

Oregon transplants have made their traveling goat a social-media attraction

by Buffy Pollock for the Mail Tribune

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A 6-year-old Southern Oregon resident named Frankie has seen more of the United States than most.

Traveling via a custom-painted Airstream — her mom is an artist — the pygmy Nigerian/dwarf goat cross (yes, Frankie is a goat) ventured from her family's former home in North Carolina and meandered across the country before setting down roots in 2017 in Grants Pass.

During their initial adventure, and every month since heading out four years ago, they've ventured down roads less traveled to explore trails, waterfalls and vistas around North America.

Frankie's parents, Cate and Chad Battles, moved west after they became empty nesters in 2016.

Photos and blogs about their travels with the worldly critter have become popular on Instagram, with more than 14,000 followers tuning in to live vicariously through one very domesticated goat and her proud parents (www.instagram.com/argosyodyssey).

Cate Battles said the couple enjoy sharing Frankie's adventures, especially during the pandemic when so many families are longing for adventure.

Their photos and paintings of Frankie began when a friend fulfilled Cate Battles' longtime wish to enjoy life alongside a goat.

"We have had her since she was a baby. She was a gift from the man who sold us our bar property back in Asheville. He knew I had always wanted to have goats, so he showed up one day and said, 'I'm driving you to Tennessee to pick up a goat. It's going to be a present,'" said Battles.

When they became empty-nesters, the couple wanted to see more of the world.

They spent six months renovating an old Airstream, and Cate added a mural worthy of a travel-savvy goat. Even before deciding to hit the road, the couple, Cate Battles said, "couldn't fathom rehoming our critters."

Heading out in 2016 with Frankie and a beloved canine named Maggie — Maggie passed away last year — the wandering crew of two-and-four-leggeds have logged nearly 60,000 miles around North America, visiting 25 states and dozens of national parks.

"We finally decided on Grants Pass three years ago due to its proximity to everything we love — the Redwoods, ocean, mountains and rivers," said Cate Battles.

Since leaving the East Coast, the couple have witnessed near purple sunsets, beautiful waterfalls, salt flats, badlands and pristine lakes.

Their Instagram feed shows Frankie enjoying sprawling vistas, abandoned ghost towns and frolicking — er, eating — in fields of wildflowers.

Frankie, a die-hard Oregonian at this juncture, is especially fond of traversing the rocks and trails throughout the Samuel H. Boardman Scenic Corridor north of Brookings.

On a recent visit, the couple posted a photo of Frankie nibbling on some grass with towering boulders awash in ocean waves in the background. The Facebook post read, “Sometimes, I goat places for the snacks.”

When not traveling with a goat — or posting images for Frankie’s fan base — Chad Battles, 47, works for Schmidt Family Vineyard in Grants Pass, while Cate Battles works as a travel writer and artist.

Cate Battles said Frankie is an inspiration — especially during the pandemic — and helps her followers enjoy places they might never get to go in real life.

“We have found that Frankie’s adventures and travels have taken on extra value during the time of COVID as many people have become isolated and disheartened by world events and social climates. Her explorations have been an outlet of happiness and a window to the outside world for many who are unable to go anywhere,” said Cate.

“Almost on a daily basis, we get messages from folks around the world who follow our blog. ... Seeing what she’s up to is a highlight of their day, and it’s humbling for us to know that sharing such a simple thing like a goat walking along a beach can provide so much joy to people.”

In addition to postcards, calendars, original paintings and prints, fans of Frankie may eventually see a children’s book with her mom serving as illustrator.

Cate Battles figures the goat has a tale or two worthy of telling.

“She’s a well traveled goat. She’s been everywhere, and she has some great stories to tell,” she noted.

“Frankie gives folks a glimpse of beautiful and unique places many don’t get to see or enjoy. She is their tour guide, and people absolutely love following her journeys.”

To see more of Cate Battles’ artwork featuring Frankie, see

www.facebook.com/catebattlesart and www.argosyodyssey.com/catebattlesart

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