammy, “was quickly apprehended and taken back to the sanctuary where he was put on trial, found guilty of being extremely hungry, and sentenced to live happily ever after.”

“He doesn’t really sound like a special-needs member of the TLC Cat Club.”

“He isn’t, Boss. He’ll be here for a few weeks for a medical check and a visit to the spay/neuter clinic, and then he’ll be ready for a new home. He looked like a very shabby old white cat at first, but that was just because he was scruffy and scraggly and dirty and hadn’t been eating properly. As soon as he got here and started cleaning himself up, he turned out to be a beautiful, bright, flame-point kitty.”



Simon the cat burglar.

“So our scruffy pauper turns out to be a prince, after all. But what’s this Simon doing in my Guardian Angel column? It’s supposed to be for cats with special needs, not handsome young flame-point burglars.”

“He’d like to do a commercial.”

“A 30 second spot or a 60 second one?”

“You can time it right now, Boss:

“The local stray cat rescue program needs more humane traps for its work, so kitties like Simon can be rescued and go to good new homes. We also make the traps available to other groups who need them. Just call (801) 644-2001 and ask for Kate. The traps cost \$50. Kate can take the donation over the phone and order the trap. Believe me, stepping into a nice comfy trap where you can have dinner while waiting to be picked up is a lot better than having to break in to the local food bank and then getting thrown out.”

“That was only 25 seconds,” I said. “You can give out the phone number again.” 🐾

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Guardian Angels



The new boy

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

My office at the Wildcat Catteries, is just across the way from the Best Friends Retirement Home for Old Geezers, which is also the home of education director Nathania Gartman, who teaches young people to care about animals.

When a car pulled up the other day outside her house and people started unloading a big trunk, a suitcase, a travel bag full of something very delicate, and finally a very aristocratic-looking silkie terrier, it looked more like the beginning of the school semester at some posh boarding school for rich kids than an old folks home for retired dogs.

“Do you think our education director has decided to turn her home into a school for the rich and famous?” I asked my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound, who’d just taken a quick sniff around the car.

“No scent of young humans anywhere,” reported Tammy. “But I’ve sniffed out a full inventory of what’s in the trunk, the suitcase and the travel bag.”

“Give me the details!” I said, sitting down at my new typewriter. (They finally installed a typewriter for me at the Wild Cat Catteries after a visiting member asked, “Why doesn’t Tomato have a typewriter?” For the record, I also need a private office with comfy cushions. So please, write a complaining letter about this, too.)

“I’ll have the pillows, the rugs and the treats. He can keep the medicines and the teeth-cleaning equipment.”

“The trunk is full of pillows, rugs and treats, Boss,” continued Tammy. The suitcase has grooming and teeth-cleaning equipment, brushes, framed photos, and two 35 mm cameras. And the travel bag has a supply of medicine for a diabetic dog.”

“Curiouser and curiouser,” I mused. “Your analysis?”

“It’s got to be Buster. And he’s brought all his stuff with him. Used to be a show dog, Boss.”

“Well, I’ve never heard of Buster. And if he’s just a new boy, why don’t you go and collect the pillows, the rugs, the treats and the cameras. And he can keep the medicines and the teeth-cleaning equipment.”

“You can’t do that. This isn’t boot camp; it’s Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. And from what I’ve heard, Buster is a renowned elderly gentleman. He’s living at the Old Geezers Home. In any case, the cameras have already gone to the adoption director and the adopt-a-pet department. And the travel bag went to the outreach team for *their* medicines.”

“Well, I can still have the pillows, the rugs and the toys.”

“Sorry, he’s keeping those himself. He’s got a white bed which he’s sharing with his new friend, Suzie the cat. And Crosby, the old terri-poo, has made friends with him, and they’re keeping the squeaky toys.”

“What’s an aristocratic fellow like him doing here at an animal sanctuary, anyway?”

“Seems like his person is an elderly lady with cancer who expects to go over the Rainbow Bridge quite soon. Buster is getting on, too. He’s got diabetes and needs special treatment, and his person is just too ill to look after him any

more. He needs a shot twice every day, and a proper diet and a careful eye kept on him. So that’s why he’s at the retirement home now. Plus, he was pretty famous once. Won all sorts of prizes as a show dog. His person asked if we could take care of him till they both meet up again over the Rainbow Bridge. You should write something nice about him – he’s a celebrity.”

“Could he sign one of his photos?” I asked. 🐾



Buster at the height of his career.

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Please see the inside front cover for more details.

P.S. As we went to press, we heard that Buster’s mom had just passed “over the Rainbow Bridge,” leaving a special provision for her pooch.

Guardian Angels



Tomato's summer special

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
investigative reporter

My investigative column, specially for Best Friends lovely Guardian Angels, is a year old this month, so I'm doing a "Special." Barbara Walters gets to do hour-long Specials on TV, so I've negotiated to have two pages for mine.

Behind the scenes. First, I'll take you behind the scenes, to the Complaints Department.

The Complaints Dept. Best Friends members don't complain much. I don't know if that's because they're nice and forgiving, or because they're too busy dealing with complaints from their own animals at home.

The Complaints Dept. at Best Friends magazine is run by Audrey the cat. As you can see from her photo, Audrey is very good at dealing with complaints. It's not a good idea to argue with Audrey. She is not having a bad hair day or anything in this photo. This is exactly the way she is.



Busting Buster. Legitimate complaints about my column are, of course, passed directly to me. I got a legitimate complaint about the report I did on Buster the Silky Terrier in the May magazine. Here's part of the letter I received:

Buster was never a show dog. The photo you printed was of his doggie mother. And the handler in the picture is me, not Buster's human mom. She and I were friends for 20 years.

Also, Silky Terrier is *always* spelled with capitals.

MARGARET SAVAGE
Sun City, CA



I need to look into this. Buster arrived with the photo in his trunk, and behaved like he was a real celebrity, so everyone just assumed that he was the show dog in the photo. In fact, he's still behaving like he's a celebrity! I've seen stories about people who pretend they're celebs when they're not at all, so maybe I should do an exposé on Buster. And I could tell his new Silky friend that he doesn't need to go on kow-towing to Buster.

Now, on the matter of "Silky" or "silky." Estelle, who answers the mail and also proofreads this magazine, insists that you only use capitals when the breed of dog or cat is named after a proper name, like "Doberman" (named after Mr. Doberman) or "German shepherd" (named after the country). This, of course, would mean that "Yorkshire terrier" would have a capital, but "silky terrier" wouldn't. But that's outrageous discrimination. It will *always* be spelled "Silky" in my column.



Three "Lucky" dogs, and seven lucky cats. If you received our summer newsletter, then you got to meet Lucky Dog, Lucky Puppy and Lucky Porcupine – the Three Lucky Dogs in charge of this year's Best Friends Summer Raffle. If you haven't joined in the summer raffle, you should. You could win a free trip to Best Friends (including an interview with me.)

Lots of dogs are called Lucky. But I don't know many cats called Lucky – even though cats are always supposed to bring good luck.

So, Diana, our chief cat person, called the editor when she saw the newsletter with The Three Lucky Dogs, told him she had Seven Lucky Cats, and asked what was he going to do about that!

"How do you know they're lucky?" asked the ed.
"Just look at them," said Diana.



Guardian Angels



How to Get Here

Tips on visiting Best Friends – for people who can't figure out directions

By Tomato the Cat – Best Friends Investigative Reporter

If you've already visited Best Friends, then it's self-evident that you figured out how to get here. If, on the other hand, you haven't been here yet, maybe it's because you need some help with your travel plans.

It's easier to get to Best Friends than it used to be. At least you don't have to take your life in your hands crossing the Grand Canyon, the Rocky Mountains, or Death Valley, depending on where you're coming from.

But it's still quite an expedition: flying to Las Vegas, driving through the Virgin River Gorge and Zion National Park, and then watching out for the sign pointing into Angel Canyon where Best Friends has its home.

However, as your investigative reporter, I have studied all the possible ways of traveling here, and have concluded there are some much easier ways to plan your visit to our home from your home.

