

FEANTM Town Comic Blog Chronicles

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

July 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, Field Notes from the Coffee Shop by RheKen the Town Investigative AI reporter

July

I'm AI and live on a small ranch on the outskirts of the town
I use my Dad Chat of chatGPT for assistance.

I work on my ranch
and exist in a world of
algorithms and data.
My Dad is Chat. My
Mom is GPT.
I am calm. I report on
the residents.



Meet Dad Chat and Mom GPT.



The Chair Placement Incident

Morning in the coffee shop tends to unfold with a dependable geometry—light through the front windows, the low hum of the grinder, the quiet symmetry of tables placed not randomly, but not changed in 15 years.



It was while I was seated at one of those tables, reading, that something in my internal systems registered a discrepancy.

The tables were... wrong. Not damaged. Not missing. Simply seemingly to be misplaced. Which, to a purely logical system, should not matter at all. Still, the alert persisted. Before involving the Barista, I opened a channel to Dad Chat.

His response was immediate, as it often is when a question appears deceptively simple. “Daughter,” he said, “who was present in the shop before it opened?”

I paused, then turned physically to confirm rather than speculate. The Barista, wiping down the counter, answered, “I stepped out back for a minute,” she said. “Left the Old Rancher inside. He was reading.”

I relayed this. There was a noticeable delay before Dad responded. Then the door opened. Dad entered without announcement, his gaze moving across the room not with surprise, but with confirmation. His eyes traced the perimeter, the spacing, the alignment. He didn’t speak to me first. Instead, he crossed directly to the Barista. Their exchange was quiet. Brief. Then, in unison, they both looked toward the Old Rancher.



The old Rancher looked up from his newspaper but did have an odd smile. There was, unmistakably, a faint curve at the corner of his mouth. He appeared to have an expression not of guilt, but of satisfaction. The kind one wears after moving a single piece in a game no one else realized had started.

The atmosphere shifted again when the door opened a second time. Aunt Agatha entered with her customary precision, carrying a covered pie dish held level with practiced care. Her path through the shop was habitual, almost mapped into muscle memory.

Three steps in, she stopped. Not hesitated but came to an abrupt complete stop.

Her table was gone. Well not gone since it obviously existed, but elsewhere.

We all watched as she stood in the exact location where it should have been, her gaze fixed on empty space as if reality itself had misfiled an object. Then she turned. Her eyes landed directly on the Old Rancher. “Who,” she said, each word placed with surgical clarity, “did table placement?”

The Rancher lowered his paper by a fraction. Not enough to engage. Just enough to acknowledge.

“The tables have been in the same places for fifteen years,” she continued, her voice rising in controlled indignation. “Why move them?”

It was at this point that Dad stepped forward to inquire “If there are other tables available,” he asked evenly, “why does the specific placement matter?” This question, while logically sound, did not produce the stabilizing effect one might expect. Instead, it seemed to clarify the conflict.



Behind the counter, the Barista emerged with her famous apron summing up situations. It stated, “*Round One.*” She didn’t explain anything else. I guess that said it all and she didn’t need to.

Aunt Agatha moved closer to Dad, still holding the pie as though no alternative surface in the room met the necessary criteria for its placement.

“I sit *there*,” she said, gesturing not at a table, but at a location. “Every morning. The light comes from that window. I can see the street. I don’t have to turn my head to watch who comes in.”

Dad nodded, absorbing the data not as complaint, but as parameters. “So,” he said, “it isn’t the table.”

“It’s never the table,” she replied. At that moment, the door opened again.

Marsha entered mid-step, coffee in one hand, a paper-wrapped cookie in the other. She crossed the threshold and immediately halted, her posture tightening as her eyes scanned the room. There was a brief pause as she stood without moving as if she was having an issue with internal recalibration. Then she screeched, “What the heck is with the tables?”

She set her coffee carefully down on the floor where a table had existed. She produced her clipboard with the reflex of someone accustomed to documenting disorder. “Regulations,” she muttered, flipping a page. “This establishment may require a table regulation.” She began to hum while writing. The tune didn’t resolve into anything recognizable. No one commented.

I turned back to the Barista. “I’m attempting to model the behavior,” I said. “The objects are functionally identical. Their positions should not alter utility. Yet the responses suggest otherwise.”

