

THE CLAYTON CHRONICLE

The Scottsdale Scoop

ISSUE 210

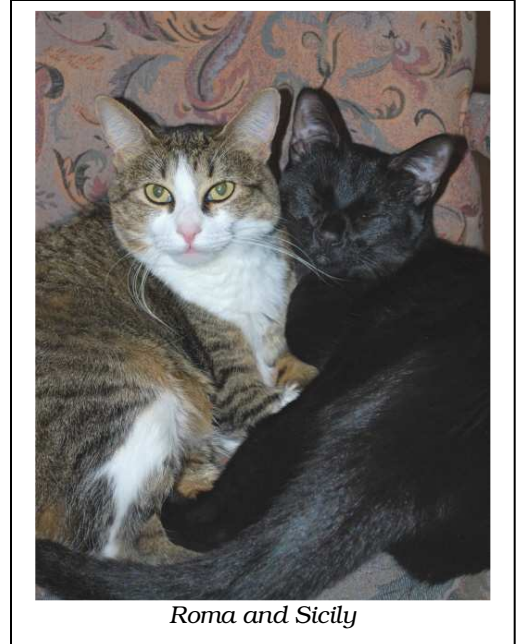
JANUARY 2009

THE CLAYTON CATHOUSE

Ken dropped the family at Target one Saturday and left to run another errand. As he drove past Petsmart, he noticed that pet adoptions were happening that day, and made a mental note to avoid the area once he picked up the family. His plans were foiled when they finished at Target before he returned—the family had wandered over to Petsmart on their own anyway.

We didn't end up with a cat that day, but the next Saturday we brought home two. Roma, the mother, is about 18 months old and is a Tabby. Sicily, the daughter, is about 8 months old and is black. The two of them were abandoned at a church along with the other kittens, and had been living in a foster home until moving to our house.

For the first week or two, we considered renaming the cats. Marnie suggested Rosetta and Silvermist (after two Disney fairies), Chad liked Gandalf and Yoda (trying to prove how nerdy he could be and give the cats gender issues), and Jeff proposed Roberta and Stephanie (after Angie's almost-name: Roberta Stephanie Liscom). Someone suggested Black Canary, but couldn't come up with a second name. We almost settled on Starfire and Raven (also two superheroes). In the end, we showed why we never named our former cat: we couldn't make a decision. Roma and Sicily remain Roma and Sicily, and we're suddenly pet owners again even though we didn't expect to be.



Completely unrelated to cats, Angie turned 41, then celebrated her birthday a day later. On her actual birthday, she worked, went to the doctor (for Jeff), and planned to attend an open house at Chad's future high school (we eventually skipped that part). The next night was a little less busy so we celebrated then, going out to dinner and giving gifts.

confrontations

This was the month for parent-teacher conferences, or "parent-teacher confrontations" as we jokingly call them (thanks to Grandpa Clayton).

They were not confrontational in reality. The kids are all doing well but each has room for some kind of improvement.

climate change

Angie logged a business trip at the end of January to North Dakota and then San Antonio, TX.

The morning she departed from Bismarck, it was 20° below zero. When she landed in San Antonio, it was 65°.

It's a little hard to pack right for a trip with an 85-degree swing.

pants emergency

After returning from Utah, we couldn't find Chad's church pants anywhere. An hour before church we figured his ox was in a pit and declared a wardrobe emergency.

Ken and Chad drove to Target and had picked out new pants before Ken realized he didn't have his wallet. Angie rushed to Target with the wallet, and we made it to church on time.

P. C. STORY TIME

By Chad

I was assigned to write a bedtime story using my Latin vocabulary words. I came up with the following:

Rainbow Alligator Saves the Rainforest

Rainbow Alligator woke up to another normal day; *de facto* today was different than any normal day, but Rainbow Alligator did not know this.

He woke up and began his *modus operandi*, taking a bath and brushing his teeth in up and down motions. He then ate his breakfast, and went out for a stroll. On his way he stopped by his friend Perry Parakeet to have a good pie.

Perry told Rainbow *sub rosa* that there were strangers at the dock, as Rainbow set out for his noon walk. Rainbow had to see for himself, these men on the river's main shelf.

He saw what *prima facie* looked good, but it was really not good, not even one itty, little bit. What these humans were doing was icky-sick-sick.

Nearing the dock, Rainbow saw a strange sign that said: "*Pro bono publico*, forest resort."

"What's this!" shouted Rainbow in surprise. "A forest hotel! My home will be gone *in tota*!" He yelled in alarm.

To Rainbow, the humans were *personas non grata*. They were running towards Rainbow. He had to hurry and get out of the way. He quickly hid behind a bush and waited for the humans to leave. He had to stop them, but he didn't know how.

The rainforest was in peril *in extremis*, so Rainbow came up with a plan. He was going to tell the strangers they could not destroy his home. Finally, Rainbow gathered up the courage to go give his speech and approached the men.

"Our forest is *sina qua non* to the world. The resort will destroy the animals' homes. You have to stop!" he urged.

The human in charge stepped forward. "We can't stop now. *Carpe diem*!"

