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Bob's Battle with Lymphoma: When is a Tumor Not a Tumor?

Fri, 2011-01-14 12:55 — Robin Olson

Yesterday Sam and I took Bob up to Wappingers Falls to see Dr. I. Bob was due for his second round of Chemo. Before we could do that, we had to shovel a bit more of the bajillion inches of snow we got on Wednesday out of the way. I used to live in Minneapolis and I've seen a lot of snow, but this was crazy. We have snow piled up alongside the driveway that is as tall as Sam's subaru. I've never seen anything like it. It reminds me of the story my Mother told me about living in Oswego, NY. I was just a baby at the time and they were hit with over 100" of snow-lake effect snow-from Lake Erie.

She told me about people using their second floor window to get out of their home, about how they tied flags to the antenna on their car (remember those?) so they could see other cars on the road. My Mother recalled driving behind another car, it swerved on some ice, turned into one of the big snow drifts and disappeared into it!

It's not that bad here, but whew...we don't need much more snow to get to that point.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. *The view of our deck after the storm.*

Sam drove, while I sat in the back seat next to Bob. I had his cat carrier door open so I could pet him. He was calm, ate a few chicken snacks, then rested his head on my hand. He was nice and warm. His fur is very soft. I could have sat like that for hours.

Once we arrived our mood soured. We both prepared for a battle-the battle to get the estimate DOWN so we could afford to pay the bill and get Bob the treatment without paying for extras that weren't absolutely necessary. The estimate came to \$812.00! I questioned EVERY item on the estimate. They went back to talk to the Dr. They said the Dr. would talk to me about everything, so we waited, fuming...knowing that Bob is supposed to have 27 WEEKS of chemo and the costs? We didn't want to know.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. At Dr.'s.

Dr. I came out and we went over everything. Bob's biopsy report, the second opinion, came in. Bob has small T-cell lymphoma. Small is better than large, but T-cell is worse than B-cell-why, I'm still not clear on. We discussed treatment. It was very confusing. We can stay on the Elspar or shift to something else. There is a less expensive treatment, but it affects Bob's white blood cells. Since Bob may have ringworm and does have FIV, this is not the best course. If we stay on Elspar, I'm guessing the Bank will take our home sooner or later.

What we decided was to stay the course for 3 more weeks, then possibly go to the monthly chemo of different drugs. You can switch treatments around, but since we didn't have a track record of elspar working or not, it didn't make sense to just stop using it right off the bat-also because Bob will become immune to it's effects over a few weeks time, so better to use it now and see how we do.

There was also one other issue-the mass in Bob's chest. IS IT CANCER? Is it lymphoma? Not likely. Is it the cancer that was in his liver-metastasized? We needed to repeat radiographs to see if it had changed, reacted to the chemo. So we said yes to doing more radiographs.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob, sitting on the top of my Mom's old recliner!

They sent us on our way while they worked on Bob. I worried about a repeat of last week. His lack of appetite, hiding, depression. So scary I thought we were going to lose him. He bounced back. They said he should not have that problem again and if so, we'd have to do MORE TESTS to find out WHY he was having a bad reaction.

Sam and I hung out at Panera where I got a smoothie for free. It seemed ironic that I'd just been told my car had to have the steering pump replaced: \$814.00 and my cat's Vet bill was now up to \$920.00 for the day...and here I get something for free. It wasn't much, but it was enough to keep me from going over the edge. This money drain is really getting scary.

We returned to pick up Bob. He looked fine. They didn't tell me anything, the Dr. was in a meeting. They final bill was up to \$950.00 because they added some pills to Bob's protocol. Great. No problem. Wah.

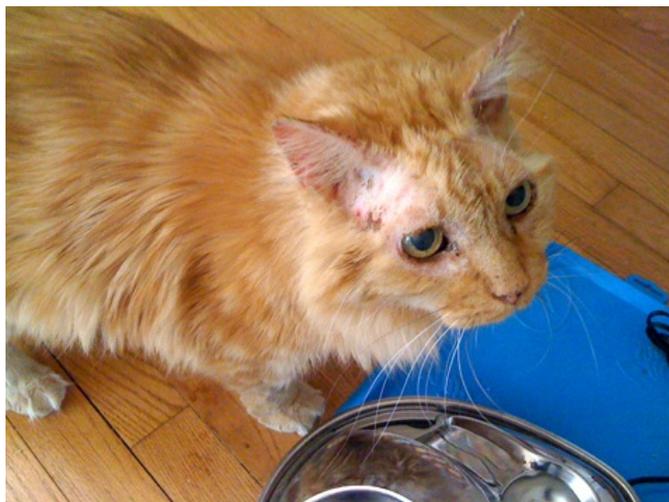
We got Bob home. He ate well. His "ringworm" or whatever is on his head seems to be going away so quickly that I can't believe it IS ringworm!

