

OrionWorks Sonova Quark

Brought to you by Steven Vincent Johnson and Darlene P. Coltrain, mailing address: 6666 Odana Road, #213, Madison, WI 53719. Email Steve: orionworks@charter.net. Email Darlene: dpcoltrain@gmail.com Web: <http://OrionWorks.com>. All material is Copyrighted © by Steven Vincent Johnson and Darlene P. Coltrain unless otherwise specified. Quark is brought to you by *OrionWorks*. Internal layout is assembled in InDesign CS5. Printing done on a HP Color Laserjet Pro MFP M277dw. Most covers were created using CorelDraw graphics suite and printed on a Cannon PRO-100 Photo Inkjet printer.

This edition was created for *Turbo Charged Party Animal*, #402.
Completed somewhere around December 21, 2019

Health Update

It's approaching three weeks since my prostatectomy of December 3rd. All considered, I'm doing remarkably well. I even felt confident enough to drive the car on short trips to the grocery store and back. That said, my recovery remains a long and winding road.

My surgeon, Dr. Sean Hedican, used advanced robotic technology to remove my prostate. The machine called the Da Vinci system. It costs two million dollars. The robotic system cut my need to be hooked up to a catheter from two weeks down to a single week. While it might be considered extravagant for the health care system to pay for a two million dollar machine to cut my need to use a catheter down to a week, it's the ability to perform far more precise microsurgery that makes the technology so valuable. The process is similar



Da Vinci Robotic System

to how technicians would handle highly radioactive materials via remote controlled robotic hand grippers installed in a safe room.

A total of six laparoscopic incisions were made to my abdomen. The majority of these incisions were

less than an inch in length. Some of the robotic arms were used to access and manipulate my internal organs. Other arms were used to expand my abdominal cavity with CO2 to give the surgeon visual access to the target area. It's my understanding that CO2 gas is used because it tends to be reabsorbed by the tissues faster than most other gases. OTOH, remember what it's like trying to chug a can of coke filled with carbonated bubbles. During the deflation process minute pockets of CO2 remain in the abdominal cavity. This can cause temporary cramps until these errant pockets of gas are completely reabsorbed. At the conclusion of the procedure most of my incisions only needed to be closed up using surgical glue. The glue eventually washes away after several showering sessions as the weeks pass by.

As I write this my lower abdominal area still feels vulnerable and highly sensitive. An occasional twist or turn can induce painful abdominal cramps. Some of this aftermath pain may be due to the fact that the surgeon didn't just remove my prostate and associated lymph nodes. He also deemed it prudent to remove a small portion of my bladder lining adjacent to my cancerous prostate tissues. This resulted in some reconstruction surgery on the inner lining of my bladder. When the prostate is removed the portion of the urethra that runs through the prostate is also removed. This shortens the length of remaining urethra when they go about reconnecting the ending to the bladder wall. What this all boils down to is that anyone who has their prostate removed must relearn how to pee again. This is due to the fact that a key sphincter-like muscle was removed. Fortunately, our bodies possess "backup" sphincter muscles which I must now learn how to rely on. Practically speaking, the relearning process starts after there has been sufficient healing of the affected internal organs.

It's likely to take months. At the moment, peeing remains an adventure for me

While the surgeon was exploring neighborhood of my abdominal cavity he found something else to remove besides my prostate and lymph nodes. He removed some lingering scar tissue that I had most likely been born with. The medical/technical term is something called as "*volvulus*", where scar tissue can affect the large and/or small intestines, potentially twisting them up in abnormal painful ways. This can lead to bad things like blocking blood flow to the colon, followed by gangrene, followed by death. The scar tissue matter was not news to me. When I was six years old I had two exploratory surgeries. It all started one day when I suddenly doubled over, screaming in pain. My parents didn't know what the problem was. While a home remedy of an enema fixed the immediate problem the doctors suspected there likely existed an internal abdominal obstruction that needed to be fixed. Within days exploratory was performed. And then... approximately two months I doubled over in pain again, and a second exploratory surgery was performed. I have no memory of experiencing the second bout of surgery. I wisely checked out. All I remember was waking up in the recovery room with another bandage over the same abdominal incision area. At least they used the same entry point.

