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Sat, 2010-07-03 10:48 — Robin Olson

Writing on 2 hours of sleep may not be the smartest thing I've ever done, but this story needs to break right NOW!!!

A few days ago I got an email from Diane, who runs a local rescue group alerting me to the fact that a 19 year old cat named, Chester had been lost in the woods by the local diner. The family hails from Maine and for reasons that are not clear to me, somehow Chester, who wore a collar and leash, got out of the car while the family was eating their meal. When they got back to the car, Chester was gone.



From Chester's "LOST" Flyer.

There's a lot of very dense brush around the diner and beyond that there are thick woods. I-84 passes one side of it.

It's been a common dumping ground for cats, garbage, beer cans and other debris. It's not where you'd want to take a walk alone late a night-not that it's "that" dangerous, but...the diner is open 24/7 so all sorts of folks stop by and many of them are just passing through the state.

We also have foxes and coyotes here-an occasional bear. There are lots of good reasons to find this geriatric cat as soon as possible. This morning, the temperatures were going to rise into the low 90's and today is slated to be very humid, too. Chester has been missing since June 28, 2010 and the run of cooler, drier weather is done.

We had our uber-trapper, Karlyn, working the case, along with Barb a really nice lady with another rescue group. We were all doing what we could to find Chester, along with another cat, Cowboy, who is also gone missing, too. His family is from VA and has been looking for him for over a week.

Karlyn set up a feeding station to see if she could tell if there were cats coming to it. Then she'd set humane traps to get the cats at the feeding station. We set up a wildlife camera but caught nothing the first day. We were going to buy another camera today, but something inside me was grinding. I kept feeling like I HAD to go look for Chester again. The last time I was ill prepared, stupidly wearing sandals which prevented me from looking too far into the woods.

I didn't sleep last night. Finally at 6:00 AM I got up, covered myself with bug repellent, put on heavy clothes to protect me from ticks. I put a feliway wipe in my pocket along with some dry food and a can of very wet food and some water. I know there's no scientific proof, but all that stuff didn't matter. I almost felt pushed to get out of the house as soon as I could. I could have left in my PJ's and slippers. I didn't care what I had on me. I just had to GO.

As I pulled up to the diner, the sun was getting stronger. It was barely 7AM. I started to think that all I should look for was a sign of the leash and the collar, so at least I would know if the cat had gotten out of it or if he was still attached to it and had maybe passed away. I tried to prepare myself to see a dead cat-the last thing I would ever want to see, but I had to be tough and just get out there.

There were some creepy cars in the back of the parking lot, so I opted to walk the perimeter and just look into the brush. I couldn't get over how dense the brush was so close to the edge of the parking lot. There's a path that leads to a dried out stream, off one of the corners of the lot. A big SUV/pickup thing was blocking it. I didn't want to go near it. It gave me the creeps.

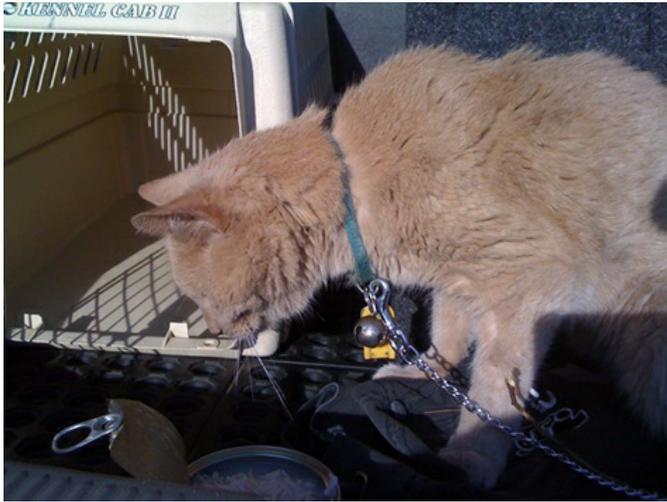
Instead I found another place to enter the woods by one of the dumpsters. I walked down a short incline and walked along the dried river bed since it was just about the only place that was clear of thorny brush. I called to Chester, waited, listened. I could hear the traffic from the highway. A bird flew over my head. A branch fell onto the ground. I thought I heard something else...a cry?