Around 9pm the phone rang. It was Dr. I. He told me that the mass in Bob's chest had NOT reacted to the chemo. It was still there. Still the same size. My heart sank. So what did that mean?

IT MEANS THAT IT'S PROBABLY A LUMP OF FAT, NOT CANCER!! THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS!!!

We still need to keep an eye on it, but for now we're OK. No worries. We just keep on treating Bob and see how he does. That night Bob ate well and I went to bed thinking he'd be ok.

Around 1:30am I heard him cough and vomit. I ran downstairs, thinking I'd find a huge mess, but I only saw a small puddle. Bob seemed all right so I went back to bed after I cleaned up. This morning I went downstairs and couldn't find Bob. I got worried. Then, I saw him. He was sitting on top of the back of my Mother's old recliner! He hasn't sat there in well over a YEAR. He used to love to sit up there! He greeted me with a purr. His forehead looked better. I gave him a little chicken treat and he ate. Was this my cat?



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob's skin is definitely getting better.

A few minutes later, I found a LARGE pile of undigested cooked chicken vomit. I gave some chicken to Bob and some to the other cats the night before. I couldn't know if it was Bob's or not. I'd have to see how he does to make sure he's not having a bad reaction.

Then, MacGruber threw up...a small bit of chicken. Perhaps he was the culprit? I guess I'll never really know for sure. What I do know is that Bob seems to be doing very well. He continues to amaze me at every turn.

Way to go, Bob! Way to go!

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Comments

Fri, 2011-01-14 13:10 — [The Florida Fur... \(not verified\)](#) ^[7]

Yippee for lumps of FAT! ^[8]

Yippee for lumps of FAT! We'll keep purring and praying for Bob. He's a real fighter!!

The Florida Furkids and Angel Sniffie

Fri, 2011-01-14 14:52 — [Kelskruse \(not verified\)](#)

Indeed - way to go Bob! ^[9]

Indeed - way to go Bob!

Fri, 2011-01-14 15:46 — [Marg \(not verified\)](#) ^[10]

Bob ^[11]

We are so glad to hear a little tiny bit of positive in your life. I cannot believe how many things have happened to you and you just don't deserve it. We sure are praying a lot for Bob and all of you. Crossing our paws and I have instructed the donkeys to cross their hooves too for Bob. They don't do that for everyone. Take care and try to enjoy your week end.

Fri, 2011-01-14 22:16 — [ZoeEmEffGee](#) ^[12]

:) [13]

Even after all he's been through, he's still such a beauty!

Hang in there Bob!!!

Sat, 2011-01-15 00:20 — [jansfunnyfarm \(not verified\)](#) [14]

Bob's health [15]

It's horrible to have a sick cat. We hope Bob does well with his treatments.

Sat, 2011-01-15 02:09 — 'Kaika (not verified)

We are purring big time for [16]

We are purring big time for sweet Bob and sending positive energy your way.

'Kaika and his mom

Sat, 2011-01-15 03:59 — [Karen Jo \(not verified\)](#) [17]

Bob [18]

I am so glad that the mass in his chest is just a fat blob. Way to go, Bob! Keep eating and feeling better. The bills must be getting scary.

Sat, 2011-01-15 09:42 — [Artemisia, Sock... \(not verified\)](#) [19]

Healing Purrs [20]

We are sending healing purrs to Bob and have our paws crossed he continues to feel OK.

Wed, 2011-01-19 10:07 — Catnynouse (not verified)

I feel for you [21]

Hi Robin,

5 years ago I had to go through high-tech and expensive Vet things with my 12 1/2 year old male kitty. He thrown up a lot of blood and had a dangerously low red blood cell count and was probably bleeding somewhere in his digestive tract. They stabilized him but he needed to be in an oxygen cage with blood transfusions. They thought it was cancer--they acted sure it was cancer, but no test had proven it. Finally I let them (after 5 days of hospitalization for the cat) do exploratory surgery to take biopsies. And the cat was clean as a whistle - no cancer anywhere that they could find. He began to bounce back in another day (because it can take that long for the cat's own system to begin to make blood after a big blood loss.) It turned out that he had a very rare blood reaction to tapezol, the medication for hyperthyroidism. He had a severe depletion of vitamin K (the clotting vitamin) that made 2 tiny ulcers bleed out.

Anyways, I guess my point is that it ain't over till it's over and I had my cat for another 2 1/2 years in fine form and that extra time was worth it all. Miss the kitty everyday but still have his sister who is almost 17 1/2.

Take care.

A fan

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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