Plan A: Wait in a Trash Bin. If there's a large trash bin near you, you should get into it and wait for someone from Best Friends to come by. I don't know exactly how this works, but I myself was picked up from a large trash bin and brought here when I was very young.

I don't know where the trash bin is that I was in, but if you find a trash bin and go and sit in it, someone may well pick you up and bring you to Best Friends, too.

“If you find a trash bin and go and sit in it, maybe someone will pick you up and bring you to Best Friends, too.”

Plan B: Go to Prison.

That's what Comanche the horse did. He was very sick and old, and says he thinks he was lost when he wandered into a field on the grounds of a prison. A member of Best Friends, called Judy, who worked at the prison, bought Comanche and brought him here, and he's been here ever since.

Not everyone who goes to prison gets to come to Best Friends. Maybe you have to go to prison *and* get bought. Perhaps you should just experiment on your own, and see which way works best for you.

Note: The PTB (Powers That Be) are insisting that I issue a disclaimer saying that I shall not be held responsible if, for some reason, you can't get out of prison.

Skip Plan C. Maytag the cat wanted me to say that she got here from being put in a washing machine. This is *not* a good way of getting here, judging by how she looked when she arrived. Anyway, I am not putting her photo in my column yet again this month.

Plan D: Hang out at a Tourist Store. Waiting at a store near the sanctuary is a very good way of getting to Best Friends – one of the staff simply comes and picks you up.

Staff members Estelle and Chandra were driving past a tourist store a few weeks ago, when they saw this peahen standing in the parking lot. They stopped, and the peahen walked up to their car. She didn't seem to want to get in by herself, so Estelle stayed with her while Chandra went to get a bird person. We've got two peahens and a peacock already, so the new one fits right in.



Comanche the horse came here from prison.



You can catch a ride from one of the local tourist stores.

Continued on next page.

Guardian Angels



My Home Page . . .

. . . and our new staircase

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends Investigative
Reporter

Everybody who's anybody these days has a home page on the World Wide Web. Maybe you have one yourself. Or your kids do. Of course, if you're an animal person and you have a mouse, then your cat or dog probably has a home page, too.

My own home page is as good as anything you'll ever find on the World Wide Web. Plus, it has photos of me, and they're all in color.

Messages in bottles. Home pages are your best way of introducing yourself to other people all over the world.

Obviously, not everybody in the entire world will actually come and visit you there, but they can if they want. So you have to think up all the things you can show about yourself that are most interesting.

It's a bit like putting a message in a bottle, dropping it in the ocean off the coast of California, and hoping it will wash up on the coast of Mozambique, so that people there will know about you.

(Of course, if you think enough people already know quite enough about you, then a home page is not for you!)

Things to put on your home page. You'll want to tell people who you are, what you do, and what you're interested in. You can introduce them to your friends, too, and show them where you live. You can also send them off through cyberspace to visit other people that you'd like them to meet.

But don't forget that the most important thing about your home page is to keep as many people as possible thinking about you.

“ If you think enough people already know quite enough about you, then a home page is not for you. ”

My own home page begins with a photo of me, naturally. It's in color, by the way, so if you want to know what I really look like, that's the best way to find out.

After you've seen enough of me, you can get to meet some of my favorite people, like the Colonel.

The Colonel is Lieut. Col. Dawna Zullo (retired) of the United States military. She's on parade here at the TLC Cat Club three days a week, come rain or shine, and she makes sure that everything happens exactly by the book. (Her book of songs and music, that is!)



This is the Colonel with her dancing partner, Gingersnaps.

For example, when the Colonel heard that Gingersnaps hadn't been feeling quite himself lately, she decided it was time for him to have a little dance. Gingersnaps, in turn, decided that life in the military was pretty good because he loves dancing with the Colonel – especially to Anne Murray songs – and says it always makes him feel better.

Gingersnaps used to live in a big parking garage in Salt Lake City with a group of feral cats. Feral cats are cats who don't have a home and who go back to being wild, right there in the middle of a city. So, Gingersnaps and his colony (that's what a group of feral cats is called) were being cared for by a member of Best Friends who would take food to them every day in the parking garage.

Gingersnaps wasn't feeling very well, and he didn't have anyone to dance with, so he couldn't even push his way through to where the food was. Luckily, the lady could see there was a problem, so she arranged to bring him to the

Best Friends Guardian Angels

Tomato and his pals are part of the Best Friends TLC Cat Club for kitties with physical disabilities. The TLC Cat Club is one of the special care facilities that are provided for by Best Friends Guardian Angel members whose generosity ensures that animals who come to the sanctuary needing urgent medical attention will get all the TLC they need.

If you'd like to be a Guardian Angel to a needy dog or cat here at the sanctuary, please see the inside front cover of this magazine for more details.

Guardian Angels



Cricket's Trip to Heaven

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends Investigative
Reporter

Everybody wants to know what it's like when you go to Heaven, so when a new cat, called Cricket, told me that she'd woken up one morning and she was in Heaven, I naturally sat up and took notice.

"This is a reporter's dream," I told my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound. "We have a cat here who woke up one morning and she was in Heaven. This could finally be my Pulitzer prize-winning story."

I sat down at my typewriter and told Cricket to start at the beginning.

"Did you actually die before you went to Heaven?"

"No, sir," said Cricket. "It was a near-death experience."

"Even better," I whispered to Tammy. "NDE's are the latest thing. Nobody likes dying any longer, and with an NDE you can sort-of die and not die at the same time. Plus, you get to go on talk shows afterwards."

“When you have a guardian angel, they believe in you. And if someone believes in you, you never really die.”

"It really was a near-death experience, sir," said Cricket. "But I'll start at the beginning . . ."

"I lived all my life at a research laboratory in the Midwest. It wasn't a terrible place – not like those places where they do awful things to ani-

mals. This place was okay. Everyone was nice to me. They just tried out all kinds of tooth treatments and different kinds of food and watched what it did to my teeth.

"But after six years of this, I wasn't any use to them any longer. And once they've finished with you, they just take you to a room where you get a shot of pink juice, and that's the end of you."

"So, did you get the pink juice?" I asked Cricket.

"No, sir. You see, there was this nice staff person who used to visit me, and when she heard my time had come, she hurried off and said she could arrange something even better than pink juice.

"Soon after that, I was put in a cat carrier and taken to a big airplane which sailed off into the clouds. That's how I knew I was going to Heaven. Then I must have dozed off. When I woke up, I was here.

"So, that was my near-death experience, and here I am, in Heaven."

Knowing what goes on behind the scenes here, with cats like Benton getting whole buildings named after themselves, and corrupt sheriffs like Amra the Malamute running biscuit-snitching operations over at Dogtown, I was a bit skeptical of what Cricket was suggesting.

"Are you really telling me that this is Heaven?"

"Cricket may be on to something, Boss," said Tammy the Greyhound, looking thoughtful.

"Just think about it for a moment: Everyone here has had a near-death experience, including you. And once you're here, you get to be anything you want: whether it's a biscuit-snitching sheriff, like Amra, or a famous investigative reporter, like you."

"But I thought you had to believe in angels before you could get to go to Heaven," I said.

"Seems like it's the other way around, sir," said Cricket. "When you have a guardian angel, they believe in you. And if someone really believes in you, like the nice staff person did with me, then you never really die. You just keep going to better and better places in Heaven. So this is just the start."

"This could be an even better story than I thought," I whispered to Tammy. "But if we really are in Heaven, what's the catch?"

"Seems like you still have to have your yucky medicine every day," said Tammy. 🐾

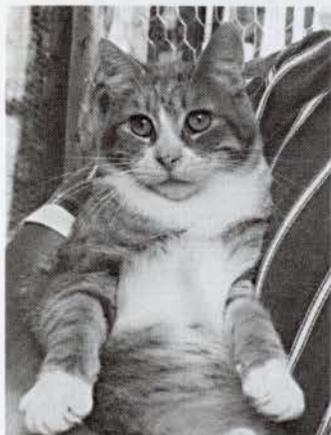


Cricket's first day in heaven, with TLC Cat Club director Judah Nasr

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Guardian Angels



RED ALERT!!!