I felt like I just had to walk in a particular direction. I saw a big tree, some of it had fallen down. Under one of the large limbs, I thought I saw a FACE. I was about 40 feet away? Was it the morning light playing a trick on my eyes? I called out to Chester. Nothing. I got closer. The thing wasn't moving. I thought that maybe it was a fox. We'd heard one a few nights ago when we

were last there. I took a few steps closer, then I realized...**it was CHESTER!!!!!!!**

I pushed through the brush, which was much more sparse, thankfully, and ran over to Chester. I could see his lead caught up in some debris. He wasn't moving. I thought he was gone. I started to talk to him as I broke apart the branches to free up his chain. He moved a tiny bit. I reached under the tree to pick him up. He was very limp, but alive.

As I ran back to the parking lot I kept talking to Chester, telling him it was going to be ok. He didn't move, which made it easier to get him to my car, but made me more worried that he was going to die in my arms.



Chester just moments after I got him into the back of the car.

It was only 7am, but I called Karlyn anyway. I breathlessly told her I found Chester!!! She said she would be right there. I opened some food and rubbed some water on his mouth. Chester was clearly well out of it, but for a moment he furiously lapped at a little bit of canned food.

Karlyn arrived. I emailed Super-Deb, hoping she would be into work early so I could get Chester over to her. SD called and said it would be 9am before anyone would see Chester. Too late. I needed to move him to a Vet-whomever was open. I didn't care. Karlyn helped me get Chester into my carrier and gave me a towel for him to lie on. I got the car going and drove as fast as I dared to the Animal Emergency Clinic in Danbury.

It was a long 15 minute drive, but they were expecting us, thanks to Karlyn's call. They took Chester and I waited. Then they told me his condition was "iffy" and that they could not get a pulse on his limbs but his heart sounded surprisingly good. His BUN was high, his potassium was good, but his sodium was high. Obviously, his kidneys are not in a good place. **Chester was not 19. Turns out he is 21!** That this cat was even breathing after almost 5 days of no food or water, is amazing.

I called Chester's family and gave them the good news wakeup call. They know where he is now and they know he won't die alone in the woods or by the claws of a predator. I gave him a hug and kiss and told him he was a good boy and that he would be ok. I hope I didn't lie to him, but it's out of my hands.



Chester. Out of the woods and safe, at last.

I hope Chester has a few lives left. I hope his family will be willing to pay for his care. It's going to be expensive if The Animal Emergency Clinic keeps him for the weekend. Right now I'm paying for it, but this isn't a time to fuss about money. It's a time to pray or send good vibes or just think kindly about a very old kitty who lost his way and who was very lucky this crazy cat lady had his back.

Come'on Chester. You can do it! We're rooting for you!

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Comments

Sat, 2010-07-03 10:55 — [JaneA \(not verified\)](#) ^[6]

YAY! I'm so glad you found ^[7]

YAY! I'm so glad you found this sweet guy and that regardless of whether he makes it, his family knows where he is and that someone found him. I know how awful it is to lose a cat and have no idea where they got to.

Sat, 2010-07-03 11:02 — [Catnymouse \(not verified\)](#)

I wonder if they left him in ^[8]

I wonder if they left him in the car (a no-no), while they went in to eat, and rolled the windows down "a crack" (futile) and he escaped. Speculation I know. At any rate, friends, please don't leave your animals unattended in your car.

Congratulations to you for finding and rescuing Chester. I imagine anyone who has managed to keep a cat around for that many years must love him very much, you've doubtless made their day.

Sat, 2010-07-03 11:15 — [jansfunnyfarm \(not verified\)](#) ^[9]

Great save ^[10]

21 years old and he survived. Great news for the owners. Hope they will pay the bill. It's amazing you found him -- or found him alive.

Sat, 2010-07-03 11:59 — [Gail \(not verified\)](#)

Chester ^[11]

Well Miss Joyce, again you have earned the Hero of the day award from me. I just KNOW that you are my long lost sister.

Sat, 2010-07-03 12:04 — [Gail \(not verified\)](#)

Chester's angel ^[12]

Oh gee, I realize it isn't Joyce's writing...sorry. Robin..YOU are another one of those Heros of the day, Chester's angel.

Sat, 2010-07-03 12:42 — [purpie](#) ^[13]

Go Chester! ^[14]

After so many sad stories it's great to finally be crying about something so wonderful. Robin, you rock! Hopefully Chester will recover but even if not he will know he is loved. Thank you. ?

