

## ***Pekoe's Story***



Originally, Pekoe came to Dr. Thompson as a rescue kitten with a blocked urethra, meaning he was unable to urinate. In fact, Pekoe had ruptured his urethra and urine was draining down under his skin into his back legs. This was classified as emergency surgery which Dr. Thompson performed. The surgery, called a **Perineal Urethrostomy**, changed his anatomy into that of a female-style rear-end.

Dr. Thompson then had to re-construct his damaged skin. He had two plastic surgeries in order to remove the dead skin and re-create the skin to cover his behind. All three of these surgeries happened before he was nine months old! As time went by Pekoe became part of the hospital staff and due to his incessant congenial personality, he was assigned the role of "Official Greeter".

As things happen in a cat hospital, sometimes we need to do blood transfusions to help save the lives of cats that are in need. Thus, Pekoe became our donor. He helped several kitties over the years and always maintained his same happy personality.

Cats at Home Hospital attended the local TICA (The International Cat Association) cat shows yearly over the early 2000's and provided a display to create awareness of feline health in our community of Cloverdale. In 2009 our technician, Rose Marie, suggested that we enter Pekoe into the cat show to see how he did. We decided to put a sign on his kennel at our display booth indicating that he was a working cat. It read "When sick kitties needed a blood transfusion, Pekoe was our blood donor." Along with popularity created by the sign, he was also a favorite with the judges and earned a grand champion score. This was a surprise to us all and we decided to not over praise him in case his ego become too big.

We entered Pekoe the following year and he continued to win points. He eventually achieved a quad grand-champion status, placing in the top twenty-two cats of the northwest division of TICA.

Early in 2011, at the age of eleven years, we decided to perform Pekoe's semi-annual wellness examination to prepare him for the spring cat show. Dr. Thompson was shocked to discover that Pekoe had developed a lump in his abdomen. We proceeded to have an ultrasound examination performed by our colleague, Dr. Laurie Head (Board Certified Specialist), and discovered that Pekoe had quite a large mass in one section of his intestines. The staff and Dr. Thompson agreed that we should investigate surgically to see if we could remove the cancer. When he was "opened up", it was apparent that not only were his intestinal lymph nodes showing signs of cancer, but one kidney was also harboring the disease and there were focal spots all through his abdomen. This was a devastating discovery. We decided then and there to proceed, removing the cancerous part of his intestine, and reattaching it back together. We also placed a feeding tube in Pekoe's esophagus so he could be fed during his recovery. Pekoe progressed rapidly with his esophageal feeding and recovery was quick.

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Dr. Thompson instituted a chemotherapy program and Pekoe handled the drugs with flying colours. One month after his surgery we decided to have Dr. Head repeat the ultrasound to see what progress we had made. To our surprise, Dr. Head reported that knowing of his previous medical condition, she would have to declare his recovery as a complete remission of his cancer. This news raised the spirits of all of the staff, and gave us hope of Pekoe's possible return to the show ring. Dr. Thompson continued to maintain his medical treatments and Dr. Head repeated the ultrasounds two more times to monitor his condition. He was ready for the next show.

Cats at Home staff agreed that if this was the total Story of Pekoe, it would have been a great ending. However, as mentioned earlier, since Pekoe had been advertised as a blood donor at the cat shows, a local newspaper had picked up on the story and published a short piece in the Cloverdale Reporter. This information was discovered by a researcher in Calgary who works for a company that produces a show on CMT (channel 20) called "Pet Heros". Christina, the researcher, called me to inquire about Pekoe. She indicated that they would like to propose a story about him as a "pet hero" helping other cats in need of blood. The producers agreed that it would be a great story if we could provide at least one recipient to demonstrate the benefit of his gift. At that time I revealed to Christina, that Pekoe had suffered from a bout of Cancer and was in complete remission as a result of his response to his surgical/medical treatments. They agreed that it would still be a great story to tell so we contacted one of the recipient cat owners to inquire if they would be willing to participate in the program. The owner was willing and so Louie, the cat and Geoffrey, the owner, became players in the story of Pekoe.

Louie came to us as a result of a strange bleeding problem on one of his feet. Originally diagnosed at another clinic as a spider bite, Louie was treated and sent home to recover. Unfortunately, the foot didn't heal properly and Louie came back with severe bleeding and blood loss at a dangerous level. He was transferred to Cats at Home. We had to biopsy the foot and discovered that Louie had a specific cancer called **Hemangiosarcoma**. This led to a big decision on the part of Geoffrey as amputation was necessary. After family deliberation, it was agreed that we should go ahead. Louie was amazing. He went through surgery and recovery with no adverse effects, in fact he was standing the next day, albeit with pain medicine supporting him. Louie learned fast to walk on two hind legs and one front leg. He amazed everyone, even his owner who had never heard of a three legged cat before.

On the day of the "Pet Heroes" television taping, Pekoe and the Cats at Home staff were interviewed. Louie, Geoffrey and Dr. Thompson were filmed doing a mock-up examination for the cameras. The story information was documented and the director, camera crew and researcher felt they had the necessary material to make a great story about Pekoe

The episode of "Pet Heroes" in which Pekoe starred, is called *Paying it Forward* and it aired early in October 2011. To our amazement, Pekoe truly shone like a star. Shortly thereafter, a lady called to say that her daughter had seen the episode and wanted to come and meet Pekoe. A visit was arranged and pictures were taken with Pekoe. He now thinks he has a fan club!

You can view the full episode of *Paying it Forward* [here](#).

