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[Home](#) > My Sweet Bob

My Sweet Bob

Sun, 2008-05-18 16:24 — Robin Olson

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photo by Deb

This is a shot from yesterday. Bob's in a new cage at a different hospital, on a new IV. The IV he's been given really helped perk him up. Yesterday, when I brought him home, he seemed so much better. He smacked Spencer for sniffing him, he purred like his old self, and rubbed his head all over my ankles and on many of the scent marking areas around the house. He is the King and he was back, better than ever.

It lasted about five hours. Bob had been very hungry at 3pm, when I brought him home. Up to that point, he'd only gotten to keep down about a tablespoon of food since Tuesday. I gave him another spoonful he greedily lapped up. I didn't want to overdo it, so I offered him pets, instead of more food. I also had to leave him and get back to the chore of cleaning up my Mother's estate. I need to put it on the market and see if I can get it sold. It's the last big hurdle of this mess since she died. On top of the flood of emotions I felt worrying about Bob, I also had the added difficulty of seeing my brother and being in my childhood home, packing up cherished trinkets and throwing others away. Without my Mother there, so many things lost their meaning. They were just old junky bits. I had to let go. My house is already overloaded. I can't add more.

When I got home a few hours later, I gave Bob another spoonful of food. He had a great appetite. I was so happy for him. By 7pm, almost an hour later from his feeding, he vomited. Not just the spoonful of food, but what appeared to be ALL the food he had been given that day. It didn't look like it had been digested at all. Bob continued to vomit until he was empty. I raced to the phone and called Dr. Larry. It was Saturday night, after closing hours, so I knew I'd need to take him to a facility that was open 24/7. I had to wait to hear back from Dr. Larry and while I waited, I cried. I cried and petted Bob. Bob, who seemed so strong and frankly, just fine. Bob who was purring loudly and rubbing his head against my hand. Bob only just joined our family and in the short time, he's become a beacon of joy. Everyone who meets him radiates. He is a special boy.

There are a few places open to me to take Bob. One is in Norwalk. They have a very nice facility and are VERY expensive, but it always felt like they had the best. They also have the longest wait time and most filled waiting room. On top of the hour drive to get there, it would be a long wait and it was approaching 9pm by the time I could talk to Dr. Larry and get things sorted out...

I could also take him to a place in Shelton, much closer and I hoped that would be the place to go. Dr. Larry spoke with a Vet there and he sounded overwhelmed and not interested in helping a cat with so many underlying issues, especially FIV. Even though this guy may have been OK in the long run, Dr. Larry said he just didn't feel comfortable and that I should go elsewhere.

He suggested I take Bob to Cheshire, which is an hour east. Dr. Larry said he had a great relationship with the staff there and that he had spoken with Dr. Y and she was willing and ready to take Bob's case on. With all the phone calls back and forth, we were also able to determine that of the three places, not one of them had someone on staff who could read and perform an ultrasound, something that may be key to Bob's diagnosis. I would have to accept that we needed to keep Bob stable until Monday. I didn't even know if he would make it that long.

I was torn about where to go. I knew Norwalk and didn't know Cheshire. I decided I'd rather be a big fish in a little pond than the other way around. I packed up Bob and Sam drove us the 33 miles to Cheshire. By 10pm we arrived. My heart sank when we walked into the building. It's a low, one-story brick and concrete building. Perhaps it was built in the 1960's or so. It was very clean, with sharp, blinding overhead lights, but it didn't hide that things were far from modern, here. What had I done? I could have taken Bob to the fancy glitter-palace of animal care and here I am. I trust Dr. Larry. I hope I made the right choice.

Within a few minutes after our arrival and filling in paperwork, we met with a friendly Vet tech in a clean, but really worn down exam room. The exam table wasn't stainless steel, it was old formica. The walls had strange scuff marks. The blue green glow of the overhead lights was dim. This did not feel like a place where miracles happen.

Bob was great during the exam. I continued to pet him as much as I could. I guess I was trying to store up the feeling of being in contact with him, so I could always call on that memory. His fur is so soft and purr so loud and bubbly. I have to smile just thinking about it.

We met with the Vet, a rather severe looking young woman with dark hair pulled back into a ponytail. She slipped on latex gloves before she touched Bob. It made me sad. Was she doing that to protect Bob from her or vice versa? Bob was, well Bob. He didn't seem to be very sick at all. No fever. No tenderness on exam. I asked if they were going to do a barium x-ray and the Dr. said no. I basically had to beg her to do one because I feared Bob had one or two Denamarin tablets stuck in his throat. They are HUGE pills and the day before he got really sick, it seemed like the pill didn't go down his throat correctly. With that, the Vet agreed to the test. She also said the ultrasound would show any gross problems with his digestive tract that the x-ray could not. She said she would call me that night if she found anything on the x-ray.

She took Bob and we went back to the waiting area, so I could put down \$1,000.00 deposit for Bob's care. Needless to say, I haven't worked this month, this debt is really bad timing, but I'd pay anything to help Bob. Hopefully, I won't have to get to that place. When I finished with the paperwork, the woman at the desk asked me if I wanted to say goodbye to Bob. Of course! They brought him out into the waiting room. They all gasped when they saw Bob's big red face peer out of his carrier. I opened the door and petted him. There were a few other people in the waiting room and they all came over to see Bob.

"What big paws he has!"

"What a handsome boy he is!"

"Oh, he's a big cat!"

We said our goodbyes and left Bob behind. I cried on the way home. It was 11pm. Sam was starving and I was too sick to eat, but I offered to go to a local diner and keep him company. I ordered a bit of food, knowing that if I am sick it doesn't help Bob. There's a point where you have to take some care of yourself.

After we got home, we dragged ourselves into bed, after finding enough energy to feed all the cats and the foster kittens. I felt guilty for not spending time with the kittens. They were getting the basics from me and little else. I just can't face them right now.

It was 2am before I went to sleep. I kept hoping the phone would wake me up with good news, but the news never came.

At 7:30am this morning, I called Dr. Y and she gave me the run down on Bob's progress. Nothing showed on the barium study, except she was able to tell that he COULD get food down into his stomach and it did pass into his intestines. The intestinal wall looked a bit thick, but it's hard to see for sure. Bob could have an Inflamed bowel or Cancer. He could still have a blockage, but we start with ultrasound tomorrow, then move to endoscopy if the ultrasound doesn't show anything. And no, they can't do an endoscopy there..where do those get done? I wonder if that might be back in Norwalk, 70 miles away from Cheshire.

So that's it. Now I wait. Now Bob waits in a cage, hooked up to an IV. I can go visit him for 15 minutes, but I don't have the heart. I think it would be cruel to go see him and not take him home and that's all I want to do—I want to take Bob home. I want him to be cured of whatever ails him and I want him home.

Now.

Please.

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