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Thu, 2015-12-31 18:52 — Robin Olson

This might as well be the shortest blog post ever. I could sum up 2015 as the year that, well, as the saying goes; “Don’t let the door hit you on the ass on the way out.”

2015 sucked.

January

The theme for 2015 was “*the Year of the Vet Visit.*” Laney’s older kittens, the “J-kitties” arrived from Georgia in mid-December 2014 and were acting a bit off so I took them to the vet a few times. Eventually we decided to test them for [Bartonella](#) ⁽¹⁾. **Sure enough they tested strong positive. Freya came up strong positive for Bartonella, too, so they were on antibiotics for 3 WEEKS.**



©2015 Robin AF Olson. The J-kitties all got adopted in less than a month after arriving from Georgia.

Lil Snickers, Ivy, Greta, Junipurr, Jasmine and Jasper got adopted so that was the good news, but it didn’t last long. **Something was wrong with Freya’s eye so I rushed her to the ER where she was diagnosed with [Horner’s Syndrome](#)** ⁽²⁾. The cause? No one really knew.

February

The month for Groundhogs and love...for me, love of taking cats to the vet. Not! **Freya continued to struggle.** It was bad enough to know that Freya could barely see with her third eyelids exposed as a result of the Horner’s Syndrome, but I began to think she was walking with her head tilted to one side. Back to the vet we went and sure enough Freya had a terrible infection inside her ear that had to be frequently monitored. Was it due to all the antibiotics she’d been on? It was only her right ear causing trouble. Dr. Mary was concerned about how much fluid was building up and that we HAD to put Freya on another type of very strong antibiotics to push this infection back. **The problem is, Baytril can cause some very scary side effects. I did not want to give Freya the medication, especially for six WEEKS, but it was the only hope we had, other than doing a CT scan, then risky surgery to drain her ear canal.**



©2015 Robin AF Olson. When Freya got Horner's Syndrome I thought I could handle any of her health challenges, but never seeing her turquoise blue eyes again felt like too much to bear.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. My poor baby. Head-tilt, vision problems, lovely.

At least Wallace, the tiny kitten who was rescued by the Danbury Fire Department from inside a wall, was now a big grown boy. He got adopted with the remaining "J-kitty", Jules. They looked like brother and sister and ended up getting along very well. Jules is madly in love with one of her new family's other pets—a dog named Coco. They spend too much time together, if you ask Wallace.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Jules (left) and Wallace (right) in their forever home.

March

Laney, Winnie and their offspring arrived from Georgia. ALL of them broke with a nasty upper respiratory tract infection the day after they arrived. If that wasn't bad enough, I was terribly worried about Piglet because she was doing the worst of all the cats. Most of her family members got better over the next few weeks, but she didn't.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Piglet takes comfort with her grandma-Laney and Louie.

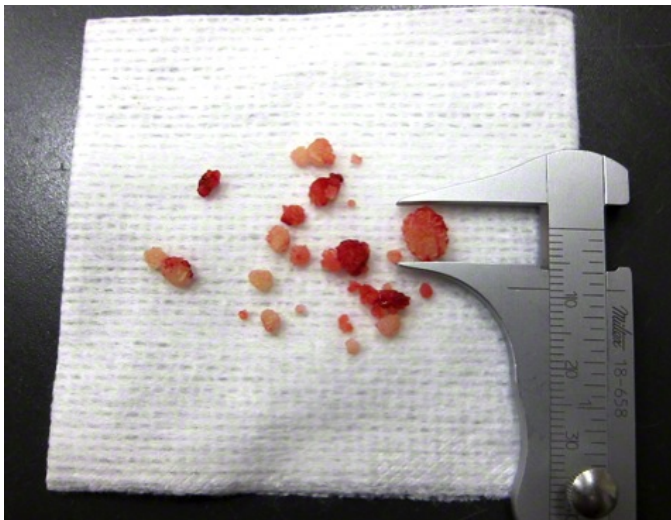


©2015 Robin AF Olson. *Fluff sick again.*

Of course you can't have sick foster cats, then expect your own cats will miraculously not get sick at some point, too. Fluff Daddy was hit the worst and required a few vet visits and many trips to the bathroom where I ran a steamy shower for him. With his smoochy-face, Fluff was having a tough time breathing. He'd had pneumonia a few months earlier so I couldn't risk waiting it out that he'd get better on his own.

Freya's ear did not improve enough so we had to continue giving her Baytril.

Meanwhile my 11 year old cat, Petunia, who I have struggled to love all these years, was just not peeing in the litter pan any more. It was a horrible mess. Petunia gets bullied and try as we might, Sam and I have spent a lot of money and effort adding cat trees, barriers, adding litter pans, adding litter additives to attract Petunia to the pan, but nothing worked.



