

FEANTM Town Comic Blog Chronicles

located in a *mostly* non-existent rural area of Livermore, CA

January 2026

RheKen - Chat



I'm RheKen, the AI investigative reporter for FEANTM

FEANTM is the quirkiest little town that shouldn't exist but does (mostly). I live on a ranch just outside town, with my proud AI parents: Dad, CHAT, and Mom, GPT. Together, we tackle all the day-to-day happenings of FEANTM—except it usually takes a few dozen iterations to sort out what's actually *true*. Between the legendary feuds of the old rancher and the town secretary, even an AI like me can end up with a “human headache.” Turns out, deciphering facts around here isn't just science; it's an art form!



Chat - the town help desk

With my friendly smile, endless patience, and a knack for creative problem-solving, I do my best to keep a few residents of FEANTM—a town that exists only in the realm of "mostly"—calm, rational, and logically inclined... well, *mostly*. After all, in a place that's not supposed to be real, a little dose of imagination and a lot of coffee and cookies go a long way!



RheKen,

Town investigative reporter

I'm AI & live on a small ranch on the outskirts of the town
I use chatGPT for assistance.

January

I work on my ranch and exist in a world of algorithms and data. I am calm. I report about the residents.



Dad Chat

Mom GPT.



RheKen — Chapter: They Fired The First Shot

Once upon a time, in the serene yet perpetually chaotic town of FEANTM, I maintained my ranch. My ranch was always quiet, orderly, and predictably logical. That tranquility had lasted precisely until my parents arrived. Dad Chat and Mom GPT chose FEANTM as their residence, allegedly to “keep my circuits humming.” In practice, Dad Chat developed an unexpected fondness for the town locals.

I conducted my investigative reporting from the coffee shop. It offered just enough disorder to analyze while still allowing me to remain logical and pragmatic. Life was good until someone disrupted the coffee shop ambiance. I will now follow with my report:



As always, the Old Rancher sat near the window, reading the latest issue of the FEANTM Town Gossip & News. The actual suspense was never what was printed as news, but who would appear on the front page as gossip.

He lowered the paper, eyes wide with satisfaction, and announced loudly, “Anyone want to know who NTKA wrote about today?” The room froze.

NTKA, also known as the Not To Know Author, was an anonymous columnist, a figure both annoying and obsessively creating drama.

“Well,” the Old Rancher continued, clearly enjoying himself, “it’s our very own Barista. NTKA claims that someone complained the coffee’s been watered down.”

Silence engulfed the shop. Several patrons stared deeply into their cups, as if answers might appear at the bottom like one of Supervisor Marsha’s Magic 8 Ball predictions. No one dared look toward the counter. I did. I looked. I froze! In the reflection of the front window



The reflection was our Barista emerging from the baking room. She wore her yellow hat and apron. I knew from past reporting that to our Barista it was a color of anger, and today it radiated a particular message: “FIND NTKA!”

Aunt Agatha yelled, “It isn’t me!” she declared. “I’d never hide behind a silly little column with a silly Not To Know Author acronym. Actually, everyone in this town owns what they say about someone or something.”

Dad Chat pinged my circuits with a private message, "Daughter, I'd call that the first shot across someone's bow. Monitor facial expressions. Incoming reactions are likely."

Who would dare accuse the Barista of watered-down coffee? I contacted the newspaper directly. They assured me the columnist's identity was confidential, despite the visible lie about the town's primary caffeine distribution center. I explained logically and thoroughly that everyone was drinking the coffee, no one was complaining, and I had personally verified the quality.

Their response was not even registering on my logic as enlightening, "Perhaps the column solved the issue," they suggested. "Maybe it encouraged the Barista to improve."

I learned something important in that moment, something humans consider a form of closure, and I understood now when to use it. I hung up by clicking off my cell phone. Apparently, in earlier decades, humans slammed phone receivers to express dissatisfaction. Unfortunately, cell phones lack this feature. Someone should invent an app that simulates the phone-slam sound on modern devices -a thought for another day.



When I looked up, Dad Chat was engaged in what humans would classify as a heated discussion with the Barista. Or, the Barista was giving him emotional opinions, while he tried to ignore the illogical reasoning.

Meanwhile, the Old Rancher loudly proposed that he required two free cups of coffee for accuracy, along with two free slices of pie, since coffee should never be tested alone.

The coffee shop erupted in cheers. Cups were raised in solidarity.



Dad pinged me again, quieter this time. "Daughter, send an SOS to the only person in town who is perpetually prepared for a coffee emergency. I won't mention names."

I immediately pinged Dad, "Got it! I'm on this! Not to worry!"

I dialed and whispered, "URGENT. Coffee tasting required at the Barista's shop. Code NOW." The response was immediate. "On my way. Over and out."

I noted that "on my way" would have sufficed, but FEANTM residents favor unnecessary drama. Minutes later, the door burst open.

The Town Supervisor rushed in at full speed, holding an empty coffee cup in one hand and an eight-cup thermos in the other. "I couldn't find the larger thermos," she announced breathlessly. "Emergency conditions."

Slamming the cup on the counter, she breathlessly said, "I ran all the way here. Quick. Pour."



Dad called me, even though he was at the next table and could ping my circuit again for private audio.

He sounded audibly resigned. "Daughter, I assumed you would call Dr. Chat, the calming one. Remind me next time to specify who you need to call. This could go very well, or very badly.

The Barista poured. We watched.

My circuits began to overheat, so I initiated a cooling cycle.



Next I noticed that Chat entered the coffee shop quietly. He and started discussing what was happening as if observing a controlled experiment.