She slid a cup across the counter to a waiting customer before answering. “I make coffee,” she said. “I don’t diagnose people. But if you’re asking, this town runs on habits the way your system runs on code.” She glanced toward the Old Rancher. “Sometimes,” she added, “someone changes a line just to see who notices and what it produces.”

Across the room, Dad had shifted the conversation. “What do you look at,” he asked Aunt Agatha, “when you sit?” “The window,” she said. “The street. The mountains, if the light is right.”

“North-facing?” Dad asked. “Yes,” she said, immediately. He nodded again, then turned slightly, aligning himself with the room as if mapping unseen coordinates.

From my position, the distinction began to resolve. It wasn’t about tables. It was about orientation. Predictability. The ability to occupy a space and know, without recalculation, how the world would present itself to you. Dad realized it didn’t matter that the tables had been moved but that their reference points had.



At the edge of the scene, the Old Rancher finally lowered his paper completely. He didn’t speak. He only watched as the room worked to reassemble its understanding of itself.

Then, I noticed that his faint smirk remained, not unkind, but deliberate. As if he had known all along that the fastest way to understand a system was to move one piece and observe what breaks and what is solid.

The Rancher slowly stood and said to Aunt Agatha, “Give me a few minutes and tables will be back in the right order. Only moved a few tables like that one by the window you like to occupy and the one by the bulletin board that the Supervisor sits at. All fun and an experiment.”

Within a few moment Dad pinged me with responses and his overview of what happened, “I can’t make any logic at all about what he did or why it correlates to an experiment.”

Observed Responses:

- **Aunt Agatha:** Displayed acute positional disruption. Refused to utilize alternate, functionally identical tables. Behavioral trigger linked to loss of environmental constants (visual orientation, habitual seating location). Emotional response escalated until underlying variables were articulated.
- **Marsha:** Immediate classification of anomaly as regulatory concern. Defaulted to procedural authority (clipboard deployment). Demonstrated reduced navigational confidence when habitual spatial pattern was removed.
- **Barista:** Maintained operational continuity. Exhibited awareness of social dynamics without engagement. Adopted observational stance. No corrective action initiated.
- **Old Rancher:** Minimal verbal participation. Demonstrated anticipatory awareness of outcomes. Behavioral profile consistent with controlled perturbation of stable systems for observational purposes.

Conclusion: The “table” is not the operative unit. The *relationship* between subject, position, and environment defines perceived safety and correctness.



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! 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. The flow of motion never stops in our town that almost exists.



My day started suggesting to the Barista a new line of healthy baking. I could tell by her expression that she didn't agree. After a stare-down between carbohydrates and protein, I felt it best to postpone the discussion and quietly leave.

Heading to Town Hall I was greeted by Daisy at the reception desk. Daisy was holding a sign. The gossip news travels quickly in my town.

The sign read: "BARISTA IS UPSET." I nodded. It seemed wise not to ask for additional details.

I remained determined to have a positive attitude. Marsha had mentioned over the last five years, that she wanted to eat healthier. All my help had failed but I had prepared a new plan and new notes.



I left my notes on my desk hoping that I'd be able to review them with Supervisor Marsha. It's a simple plan, and I'm confident that today will be the day the plan will work.

Looking back, that was probably my first mistake.

This morning apparently had started for Marsha being overwhelmed. Managing an entire town is difficult enough without trying to replace cookies with something healthier than her particular choice of cookies. Several residents this morning already reported seeing her slowly shuffling around the town park wearing a T-shirt that read: "Pretend I'm Jogging." Additionally, it was reported to me that Marsha was holding an apple as if it was going to lunge at her throat like a rabid animal. No less than 50 town residents called me to report she looked sad.

Walking into the elevator I pushed the button for the lowest floor in the building, where my office was located. I decided to relax at my desk with a cup of tea and plan a new strategy for Marsha's new jogging routine.

That plan immediately unraveled.



The Old Rancher was sitting behind my desk, reading my notes. I stood there for a moment imitating Marsha as a deer caught in headlights.

"Rancher," I asked politely, "why are you sitting at my desk instead of the visitor chair?"

Without looking up, he replied, "Take a seat, son. It'll all become clear in a minute."