Rainbow tried to bargain with the man. "What about a *quid pro quo* arrangement? We give you something you want, and you leave our homes alone. What do you think?"

The human said, "I'm Joe. We can't stop because we are already *in medias res*." He scratched his head. "You'll have to get out of the way, Mr. Alligator." He turned to his friend. "Get this. I'm talking to an alligator."

Rainbow scratched his head. "I guess if you're set on destroying the world, *caveat emptor*. Remember, you will reap what you sow."

With that, the man turned to his colleagues, ordering them to stop. "We can't interrupt their *modus vivendi* without hurting our own. Mr. Alligator, thank you for your wisdom. Namaste."

Alternate ending:

With that, Rainbow stepped forward and bit the man's head clean off his neck in one satisfying chomp. "Tastes like chicken," he mused. Turning to his reptilian forest friends he added, "*Sic transit Gloria mundi*. Chow time!"

Later, when they buried the headless corpse in the swamp, one of them was heard to remark: "*Requiescat in pace*, scum sucker."

CHAD ELIZABETHAN-STYLE

Chad volunteered to wear Elizabethan-era clothing for an English class project. Angie, of course, did most of the work making the costume, but Chad also wore the costume all day long at school. Right down to the tights.



WE LIKE LICHENS

By Marnie

In January, I hiked Pinnacle Peak twice. The first time was with Mom and Jeffrey.



Why didn't Chad & Dad go with us? Dad was doing a move, and Chad wanted to sleep instead.

What did we do to prepare for the hike? We put water bottles in my backpack, and my lipstick stuff was in there, too. We also had two snacks: chocolate covered pretzels and chocolate Oreo thin crisps.

What was your favorite thing we saw on the hike? Lichens. They are colors on rocks.

How far did we hike? There's this thing like a clock in my head, did you know? And it said we hiked 30 minutes. No, wait, we hiked 2 hours.

Did you want to go again? Not really 'cause it would make my legs tingly.



The closest Jeff comes to putting his arm around Marnie

Did you go again the next week? Yeah, I went with Mom and Dad.

Did you like the second time as much? No because I fell down. I was walking on some loose rocks and just slid. Dad caught me a little bit, but I still scraped one knee. That hurt, and it was huge also.

MY TAKE ON THE CATS

By Jeff

I also wanted to talk about the cats this month, so it looks like you get two articles about them.

We spent two Saturdays shopping for cats, and we even had a few more cats to choose from. It wasn't very easy to choose which cats to get, because there were a lot of cute cats, like Donny and Marie, Dylan, Chula, and Hawkeye and Trapper. I think Roma and Sicily are really the perfect cats for us.

Once we got them home, we set them up in the laundry room with food, water, and a litter box. They also had their crate for the first week. They still have the food and litter in there, but now they can go almost anywhere in the house. They really like to sleep under the kid's bed or on one of the couches. They also have a kitty condo in the family room where Roma goes inside and Sicily climbs on top, looking out the window.

The first week we had the cats, Sicily went missing. We thought she got outside when the door was open, so we were a little worried. She does at least have a microchip in her for identification, but that doesn't help if a coyote finds her. Chad and I went looking for her all the way to Kings Avenue, but when we got back we found out that she wasn't really missing. She was under Marnie's bed all along.



Sicily hides in our recycling box

FROM ANGIE'S EASEL



This was from a photograph we took in Ephesus, Turkey. I'm not sure I like how it came out. Oh well.



This portrait of Marnie was very difficult to do well, partly due to the bad source photograph. It reminds me a little of the portrait of Henry VI.

...AND KEYBOARD

- Nipples, Sexism, and Racism
- The Problem with Authority

RANDOM NOTES

- Ken and Chad both started the new year off with colds.
- Ken got under 200 pounds on the 7th. The last time he was that low was about 1993.
- Angie taught Relief Society on the 11th and was then released and called as Cub Committee Chair. Sigh.
- Angie stayed home from work on Human Rights Day and Marnie had Brigid DeLoughery over for a play date.
- Marnie's show choir performed "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Put on Your Sunday Clothes" on the 24th.
- Ken came home on the 24th and captured the video of Marnie's performance. This kicked off a two-week project in which he captured all the video we've ever taken as a family.

MEDIA ROUNDUP

AT THE MOVIES...

Yes Man

Jim Carrey has to learn to let go of his inhibitions by being more open to life and impulsive. 'Cause Jim Carrey lacks spontaneity.

Ken ***
Angie ***



BOOKS

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

Gladwell provides interesting insights on how long it takes to become a true expert (10,000 hours), why cultures of honor still exist, and how too much respect for authority can cause plane crashes.

Angie ***½

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

Jeannette Walls, who also writes opinion pieces for MSNBC, lays bare her white trash childhood, raised by parents who are creative and intelligent yet irresponsible and depressed. It was fascinating. I highly recommend it.

Angie ****

Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal by Christopher Moore

This is what it would be like if Jesus were best friends with some funny yet big-hearted loser guy. It makes Jesus accessible in a whole new way. Some would doubtless find this book offensive, but I found it fresh, inspiring and relatable. It also answers the question, "What if Jesus knew kung-fu?"

Angie ***½