Fast-forward to today, (sixty years later) it turns out the surgeon discovered additional scar tissue the original surgeons had not removed. As a result, I'm not just recovering from a prostatectomy but also from abdominal surgery akin to having an abdominal hernia fixed. My rehabilitation is likely to take a little longer than the average haul.

* * *

When I try to look at the Larger Picture, to put it bluntly, my life was turned upside down. While I remain a pilgrim of the new age movement, where I still have a sense of my conscious awareness being a permanent and indelible part of the Universe, (as are all the atoms and energy that make up the Cosmos), I learned that I needed to respect and honor how my lizard brain *felt* about the whole affair. No one asked him for his opinion, until now. It had no qualms about telling me about his profound sense of finiteness in the face of an impartial fate. A fantasy he had held on to, of living forever was ripped away. In its place - a visceral fear of my eventual termination as a conscious living being,

an ultimate fate of pending nothingness. These emotional confrontations have occasionally terrified and depressed me. While I hear my Higher Self reminding me of the fact that it's all part of the Cosmic Soup, of helping conscious aware human beings acquire a better sense of how utterly precious and unique each and every human life-span really is, my lizard brain continues to scream out: *I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it any-more!*

I suspect a good portion of what I have occasionally been feeling is all a part of the recovery process, perhaps particularly so for anyone diagnosed with cancer. The good news is that the surgeon removed all the offending tissues, plus all the adjacent lymph nodes - all which turned out to be negative. No cancer detected in the adjacent areas. That an encouraging sign. Eventually, I will recover from my surgery, certainly in the physical sense. There's so much left for me to do before I feel ready to check out. But perhaps I may need to do some prioritizing.

Or

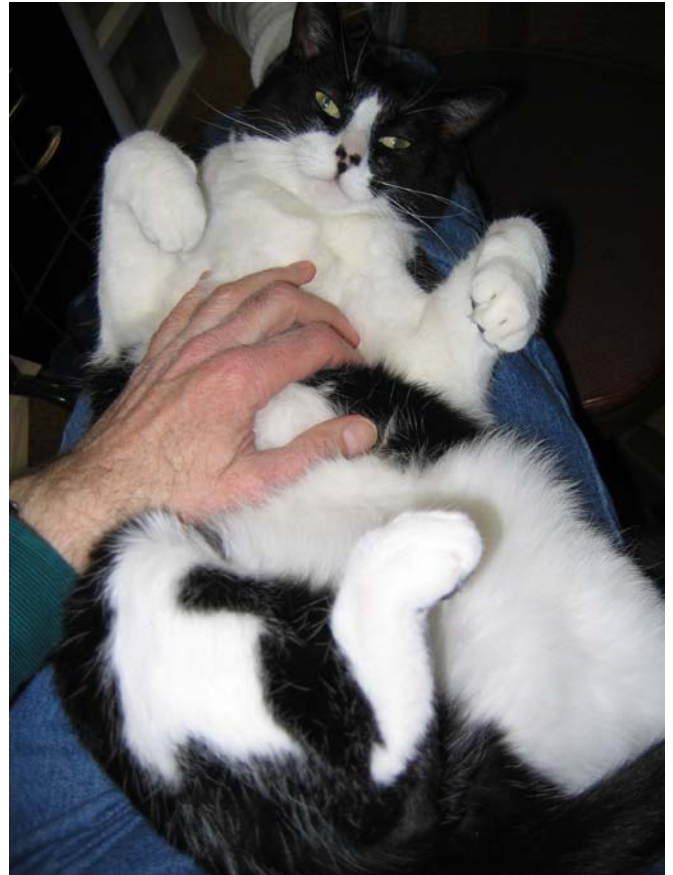
Mail Bag

REDACTED

* * *

My apologies for not responding to everyone's commentary. Hopefully I've removed the most obvious grammatical errors. At least I have a note from my doctor.

Or



Archival photo of Zoey receiving a belly massage - 2007