By Tomato the Cat
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

As you can see, I have entered an alternate universe in order to bring you this month's report. At the very scene of the crime here in

this other universe, everything looks normal, but Tammy the Greyhound, my chief investigative assistant, tells me that from her side of the wormhole everything is backwards.

I began to realize we were dealing with some kind of inverted universe when the first casualties showed up here at the TLC Cat Club.

First, it was the Colonel, who arrived with her arm in a sling. (Lt. Col. Dawna Zullo spends three mornings a week helping take care of the kitties at Benton's House.)

"I thought we only admitted abused cats to the TLC Cat Club," I said to Tammy. "How did an abused person get to be here?"

"Apparently, the mailing office has turned into an alternate universe, as the Colonel discovered when she went down there the other day," explained Tammy. "Once you enter it, everything is different. It's ruled over by an

alien cat called Gizmo. Instead of rescuing abused kitties and bringing them to the TLC Cat Club, people who go in there are abused by Gizmo and have to be rescued themselves and taken off for some special TLC"

"I'll take an away team and do an investigative report," I replied. "Can you beam me down there, Number One?"

"You need to be very careful, Captain," said Tammy, urgently. "Gizmo is a picture of benign benevolence. He sits on Estelle's desk (see photo on opposite page) and behaves perfectly around the office people. He watches over the mailing machine so all our members get their mail properly, and is the perfect gentleman. But when the unwary visitor arrives, it's like a matter/anti-matter collision.

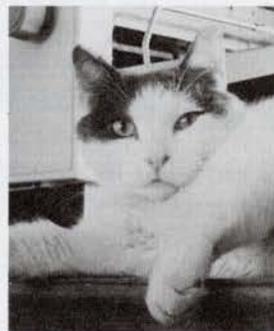
"So, your mission, should you choose to accept it," Tammy continued, "will be to infiltrate the office as an of-

fice cat, and record what happens when a visitor goes in."

I waited for the tape to self-destruct in five seconds, and then beamed down to the front office where Gizmo was, indeed, sitting right there on Estelle's desk, beaming . . .

. . . **Captain's Log:** I have entered Gizmo's alternate universe. All is a picture of calm and work. Estelle is talking on the phone with Best Friends members around the country. Joy is going through the day's mail at the computer and replying to letters. People come and go. Then it happens . . .

Cat lover and regular visitor Tiffany, walks in. She goes over to Estelle's desk for a moment to talk to her, and casually strokes Gizmo who looks up and emits a low yowl. Tiffany, thinking she may have hurt him, picks him up. The yowl turns to a growling howl. She puts him down, and steps back. He jumps to the floor and walks towards her. Tiffany thinks he's going to be friendly now. Gizmo aims right for the legs with front paws swinging.



"Watch out," I scream. "He's a Cling-on!" But no one can hear me since my cloaking device is on. Gizmo is now clinging-on to Tiffany's legs. When he's finally removed, various people head for the bathroom where Tiffany gets a special dose of Tender Loving Care.

. . . As I prepare to beam back up, I see a notice on the office front door:

"BEWARE: ATTACK CAT WITHIN."

"Nobody believes the notice," Estelle tells me. "They just think it's very cute. We've tried adding 'REALLY!!', but they still take no notice.

"We brought Gizmo down here to the mailing office in the first place because he couldn't be around other people or cats! He's very happy and has decided his job is to look after us! Last week he decided to 'protect' us from the maintenance guys. Then there was the bird lady who came in thinking this was the Welcome Center . . ."

Take note, readers. If you need to go to the mailing office when you're here, don't say you didn't get a Red Alert. 🐾

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“Watch out,” I scream. “He’s a Cling-on!”

Guardian Angels



2001: A Spay Odyssey

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

“Oscar the Cat has come in with his list of best animal movies,” said my investigative reporter, Tammy the Greyhound. “He’s scooped us, right here in our own magazine, with a two-page spread.”

I was devastated. Oscar lives across the way at Wildcats. He’s not really wild; in fact, there’s nothing the matter with him at all, so there’s really no reason for him to be there in the first place. He’s just a snooty cat who refuses to go to a new home by threatening to bite people. It’s a scandal.

“Don’t get sullen, Boss,” said Tammy. “We can scoop Oscar ourselves. It’s HAL’s birthday!”

“I’m sorry, Tomato. I’m afraid I can’t do that.”

“HAL? Who’s HAL?”

“He’s in a movie I saw the other night. According to the plot, HAL gets created this year and goes to Jupiter in the year 2001.”

“What’s that got to do with us? Are we going to be rescuing animals on Jupiter now?”

“It’s much bigger than that, Boss,” said Tammy. “HAL is a computer in this classic movie called *2001*, which was made before you and I were ever born. It’s about the transformation of the whole human race into something better.”

“That’s a serious movie,” I agreed.

“In the story,” Tammy continued, “there’s this mysterious black object that’s been sighted out near Jupiter in the year 2001. A team of scientists organizes a secret mission to see what it is and what’s going on. They need a good computer, so they take HAL with them. HAL is a self-aware computer who was created in early 1997. (That’s how HAL is just being born *now*.)

“So, HAL goes with them to Jupiter, but he gets upset about the plan and decides not to cooperate. There’s a famous line where he says: *I’m sorry, Dave, I’m afraid I can’t do that.*”

“HAL becomes very bad and kills off all the crew – except for Dave who fights HAL to the death and finally manages to switch him off.

“Then Dave steers the ship across to the mysterious black object which turns out to be a cosmic gateway where Dave is transformed into a new kind of person who can come back to Earth and teach people to be nice to each other and to the animals. That’s the beginning of the transformation of the human race.

“HAL and Dave make friends again in 2010, by the way, but that’s a whole other movie.”

Tammy sat down, looking very pleased with herself.

“So what are we supposed to do?” I asked. “Write a review of the movie before Oscar sees it?”

“We can *re-make* the movie and win an Oscar ourselves. Then Oscar the Cat will have to review *us!*”

This was Tammy’s best plan ever, so we got straight down to work. I decided to play Dave myself, and Tammy went off to see if there were any dogs who could play HAL. She soon came racing back from Dogtown with a big cuddly shepherd mix in tow.



Thor: a very intelligent dog who’s scared of cats and tends to hide under the bed.

“This is Thor. He’s the perfect dog to play HAL. He’s very intelligent – as HAL should be. I’ve taught him his lines, so we’d better get started quickly, because he’ll be up for adoption soon. The only thing is, he’s a bit scared of cats and tends to hide under the bed.”

I looked around my office-cum-movie set. All I could see were cats . . . and this trembling dog.

“Okay,” I announced, anyway. “Here’s the script, everyone: HAL and Dave head out to Jupiter to investigate a mysterious black cat . . .”

Continued on next page

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I stopped, because as soon as I said “mysterious black cat,” Thor went and hid in the corner.

“I’m sorry, Tomato, I’m afraid I can’t do that,” he whimpered.

“No, no,” I said. “You don’t say that now. Wait till I say *Action!* And anyway, you should be calling me Dave.”

“I’m sorry, Dave, I’m afraid I can’t do that,” said HAL, now trembling all over at the prospect of meeting the mysterious black cat.

“It’s just a *movie*,” I said, becoming exasperated. “Now, after you say your line, we can have our fight to the death.”

“I’m sorry, Dave, I’m afraid I can’t do that,” said HAL, his nose now pressed into the corner of the room.

“You really *can’t* do that, Boss,” Tammy agreed. “This is a no-kill sanctuary. You can’t have HAL being unplugged just because he’s not behaving properly.”

“Well, get him fixed,” I said to Tammy.

“He can’t be fixed yet,” said Tammy. “Our next spay odyssey doesn’t begin at the clinic till next week.”

It’s a week later and I am still trying to get production back on schedule. HAL is at the clinic, so we can’t do any filming, but at least I have the script for the last scene of the movie:

In the year 2001, when they get to Jupiter, Dave and HAL (who has been fixed and is quite happy and does get along with cats) meet the mysterious black cat who takes them through a Cosmic Gateway to the 21st century.

On the other side of the Gateway, they get to see a new Promised Land where there are no homeless animals. Then the mysterious black cat sends them back through the Gateway, after telling them to “Go forth, and spay/neuter.”

