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A Home At Last for Bongo and George

Tue, 2013-07-02 09:04 — Robin Olson

In October of 2012, we rescued two cats. One cat was on "death row" at a municipal shelter and the other was toughing it out, a dumped stray cat, who chose to seek help at an apartment complex where the owner was considering poisoning the many homeless cats on the property to "deal with" the situation.



©2012 Maria S. (inset) ©2013 Robin A.F. Olson (main). George with a lipstick stain on his forehead and ratty coat right after being rescued and now stunning beauty.

It's not easy for us to take on young adult cats because without a brick and mortar facility, where folks can come and see our cats, it takes a long time to find forever homes. People will make an effort to go through the application process and home visit for a kitten, but for an adult, that's another story.



©2012 Maria S. (inset) ©2013 Robin A.F. Olson (main). I can't get over the transformation of Bongo! He weighed four pounds on intake.

So here we are, eight months later with our cats [Bongo](#) ^[1] and [George](#) ^[2]. They've both blossomed from being underweight, flea-covered, suffering with ear mites and tattered coats, to magnificent, radiant, affectionate beings. Looking at their before and after photos surprised me. I hadn't realized how far they'd come. It makes me proud to see their positive transformation.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Oh George, I will forever swoon when I think of you.*

There were a few bumps in the road, particularly with Bongo. I noticed he'd pant after a short period of playing and at rest his respirations were far faster than the normal, roughly 20-40 per minute. **This concerned me greatly because I'd lost a cat to HCM, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy [3] and the only sign I had that something was off was his breathing had a "hitch" to it.** By the time I knew he was really ill, it was too late and he passed away during attempts to treat him. Ever since that horror, I've been more vigilant.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Barney and George.*

I brought Bongo to visit a new Vet, Dr. J., and he examined Bongo carefully. They did some blood work, a chest x-ray and some tests. One of the test was for Heartworm and the other was for Bartonella, either issue could cause Bongo's problems though it was less likely that Bartonella had anything to do with his respirations, but it might have an issue with his chronic loose stools.

The tests showed that Bongo was negative for heartworm, but a STRONG positive for Bartonella [4] which is transmitted by flea bites and IS contagious to humans. In humans it's nickname is Cat Scratch Fever [5].

I urge you all to learn about Bartonella (which can also be called, Mycoplasma) because it can mimic MANY other health issues in cats. Look out for upper respiratory issues that just won't clear up, especially eye problems. Look for digestive issues, too, like chronic loose stool. If you run a stool sample on your cat and it keeps coming up negative and you've de-wormed your cats according to your Vet's recommendations, then consider testing for Bartonella. I mention this because more and more Vets are starting to test for this. They're seeing cats with very few symptoms or NO symptoms and have it. **I do random tests on my own cats and was shocked that some of them had it and they do NOT go outdoors.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *The tail of tails.*

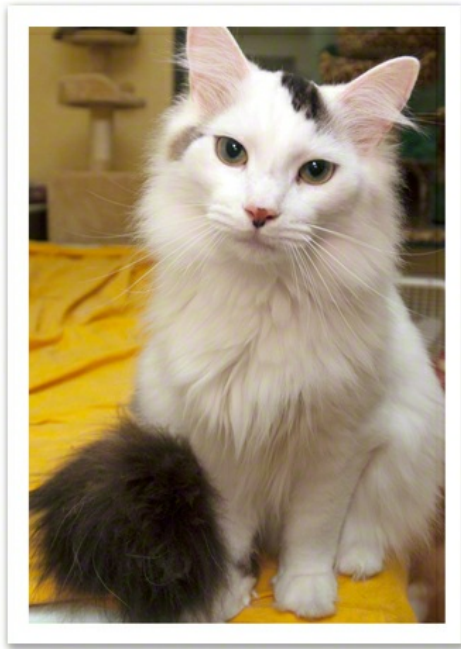
We decided to do the treatment for Bartonella, then wait to see if Bongo improved before going to the next step, which would be doing an echocardiogram, the only way to see the thickening in the walls of the heart that is indicative of HCM.

