

Sonova Quark

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Knee Replacement Surgery

On March 11, Thursday, Darlene is scheduled to have her right knee replaced at UW Hospitals, East Side. I'm trying to get everything in order before the surgery. I know the immediate post-surgery period will involve at least two weeks of intense pain and discomfort. Hopefully, after that, things will gradually improve.

One of my main concerns is finding a good recliner for Darlene, but it hasn't been easy. She needs to test it herself, which has made getting to the right stores a challenge. We also need to ensure whatever we choose can be delivered before her surgery. Complicating matters, Darlene developed a fever and cough around February 13. As of February 21, she is recovering—slowly. Lots of coughing. All COVID tests have been negative. We keep testing. This complicates multiple pre-appointments to keep every week until March 11, the day of reckoning. Meanwhile, I have a few of my appointments not to miss.

At a recent TURBO gathering Jamie showed me all the tools and devices they used for Dianne's knee recovery. One thing I hadn't thought about was getting a baby monitor—a great idea! (I GOT ONE!) Later on, I realized I could use the camera to keep an eye on our bird feeder, tracking squirrels trying to take over the top platform. I have an excellent water rifle with great aim to keep the furry bastards at bay. FYI, I keep two cinder blocks at the base of the feeder stand stocked with nuts and seeds for the ground foragers. So, no need to lay on guilt-ridden laments about cruelty to wildlife, as

the squirrels get plenty of food. Just not on the top platform. The smarter ones have figured this out and now enjoy watching the water carnage from the cinder blocks as I teach the less-informed another lesson.

I remember that Jamie wisely arranged for some relief time during Dianne's recovery—perhaps an hour or so just to get out of the house, take a walk, or run errands. Helpers would come over to assist Dianne and keep her company. I seriously considered volunteering but never did. And I still feel bad about it, especially since we live just a couple of blocks away, closer than anyone else. It would have been so easy for me to have been of some assistance.

My excuse? I can be a bit of a mad scientist—someone who stays in his own world, tinkering away on his PC with multiple flashing monitors. I've self-diagnosed myself as having been inflicted with AMPS: *Absent-Minded Professor Syndrome*. When I'm deep in thought, working through a complicated concept or mentally rehearsing something—even while prepping salads in the kitchen—I can completely miss the fact that Darlene was saying something and assuming I was listening. I've lost count of how many times my absent-mindedness has gotten me into trouble. I tend to get so absorbed in my thoughts that I don't always make time for social interactions. It's one reason I joined **Luke's** bowling group. Our members include several current and former TURBO members, like Luke, Julie, Pat, Hope, Scott, Carl, and more—and some of their progeny. I've really enjoyed these casual outings—thanks, **Luke**!

Regardless of whether this is an accurate excuse or not, one rationale I fell back on for not volunteering to give Jamie a brief break was that I have gradually become more focused on taking care of Darlene's immediate needs. Like any spouse, my main priority has been ensuring my partner is safe and well-supported—especially because of her increasingly ailing and failing knee. Something as simple as going up and down the stairs has become not only painful but a potentially dangerous hazard for her to negotiate. I don't want a repeat of a prior trauma we both went through years ago when Darlene slipped and fell down the basement stairs and broke her arm near the shoulder socket. That ordeal required surgery, a metal plate, screws, pain drugs that Darlene detested taking, and months of physical therapy.

Taking all of this into account, Like what Jamie wisely requested, particularly during the first two weeks after Darlene's knee surgery, I might send out an email to the local TURBO group asking for a volunteer or two ...maybe just so I can forage at a grocery store to bring food back to the cave, or just to get out and walk around University Bay Drive.

I can think of another rationalization. Darlene thrives on face-to-face interactions. I know she hasn't had enough of such interaction for quite some time. Yes, there was *TURBOCON* where Darlene was able to participate and contribute... that along with our trip to *Windycon* (Chicago suburbs) last November. There are also online platforms like *Ravelry.com* where Darlene has become well-known in certain corners of that vast website. It's a huge place, globally populated with knitters, crocheters, and fiber artists talking to each other on just about every conceivable topic one can imagine. But cyber-interactions, as networking and informative as they can be, it is not the same thing as having real, in-person, engagement.

With this knee replacement adventure staring us in the face, it did cross my mind that perhaps a few sittings might help bring Darlene just a tad more in touch with the healing energy that comes from added exposure to Madison-based face-to-face connection.

Or



Darlene, 2011

While still in Idaho,
the both of us in the process
of bonding with Charm.
From the deserts of Idaho
we rescued Charm
who had either escaped
or had been deliberately abandoned
at a desert rest stop.