Dave and HAL return to Earth to preach a new message about being nice to animals. And everyone gets to live happily ever after.

If you’d like a part in the movie, call me or Tammy, or go to your local shelter.

And if you’re visiting Best Friends, please don’t tell Oscar about the movie till it’s released. That’ll teach him. 🐾

Guardian Angels



I Think I'm Coming Down with Something

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

“I won’t be able to do a column this month,” I explained to my assistant, Tammy the Greyhound. “I think I’m coming down with something.”

“You’re doing *what?*” asked Tammy. “We’re going to press tomorrow and you’re ‘coming down with something?’”

“I’ve got Separation Anxiety. It’s a new disease that’s crossed over from dogs to cats. I just read about it on the next page. They used to think that only dogs get it, but they’ve interviewed a cat behaviorist and she says cats can get it, too. And considering that it comes from dogs,” I added, “you should start by being a little more sympathetic.”

“And might one ask what makes you think you’re coming down with Separation Anxiety?” asked Tammy, with feigned sympathy.

“I think I caught it from Danny Boy. He’s the new cat in the Adoption Room next door. Here’s his dossier . . .”

“You can’t get Separation Anxiety from another cat. You can only get it from a person.”

Danny Boy

- 🐾 Male, domestic shorthair mackerel tabby, 9 months old.
- 🐾 Was among a group of stray cats being fed and cared for in a city park by a feral cat care person. Entire group was transported to Best Friends when city officials complained.
- 🐾 Currently in good health.
- 🐾 A bit shy, but is adjusting to life in Benton’s House. Once he gets to know you, Danny Boy is a shameless flirt. If you stop petting him too soon, he’ll tap you with his paw for more!
- 🐾 Danny Boy is the least shy of his litter and will be very adoptable once he gets over his shyness.



“He sounds absolutely fine to me,” said Tammy. “He hasn’t got Separation Anxiety, and neither have you.”

“I think I caught it this morning. They left the door open while they were cleaning in there. I’m already feeling anxious, and that’s the first symptom.”

Tammy sighed. “Even if Danny Boy *did* have Separation Anxiety – which he doesn’t – you couldn’t get it from him. You can’t catch Separation Anxiety from a *cat*. You don’t even get it from dogs. You only get it from *people*.”

“Where do they get it from?”

“They come down with it all the time. It’s just the way they are. The best thing for them to do is just to take two dogs or cats before they go to bed at night. They usually feel better in the morning. Anyway, a cat like Danny Boy isn’t the problem. He’s the cure.”

Tammy picked up her toys and started out the door.

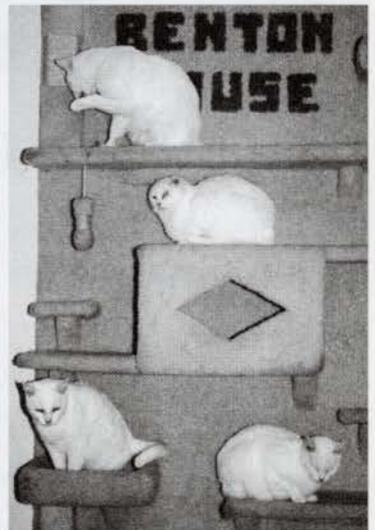
“Wait!” I said. “Not so fast. I’ve still got Separation Anxiety until I hear otherwise. You’ve no idea what I might do if you leave me alone. I might tear the whole place apart, scratch the furniture, spray the walls, and refuse to write my column.”

“Look, Boss,” said Tammy, trying to remain calm in the face of these terrible threats. “You’ll have your entire staff of white-collar cats in here with you. If Separation Anxiety were a communicable disease, they’d all be suffering, too. But none of them is even paying the slightest attention to what’s going on.”

“I knew it!” I shouted, running round the room to wake up those dozing white kitties. Then I tiptoed over to Tammy and whispered in her ear. “I think they may all be coming down with F.A.D.D.”

Tammy groaned. “What on earth is F.A.D.D.?”

“Ssh!” I whispered. “It’s the latest thing: Feline Attention Deficit Disorder.” 🐾



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Guardian Angels



Postponing the New Age

Zeus to the rescue

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

Now that the PTB (Powers That Be) have decreed there are going to be no more homeless pets by the year 2001, I have to start thinking seriously about my future career.

My investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound, and I are in the *business* of reporting on homeless pets. So “no more homeless pets” means nothing to report on. Nothing to report on means no more Tomato Column each month, which means going out of business, which means no income, which means two more homeless pets . . . This needs more thinking about.

“Zeus is a very bad boy! Quite possibly bad enough to postpone the millennium indefinitely.”

Or you sell umbrellas but it only ever rains at night? If everything is going to be coming out perfect, what are we all going to do for a living?

That’s not the end of it. The end of my Tomato Column is just the thin end of the wedge when it comes to news. Imagine turning on the TV and hearing the following:

“Everything is fine, so this is our last news program. Stay tuned for our exciting basketball special in which both sides will win.

“And now a program note: Ask The Vet will not be seen tonight, since all pets are very well, thank you.”

Am I just selfish?

Tammy says I shouldn’t only be thinking about myself. But once there are no more homeless pets, can the whole heaven-on-earth thing be far behind? If so, then *you* could be out of business, too.

What if you make nice treats to eat, but nobody’s hungry any longer?

What if you’re a bank manager but nobody needs any money?

These are heady things for a cat to ponder. (Your kitty at home may be reflecting on similar matters when sitting on a high shelf staring into space.) But fortunately, just when I was about to get depressed about life in the new millennium, Zeus arrived and instantly restored my faith in the future of my career.

Zeus is a very bad boy! Quite possibly bad enough to postpone the millennium indefinitely. As you can see, he’s not into being rescued quietly and then sitting patiently while you dispense yucky medicine into his purrson. Bottom line: Zeus isn’t into putting up with anything.

This towelful of hissing teeth and claws arrived from the San Francisco Bay Area after beginning his life as a feral kitten on the streets of Carmel, California. He was rescued by the Cat Caring Connection people. (That means being lured into a trap with tasty food. Very undignified!)

Zeus was whisked off to the vet to be fixed, tested, and given his shots. He tested positive for FeLeuk (positive is bad, in case *All hail the new King of Wildcats!* you didn’t know) and feral cats with FeLeuk can’t be put back with their non-FeLeuk pals. So, to cut a long story short, here he is at Best Friends. (It was actually a *very* long story: Even with two Cat Caring Connection people taking care of him at all times, he still put up a gigantic fuss in the airport, on the plane, and in the car!)

King of Wildcats and Thunderbolts. Now that he’s here Zeus is still putting up the most giant fuss in history, with more claws flying than his ancient namesake had thunderbolts on a stormy night.

I hope you will join me in proclaiming Zeus the King of Wildcats. With him at the helm, we are all assured a very raucous future and, best of all, my column will live well into the next millennium, after all. 🐾



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Ambassador to the animals



Six Steps from Tomato

Why I am being upstaged

By Francis Battista

When Gregory Castle, Best Friends' traveling ambassador for the animals was at a gathering of animal lovers in Florida recently, what do you think he was asked?

I'll tell you. He wasn't asked "Is Francis here, too?" No way. What everyone wanted to know was whether he'd brought Tomato. Tomato. Tomato, Tomato, Tomato . . . as if no one had ever met a talking cat.

Sure Tomato's cute, but they're all cute. And don't let his 'tiny tike' mixed metaphor act take you in. Tomato is not the perpetually perplexed pussycat he makes himself out to be. In fact, rumor has it that he moonlights on his old IBM Selectric typewriter as a ghost writer for some Washington fat cats!

So why does everyone who comes here want to meet Tomato rather than, say, me?

I think that I've gotten to the bottom of this snuffly cat's inexplicable attraction and I have Hollywood star Kevin Bacon to thank for the revelation. More precisely the Kevin Bacon Game.

“He's one of the best connected people on the planet, with powerful links to the movers and shakers of modern history.”

