

# #BettyWhiteChallenge raising money and awareness for animals

NEW YORK, Jan 18, (AP) — The late Betty White was a tireless lifetime advocate for animals, from caring for those without homes to launching her own weekly TV show, "The Pet Set," dedicated to her celebrity friends and their pets.

Her most far-reaching contribution, though, may be yet to come: On Monday, fans of White were to donate to animal welfare charities and shelters as part of what's been dubbed the #BettyWhiteChallenge. And animal welfare nonprofits are gearing up to capitalize on the viral tribute to the star of "The Golden Girls" and "Hot in Cleveland" on what would have been her 100th birthday.

"I've had many conversations with Betty about animal welfare, and I know she's looking down from heaven and really smiling," said Robin Ganzert, who leads American Humane, an animal welfare organization that White was involved with for more than 60 years.

"She'll be smiling on her birthday," she said. "And she'll be smiling about the lives she's changed."

It isn't exactly clear who started the #BettyWhiteChallenge on social media shortly after White's death on Dec. 31. However it began, the idea — to donate \$5 to a local animal rescue organization in White's name on her birthday — quickly took off and drew support from celebrities like actors Mark Hamill and George Takei on Twitter.

Traffic to American Humane's website spiked after White's pass-

ing. Ganzert said donations, too, have increased. The nonprofit is waiting to reveal by how much until more gifts flood in, including sizable donations it's expecting from some donors.

During the decades in which White was involved with the organization, she made fundraising appeals and served on its board and as a presenter and judge on its televised show featuring "hero" dogs. During tapings of "The Pet Set" in the early 1970s, Ganzert said, White would have American Humane representatives on set to ensure that animals were safe. In 2012, the nonprofit honored her with its highest award, the National Humanitarian Medal.

Ganzert would also give White a photo book each year of the animals the organization helped.

"She kept those out on her coffee table," Ganzert said. "And (it) always touched me whenever we would visit."

### Promoted

Best Friends Animal Society, a Utah-based animal welfare organization, has raised \$25,000 in donations made in White's name, according to the group's chief mission officer Holly Sizemore. The group has promoted the #BettyWhiteChallenge broadly across its social media channels to drum up support both for its work and other organizations.

"That's the beauty of animal welfare," Sizemore said. "There's

something for everyone to support. There's so much good work happening and so much opportunity, particularly right now, to make the world a better place for people and animals."

Sizemore hopes that Monday will bring plenty of donations and attention for animal welfare.

"What an incredible opportunity to honor Betty White's legacy — to come together as a nation and celebrate something that she was so passionate about, her love for animals," she said.

Maintaining that connection with #BettyWhiteChallenge donors is the main test for animal welfare nonprofits after Monday. Viral fundraising efforts can bring in a stream of money, but experts say donations tend to drop off quickly.

Sarah Newhall, the chief strategy officer of the fundraising firm MissionWired, says charities can best capitalize on these moments if they already have a strong foundation in place to engage new donors — whether through emails, a website, social media or other methods.

"What it allows them to do is really use that tent-pole moment to get in front of an audience they might not otherwise have gotten," Newhall said. But, she added, retaining these donors can be an uphill battle because the push to give is tied to one day, and the motivation to one person. Animal groups might also become overshadowed by other organizations soliciting donations during Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which also falls on Monday.

People

Variety



Elvis Costello poses for a portrait at The Redbury New York hotel in New York on Sept. 17, 2018. Costello's new album, the coronavirus-era disc 'The Boy Named If' was made in solitary style — four musicians, five if you count a backup singer on one song — all worked from their own homes. He says that conjures the image of a laid-back sound, but the new disc is an up-tempo, guitar-based selection of cranking rock songs. (AP)

Music

'The Boy Named If' sounds a little different

## Costello rocks out from the back porch

NEW YORK, Jan 18, (AP) — Elvis Costello's 32nd album rings with the sound of a tight rock 'n' roll combo sweating together on a tiny stage, feeding off each other to produce a joyful noise.

Yet that's all a mirage. Costello and his three-piece band, the Imposters, were never in the same city, much less the same room, as they made "The Boy Named If," which is out Friday. They were waiting out the coronavirus, like everyone else, and looking to do something productive.

After writing, Costello would make an initial recording of a song with his vocals and guitar at his home in Vancouver. He'd send it to Pete Thomas, who retreated to his basement in Los Angeles to add drums. Bass player Dave Faragher was next, before it was sent to keyboard wizard Steve Nieve in France. Nicole Atkins added guest vocals on the song, "My Most Beautiful Mistake," from a fifth location.

Occasionally they'd jerry-rig a FaceTime connection so they could look at each other, although that wasn't conducive to recording because of delays in each connection.

Producer Sebastian Krysz, from his own home, "did a terrific job in making it sound not like it was something made with a construction kit," Costello said.

"I think everybody surprised themselves how we found ourselves in our basement or spare room playing and it sounded so vibrant," he said. "We didn't let that hold us back. When we found out that it worked, it just spurred us on."

The image of the Beatles in the "Get Back" film romanticized the idea of a band creating music by working face-to-face and kicking around ideas.

But the idea of creating songs through multi-track recordings predated even the Beatles, said Prince Charles Alexander, a professor at the Berkeley College of Music and a producer/audio engi-

neer who's worked with the likes of Sting, Luther Vandross and Aretha Franklin.

