

- - - - Wednesday, February 21, 2007 - - - -

1 - Draper here... You've Gotta Be Kidding

2 - Laree here, taking over with IronOnline news

Printable pdf version of this newsletter:

<http://davedraper.com/pdfs/irononline392.pdf>

You'll also find Dave's column from last week online at the link below.

<http://davedraper.com/url/column.php>

1 - Draper here... You've Gotta Be Kidding

It's the third week of February, a month before fabulous spring. How do I know that, you ask, these and other things equally scintillating and profound? I'm IronOnline's official timekeeper, an important post by which I am honored. I have a calendar hanging on the wall, a clock on my desk and a precise hour glass strategically situated on a nearby utility shelf. Very professional, very efficient. The year is 2007.

I also do the weather (it's pretty nice out) and give traffic reports (the freeway's a mess) and make up facts about most anything that comes to my mind -- baby dogs are also called adorable little puppies, standing barbell curls build neat muscles, squats are really hard, and on and on.

These duties plus my workouts keep me busy, leaving little time for recreation. My single pastime is hanging around waiting for inspiration to write the weekly IOL newsletter. Of course, inspiration is not always forthcoming, whereupon I must resort to invention or improvisation, black magic or pulling my hair out. The hair is going fast.

This week was a tad unlike the rest, an exception, you might say almost bizarre. I was dozing before my blank computer screen hypnotized by its pulsing drone when the phone rang. Who the heck can that be, was my first reaction. Why don't they go away, was my second. I picked up after the tenth ring and said with my usual charm, "WHAT?" She said, "Hi, Mr. Draper," a little song in her voice, and provided me with more stimulus stimulation than I could ever imagine.

The story goes something like this:

A month ago in a newsletter titled, "Health and Strength and the Joys of Living," I grumbled about shortness of breath and a pending visit to a heart doc to assess its origin. How bothersome! Medication or non-invasive stent placement I suspected were the possible solutions. I ain't no dummy. I trained at the Muscle Beach Dungeon, I'm a physical culturist, bodybuilder and authentic ironhead. I read Flex. I'm hip.

Well, three heart doctors -- cardiothoracic specialists -- known for their genius, advanced learning and meticulous skills, determined I was close in my suspicions (it is the heart), but not exact in my diagnosis (needs more than aspirin and a good night's rest). Get this: Curly, Moe and Larry, as I have affectionately named the amusing threesome, agreed the best fix is quadruple bypass surgery, "and while we're at it, let's repair that leaky valve. What the heck!"

Rats! Just when I was hitting my mid-sixty stride, I thought.

I thanked them for their generous contribution of fodder for this week's newsletter, my head reeling with dazzling thoughts of the copious writing material I suddenly and unexpectedly had at my disposal. Newsletters a-go-go! Good news comes in heaps and piles and quadruplicates.

Have you ever experienced true joy, dear friends?

Here's one of the best parts: As you read this newsletter (written over the weekend) I am recovering in postoperative care somewhere in the bowels of a huge, highly reputed hospital in San Jose, California. I'd have told you sooner, but I just found out -- no emergency, just swift action. I'll be back in the gym before spring, knocking out sets like golf balls at a driving range.

Number two of the many best parts: I'll be as good as new... well, almost new... maybe, slightly used... used, but not broken. Seriously, the reparations will provide enhanced oxygenation (this translates to improved energy and endurance... step aside), breathing comfort (no horrid gasping) and muscle recovery (huge and ripped), and reduced daily fatigue and post-set exhaustion. The old freight train is moving from the rusty county rails to the shiny interstate express tracks.

Number three: I did not cause the disease of the arteries by my addictive behavior 25 years ago. As the doctor said, "You did not do this; someone else did." Arteriosclerosis is mostly genetic. I inherited the vulnerability, though there are no signs of heart disease in my immediate family. Laree and I have some theories we'll discuss later.

Four, a big relief: It is not contagious, meaning Laree and Mugsy will not be shot.

Finally, I have the opportunity to experience and review the whole catastrophe firsthand and pass on my observations to you, assuming you're interested. To this tall tale I will add the commentaries of the ever-so-clever doctors for scientific flavor.

We're jazzed! Sounds like fun, Draper. Can't wait!

Like, for example, I'm told stuff like four to five days in the hospital for recovery; up and walking the day following surgery and every day thereafter; smoking in parking lot only (joke); no movement or exercise that will cause stress on the repairing sternum -- an eight-week process -- meaning no flies, pullovers, bench presses, hysterics, giggling and uncontrolled laughter. Grimacing is permissible. It seems it's the mending of the sternum, not the heart, that requires time and prevents desperate muscleheads like me from tossing the iron within a day or two of the incisions.