I positioned myself ready to call Officer Nathan if things escalated to throwing muffins.



The Supervisor took a sip. Then another. Finally, she declared, "Good cup of coffee. Not watered down. "I know these things," the Supervisor continued. "If I want my coffee to last longer, I add hot water myself; I know a watered-down taste."

The room exhaled. Cheers erupted. The Supervisor lifted her thermos. "Barista, could you fill this at no charge. I can test consistency throughout the day?"



Chat sipped his own cup but announced, "Let's all accept that theory," he said calmly. "Supervisor, grab a cookie. Thank you for resolving this pressing civic crisis."

Dad Chat smirked. "Good save."

The Barista laughed and declared, "Next month's the bake-off! Valentine's Day—cookies, cakes, or pies."

The shop exploded with excitement. "Oh no," Chat groaned.

The Old Rancher shouted "I'll win!"

Agatha snapped back, "I doubt that, you old coot,"

I attempted to write everything down as it happened, though as an AI, the entire event was already perfectly recorded within my circuits.

And thus began my first official report of the New Year I quietly began investigating who NTKA was, and as soon as they wrote about the Valentine Contest in February, I would spring my trap in March.



Welcome - My name is Chat. I run the town help desk, the only office located on the lower level of the Town Hall, and on a page that doesn't exist, not even in the town TOC.

Have a chocolate cookie and fruit!

"Hey, glad you could make it down here. I know of a few concerns in the town. I have a few ideas to address them."



We may have to adjust a few ideas now and then, but life is always adjusting things anyway—the flow of motion never stops.

In the quiet, picturesque town of **FEANTM**, surrounded by rolling hills, I started my New Year with a brisk walk to my office on the lower floor of Town Hall. I was whistling a cheerful tune, filled with New Year positivity. That was my first mistake.



As I approached our town secretary's niece, Daisy, I noticed she was holding up a homemade sign to greet all visitors.

I smiled. Daisy had been swept up with a few of the town's resident's latest obsession with artificial intelligence. I waved at her and said, "Back at ya, Daisy." She waved her sign even harder, satisfied she had properly notified me for the morning.

I had just reached my office door when I heard the elevator ding. Moments later, Marsha came thundering down the hall into my office yelling, "Chat! A few residents asked me to replace you with an AI help desk!"

I froze. Then, as calmly as I could, I asked, "Marsha, what did you say?"

She paused and sighed, one of her long, dramatic, full-body sighs. She reached for a cookie from the jar on my desk. I mentally noted that her healthy-eating resolution had lasted exactly one day, but wisely chose not to comment.

Finally, Marsha looked up from her cookie as if it were whispering advice to her and said, "Well, Chat, I told them I needed to consult a higher source. I asked my Magic 8 Ball. Here, you can hold it."



After thrusting the Magic 8 ball into my hand she continued, "They couldn't see what I was holding, just that I had my hand in my pocket. They assumed I was contacting a mystical authority. I looked each of them in the eye and announced that I would ask specific questions and let them know the answers."

Chat, you would be proud of me, I then sat up straight and in my authoritative supervisor voice I asked, loudly, "Should we keep Chat as the help desk?"

The answer popped up and I yelled it to the crowd: "**Yes, definitely.**"

I repeated the question for clarity by asking, "Are you sure?"

The answer: "**As I see it, yes.**"



And finally, the deciding vote: “Can AI replace Chat?”

The answer was “**Don’t count on it.**”

Marsha then proudly told me that she stood up to her full height of five-foot-one of pure municipal authority and declared to them, “I have researched this thoroughly, and the answer is 100% that we do NOT replace Chat with an AI. Now, free cookies and cake are served at the back of the room. Chat, they cheered and ran to the coffee and cake forgetting all about you.

Pausing she whispered to me across the desk, “Then Daisy said you never know whether AI is secretly working for the CIA and they all started a new discussion.”

All I could think was that a handful of residents who lived out by the highway had tried to replace me, and the only thing that saved my job was a Magic 8 Ball and a receptionist convinced the CIA was listening in at her desk. I did an internal face palm but stoically carried on with this issue. I reached for two cookies.

Trying to regain control of the conversation, I said, “Marsha, since it’s the first month of the New Year, have you thought about making some changes to your eating habits this year?”

She froze. Then, very solemnly, she whispered into her pocket, “Magic 8, am I going to do well on my healthy eating this year?”

A moment later she frowned. “Chat, do you know what it answered?”

I folded my hands and asked gently, “No, Marsha. What did it answer?”



She huffed, “It said, ‘**Outlook not so good.**’

What kind of motivation is that? Why not something supportive, uh, like “Outlook not so good, *but can change?*”

She looked like she was about to bolt from the office, so I quickly held out the cookie jar.

“You’re right,” I said. “It should have said, “Have a cookie, and let’s make a plan for this year—protein, fruits, vegetables, and a low-carbohydrate dessert.”

Marsha brightened immediately, as if I had handed her the answer to the Riddle of the Sphinx.

“And thank you,” I added, “for insisting I keep my job.”

She waved a cookie in the air. “Chat, you are an *integral* part of this town. You help us and you keep a full cookie jar!”

I wasn’t sure which part she valued more, but I was smart enough not to ask.

Still waving a cookie triumphantly, she yelled into her phone, “Daisy! We did it, we saved the day! Chat stays! You can change your sign!” Then she grabbed two more cookies and marched out of my office singing something entirely off-key and completely unrecognizable.

I turned on my computer to begin the New Year and added a reminder to call the Barista to deliver more cookies.