

## TITLE---Knees in need...!!

### *"Neighborhood Speak"-----by Steve Patterson—Federation of SR Neighborhoods*

Ever wonder what else is going on in a NewsPointer columnist's life that might interfere with "normal"? Maybe, maybe not? How about getting two knee replacements within 3 months of one another? Here is what a road laced with potholes can look like and put a neighborhood perspective into perspective. It is not this way for everyone, but this is what it was for me.

- Sept 20<sup>th</sup> new right titanium and high tech plastic knee (Zimmer brand) replaces a knee that is bone on bone and has been for 12 years. Released Sept 24<sup>th</sup>, but readmitted to hospital on Sept 26<sup>th</sup> with GI bleed. Endoscopy and Colonoscopy reveal nothing. Released Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, but taken off blood thinners (Coumadin). Readmitted to hospital Sept 29<sup>th</sup> with blood clots in the lungs. Filter dropped in cava artery via the neck to catch any future blood clots and prevent death. Put back on bloody thinners very very slowly. Released from hospital on Oct 4<sup>th</sup>. Pretty hammered physically, but physical therapy a must and continues.
- December 13<sup>th</sup> new left knee replaces another bone on bone knee of 12 year duration. Minimum of complications with great care being taken to manage blood thinners. Patient released on Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, very exhausted and fatigued. January 11<sup>th</sup> it is discovered that patient has a severe case of anemia. Symptoms are lethargy and really low energy. A program of iron pills gets underway. On January 18<sup>th</sup> the cava artery filter is removed with one day visit to Marin General and a light general anesthesia. The case of anemia has now improved dramatically. Only remaining issue—how long blood thinners will continue—6 mos. or a year? Soon will be biking once endurance improves from walking and plan on recapturing my lifestyle. So amazing what walking without joint pain feels like. I did not anticipate the joy of it all.
- Costs for right knee and left replacement are billed to insurance company, with negotiated payments. Right knee bill--\$350,000++ / Left knee bill--\$150,000++ = \$500,000 but as a practical matter lower amounts are actually paid out. With the many people in our country with no health insurance how would a person in need ever be able to consider having such a procedure completed??!

So that is one person's story of getting immersed in the medical system. It is very taxing emotionally and can mentally and physically wear you out. It is vitally important that every patient learn to "Speak Up" and take responsibility for being a partner in their care. Doctors and nurses can often get overwhelmed themselves, so closely monitoring details of your own care is vital all along the way. Also, my kudos to the people at Marin General for their friendly, compassionate, genuine efforts on my behalf.

**Imagine:**

Now that Extreme Pizza has begun the "pizza wars" in San Rafael by heavily spraying graffiti on the front of the "yellow submarine" building of Pizza Orgasmica. It all may have backfired on the Extreme folks. Not only did they get arrested but it looks like it filled up Orgasmica with customers and emptied out Extreme Pizza of those paying end users.

But imagine, if the nail salons or the massage studios went to war and started to graffiti their front facades. There would be more buildings that would be "tagged" than "untagged". Since many of the nail salons are run by people from Korea, I would guess that may not happen. And it appears many massage studios are run by those of Asian descent where graffiti is not part of the DNA. So maybe this will be unique to the world of pizzas—and whatever Neanderthals who see graffiti as a way to make statements.

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