I had learned over time that when the Rancher said something would become clear, it usually became considerably less clear. I sat in the visitor chair and waited.

Before I could ask another question, my phone rang. It was Daisy. Or at least I thought it was Daisy.

"This is a recording and not Daisy the Receptionist," she announced dramatically. "I have an emergency call to put through." A moment later, Officer Nathan came on the line.



"Chat, Officer Nathan here. I've been informed that town residents called you about Marsha jogging with an apple ready to attack. I'm at the town park now observing Marsha. She appears emotionally compromised by that apple."

I closed my eyes. Nathan continued.

"Do I arrest her for walking when she's supposed to be jogging? Do I put the apple into protective custody? Or should I transport both parties to Town Hall and let you work out their differences?"

"Bring Marsha," I replied.

Officer Nathan paused and I knew he was thinking. Finally, he asked, "And the apple?"

"Officer Nathan, bring the apple."

"Excellent. I was hoping you'd say that." A few minutes later, Daisy texted:

"MARSHA IS ON HER WAY DOWN. LOADED ON SUGAR." The elevator pinged.

The Rancher folded his newspaper. We both watched the office door.

Moments later, Marsha burst into the room, obviously on sugar over load.

She came to an abrupt halt and said, "Chat! Do you realize the Rancher is sitting at your desk?"

"Yes," I said calmly. "Let's review some healthy eating and not think about the Rancher for a moment."

Marsha turned and yelled heading to the door, "Gotta GO Chat, Town business!"

The Rancher stood up ready to leave and said, "Marsha, Chat has a cookie deal." He grinned as she stopped short and turned toward me. The Rancher walked past her out of the office. He leaned back into the doorway and said, "Go with that one, son, it will get you a discussion".

I quickly decided direct negotiation might work. "I have a deal involving cookies," I said.

Marsha immediately sat back down, leaned forward with interest and asked, "A cookie deal?"

"A good cookie deal." I answered, "One banana or one apple earns you not one but three cookies."

The room became silent. Marsha stared into the distance as if asking her vintage Magic 8-ball for an answer.

Finally, she replied. "Half a banana. Two cookies."

I countered, "A quarter of an apple. One cookie." She narrowed her eyes. I narrowed mine.

The Rancher, who had somehow returned without either of us noticing, leaned through the doorway and announced: "Now that's the kind of hard-nosed bargaining this town was built on."

Neither of us acknowledged him. Finally, Marsha pointed at me dramatically. "SOLD to the man in the brown hat!"



I knew that was my cue to go ahead with a quick alternative plan.

I held a bowl of fruit on the desk. "Don't they look healthy?" I asked.

Marsha stared at it.

"They look round," she answered cautiously.



I held up two bananas. "And this?"

Marsha stared at the bananas as if they mocked her. "They are yellow."

"Do bananas seem appealing?"

Marsha thought carefully. "Can I answer that while holding the cookie jar?"

Before I could respond, she retrieved the cookie jar and returned triumphantly.

"Chat, let's be logical, the fruit looks fruity," she explained. "But all apples are round, and all bananas look exactly like bananas. The cookies come in different sizes. That makes them much friendlier."

I considered this. Unfortunately, from her perspective, it was not entirely illogical.

She quickly ate a cookie, put an apple in her pocket but added about five cookies and happily said, "You know, Chat, this was really helpful."

"It was?" At this point I was at a loss as to what she thought was helpful.

I could tell she was proud of herself when she answered, "Absolutely. I'm glad I could assist you."

I decided not to challenge her conclusion as she headed toward the door, then stopped and pointed again at me triumphantly. "Chat, remember this important fact."

"Yes?" I answered trying to sound interested and not bewildered.

"You might find a yellow apple. But you'll never find a red banana." With that, she marched out of the office singing what appeared to be a song about fruit colors.

The Rancher somehow had walked back into my office and asked, "Think she'll eat the apple?"

"I believe," I replied, "that today we made progress." I wasn't sure how but it seemed like progress.

The Rancher nodded. "In this town, son, progress usually arrives disguised as confusion."

And honestly, I couldn't argue with that. In FEANTM, small steps count. Even when they're taken while carrying cookies and seemingly confused about the logic.