Meanwhile, life in the foster room had improved for Barney, who during the past six months has been over grooming his fur, leaving shocking bald patches on his sides and belly. I'd been running Barney to see Dr. Mary and we did some tests, but nothing helped. I didn't want to put Barney on steroids because they truly harm so many systems in the cat ^[6] that it's a last-ditch treatment in my book.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Bongo-loaf.*

Since Bongo, Bunny and George joined Barney and after a few days of hissy behavior, Barney began to enjoy his new companions and his over-grooming began to wane. **Looking back I think Barney knew that Fred was sick before we did and his anxiety about it was reflected in him licking off his fur. With new friends who are healthy and can play with him, Barney's coat is filling in** and he spends the day rubbing up against his new friends and enjoying games of "chase me around the room" and "Ooo! Chase me some more!"



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Geogre can you stop being so pretty?*

The pace of each day fell into a familiar routine. Each night I'd sit with them for a few hours. We'd have play time, snuggle time and a snack. Bongo and George would often lay in my lap and give me those lovey-eyed looks that made me want to keep them here for good.

But I was waiting. I knew I had a home for Bongo, not long after I rescued him. A friend of mine brought over a donation of cat food from a couple whose cat had recently died very unexpectedly. The FIV+ cat had had its' leg amputated, and not long after, the Vet had over-prescribed medication for it, which ended up killing the cat.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *George and his mama-Beth.*

I wrote the couple a very nice thank you note and sympathy card for their loss. A few weeks later, in late December of 2012, I got photos and a heartbreaking letter about their wonderful kitty. **Clearly, these people LOVED their cat and even mentioned that "one day" they would want to adopt another 3-legged cat. I knew right then and there that Bongo was going to be theirs-maybe not today, but some day.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Bongo and Mama.

Six months later, the couple reached out to us and asked about Bongo. They wanted to make sure they could adopt him, but could I hold onto him for a few weeks while they do some home repairs? The last thing they wanted to do was bring in a new cat and stress him out. **I didn't mind the added wait and they graciously brought me cat food to cover his extra time with us AND a PIE (for me and Sam!).**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Newly minted brothers, Bongo and George.

Meanwhile George's adoption fall through, twice, with the same family. Though I was very sad it didn't work out, with George being available again, once the couple saw him, they knew that he needed to be part of their family, too. That meant Bongo and George would be brothers and have a wonderful life together.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Barney reaches out for a kiss goodbye, which Bongo graciously gives him-though it doesn't look like it in this photo!

Though having fosters cats here for many months is not ideal and keeps us from helping more cats, knowing that these two will be going to a fantastic home, where their every need will be met, where they will be looked

after and cherished, is a thrill. They're both such deserving cats, I can't help but smile thinking about them leaving us.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Barney still waits for a home. His Petfinder page is [HERE](#) ^[7].

I love both cats dearly and will miss them very much, but this time there are no tears. I won't be worrying that they won't get what they need as I sometimes do after adoptions.

My focus now is to find a home for Barney, who just had his first birthday and who still has no one interested in adopting him. It makes me so very sad. Barney is the sole survivor of his litter and is the most easy-going, friendly cat you'd ever meet. He makes me laugh with his silly antics. I just wish someone else would see that and want to open their home to him.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Bunny is waiting, too! Here's her [Petfinder PAGE](#) ^[8].

Barney is also very close to Bunny Boo-Boo, who with her shyness is going to be tough to find a home for. She's sweet and playful and loves other cats, but she tends to hide when new people enter the room. Perhaps with George and Bongo on their way to their forever home, she'll have a chance to flower?

I guess we'll just go back to waiting and hope that one day the family for Barney and Bunny will contact me so they can find their rightful place in the world, just as Bongo and George have.

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Comments

Tue, 2013-07-02 09:21 — [Random Felines \(not verified\)](#) ^[20]

What a great adoption story. [21]

What a great adoption story. Their transformations are a testament to your hard work. Congrats to George and Bongo and their new family.

Tue, 2013-07-02 09:35 — Terry (not verified)

George/Bongo [22]

I've been waiting to read this letter for months - 2 stunning cats, at last, forever home. I will miss seeing George and Bongo. The very best to the both of you!