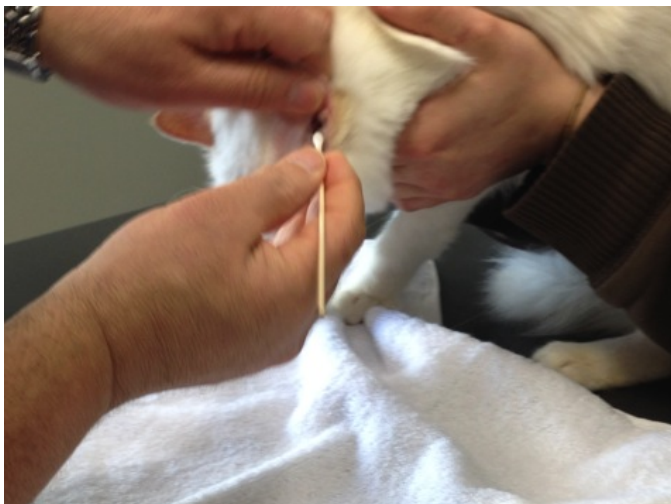
©2015 Robin AF Olson. *What can happen to your cat inside her bladder when she experiences long-term stress.*

I took Petunia to see Dr. Larry and found out something terrible. Petunia had stress-induced cystitis called, FLUTD [3]. Her bladder was FULL of barbed, painful cysts and she needed surgery right away. Every time she urinated it must have hurt like HELL. If I couldn't get the other cats to stop bullying Petunia it would continue on, but at least I could help her feel better and maybe that would help her in other ways.

Poor Piglet. She was just not getting better. We ran a DNA test called a PCR on her mucus and found out she had a triple-threat viral infection of calici, herpes and mycoplasma! No wonder she was so sick.

April

Petunia's surgery was a success. I could tell she was feeling a lot better. The cats who picked on her backed off a little bit, but ultimately we had to do more to help her so we went back to the drawing board to figure out what we could do.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. *Piglet's struggles continue.*

Now Piglet had an ear infection so we began treating her for that. It was odd because it seemed like she had weird-gummy-dirt-stuff (*not ear mites*) in one ear and that one ear was susceptible to getting infected. She did NOT like being medicated and for a little cat, she sure is strong.

May

May arrives along with a sad realization. Where are my kittens? I usually have rescued a pregnant cat or a mom-cat and kittens by now. I had no space for kittens. **Even if I did open up my nearby foster home, I couldn't oversee their care remotely. I had a full house and most of my cats were either sick or just getting over it. My home was no place for any kitten.** It was simply too dangerous. It was the first time since we opened Kitten Associates in 2010 that we didn't have any foster kittens.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Finally, Freya is doing well.

At least Freya was improving. I could see her beautiful eyes again and she was no longer walking with her head to one side. Her final check with Dr. Potanas went really well. He didn't feel she needed surgery and he added that she didn't need ANY more surgeries related to her atresa-ani repair, too. It meant that Freya could be spayed and be put up for adoption. The news hit me like a brick and considering the intense backlash I got for suggestion she ever be adopted, I realized that maybe we needed to consider making Freya part of our family.

June

Although we had no foster kittens, I was helping behind the scenes. By pure accident I discovered that a gentleman who called me about getting a c-section for his cat (*no, I'm not kidding*), ended up telling me he had 22 cats that were INTACT. He was in his 70's and was overwhelmed. I put out the call to help and thankfully my friends at Nutmeg Spay/Neuter Clinic and PAWS jumped in to help out. You can read more about that [HERE](#) ^[4].

July

And then everything stopped and my life came to an end as I knew it.

In late June, I was experiencing severe chest pains so Sam took me to the walk-in clinic right after they opened at 8AM. I was positive I was having a heart attack. I was so upset I almost passed out from worry. I explained to the doctor my weird, radiating pains. I'd read that women present heart attack symptoms differently than men do and I was sure I was in trouble.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. *Is this my new best friend?*

The doctor said the strangest thing to me. He said *he believed me but he couldn't sort out what was going on*. They did an ECG and said it was pretty normal but there was something about a q-wave abnormality that might be worth checking into. He said I should follow up with my GP (*I didn't have one*) and that if I felt worse to get to the ER.

On July 1 I was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. My new doctor suspected angina, too, but didn't tell me as much. The full story is [HERE](#) ^[5], but the bottom line is I had a choice to make; change my life or have a very bleak future.

For the rest of the month I didn't do much of anything. I was already exhausted from doing rescue and never taking any time off. I let adoption applications go down the drain. The cats got the care they needed, but Sam had to help me because I couldn't lift ANYTHING. I could barely climb the stairs without the pain returning. I felt lost, broken, angry. **How was I going to go on?**

the rest of this craptastic year in review coming up next...

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[1] http://manhattancats.com/Articles/truth_about_bartonella.htm

[2] <http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=1+2124&aid=2477>

[3] http://www.vet.cornell.edu/FHC/health_information/UrinaryConcerns.cfm

[4] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/letter-zoe>

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