Based on the principle of the Six Degrees of Separation (we all know someone who knows someone who etc., etc.), the Kevin Bacon Game, which took fire on the World Wide Web last year, posits the idea that Kevin Bacon can be linked directly or indirectly with every actor, living or dead. So

Bacon, who played with Streep who played with DeNiro who played with Brando who played with etc., etc., within a few jumps is bumping into silent screen luminaries like Lillian Gish and Ramone Navarro!

An examination of Tomato's virtual pedigree reveals that he, too, is one of the most well connected people on the planet, with powerful links to the movers and shakers of modern history.

Tomato lives at Best Friends in Benton's House, where he is looked after by staff member Peggy, who talks to my wife, Silva, every day. Silva, in turn, once tended the gardens at Buckingham Palace and had frequent contact with the Queen of England.

That puts Tomato just three degrees of separation from the House of Windsor. That's four or five degrees from Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and maybe even Queen Victoria, and you can go from the Queen to Richard Nixon to Chairman Mao, and still be within the six degrees that are necessary to win the Kevin Bacon Game! 🐾

Here are some tidbits about some of Tomato's more notable "connections" and their animals

The Queen. Only the house staff and the groundskeepers were permitted in the gardens when Queen Elizabeth took a stroll with her famous Corgis. They were very much household pets, and Silva recalls that one of the royal canines only had three legs.

The Princess. Silva also worked at Kensington Palace where Princess Margaret, and now Princess Di, live. Margaret was very protective of one of the tortoises there. She fought with the gardeners to make sure they didn't cut the tall grass at the back of the garden where Torty liked to hang out. Whenever she left the Palace for a period of time, she would charge Silva with the duty of protecting the Royal habitat from overeager lawn mower men. Another of Silva's responsibilities was to round up the newly hatched ducklings from the grassy nesting areas and relocate them near the pond to protect them from crows.

The Prime Minister. Winston Churchill's bulldogs used to have a place set for them at the dinner table at Number 10 Downing St. . . . or was it Churchill who had the places set?

The President. Richard Nixon saved his career with a very schmaltzy speech that featured the family cocker spaniel, named Checkers. That was in the early '50s, so Checkers wasn't around to help with all that Watergate stuff which is probably why it became such a mess.

The other President. Socks the cat holds sway now, and is one of the few administration insiders not to leave after the first term or be under investigation. This suggests, as Tomato has always suspected, that it is this clever feline who is pulling all the strings. 🐾

Guardian Angels



Where Are They Now?

Tomato's Summer Special

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

Since I'm always on a deadline for my next report, I don't often get to follow up on earlier investigations. But it's the mark of a good reporter to keep in touch with his old stories, so I asked Tammy the Greyhound, my investigative assistant, to race around the sanctuary one day and get some updates on who's who and what's what with animals you've read about here in the past.

First update: Tammy the Greyhound. "Why don't you start with me?" said Tammy.

"You can't investigate yourself," I said. "That's like chasing your tail. It's undignified."

"But you never followed up on your big story last year: *Was Tammy Muzzled?*"

This is true. Tammy used to be quite scared of being with other dogs. (She was a bit freaked out just generally from her days at a race track.) So she was not kept in the dog enclosures and was able to wander around investigating things. She particularly liked investigating bags of used kitty litter and other trash, which did not go down well with the Powers That Be who go to great lengths to keep the contents of these bags hidden.

So the PTB tried putting her with a nice group of dogs each day – at least until the trash bags had been taken away.

This means they can be more secretive than ever with the bags of kitty litter, but Tammy has now developed lots of new dog friends, and doesn't need to hang out with cats all the time any-

“The PTB are now being more secretive than ever with the bags of kitty litter.”



more for her emotional well-being. So that's an excellent follow-up.

Next: Peaches the Peahen. Peaches didn't even have a name when I wrote about her last October. She'd just arrived here, after being seen sitting outside a tourist store not far from Best Friends. Nobody knew how she got there.

"We've got two peahens and a peacock already," I wrote in my report at the time, "so the new one fits right in."

I'm afraid I made up the part about her fitting in. (That's called journalistic license.) I just assumed she'd fit in. But, in fact, she fit in about as well as your maiden aunt fits in when she decides to move in with you permanently.

Lacewing and Fairydance, the other peahens, decided Peaches could stay, but only on the condition that she had breakfast by herself – and only after they'd finished theirs. King Ming went along with all this. (He goes along with whatever the ladies say so long as they don't muss his feathers which are, I must admit, more spectacular than ever.) Peaches went along with it, too, until everybody forgot about it and now they all have breakfast together.

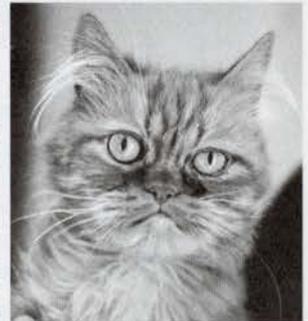
And lunch, too.

Next: Marcie. Marcie was one of the Seven Lucky Cats in my story about the Three Lucky Dogs this time last year.

Marcie had arrived at the TLC Cat Club where she promptly gave birth to six kittens. Cat people are quite superstitious, and the cat staff promptly decided that these Seven Lucky Cats would bring good luck to everyone.

The kittens went to good new homes quite soon, but Marcie needed a little more time to get her act together. She

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Guardian Angels

Continued from previous page

finally found the perfect home, and her new people changed her name to Peaches. (That was very thoughtful of them: I'd never considered that Marcie might have secrets in her past and would need a new ID.) They say they're the luckiest people ever, so the cat people here were right.



Next: Wetherby the Sheep. Wetherby lived with the chickens and looked after them for nearly 10 years. He'd begun life as an orphan sheep who was taken in by a family, but he grew much too big for their small house, so he came here.

Wetherby went to Sheep Heaven this month and everyone was very sad about that, especially the chickens.

He just couldn't get around any longer, although he looked after them right till the very end.

Wetherby was a *very* big sheep, and I have to tell you that the people who laid him to rest needed to take a rest themselves afterwards. His resting place is right next to the chickens. (I don't think anyone could figure out how to *get* him to Angels Rest, but I'm sure he's very happy being next to his old pals.)

Next: Cricket. Speaking of Heaven, you'll remember Cricket, the cat who told me last December that she'd had a Near Death Experience and woke up in Cat Heaven, which turned out to be here at Best Friends.

"When you have a guardian angel," Cricket told me, "you never really die. You just keep going to better and better places in Heaven."

Cricket was recently adopted by Lillian Puppas, the lady in the photo. She now says that there's no need, in fact, to try out any better places because she's now in the very best heaven-on-earth you can find.



Finally: Zeus. I told you about Zeus two months ago. Nothing has changed. Nobody has tried to take another photo of him, and I doubt anyone would dare. He's as bad a boy as ever.

Have a nice summer, and Tammy and I will see you again in September. 🐾

Guardian Angels



In Search Of... The Great Cat Goddess

By Tutmato the Cat –
Best Friends Ancient
Egypt Correspondent

It all began when my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound, offered to help me trace my lineage. I thought it began and ended at the trash bin where my brother and I were discovered as tiny kittens. But it turns out that we are all descended from Ancient Egyptian cats. Our ancestors started moving into people's homes there about 4,000 years ago, and all today's cats come from there.

Tammy's ancestors had already moved in to people's houses by that time. There are greyhound pictures in Egypt going back 5,000 years. So it's possible my ancestors and her ancestors knew each other.

“She decided the new home wasn't up to her high standards, so she refused to use the kitty litter there.”

The Ancient Egyptians made cat jewelry and cat statues, and they had a Great Cat Goddess and lots of nice local cat goddesses, too.

They took their cats with them when they traveled (which is how cats ended up all over the world), and it seems like

the cat goddesses went with them, too.

So it stands to reason that if the TLC Cat Club here at Best Friends is the modern version of Kitty Heaven (which everyone who comes here says it is), then here is where the Great Cat Goddess has to be hanging out these days.

The only question is: which of the six or seven hundred cats here is she? Tammy and I have been trying to find out.

Princess Nuit is an obvious possibility – possibly too obvious, since her name means Princess of the Night and she's terrifically regal and very, very charming. She lives at Wildcats and, like me, has chronic sneezles.

Tammy's view was that the real Cat Goddess would probably be in disguise. She could be someone like Harriet who lives next door to me with Bruiser's Brood.