Sat, 2010-07-03 13:18 — [Mary \(not verified\)](#) ^[15]

VICTORY! ^[16]

Oh, Robin -- I read this whole thing just about holding my breath! Thank god for your instinct and intuition, girl! and for your never-ending dedication to saving kittehs! I'm so relieved and happy and proud that you were able to do this. Now get some sleep. You're awesome.

Sat, 2010-07-03 13:23 — [Julie \(not verified\)](#)

Catsinthebag.org always says ^[17]

Catsinthebag.org always says the best time to look is dawn! It's also a blessing that his collar got him stuck so he couldn't run away! Normally not a great thing but in this instance it's what u needed.

Sat, 2010-07-03 13:37 — [Lizzy \(not verified\)](#) ^[18]

Chester is a Lucky Kitty! ^[19]

Good for you! You are an awesome person! I know the family will be grateful to have their beautiful kitty back! The world needs more 'crazy cat ladies' who are actually the sane ones with the sense to take care of our animal friends! Chester is not my cat, but I thank you anyway.

Sat, 2010-07-03 14:25 — [Lisa \(not verified\)](#) [20]

We're purrayin' [21]

... that the next of Chester's lives kicks in. What an inspiring rescue story! Sleep well, Robin, and know, as Purpie said, this rescue let a sweet old man know love and caring today, no matter what happens.

Sat, 2010-07-03 15:29 — [acninee](#) [22]

Super-Robin to the rescue! I [23]

Super-Robin to the rescue! I hope Cowboy gets lucky too. :)

Sat, 2010-07-03 16:20 — [Lizzie \(not verified\)](#) [24]

Well Done Robin! [25]

Wow, Robin! Amazing - well done... you are very determined and the feline world owes you so much - not least our little friend Chester.

I do hope he recovers from his ordeal. I would think his family will be so happy to have him back. I hope the vet has the sense to bill them for his care, then refund you.. It's good of you to take responsibility (but I'm sure many of us would be likely to do the same if a dear old cat was suffering.)

We would be heartbroken if our darling old man was lost. We love him to bits.

Well done Robin, cat hero!

Sat, 2010-07-03 22:32 — [Bethany \(not verified\)](#) [26]

Good for you [27]

What a story. I hope he's ok. Will you update to let us know the story's end? If the family doesn't pay you for the care, would you be able to set up a paypal site? I'd certainly kick a few bucks your way for helping out an old guy. That poor cat, I can't imagine how scary that had to be for him. So happy you found him.

Sat, 2010-07-03 23:07 — [Your Daily Cute \(not verified\)](#) [28]

So happy for Chester! [29]

I saw this on Facebook earlier, but am just getting to read the whole story. I got chills reading it! So happy!

Robin, you are a SAINT for these animals. Absolutely amazing. Chester is one lucky kitty -- all thanks to you!

Sun, 2010-07-04 13:24 — [Betty \(not verified\)](#)

Kitty Angel named Robin [30]

OMG, I cried reading your story. What a wonderful heroine. How many times do you hear "I can't" when someone is asked to do something to help. It sounds like "can't" is not in your dictionary. It is a wonderful, wonderful story. Bless you for all your efforts. If you are stuck with a bill, I would also be willing to make a donation for Chester's care.

Mon, 2010-07-05 00:25 — [Catnonymouse \(not verified\)](#) [31]

Amazing!!! [32]

Robin,
i thank you a million times over for your devotion to these lost kitties.
i live in the Bronx and if i had heard the story before you found him,
i would probably have come up to Danbury to help you look for Chester!
Nothing short of a miracle.
i hope Cowboy is found too.

Wed, 2010-07-07 11:35 — [Kalieris \(not verified\)](#)

Just echoing a previous [33]

Just echoing a previous commenter about setting something up with Paypal if Chester's family doesn't reimburse you for his care. Thank you for finding him and making sure he's cared for.

Tue, 2010-07-13 12:37 — [CleaS \(not verified\)](#) [34]

oh well DONE! [35]

Just reading back and catching up! What a wonderful story, Robin. WELL DONE!! You're an angel.

Tue, 2010-07-20 08:31 — [angie \(not verified\)](#) [36]

yay! [37]

i read the news article you posted the other day. i'm still catching up from vacation. what an AWESOME story!! except the part about leaving the animals int he car, but anyway... you are AWESOME!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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