

Apologies for sending a group email!

Well I just lost a week. Thank you all for asking how I'm doing. I was released from South Austin Medical Hospital yesterday (Sunday Feb 1) afternoon. Today in serious physical and mental lag, but doing well thanks to Chris and some good medical staff.

So what happened? The short answer is that on Tuesday, Jan 27, I was almost passing out between the bedroom and bath. Entered South Austin ER that night. Serious internal bleeding requiring 4 pints of blood with stomach & bowel surgery cauterizing two cysts. And some complications that never should have happened.

I am very lucky. Not been in a hospital overnight since 1949 (left kidney removed - Welm's tumor). Doctors told my parents that I might be lucky to make it only to high school). After the ankylo spondylosis diagnoses in 2006, I was supposed to be bent over with very limited movement by 2010. Dr, Russell Krienke, my amazing doctor for 30 years has balanced my physical condition so well that with a few limitations, I am really fine. Incidentally he does not look much older than when I first met him. I believe that's a sign of a good doc.

If you want the long answer, continue, otherwise stop now. Then I'll be following up 1,992 emails. Sorry for the delayed responses. Thank you! Cheers!

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Tuesday morning without warning, I began almost passing out when I stood. Fine laying down. By noon it was so bad, Chris said call our doctor. No, I'll be fine. I call my doctor at 4:45 pm just before they close at 5 pm. My Dr of 30 years is out for the week. Nurse recommends not treating it lightly and set appointment for ARC after hours clinic on Slaughter and Manchaca. Dr. Smith does quick evaluation, lists my meds and says due to internal bleeding, I'm en route to South Austin Hospital ER by ambulance. Really?

Ambulance crew takes my med list and refuse my request to go "code 3" -(lights and siren). Great conversation with 30 year Austin Medic. As I was on the Brewster Squad, it was interesting to compare resources from my 1960's to his current. He bemoaned the small ambulances

Austin moved to. His concern, mainly lack of staff and resources in small truck. He was in one of the larger trucks in prior years, was hit head on on IH 35 by drunk driver going wrong way @70mph. Driver killed & EMS crew fine. Not sure if the same would be true in this truck.

Arrived at South Austin Medical Hospital with Chris anxiously waiting already (I am so incredibly lucky to have found this girl!!). South Aus ER is completely full, as is the hospital with flu patients. Incredibly, I am whisked into one of four private ER rooms, while many patients line every inch of wall space. Maybe they were trying to keep non-flu patients separate. Here we go again taking my list of 7 major meds again...doesn't anyone forward info electronically?

There is no room in the inn, so I occupy a critical ER room overnight and am treated by nurses in the morning who are definitely surprised to be dealing with ongoing vs quick treat and move on patients. No one can be moved as the hospital is totally full. I really felt for their staff.

It's all scary to me because it seems the perfect bad storm. Hundreds of serious flu patients, nursing staff totally overwhelmed which unfortunately results in several missed processes just for my situation.

I have not been treated in a hospital overnight since my left kidney was removed in 1949. I lost both parents due to hospital negligence. My Mom had narcolepsy and this was not communicated to the anesthesiologist when she went into surgery with a gangrene bowel and died at 71 in the small Alpine hospital (1985, the year Chris & I married). Chris and I took my Dad to El Paso at Thanksgiving 1986 as his Alpine doctor recommended surgery for a hole in his heart. Unfortunately he had a stroke during the surgery and lost all ability to move or communicate. This was greatly complicated by a "cooling bed" he was placed on in ICU. In the middle of the night the bed malfunctioned and did not shut down, nor did the bed communicate to the staff that it was failing. Failing meant the bed went to the highest temperature for almost 3 hours giving him 3rd degree burns over his entire back, arms and legs before the ICU staff discovered it. There was nothing for my Dad to do but endure it. We found that bed was to have been discarded or undergo major recall repairs three years prior

to the event.

So, it's an understatement to say I am seriously apprehensive about being a patient in a hospital.

On the morning of the 28th, 59 patients are being discharged from South Austin Hospital which frees up a room for me on the third floor.

Once again we go through the listing of all my medications. This becomes increasingly important to me as now, I'm in the third day of not having my regular blood pressure, cholesterol and [ankylo spondylosis](#) medicine (migraines, joint pain, Inflammatory bowel).

However shortly we meet Dr. Douglas Srygley, Austin Gastroenterology, who believes the bleeding symptoms are stomach and Bowel related and he will complete a procedure this afternoon. Chris follows me being rolled to a surgery suite and in I go. Now I've seen a lot of surgery suites on TV and to be honest this looked like an Audio Visual storage room at UT. Unplugged computers and machines wall to wall with my bed rolled into the middle. Dr Srygley is discussing the new mouth Esophagogastroduodenoscopy. Good Grief.

So I ask if he's performed this procedure previously? The Dr says "no, however , I did stay in a Holiday Inn Express last night." I love it! (he'd actually done three already that day). I was asked later by a nurse if, while I was mildly sedated, he explained what was going on. I responded, no, he and the Tech just talked about all the new technology coming out and whether South Austin would upgrade.

Dr. Srygley clips a cyst in my stomach and one in the upper GI tract with metal clips that will evidently show up on airport scanners, but pass later. Both cysts turn out to be benign after tests. He was really excellent! Back to my room.