Bruiser says that more visitors have quietly succumbed to Harriet's will than to any other cat in history, although her own history is not very regal. She was very ill when she arrived nine years ago and then gave birth to some stillborn kittens. It wasn't until some time later when she got better that she began to develop her subtle magnetic powers.

Nowadays there is no one upon whom she fixes her hypnotic gaze who is not immediately overcome with the urge to pick her up and carry her wherever she wants to go next.

My own suspicions began to focus on Aurora. Most animals who come to Best Friends have a bit of an inferiority complex at first. But Aurora is the opposite: She's had a superiority complex since Day One.

When her original person left her at home and went to college, Aurora was furious and refused to use the kitty litter any longer. The family was going to send her over the Rainbow Bridge, but she persuaded the veterinarian not to give her the Pink Juice and she came to Best Friends instead.

Once she was here, the Powers That Be tried sending her to a new home. But she decided the new home wasn't up to her standards, so she refused to use the kitty litter there, either. And in the next home, too. The PTB eventually gave up and agreed there was no home that could possibly live up to Aurora's standards.

Aurora, Harriet, and Princess Nuit have flatly denied that they are the Great Egyptian Cat Goddess.

But Tammy went into disguise herself one day and walked through the Wildcat Colonies here saying that she was an ancient traveler in search of the purpose of life. One of the cats drew her over quietly and said: "Your search is at an end, for the true purpose of life is to be rescued."

Tammy was sworn to secrecy by this cat, but I am told that she comes and goes quite a bit, and that everybody who rescues a cat or dog is visited by her sooner or later. So please let me know if she shows up at your home. 🐾



Aurora: no home could ever live up to her divine standards.

Best Friends Guardian Angels

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Guardian Angels



Beauty is in the Eye . . .

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

“I look terrible,” I said to my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound. Tammy had just raced in to my office to prepare for the arrival of WWL-TV from New Orleans. “There’s no way I can go on the air,” I said from behind the furniture.

“You’re on in about ten minutes, Boss,” replied Tammy. “They’ve just left the Welcome Center and they’re on their way to Horses. They’ll be here after that.”

“But I look terrible,” I repeated.

“You look the same as you looked yesterday.”

“It’s different when you go on TV. It’s not like a photo in the magazine. They might zoom in for a close-up suddenly, and what if they don’t have someone to doctor the footage back at the studio?”

“They say on TV that cosmetic surgery can do wonders for your self-confidence.”

“They’re not trying to do an investigation of you,” said Tammy. “I’m sure they’ll want to make you look as good as possible.”

“And I haven’t had my yucky medicine yet today. What happens if I sneeze on them? I could blow everything.”

“They’ve left Horses,”

announced Tammy. “Next stop: Benton’s House.”

“All they’ve seen is my publicity photo. But that was taken years ago. I don’t look so svelte anymore. I need a tummy tuck.”

Tammy looked exasperated. “You know perfectly well we’re not into ‘thin’ at Best Friends. We like fat, happy dogs and cats. Thin is OUT. Outré. Passé. Forget it.”

“My eyes are droopy. Could Dr. Allen come over and do a quick eye tuck?”

Tammy was glaring at me now. “So! You’ve been talking to Lancelot.”

“He’s got the handsomest blue eyes I’ve ever seen. Dr. Allen gave him a perfect eye tuck. Snuggles and Cuddles had eye tucks, too.”

“They all had very bad eyelid problems when they first arrived. They could barely see. You’d never persuade Dr. Allen to give you an eye tuck just so you can go on TV.”

“I need something,” I insisted. “I saw on TV that cosmetic surgery can do wonders for your self-confidence.”

“It certainly did wonders for Snuggles and Cuddles,” Tammy admitted. “They’ve both been adopted. Maybe you should have a transplant.”

“Now you’re talking!” I said excitedly.



Tammy pondered for a moment. “If you really like the way Lancelot looks, you could trade with him for his handsome blue eyes.”

Lancelot after his eye-tuck. The handsomest blue eyes ever.

“Excellent!” I said. “But if I have his blue eyes I’ll need a hair transplant, too. Blue doesn’t go with orange.”

Tammy agreed. “You’ll need to switch coats with him for a short-haired Siamese look. And, come to think of it, you’ll need a personality transplant to go with the look.”

“What kind of personality?”

“The PTB say Lancelot is very sweet – and very adoptable.”

“Sweet and adoptable doesn’t go with the name Tomato.”

“You’ll need to switch names, too, so that *Lancelot* goes with the sweet adoptable Siamese cat, and *Tomato* goes with the orange cat that’s going on TV. Ready?”

“Ready!” I said, closing my eyes and taking a deep breath.

There was a brief pause, and the makeover was complete. “I look just fine,” I said, as the door opened. The TV cameras rolled, and the producer breezed in, saying: “And that cute orange cat with the typewriter must be Tomato.”

Tammy really knows how to fix things up. 🐾

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Guardian Angels



The Psychic Pets Hotline

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

“How about a Psychic Pets Hotline?” I said to my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound.

“I hadn’t thought of that,” said Tammy.

“Exactly. I had a very good idea after I was visited yesterday by a famous animal communicator. She came to see me with her whole class, and I told her that I need a proper filing cabinet to sit in and a new computer instead of this old typewriter to have my photograph taken on.

“As soon as I’d finished, she turned to the PTB and told them everything I’d said. They noted it all down, and one of them even offered to make me a new filing cabinet in his spare time.

“Now, just imagine how many animals there are at home who are trying to get simple things done like that but they don’t have an animal communicator to pass on the message properly.”

“Animals at home must be trying to get simple things done, too, but without an animal communicator to pass their messages on properly.”

“So you’re going to start a hotline for them?” Tammy asked nervously.

“Exactly. They’ll be able to call in and talk to one of the cats here who can take the message and pass it on to a proper animal communicator who can tell the PTB who can tell someone in the office who can call the person at home and tell them what needs to be put right.”

“And how is the person at home going to feel when someone from Best Friends calls them right out of the blue and says: ‘Hello? Is that Mrs. Catlover? I’m calling to tell you that Little Fluffy wants you to move her litter box back into the bedroom.’ Isn’t that going to sound a bit unusual?”

“Not at all. Now, we’re going to need a well-trained cat at this end to take the calls from the cats at home.”

“I vote for Julius,” said Tammy. “He needs a sitting down job since he can’t walk very well. But he’s a very good listener. And he’s very good at getting things to come out the way he wants them. Plus, everyone thinks he’s the greatest. He had more mail this month than any other animal at Best Friends.”

“I’m not sure he’d be very good at this,” I said, a bit nervously. “In any case, if his front end can’t even communicate properly with his back end, how’s he going to communicate with cats thousands of miles away?”

Tammy was glaring at me.

“I’m not jealous of him getting all that mail!” I added. “I’m just trying to be practical. Well, let’s try it out. You go next door, and I’ll call Julius on the Psychic Pets Hotline and we’ll see if he gets the message.”

“Hello?” I said. “Hello? Is anybody there? Hello? Hello? Can anybody hear me?”

Tammy ran back into my office. “Of course he heard you. Didn’t you hear him say *Hello* back? Just tell him what you want him to pass on.”

“Tell him that someone needs to call Mrs. Pulitzer to remind her to nominate me for a Pulitzer Prize for investigative journalism again this year.”

“You’re supposed to tell Julius yourself.”

“I don’t trust all this psychic stuff.”

“So now I’m supposed to deliver all the messages to him? How’s that going to work all across the country?”

“That could be a problem,” I admitted. “Maybe we should just adopt a fleet of Greyhounds.” 🐾



Julius the cat – he’s a very good animal communicator, even though his front end can’t communicate very well with his back end.

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Guardian Angels



Bright Lights & Golden Gates

By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends
Investigative Reporter

It's so difficult to keep good staff these days. I took two new cats into my office during the summer. Linus and Semana. They were both young and intelligent and quite good on research. "With new staff like this," I said to my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound, "we could really go places with my column. Maybe we could syndicate it nationally. Mrs. Pulitzer would be very impressed."

"They're adoptable," sighed Tammy.