Technology around the turn of this century advanced and became affordable to the point where most musicians effectively have studios in their homes, he said. While there were lingering fears that home recordings would feel sterile and lack soul, "now we have a generation of producers, recording engineers and producers that are kind of over it," he said.

With the coronavirus, many musicians have little other choice but to work alone.

When the weather was good in Vancouver, Costello set up on his back porch, "which conjures up a much more laid-back sound than this record," the singer said.

Indeed, "The Boy Named If" crackles with energy, virtually all up-tempo songs driven by guitar. The arrangements demand a lot from Costello's voice, and the underrated Thomas delivers some of his best drumming on record.

### Difference

In the album's liner notes, the band offers "special thanks from the louses to our spouses for letting us make all this racket around the houses."

While the untrained ear can't detect any difference between the solitary set-up and how the band sounds onstage, the order in which the work was done made for an interesting departure. Nieve's keyboards have provided the musical framework for much of Costello's music throughout his career, but in this case they were the last instruments to be added.

"We would send it to Steve and he would say, 'What am I supposed to do? You've finished already,'" Costello said. "I said, 'I think you'll find where to play.'"

"It sounds a little different," he added. "Steve is playing in different places in the flow. He was an-

swering, where normally he was leading the way. His ingenuity in choosing where to play and not just play on top of everything sounded fresh."

The disc's title song provides a loose thematic frame to the collection of songs, creating the image of a child's imaginary friend if that extended into adulthood.

"I was drawing comparisons to the excuse that a child makes — 'Oh, it was my imaginary friend that broke that,'" he said. "In the case of a child, it's usually a cup or a vase, instead of a heart or some vow you've made."

Costello, 67, has been busy during the pandemic. "The Boy Named If" is his third release in 14 months, following the "Hey Clockface" album and "Spanish Model," where Spanish-language singers replaced his vocals on his 1978 album "This Year's Model." Oops, don't forget the EP of French versions of some "Hey Clockface" songs.

A decade ago, he'd been talking openly about ending his recording career and concentrating on live performances.

Like many music fans, he was absorbed in the Beatles' "Get Back" film. Unlike anyone else, Costello is a Rock & Roll Hall of Fame member raised in Liverpool who, during the 1980s, wrote some songs with Paul McCartney.

He practically shouted at his TV during the passage where George Harrison told John Lennon that he was stuck on a lyric to "Something," wondering how to complete the line, "attracts me like..."

How come you can't see it should be "no other lover"? Isn't it obvious?

"It gives great comfort to anybody who's ever stumbled around on the guitar to see this very famous band at times be really exposed as just making anything up to fill the space until the really inspired line came," he said. "It wasn't all done with a quill pen and flourish of poetics."

**SPRINGFIELD, Ill:** A museum exhibit in Springfield is featuring a range of work from Illinois artists including Muddy Waters, Earth Wind and Fire and Chance the Rapper.

It's called the "State of Sound" and runs through Jan 23 at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The exhibit features personal papers, rare artifacts and more than one dozen mini-documentaries.

Organizers said the exhibit was created to "explore the state's impact on music history, from gospel to rock to jazz." After the exhibit closes, the dozens of artifacts will be returned to owners around the country.

The museum "was honored to be entrusted with these incredibly important and personal items from some legendary artists. Tens of thousands of people got to enjoy them and expand their appreciation of music history." Christina Shutt, the library and museum's executive director, said in statement. "But an exhibit with this many treasures cannot go on forever." (AP)

**ANSONIA, Conn:** A Connecticut town is coming under fire from parents after it scheduled a free comedy basketball show that is restricted to vaccinated children.

The Feb 6 show in Ansonia features the Harlem Wizards, a professional touring team in the tradition of the Harlem Globetrotters. The show is being sponsored by Griffin Health, a Derby-based health care provider, to thank the city for its efforts to boost vaccine rates.

City officials weren't backing down in limiting the event to vaccinated children.

"Safety is paramount in this administration here in Ansonia. I want to make sure everybody has their vaccination. This is what Griffin Hospital requires and I'm fine with that," Mayor David Cassetti told the New Haven Register.

The newspaper reported about only about 15% of children aged 5 to 11 in Ansonia were fully vaccinated as of last week.

Some parents objected to the fact that schools handed out flyers for the show and raised kids' hopes, without letting parents know ahead of time about the vaccine requirement.

"My only issue with this event was how they're promoting it," Gina Rummo Diaz, a mother of two who said she is vaccinated and working to get her kids vaccinated, told the newspaper. "They handed it out in school to children. And the children are excited to attend these events. And then they come home and mom



Cassetti



Chance

says 'Sorry, you can't go you're not vaccinated.'"

Patrick Charnel, president and CEO of Griffin Health, told the Register it was done purposely to create an incentive for children to push their parents to get them vaccinated. (AP)

**LEBANON, NH:** A German shepherd named Tinsley, first thought to be a lost dog, successfully led New Hampshire state police to the site of its owner's rollover crash.

Both the vehicle's occupants were seriously hurt, but thanks to Tinsley's dogged efforts they quickly received medical as-

sistance once officers discovered the truck, which went off the road near a Vermont interstate junction, WMUR-TV reported.

"The dog was trying to show them something," said Lt Daniel Baldassarre of the New Hampshire State Police. "He kept trying to get away from them but didn't run away totally." (AP)

Features

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