I imagine there will be pain (how loud can I scream MORE MORPHINE, MAXINE?) and I'll feel as sick as a dog for a few days. Then the impatience will spill from my guts and frustration and discouragement will penetrate the marrow of my bones. At the feet of these towering challenges I shall grow stronger, while simultaneously devising ways of training without undoing the good the doctors have so skillfully done. It is written that through the eye of a needle a camel can pass if he tries real hard... slightly paraphrased, incidentally.

Laree has made enough beef jerky to feed an army; I have sardines and tuna under my pillow and an iPod loaded with my favorite tunes (Kate Smith, The McGuire Sisters, The Mills Brothers, Lawrence Welk, Ink Spots) by the Queen of the Hop herself. Till this day I have never touched an iPod, for your information. It is this kind of information you will be receiving regularly now that I'm a Quipee (quad patient). Provocative, entertaining, cutting edge -- no pun intended.

Other good things coming from my downtime besides the pump repair is the overdue layoff to rest the rickety joints and dilapidated body systems under load for a long, long time. I shall bask in thankfulness as the days roll by, nibbling beef jerky and listening to the scintillating sounds of Tony Bennett and Vaughn Monroe. Gratitude, a sleeping giant, shall be awakened and revisited, as I grasp the truth that life goes on and not without me.

I proposed to the doctors that perhaps they could perform a tummy tuck while I'm under sedation... remove the loose skin under my chin. No soap! They're a stiff bunch.

Till next week, bombers, when the skies are clear and the horizons are where they always are -- before us and in the near distance. I'm fine, though I find gliding less fulfilling than soaring, landings less challenging than takeoffs.

Don't taxi when you can fly... and when you can fly, fly high.

God's Might... Dave

Post Note: I hope you realize I joke about my choice of music.

2 - Laree here, taking over with IronOnline news...

Dave neglected to tell you about those bike shoes I just ordered for him. Oh yes, he's getting on that thing. Does that mean I think he would have needed surgery if he'd been doing cardio? No. No, not really. But he's sure as heck going aerobic post-surgery. Oh, very yes.

So anyway, I wonder how many of you read Dave's first few paragraphs, then scurried down here to the basement to get the straight scoop. Truthfully, as I'm writing this I haven't seen his contribution and don't know if you got the fluffy version or the nitty gritty. I'm just guessing, especially given that I've been here the past few days since the decision was made, and have watched him get a little goofy from time to time. He seriously had me in stitches yesterday; if you got a dose of that (and I hope you did), you won't have a clue how to separate fact from fiction.

That's where I come in -- from the layman's point of view, where, of course, I belong.

The angiogram of January 31 showed too many blockages to stent, so we spent the last couple of weeks getting medical opinions before scheduling the surgery. Dave's surgeon will be replacing three arteries, as well as repairing the valve, which was damaged during congestive heart failure in 1983. Once recovered from the surgery, his breathing will get better and oxygen fueling his muscles will increase; the expectation is he'll be very pleased for having decided upon this non-emergency surgery.

I've done a ton of research on this and will report my findings in the blog. The culprit is likely a combination of the dense LDL sub-particles, plus inflammation caused by a mix of overtraining stress and red meat -- the problem not being saturated fat as many people believe, but the iron in the beef accumulating in his system. As a heart patient on blood thinners, it's a hassle to give blood, and therefore iron is building up and oxidizing. I'd bet anything oxidation and inflammation is what caused the blockage, and in addition to his new-found biking habit, you can add regular blood donations to Dave's new regime. I suspect not much else will change, in case you were curious.

If his medicated brain isn't clear enough to drop you a note next week, I'll report in with an

update. Dave's attitude is fabulous; he's eager to begin recovery and to test rehab strategies to write about -- you'll get a firsthand report. We covet your prayers that the skilled surgical team was alert, his nursing team attentive and his healing is quick. Stick around for the ride; we'll take this journey together.

Here's the link to the rest of the details:

<http://www.davedraper.com/url/heart-surgery.php>

<http://www.davedraper.com/url/heart-disease.php>

Laree

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IronOnline forum:

<http://www.davedraper.com/url/iol.php>

IronOnline blog:

<http://davedraper.com/blog/>

IOL One-on-One Personal Training:

<http://www.davedraper.com/url/trainers.php>

IronOnline health and fitness database:

<http://healthandfitnesswiki.com/>

Dave's Bomber Blend whey protein powder:

<http://davedraper.com/url/blend.php>

Pearl/Draper seminar dvd:

<http://davedraper.com/url/seminar-dvd.php>

Easy access to our online store:

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