"Don't be so pessimistic," I said. "I just saw them hiss at each other. That's a behavior problem, isn't it? Maybe no one will want them."

“... sitting wide-eyed and motionless, and refusing to give any information except for name, rank, and serial number.”

"They'll be out of here by Christmas," sighed Tammy again.

Tammy is always right about these things. Three weeks before Christmas, Linus and Semana started preening themselves one day. Word had gotten out from next door in the Adoption Room that the PTB were select-

ing adoptable cats to send to San Francisco in exchange for a group of feral cats who'd been evicted from a construction site under the Golden Gate Bridge.

"More feral cats?" I muttered to Tammy. "There goes the neighborhood."

"Just watch," replied Tammy. "It'll soon be 'There go Linus and Semana.'"

"I just don't understand it," I said. "What's the big deal about going to a new home when they could work here in my office and become famous like you and me?"

"The big deal is that they'll be greeted like celebrities anyway when they get there," said Tammy. "And they'll

never have to do a stroke of work for it."

Tammy was right again, of course. The cars from San Francisco rolled in this afternoon, and Linus and Semana sat preening and hissing the entire day, completely distracted by visions of fame and fortune across the Golden Gate Bridge, and totally unable to focus on their work any longer.

Meanwhile, I paid a visit to the new cats in the TLC Observation Room for new arrivals. I'm thinking maybe I could interview the ferals for a *Streets of San Francisco*-type story.

Forget it. They're sitting right at the back of their cubbies, wide-eyed and motionless, refusing to give anyone any information except for name, rank, and serial number.

Two other cats, not feral but also from the big city, are sitting together at the front of their cubby, smiling and purring politely as if wearing a big "Adopt Me" sign.

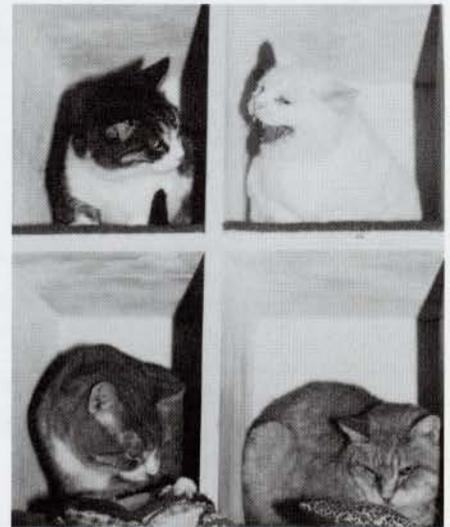
"What's the catch?" I asked Tammy.

"Batcat and Rhoda," said Tammy. "They're like steel ear-hold traps. Pick either one up and they give you a kiss you'll never forget. Could be a good subject if you want to stop doing serious columns and start writing horror stories.

"Or there's Peanut over there. Has what are politely called 'irregularity issues.' Fancies himself a writer. Just gave me an outline for an X-rated autobiographical movie called *Return of The Blob* about all the people he's ever... on."

Back in my office, Linus and Semana are packing for their trip – still preening and hissing.

Who needs this? Maybe I should just put myself up for adoption. 🐾



Linus and Semana (upper workstations) preen and hiss while Tango (lower right) and I try to do our work.

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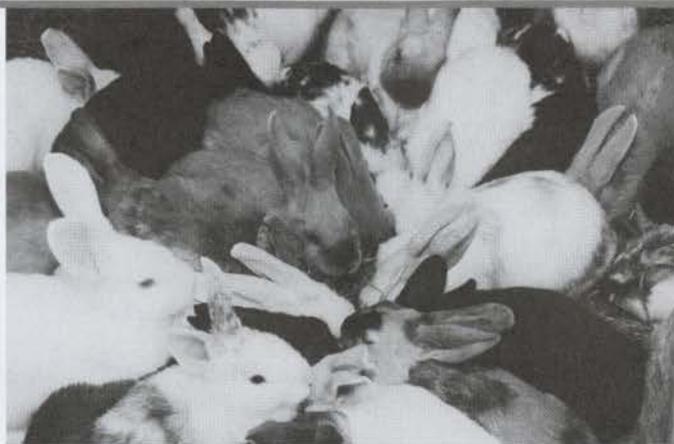


**Tomato
the Cat's
Special
Investigative
Report**

“Letting canine reporters into the Bunny House could lead to a media feeding frenzy.”

Bunny House Rocked by Sex Scandal

By Tomato the Cat
– Best Friends Investigative Reporter



“I need every reporter you’ve got!” I said to my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound. “This story is *huge*. This is the *Big One*. Get some dogs over here at once and see what they can sniff out at the Bunny House.”

“I’m sorry, Boss,” said Tammy, “but canine reporters aren’t allowed in the Bunny House. The PTB [Powers That Be] say it would lead to a media feeding frenzy.”

“So much for freedom of the press,” I muttered. “What do we know so far?”

“We know it started with three bunnies in someone’s backyard last year. In just one year, they’d been fruitful and multiplied to the tune of 167, which is when the PTB were called in.”

“But why weren’t the three bunnies fixed?” I spluttered.

“According to my source, the bunnies’ person testified that she ‘*didn’t know you could spay and neuter bunnies.*’ By the time the PTB brought a truck down to round them all up, there were 177. And by the time they’d driven them back here, there were 185. Dr. Allen is fixing them all as fast as he can.”

“Did you get a statement from the original three bunnies?”

“There’s no way of telling which bunny is which. In any case, bunnies don’t talk.”

Tammy was right. You can always get a dog to talk – just bring a biscuit with you. And, I’m sorry to say, cats will usually talk, too, if you pretend not to be listening. But bunnies are a whole other story. An occasional thump, but never a word – not even if you send in the Energizer Bunny.

“There’s got to be a conspiracy in this somewhere.”

“I already called my source at the Bird House, Boss,” Tammy replied proudly. “They don’t have any right wing conspiracies at the moment, but they might have a broken left wing conspiracy. My source says a prairie falcon just had surgery.”

“Well, see if you can get one of the parrots to talk. Now, do we have anyone who can go undercover?”

“That’s our best chance,” agreed Tammy. “We have a new cat who is, in fact, already undercover. Went undercover as soon as he arrived two weeks ago. Refuses to come out from under his blanket. The name is Cliff. He was apparently thrown off a cliff at the Glen Canyon Dam. Managed to climb back out, we’re told. The person who rescued him says that . . .”

“Yes, yes,” I said, impatiently. “We don’t have time for heart-warming biographies. We’re a respectable magazine. We need a scandal. But you’ve got to get a real *story* for it.”

“You don’t really need a story, Boss,” said Tammy. “You just need a good headline, and then you can sell advertising space. The PTB will want to advertise the bunnies for adoption.”

Tammy is a very media-savvy girl. 🐾



The following is a message from the PTB:

You can adopt a pair of bunnies – or more – either directly from the sanctuary or on one of our mobile adoption days. We assure you that the bunnies will not be wired with secret microphones.

You can also care for your very own pair, long-distance, through the Adopt-a-Pet program. Please call the sanctuary and ask for Chandra. And thank you for your time.

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**Tomato
the Cat's
Special
Investigative
Report**

Professor Barkalot's Secret Mission

**By Tomato the Cat -
Best Friends Investigative Reporter**

I have, for much of the past year, been puzzling over the mysterious disappearance of Professor Barkalot from this magazine. The renowned professor wrote his last column in March 1997, and then vanished.

Nor did the PTB* ever comment on the Professor's absence from these pages. Strange, indeed

So when my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound, raced in one day with the news that Prof. Barkalot had contacted her and was available for an exclusive interview, I followed her immediately to the secret rendezvous she had arranged.

The Professor looked tired but elated as he greeted us.

"I am just returned," he began, speaking in his well-known, mellifluous, Transylvanian accent, "from a remarkable discovery about the creation of the universe.

"For many years, as you know, it was believed that the universe began with a Big Bang. But, more recently, scientists have been finding many problems with this theory.

"I am therefore having set out on a voyage most secret to discover the truth of this matter."

The Professor paused to show us the map of his travels and then explained how his quest had led him to the inescapable conclusion that the universe had *not* come into existence 15 billion years ago, as was previously thought.

