



Chat Room

Ellen Herscher

Tuxedo cat brings much joy

The first time I saw him, he was sitting motionless on the corner, half a block from my house. Because it was twilight, I could not distinguish much, but it didn't seem important at the time.

Late the next morning, I walked out to put a letter in the mailbox and saw some movement in bushes a short distance away. Squirrels are always scampering about the neighborhood, so I paid little attention to the rustling of leaves.

Unbeknownst to me, what lurked in those bushes would dramatically alter my life.

A couple days had passed when I saw him a second time, loitering beside my driveway, and I could clearly see the black & white tuxedo and hair that was visibly matted and unruly.

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Momentarily, our eyes met and I quickly turned away and drew the blind, hoping that he had not noticed me staring. The following morning, I was startled to see him peering in my direction from the bush where I previously thought I had heard squirrels.

There was no doubt that he saw me, so I called out to him. "Come out of hiding, you coward!" With that, he bolted and ran in the opposite direction.

Seeing him again that night, I realized that he was young and even more disheveled than I had remembered. Growing brazen, he appeared more frequently and even closer to my house...like a stalker and I wondered why he had chosen me.

I could have called authorities to pick him up, but I sensed that he was simply lonely, hungry, and homeless. It occurred to me that he could be crazed and I struggled with a compelling moral obligation to comfort those in need.

A week had gone by and he now sat pitifully in my porch chair, as the sun dropped below the horizon. Unlatching the door, I opened it only an inch, since I couldn't predict his reaction. Surprisingly, he made no effort to move, so I spoke softly to him and he murmured a barely audible response.

Should I be fearful of inviting him inside what if he wouldn't leave? Abandoning all sense of reason, I pushed the door wide open and stepped cautiously toward him, holding out my hand in benevolent gesture. He stood up, stretched his legs as though he had been sitting there for hours, and followed me into the house.

Leading him to the kitchen, I offered him a piece of leftover chicken from dinner and poured some milk. Devoting the food with a seemingly insatiable appetite, he then wandered into the living room where he sat unwaveringly in the wingback chair and

PLEASE SEE CHAT ROOM, C10

Farmington couple finds joy through foreign adoption



BY PAUL R. PAGE
STAFF WRITER

Doug and Anita Peterson of Farmington are enjoying the new person in their lives. And they plan to make it a life-long commitment.

Doug and Anita are among 1,600 families in the U.S. who chose to adopt a child through the Great Wall China Adoption program.

The couple were introduced to a little girl not long ago in her homeland of China, when she was just 1 month old.

Now Lillian is 27 months old and like most youngsters, she's a bundle of energy in the Farmington historic district home she shares with her adoptive parents and their dog.

Doug and Anita are among 1,600 families in the U.S. who chose to adopt a child through the Great Wall China Adoption program.

There are thousands of abandoned Chinese children waiting to be adopted, according to officials with Great Wall. The children are between the ages of 6 months and 13 years. More than 95 percent of them are girls, but boys are also available.

The Farmington couple started thinking about adopting a child in November 1999.

After examining domestic adoption agencies, they learned about the Great Wall.

In February 2000 the Petersons started the paperwork and completed it in June of that year.

They were approved by the Chinese government to adopt Lillian, and they picked her up in August 2001.

Anita and Doug said they

received a small picture of the girl when she was six months old and they were happy to hear she came from a foster family setting.

Part of the reason they chose the Great Wall program was the adoption process in China is well documented, Doug said.

"There was less opportunities for problems," he said.

The couple said they realized being parents for the first time in their late 30s with a child already out of the infant stage was going to be a challenge.

But they wouldn't change a thing.

Their trip to China was enjoyable and they joined dozens of other couples visiting Beijing to pick up their adopted children through the program.



The Petersons hope to bring Lillian back to her homeland someday, so she can learn more about her roots.

"We enjoyed the trip," said Doug. Anita said they both took some Chinese language classes to prepare themselves for the visit to the area. They plan to return so Lillian can experience her heritage and her hometown when she's older.

"We want her to know the cultural aspects so she does have her history," Anita said.

The couple said they may even consider adopting another child from China.

Deb Morse of Berkley is the eastern Michigan representative for the Great Wall China Adoption program, which was started about six years ago by Snow Wu, a Chinese Nationalist who now lives in Texas.

Morse and her husband recently adopted their second child from China.

Great Wall China Adoption is encouraging other people or couples to consider adopting the many abandoned children in China looking for a loving home.

Who is eligible to adopt?

■ Individuals 30-60 years old

■ Married couples

■ Childless couples

■ Families with children

For more information about the agency, call Morse at (248) 644-1366.

ppace@oe.hometown.com | (248) 477-5450

Above, Doug and Anita Peterson's lives were changed by Lillian, their adopted daughter. Below, while mom Anita Peterson chats, Lillian is a whirlwind of activity.

PHOTOS BY BILL BRISLER | OBSERVER

There are thousands of abandoned Chinese children waiting to be adopted, according to officials with Great Wall. The children are between the ages of 6 months and 13 years. More than 95 percent of them are girls, but boys are also available.



Web sites help untangle knotty homework

Students don't have to ask mom and dad for help with math, social studies, science and English again. Now they have their own place to get help on the Internet.

There are two new Internet-based tutoring programs offered through several local libraries. The participating libraries are Farmington Community Library in Farmington Hills; www.farmilb.org; West Bloomfield Township Public Library; www.wbtlib.org; Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham; www.baldwinlib.org; Bloomfield Township Public Library; www.btlpl.org; and the Independence Township Library in Clarkston; www.inctronet.lib.mi.us/INDE/.

The new programs are called TutorMe and After-Hours Answers and are part of Live Homework Help for students in grades 4-12.

Here's how they work: TutorMe is available daily from 3-12 p.m. Students can log on to one of the participating library's Web site, click on Connect to a Librarian, then click on TutorMe. Once they enter their grade level and select

On-line Classroom tutors are certified teachers, college professors, professional tutors and graduate school students who meet stringent selection and screening criteria.

the subject they want help, they immediately are connected to a tutor in an On-line Classroom for up to 40 minutes of help.

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On-line Classroom provides students a way to review specific homework questions through a controlled chat, an interactive white board and shared

Web browsing. Tutors can help with math equations, ideas for papers and writing assignments, proofread papers and do much more.

There's also a cyberspace librarian ready to help students through the After-Hours Answers service when the library is closed, such as during holidays. The program is easy to use. Go to the library's Web site, click on Connect to a Librarian, then click on the After-Hours Answer button.

Users will be asked to complete a short form to ask their question. Then they will be connected to a reference librarian. Users can talk with the librarian through a chat function until their questions are answered. The cyberspace librarian may direct them to Web sites and other resources related to their question. Users will get a complete transcript of the chat and a list of all the Web sites visited once the session is completed.

Librarians at participating libraries are excited about the new tutoring programs for students.

If you have more questions, call the Farmington Community Library, (248) 474-7770.