



VANITY FAIR NOMINATES

BEST FRIENDS
ANIMAL SOCIETY

BECAUSE, in the late 1970s, some 20 members of an informal church group began rescuing healthy animals that were under threat of euthanasia from the local Humane Society in central Arizona, taking these "unadoptable" pets into their own homes. BECAUSE from this act of collective conscience there emerged a powerful voice for the voiceless when that group of pet-rescuers founded Best Friends Animal Society—a "mecca for animal-lovers"—in Kanab, Utah. BECAUSE, over the past 30 years, Best Friends has grown into the largest no-kill sanctuary in the U.S. and one of the foremost organizations dedicated to animal welfare. BECAUSE the sanctuary is home to roughly 1,700 animals—from dogs and cats to pigs and parakeets, who receive food, care, shelter, and medical attention for as long as they need it. BECAUSE in 2007, Best Friends took in 22 of the pit bulls rescued from Michael Vick's dogfighting ring. Six of those dogs have since been rehabilitated and adopted—and another one, named Lucas, spends two days a week keeping C.E.O. and co-founder Gregory Castle company in his office. BECAUSE Best Friends has partnered with municipal shelters across the country, recognizing the need for community-based efforts in aid of animal welfare and rescue. BECAUSE the "No More Homeless Pets" campaign, launched by Best Friends in the early 1990s, has been instrumental in the growth of the no-kill movement in the U.S. Since Best Friends' founding, the number of healthy dogs and cats killed per year has gone from 17 million to 4 million. BECAUSE that is not enough for the founders of Best Friends. "Those of us who care about it won't rest until that number is zero," says Castle.

Best Friends
Animal Society
co-founder
and C.E.O.
Gregory Castle
with his rescued
Chihuahua,
Esther, at the
sanctuary, in
Kanab, Utah.

—KATHERINE STIRLING

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN HUBA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 166 was discovering that the delivery delays were the result of the workers' wages' not being paid—or, rather, not reaching them: they had been stolen by an intermediary.

With the water level dropping, Haynes located a suitable anchorage across the river and sought and received permission from the Peruvian Navy to move the structure there.

On June 6, Haynes jubilantly reported, "Move Successful! It took around 7 hours to move the pyramid. 5 boats were used . . . The pyramid is now safely stationed on the other side of the river."

The riverbed beneath the pyramid's new anchorage was a bowl-shaped declivity. When the Amazon's water level appeared likely to drop further than Haynes had expected, he became concerned that the pyramid might come to rest on a slope of 5 degrees or more. Because the structure was not designed to support the added strain imposed by a sloping foundation, it might well collapse.

On August 17, with the river water continuing to drop, Haynes believed he had no choice but to move the pyramid again. He chose a new anchorage upriver, where the water was never less than six feet deep. To save time and fuel, Haynes decided to take just 2 of the pyramid's 21 anchors (each consisting of 15 bags of rocks tied to a thick rope) to the new location. Nineteen were left behind, to be moved at a more convenient time.

The pyramid had been towed no more than a mile upstream when the slow-moving flotilla encountered an unexpectedly strong current. The towboats were running perilously low on gasoline. Haynes decided to anchor for the night and resume the move the next day, with the boats refueled.

The next morning Haynes instructed his men to retrieve the 19 anchors abandoned at the old mooring site. They were unable to do so. During the night, someone—possibly a local fisherman, they said—had stolen the thick floating anchor lines. There was no hope of recovering the 285 bags of rocks. Haynes had no time to evaluate the truthfulness of his men's story—the pyramid had begun dragging its two remaining anchors on a course that would soon take it directly into the main Iquitos shipping lane.

Haynes thought his best option was to move the pyramid south, with the current, to a spot where the geography of the riverbank would allow him to temporarily attach the pyramid's mooring lines to some large trees. Haynes cut the lines to the dragging anchors; the towboats' engines strained as they tried to keep the massive barge on a safe heading, even as it was swept downstream by the river's powerful current. Then, no more than five minutes after the anchors had been cut, out of a clear sky, a violent seasonal storm, a Santa Rosa, struck. Driven by powerful, gusting winds, yawing and plunging, the pyramid was out of control.

Haynes climbed the spinning, rocking structure to a perilous and precarious perch high on the scaffolding. From there he shouted instructions to the boats' crews, inaudible over the storm and the roar of the engines, whose combined 300 horsepower was useless against the Santa Rosa. The pyramid plunged on, lashed by wind and rain, and would have capsized or broken up had it not first run aground on the riverbank about two miles south.

Desperate, Haynes managed to raise just enough money the next day to hire a few more men and an additional boat. By dint of their herculean effort, and thanks to favorable river conditions, they managed to pull the huge structure free. Refloated, but with the extent of its structural damage as yet unknown, the pyramid was secured by an iron cable to large trees on the riverbank.

Without warning, a few hours later, another Santa Rosa struck. Haynes recorded, "Tying iron cable is quite an art and unfortunately the men who did this job were insufficiently experienced." The pyramid broke free and ran a short, wild course downstream to be smashed again on the riverbank. This time it grounded so hard that it was impossible to move.

Haynes wasn't prepared for the suddenness and finality of the di-