Tue, 2013-07-02 09:48 — [Leslie \(not verified\)](#) [23]

Bongo & George [24]

Robin I absolutely LOVE your blog and the stories of your fosters. I was heartbroken for weeks after Fred passed away, even now I'm getting teary eyed thinking about it!

The care you show for your cats is wonderful! The transformation of Bongo & George is just amazing. I'm so glad they have found a home. I'm sure Barney & Bunny will find one soon too, you can just tell how sweet they are.

I often think about getting a second cat but worry so much about how my cat Smokey would react. He's very sweet, sensitive, shy and very attached to me. I'm afraid he would feel neglected of attention. He had been abandoned by some ignorant people, I think likely when they moved from an apartment. He found me and my sister (yes, he found us!) just before our wonderful furbabies Axl & Rose crossed over the Rainbow Bridge less than 4 weeks apart. They were brothers from the same litter . Yes, Rose was a boy. A little misidentification when he was a kitten by their original owners! Ironically my sister and I would only supposed to have them temporarily when their owner, our friend, had to move to a place she couldn't keep them. We both knew we were probably going to have them permanently and we had our 'temporary foster' cats for more than 10 wonderful years. Our friend knew we would provide the best place for them and she often jokes that if there is such a thing as reincarnation, she would want to come back as a Peed Family cat because our whole family is known for loving and spoiling cats. It was tough losing them so close together but I think that is why Smokey came along.

Anyway, that last thing I would want would be to take in another cat and not have it work out. I can only imagine how that would affect either kitty. That's why I think it is so wonderful what you do, that you give every cat a chance and screen the applicants to make sure the fit is right for the best interest of the cats.

Keep up the great work and the wonderful blogs. Sorry I rambled so much!

Leslie

Tue, 2013-07-02 14:59 — jmuuj (not verified)

RE: George and Bongo and Barney and Bunny [25]

I share your happiness for George and Bongo! and also your hope and determination for Barney and Bunny ;)

Thu, 2013-09-26 09:16 — Deborah Marple (not verified)

Happiness and Prayers! [26]

I am so happy that George and Bongo, both absolutely gorgeous cats (George's eyes...WOW) have found a forever home and I pray that someone with lots of love comes along for Bunny and Barney! Thanks to people like you, these cats are given the chance to see that there is love out there and that not all people toss, neglect and abuse animals. I hope more people start to adopt adult cats, I did and in no way regret it. The personality they show is the one you get and as long as you supply them with food, water, toys and love and the odd treat, you will have a great companion. Deborah xoxo <3

Thu, 2013-09-26 09:40 — AZDeb (not verified)

Great adoption story [27]

Thank you for sharing the story of Bongo, George, Barney and Bunny. Glad that Bongo and George got a wonderful home together. Now it would be great if Barney and Bunny got to be adopted by a loving home and stay together too, might help Bunny with being shy :)

Thu, 2013-09-26 09:41 — dvlawyer (not verified)

Barney [28]

I have 4 rescued kitties, so I really can't take another, but maybe if you posted a video of Barney's silly antics, he will win the heart of a home looking for a furbaby. Maybe you could post it on Facebook, Pinterest, etc?

Thu, 2013-09-26 13:18 — crystal Rousseau (not verified)

adoption ^[29]

I had an elderly cat adopt me a week ago one of the sweetest cats. I have ever met I know that he was someones pet. I had recently lost my 28 year old cat Tigger. I named my new cat Shadoo because he follows me everywhere. happily talking to me he only has one tooth left and has lost most of his muscle mass. due to age but no major health problems he even gets along with our other 4 cats. I know he will not be on earth much longer but he will get a lot of love and care till then he is a hugger and he is my baby.

Thu, 2013-09-26 18:12 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

That George is one handsome ^[30]

That George is one handsome cat! (I may be partial. I have a George myself, and my parents had a George--George is an excellent name.)

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- [2] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/not-my-watch-its-just-one-more-cat>
- [3] <http://www.fabcats.org/hcm/>
- [4] <http://www.sheltermedicine.com/node/59#bartonellosis>
- [5] http://www.petmd.com/cat/conditions/infectious-parasitic/c_ct_bartonellosis#.UdLCZD5T1rU
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