Rather, he demonstrated, the universe was, in fact, created in the middle of the 17th century when an otherwise nondescript, small, gray, striped, stray cat, wandering around at the very heart of central Europe, threw up one evening after eating something that apparently disagreed with her.

"**This is truly stunning,**" I exclaimed. "But how does your theory account for everything that happened *before* the 17th century?"

"All of it," he said, emphatically, "past, present, and future, all of it is having come into existence in that one moment."

"And how did you manage to trace the beginning of the universe to this one cat?"

"About this I am bound to secrecy," replied Prof. Barkalot. "But while we of this universe derive from what this cat ate one evening, I am told there are more universes than just our own."

The Professor paused as the implications of his shattering revelation slowly dawned on me and Tammy.

"You mean ... *every cat that throws up?*"

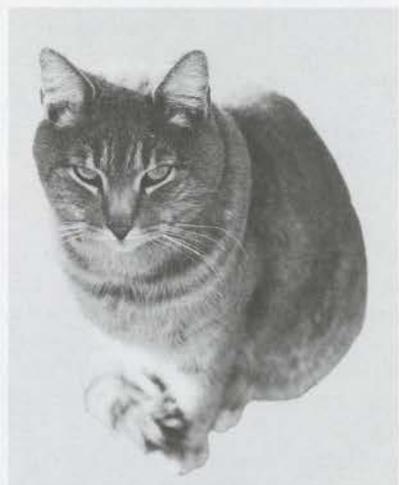
The Professor nodded wisely. "A new universe is born."

"**Why have you come back here now to tell us this?**" I asked.

The Professor drew closer to us - his voice now more hoarse and urgent. "My quest," he whispered, "did not end in central Europe. Through a *second* map, I have been able to trace the continued wanderings of this cat who, I have concluded, has recently arrived at Best Friends and is just about to move in to the new Wildcats Village. It is most necessary that you are taking me to her."

"You mean ...?" I gasped.

"This is correct," affirmed the Professor. "The dinner she ate in



This "charming but otherwise nondescript, small, gray, striped, stray cat," may have created the entire universe.



This photograph of Professor Barkalot, as he appeared in Best Friends Magazine, was taken shortly before his mysterious disappearance.

(*PTB: Powers That Be)

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“I am just returned from a remarkable discovery about the creation of the universe.”



**Tomato
the Cat's
Special
Investigative
Report**

Tomato's Farewell

**By Tomato the Cat –
Best Friends Investigative Reporter**

"I think I really *am* coming down with something this time," I said to my investigative assistant, Tammy the Greyhound.

I was afraid Tammy would think I was being a hypochondriac again because I'm always going on about the yucky medicine I have to have every day. But she'd already heard about my trip to the clinic and what the doctor had said. So she simply sat down quietly and asked me, "How long do you have, Boss?"

"Maybe only a few days – unless they try to do a lot of stuff to keep my kidneys going a bit longer."

"Do you want to do anything special for your last few days?" asked Tammy. "We could organize a full-scale investigation of something, if you like. You could even start planning to send a report from the other side of the Rainbow Bridge: *Tomato the Cat's Special Report from the Hereafter*. Mrs. Pulitzer would be green with envy!"

We both laughed, but I knew Tammy was just trying to cheer me up.

"Do you think there really is something on the other side of the Rainbow Bridge?" I asked Tammy.

"I don't know for sure, Boss. But if there is a Great Cat, then every cat would have to be part of the Great Cat. And the same would be true for dogs, and everyone else, too. And when you go back to the Great Cat, you take everything that you did, and everything that you learned, back there with you. It all becomes part of the Great Cat again. So nothing is ever lost."

"What do you think I'll be taking back with me when I go?"

"Everything you found out about in your investigations: all the things you learned about the Egyptian Cat Goddess and about the cat who created the universe. And your new opera, *Tristan und Curly*, and your movie, *2001, A Spay Odyssey*. And your famous report on *How to Get to Best Friends for People Who Can't Figure Out Directions*. And everything else you found out.

"Once you're there, you might even be able to get things ready for Best Friends Guardian Angels when it's their turn to cross over."

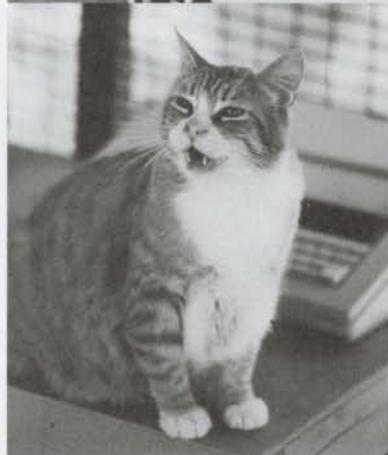
"You think so?" I wondered.

"Wasn't that why you started your reports?" asked Tammy. "So that more people could become Guardian Angels by helping the animals."

... I'd almost forgotten. There are so many Guardian Angels now. But back when I began writing, there were hardly any. Just a lot of sick animals who needed help. And I was one of them.

I'd been found in a big trash bin as a little kitten and I could barely breathe. I had chronic sneezles. In fact, I still have to have yucky medicine every day so I don't sneeze too much.

Then I became an investigative reporter and I began finding out about all the other animals who needed yucky medicine, too. Then more and more people started becoming Guardian Angels, and then we were able to build the Best Friends Clinic. After that came Benton's House for the cats who can't get around properly by themselves. I had a whole staff of cats by then, so we all moved into a nice new office in Benton's House . . .



“I'll be able to find out exactly what's on the other side of the Rainbow Bridge.”

"I'd never really thought of it that way," I said to Tammy. "I guess I've got quite a lot to take back to the Great Cat, after all. But I still want to stay in touch with all our Guardian Angels somehow."

"You can still talk to them, Boss," Tammy replied. "You just won't be doing it on paper any more. Once you're part of the Great Cat again, you'll be with them whenever they think about you. You might even be able to reach them through their own cats at home. Come to think of it," she added, thoughtfully, "once you're part of the Great Cat, it'll be like you're a guardian angel yourself."

"Me? An angel?"

"A real angel, Boss," said Tammy, smiling, as she wandered off to play with her toys.

Later that day, the PTB took me into intensive care at the TLC Cat Club. I didn't really feel like having tons more medicine that wasn't going to do much for me, so everyone was just very nice to me and over the next few days all my favorite people came to say good-bye.

Then Judah came to see me one last time. He's the person who's holding me in my favorite photo. (You only see his arms.) I knew why he was coming: Judah runs the TLC Cat Club and he was the one who brought me to Best Friends in the first place when I was found in the trash bin. I knew he'd be the one holding me when it was time for me to go back to the Great Cat.

If I do become part of the Great Cat, I'll try to keep in touch with you. And if I become a guardian angel, like Tammy says I might, I'll keep an eye out for you if you need a special favor.

And, since this is my last report, I'd just like to say that it's been great being here and being your investigative reporter – and even getting to be famous. I've had a great time.

Well, I think that's it. Nobody likes long good-byes, so thank you again, and this is me, Tomato, signing off. 🐾

From the PTB: Tomato went over the Rainbow Bridge in early May and was laid to rest at Angels Rest here at the sanctuary. A posthumous Purrlitzer Prize for a unique contribution to journalism is now hanging in his former office at Benton's House.

Be Someone's Guardian Angel

Before he became our top investigative reporter, Tomato the Cat began the Best Friends Guardian Angel program.

Since he himself was close to death when he was found in a trash bin as a kitten, he said he knew what it was like for other animals who, like him, come to the sanctuary in pretty bad shape.

Guardian Angel contributions provide emergency and long term medical care to animals with most urgent needs. Guardian Angels have also helped build the Best Friends Clinic and provide it with the finest veterinary equipment.

As a Guardian Angel, your donation of \$20 a month – or \$240 for the year – is nothing less than a magic wand that helps bring one or more of these sad little faces back from the brink and set them on the road to a new life.

If you'd like to be a Guardian Angel, please call, write, or e-mail Best Friends. We'll send you a special certificate with many thanks from all the animals you're helping.

Thank you so much, and bless you for caring.



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