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The Saddest Place on Earth. Sandy Hook, CT 1 of 2

Tue, 2012-12-18 10:08 — Robin Olson

*[There's SO MUCH going on that it's tough to catch up. Here's a double dose of blog entries that cover Saturday and Sunday. Next up will be the truly uplifting, surprising and amazing story about what's going on with the **Kitties for Kids** Program we've put into action. By the time I get to write it, I'm hoping I'll have even more joyful news about how this program is taking off.]*



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Land of the Tripods at Treadwell Park in Sandy Hook.

I've been doing a lot of crying over the past two days. I've been raging, not sleeping much, not eating much. Whatever I "had" to get done isn't done. Christmas plans or shopping? Who cares? We cancelled dinner with dear friends we rarely get to see because we were too sad to go out and the roads are nearly impassible in some areas so why bother?



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Imagine yourself standing here with the world watching.

I need to explain to all of you that writing and taking photos is a way for me to purge, explore, digest my feelings. I also feel that I want you to see what I'm seeing, maybe in some way so you can understand what's going on here a little better without the filter of television news.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Our intrepid First Selectman, Pat Llodra (center facing right) at the news conference to announce the names of the deceased.*

Last night I was editing photos I shot at the news briefing in Treadwell Park where Lt. J. Paul Vance handed out the list of the deceased. **I needed to be there, partly to prove to myself that this was real, partly to honor the history of this moment and partly because I was terrified some of our adopters were on that list.**

The phone rang. It was 9:30pm. **The local 24 hr Emergency Vet was calling me to ask if I could help a cat who needed care right away. His urethra was blocked and his owner, who was disabled and on social security could not afford to pay for it.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Reporters, reporters, reporters.*

It took a few hours to sort it all out. The owner surrendered the cat to us because in all honesty he had no family to support him with this challenging situation and he was not mentally clear enough to understand what his cat needed done-just that his cat was sick. **I made sure he was fine with giving up his cat as long as he got a good home-which I promised we would do.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Lt. J. Paul Vance (right) and the medical examiner (in white).*

The cat's name is Shorty. He's a big red tabby who must have lived outside most of his life because his left ear tip is missing, indicating he was trapped and neutered at some point. **Sadly, it was done too late in his life because he is also FIV+, which can be transmitted sexually or from fighting (deep puncture bites).**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Lt. Vance holds "the list" of the deceased close to his chest.

Money. We needed a lot of it-about \$750.00. In the middle of the night, in the middle of all this sadness, I stopped what I was doing to help this cat.

I asked for help for Shorty. Taking on a debt like this would put our finances into a very serious strain and prevent us from caring for the cats in our program. **I needed my support group-my friends and fans of Covered in Cat Hair and once again, they did NOT disappoint!**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Shorty.

Before I could even **FINISH** writing the plea for help my phone started chiming with text messages notifying me of donations.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Shorty after a night of treatment, beginning to perk up.

In LESS THAN 4 HOURS WE RAISED \$760.00!!!! IT IS BEYOND A MIRACULOUS ACHIEVEMENT! THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED SHORTY!

The sun didn't make an appearance this morning. It was cold and drizzling. I wanted to drive over to visit Shorty and get his bill settled. If things weren't so insane I'd normally drive through "downtown" Sandy Hook to get to [NVS](#) ^[1].



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. The sign says it all.

I often feel the tug of my instincts to tell me where to go, when to go, what to do. Half the time I ignore it and try to "rationally" choose my next steps because that's more logical than following your gut. Today, perhaps I was too tired to fight it and instead of driving the long way over to the Vet, I went straight for downtown. It was early enough and miserable enough outside that I thought maybe I'd miss the bad traffic.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *The memorial—its first day.*

I got there without much delay, but the center of our little district was already jammed with cars and people milling about.

I took a few photos from my car since the traffic was barely moving. A few cars ahead of me, a huge satellite truck was trying to parallel park. I watched in amazement as this behemoth crept backwards, knocking branches off a tree it was so tall. I thought he was going to hit the car behind him, but he suddenly signaled and pulled back into traffic, giving up on any chance of parking. **It was a HUGE parking space. The car in front of me didn't take it and in a flash I was parked and out of my car, walking down the sidewalk to the center of Sandy Hook, where many of the memorials are located.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *One of so many plush toys all over downtown Sandy Hook, CT.*

I felt okay for the first block. It was my town. It was all so familiar. **There were the pretty garlands of holiday evergreens tied with big red bows. There was the coffee shop where we sit outside on the back deck and soak up the sun while we sip our frothy cappuccinos. Everything seemed normal.** I was just going to look around, take some photos. Not a big deal. But within a few more steps everything changed. My heart began to tighten, followed by my throat. I felt like I was going to faint.

There before me was a makeshift memorial, just like the ones I'd seen firsthand in New York City on 9|11, but these had teddy bears and toys covering what was normally a place to sit and look out onto the Pootatuck river.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Yes to both!*

I began to sob. It came on so fast, from such depths of despair, that I had no way to stop...

...to be continued.

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Comments

Tue, 2012-12-18 12:08 — [Catnynomouse \(not verified\)](#) ^[15]

Thank you ^[16]

I found your facebook comment on a high school mate's fb page (Eric Shaeffer) and I saw your page and began to read what happened there in Sandy Hook from your first hand prospective, then I found your blog today from a link there. I read it and understood it, like it was happening to me. It's kind of unusual to thank someone for commentary of such a horrific life event such as this, but I did want to thank you for letting us see through your eyes. The media is tripping over themselves to find stories, but none of them are as heartfelt, personal and true like yours. I made up my mind to stop watching the news a day ago, as it's just too much.

Tue, 2012-12-18 15:42 — Sheila Falconer (not verified)

Robin, this is amazing. So ^[17]

Robin, this is amazing. So touching, so real. And despite the immense sadness, I found some hope from the last picture, which gives the hope of this unspeakable tragedy inspiring greater love between people...

Tue, 2012-12-18 17:40 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: SANDY HOOK ^[18]

Echoing the previous poster's comments and feelings, and also feeling similarly, 3,000 miles distant. My *PRAYERS* continue for you all, and may you be many times blessed for your great and loving, generous, kind heart, Robin.

As for the media, of course the world is grieving and wanting to know. But perhaps it's time to back off now, and at least pull the crews out so that the residents of Newtown can navigate their own streets? Heaven only knows they are having an unspeakably hard time just doing that, as you so eloquently state.

I'll leave it at that, except to ask that you *hug those cats like nobody's business* <3

Wed, 2013-01-02 12:44 — [Cathy Keisha \(not verified\)](#) ^[19]

I came here from the ^[20]

I came here from the Conscious Cat. So sad. I know of what you speak because we lived through 9/11 and the memorials. The toughest part were the posters of the families looking for loved ones, hoping against hope that they were still alive. NYC's Penn Station was filled with hundreds of them. We shall never forget that just like you'll never forget the insanity of that Friday morning.

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