

This episode is way better watched as a video. But for you diehard readers:

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Proem

A busy and eventful year. The top line is that my health and mobility are stable. If we take it on average, I'm doing what I want to do. I got a new diagnosis of type two diabetes, which triggered my efforts to lose weight. I've lost 35 pounds to date. Everything else health-wise is mildly to severely annoying, with brief episodes of symptoms affecting basic function.

Our sons, daughters-in-law, and grandsons thrive and amaze us. We're looking forward to our 50th wedding anniversary in June. We'll celebrate over the 4th of July weekend on Bloom Mountain in Flatwoods, West Virginia. I'm busy with my work, which includes podcasting, PCORI, and consulting gigs. We traveled a lot, and we have more travel in the works.

Wheelchairing in the Snow

Oh, Jojo, I'm not taking you out. Nope, come on.

Alright, I'm going to go for a ride in the snow. Here we are. It's the 20th of December, a few days before Christmas, and here we are having some snow.

San Diego

Um, okay, so what have we done this year traveling-wise? I think we started in January. We went to San Diego to visit my sister, Jessica, and we went for about a week and stayed with some friends, Laura and Fred. Oh, my goodness. They were the best hosts, and we enjoyed hanging out with Jessica and her



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friends. We took a side trip to visit Luc Pelletier, and we went and saw Tania Marien, one of my podcasting buddies, who came to meet us at Luc's. That was really enjoyable.

Florida

I went to Florida in February, and we visited Patty and Joel, who are West Virginia friends, and there were. We had friends we stayed with who met us there, Linda, Alan, and Kathy Bloom. So that was really fun. And Charles.

We went to a pretty amazing street fair. They blocked off a few square blocks of town where they lived and had this chalk festival where people drew. I'll put some pictures of that in this episode.

Cloudland Canyon State Park

I'm just trying to remember where else we went. We went to, maybe it was April. We went to the Cloudland Canyon State Park, which I can also put in some clips of. It's a mess through here. Oh, my goodness. Look at this. Isn't this beautiful? Oh, we're here. Look at that. There's not more steps.

New Wheelchair

So anyway, the thing about travel is this sort of stuff. How am I going to manage the infrastructure and pathways? That's a question for me because I had an experience this year in my chair where I ran out of juice unexpectedly, and I ended up having to push my chair quite a ways in DC. This got me freaked out, so I started looking into different shares, and I ended up buying a different share called a Ranger Quattro XL, which is another folding wheelchair. It's a little more expensive. It got written up as having more battery life, and it had little wheelies on the back, which I liked because they felt like that was a little safer. It had slightly larger front wheels, which I thought would help me—just trying to get over the lips. Ooh. Like that. It didn't have more battery life, even though it was advertised as having twice as much battery life.

Testing Nimbleness of Chair

And it, I felt like, the joystick wasn't as, wasn't as sensitive. So, I didn't take corners quite as well. I'm in my old chair now; you can see it here. It responds pretty well to any kind of turns I want to make. I am considering selling. I am trying to earn enough money on the new one to get a new version of the chair I'm in. I will try to do a couple of these going by these trees.

See how these trees are; this one's easy. How about that one? It's just smooth, but sometimes. It's not so smooth and a lot harder to get across. My face is cold. Okay, let's see how this chair does. Oh yeah, that's a little rough, but it handled it pretty well.

See now, this one's tricky. Oh, look at that. See? Okay, I'm going to see it now. I'm going to turn around. It's a pretty nice turnaround, isn't it? Let's see how this goes.

Music -Lechuga Fresca

Let's talk about music. Even though I'm cold and have a runny nose, now hear my whistling. That's my whistling 'cause of my cold breathing. Let's see what I do right here. So I played a lot in the Lechuga Fresca, and we got together maybe about once a month. We had a few gigs. I feel like I've been learning a lot and improving. Then we had a challenge because our bass player, Josh, the heart and soul of the



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band, had some hearing issues. Oh, let's see what I do. See, that does well there. He couldn't play, so we had to take some time off to recover. And then, the person who's been pretty much our arranger, Jon, our trumpet player, decided he needed to be earning some money.

And I can say that I earned \$54 and some cents last year. So, I am a professional musician, but. That's not enough for anybody to live on, and he needs, so he's dropping out. Then, one of our percussion players had a bike accident that hurt her shoulder. And anyway, so we're on hiatus. We're trying to keep the group together by having dinners and stuff.

Dixieland Hot Jazz

Meanwhile, I joined a Dixieland band, where I played old, traditional, and hot jazz. It's a New Orleans Jazz, uh, bluey Armstrong, and oh, that is really fun. It's a group with a keyboard player. There are two clarinets, saxophone, alto sax, banjo, tuba, and trumpet.

And me. I'm Bari Sax. And even though there aren't Bari Saxes traditionally in New Orleans, old jazz, I'm trying to learn bass and trombone parts, but it's different music. It's really fun. And so I feel like, um. It's still very motivating.

Cuba

Another musical travel thing we'll do next year is at the end of January, we're going to Cuba for a music camp sponsored by a fellow Dan Fox in this community, and he hosts. These are twice a year to Havana, once a year to Brazil, and once a year to New Orleans. We'll go for a week, and my wife is going with me, and she's not a musician, and there'll be, I think, one other non-musician going, and there's, I think, 11 of us all told.

And in the morning, we'll get private lessons. We'll have ensemble practice in the afternoon, and the rest of the day is tourism and music. And it happens to be the week of the Havana Jazz Festival. So, musically, life has been pretty darn good for me.

Learning

I'm proud that I can learn. I'm pleased that I can find friendly people who are musicians. They're open, friendly, encouraging, and everybody works on stuff—relatively low ego. I'm still taking lessons with Jeff Harrington, and I think it's been almost 15 years since I've taken lessons with him, and it's amazing.

He's a great, encouraging, appreciative teacher, and he follows my lead where I want to go. I'm just making improvements in leaps and bounds. Oh, my goodness. I'm closed now. I dunno how you guys are feeling, but you're probably all warm listening or watching.

Podcasting

Okay, so what about this whole podcasting business? This year, I expanded my I'm doing a lot of videos. That's a big part of what I'm doing. The adding-on video, a comprehensive episode, takes me 40 to 80 hours. I'm only doing one episode a month now because I'm doing the interview, the recording, the editing of the transcript and the audio, and then creating a couple of four- to ten-minute YouTube video podcasts and then four 60-second videos for social media. The thing is that I seem to be constantly



learning something new, and it takes a while for me to get it all stuck in my brain, and then I forget specific steps. So I have to do stuff over, but. I'm really enjoying it.

It's a hoot, the whole conundrum of health communication. This is an example of health communication and mobility, and it's fun using different devices, so this is my GoPro Pro media. Anyway, I'm getting home, God, because I am Cold. Cold, cold.

Reflection

So, my friends and loved ones, my video letter ends. I especially enjoyed sharing the music from the Tuesday Hot Jazz Band and Lechuga Fresca Latin Band. I'll end with Lechuga Fresca. I'm grateful for an open heart and the wherewithal to handle what flows out and in. I'm blessed with the privilege of sharing the buzz of a vibrant and challenging network, and you humble me.

Who create ripples of peace and generosity. See you around the block.



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