On Thursday Jan 28th, I have what is one of the worst migraines in my life with headache, severe neck pain and vomiting. Why? Four days without the medical staff following up on all those many times Chris and I listed medications that I require on an on-going basis. So a successful uneventful surgery and what could have been my quick

release turns south.

Luckily Josh, an excellent nurse, recognizes the migraine symptoms and begins several failed medicine attempts including morphine. Now to be clear, I took naprosyn to keep the spondylosis at bay successfully, however it was also the cause of the internal bleeding, so they couldn't go back to it. One of the other doctors said South Austin should have begun giving me an alternative from the beginning.

"Should have" is a difficult word in medicine. Dr. Srygley said the naprosyn is the best alternative, however not to begin again for 2 weeks and for me to add a stomach settling medication which I'll probably get once Dr. Krienke reviews everything.

So finally it's "narco" that knocks the migraine which included severe vomiting. An aside, they had to change out all my bedding. My iPhone was under my sheet, and was gathered up with all the linens and put in the laundry bin. About 15 minutes after I returned to the bed, I found no iPhone, realized what may have happened and luckily had a nurse retrieve it. Five minutes later the housekeeping came in and left with all the linens. Lucky!

On Friday Jan 29th, the nurses came in to complete their shift change with me at 7 am. A tech takes my blood sugar. Suddenly severe irregular heart beats with a pulse at 180. Now 4 nurses show up, serious actions, quick medication and within two hours my heart is down to around 100. Why? I was now 5 days without my regular medications as South Austin had failed to give me my blood pressure beta blockers (just my regular medication). For several days, Chris and I both continually mentioned to staff this lack of my having my regular meds and my not eating for 5 days.

So, it's Monday evening, Feb 2nd, and I'm home documenting my adventure (more than you wanted to know I'm sure). It is frustrating that it had to be much worse than it could have been. However, overall there were a wonderful group of very dedicated medical staff performing things that I could never, ever do. In law enforcement, I was told to direct traffic at auto accidents, as I would pass out at the sight of a victim. I passed out at age 6 watching a shot being prepared

to be delivered & received 4 stitches in my chin. My Brewster County Rescue Squad medical training sessions several times caused me to pass out, awakening to find the rest of the class practicing stints and bandaging technics using my prone bod.

So thank you Saman, the wonderful nurse who wanted to be a vet because of her love of animals, and then found learning the biology of so many different animals was harder than learning the human body, so became a truly caring efficient nurse. Thank you Tevon a great caring Tech who should hear today whether he is accepted in medical school in Fort Worth. And to the Tech Maria, whose incredible attitude shown through all the vomiting and pain. My sight was blurred and I thought her chalk board message said "flu butter" when it was actually "Feel Better... no more migraines." Thanks to the nurse Kara who was the only staff that worked with me 2 days in a row. She's happy today as her Patriots won. She and Laura had really positive and patient care. All these staff put up with my constant stream of stories when I was feeling good. I apologized to Kara as it seemed she had to spend a lot of time updating my information on the computer in my room. She said "no, she came to my room to update all her patients and listen to more of my stories." Wow a real audience!

On the 29th, I had a sonogram (because of the heart problem) by a member of "Bayou Black" cajun band member Tony Kountoupis. I know that I'm in good hands when it's a musician with a day job.

Okay now later that night I received an EKG from a frustrated tech who said he was running late due to allergies. Man I hope they were allergies, or here comes the flu. I recommended Nasalcrom which has resolved my cedar fever for many years now. I wondered if I was dreaming because this guy was actually very serious, was Russian, had not been in Austin long and had fatigue type shirt and pants which is how you often see a Russian soldier dressed. Hummmm?

Chris made ten plus trips from home to be with me, as well as take care of KanDaaz her Arabian and our German Shepherd Bracken. I am so incredibly lucky to be sharing life with Chris. She did this while losing a lot of sleep and covering her and David's music business.

Sharon, Anthony, Julius, Rowan and Ken all passed support and love to me through Chris (plus a Starbucks certificate for chocolate croissants). Really sorry about the Seahawks. It shouldn't have ended that way!

I asked not to have visitors as things were pretty touch and go and I'm never social when I feel bad. Thank you Lloyd & Rusty and others who volunteered to help. I'm so sorry our Superbowl party group of 21 years had to cancel and stay home hopefully not alone. Mike Murray slipped in, however, I am forever thankful for his and Mary's friendship. When Chris brought me home Sunday evening, Liz and Bennie had come by, programmed our DVR so we could watch the Superbowl later. And left us Central Market chicken pot pie, tortilla soup, chocolate pie, fruit bowl and much more, so Chris didn't have to fix anything. We will reciprocate with a trip to McDonald's or something (-:-).

So I just wanted to say thank you. I told Mike previously that I was concerned about all his medical episodes, however now I have a deep understanding and empathy for folks undergoing serious medical treatment. Johnny so glad you're doing so well! Shelly you are amazing. I wish you the best Ted and am sorry for not communicating my concern for you and others in our Mo Ranch group. I miss you Dr. Larry Johnson!

I must admit I was scared and I cried like a baby when the Superbowl national anthem played, as one really wonders if they will come out the other side okay.

Love to all!  
Martin (Oliver to the medical staff)