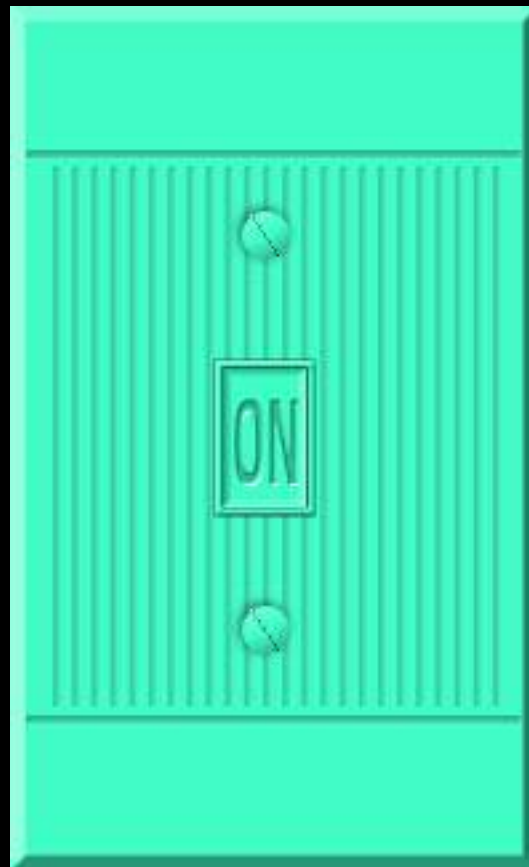


Fandom





A MOST PECULIAR THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO TODAY!

A YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

Here we go, another year down the damn tube and while I haven't been discovered for the genius I've always wanted to be, at least I haven't been discovered for the complete fuck-up I've always been (but don't ask DeDee). The older I get, the more I realize how foolishly I squandered my first 58 years and trying to catch up the the realities of impending oldpharthood may be an impossibility. Now that I've lost my looks, energy, and with my earning power on the wane, I'm puzzled and horrified just what to do next.

It finally dawned on me that living isn't about the sex, drugs, rock n' roll and a big collection after all. Sure, having great stories makes growing older more fun, but it's really about what financial condition you'll be in when you're unable to work; or, maybe you can work, but can't find a job. I lost my last job at 9/11 and took a year and a half to find another. There were a number of reasons; one being, nobody wants to hire an old guy; next being, as a computer graphics person, if you work one job for any number of years, once cut loose, you're that many years behind the technology eightball of places you want to work.

We've been getting our annual statements from Social Security and can't help wincing at what we're entitled upon retirement. The big questions are... when do you retire? Will Social Security still exist when it's time to bail?

You can retire at 62, sure, but you get appreciably less than should you wait till 67, and even that isn't a suitable income. Surely the government is betting you'll croak before collecting. It appears utility bills are going up, up, up, expense for everything else is doing the same; my mother being 92 is just not having a good time and I, the shitty son, can't do much to alleviate her problems.

No doubt the best thing DeDee and I have done was buy a house years ago that has tripled its value, but that's problematic at best, and much depends on how many more ugly children move into your neighborhood and spend the day standing bleary eyed in the middle of the street in front of your house. But again, if we don't have the house paid off in the next ummmm, 8 years, we may be in big trouble.

I've had a calamitous medical year and just can't imagine what would happen had I not kick-ass insurance, which will certainly collapse once I retire. I'm open to ideas.

Merric and I were chatting about what a hoot it would be should a number of fans form a corporation, buy a small apartment complex and create our own fannish retirement community. What a place to spend those twilight years. Sigh, if fans only had two nickels to rub together. Well, it was just an idea. ■

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**
From
DeDee
& Alan

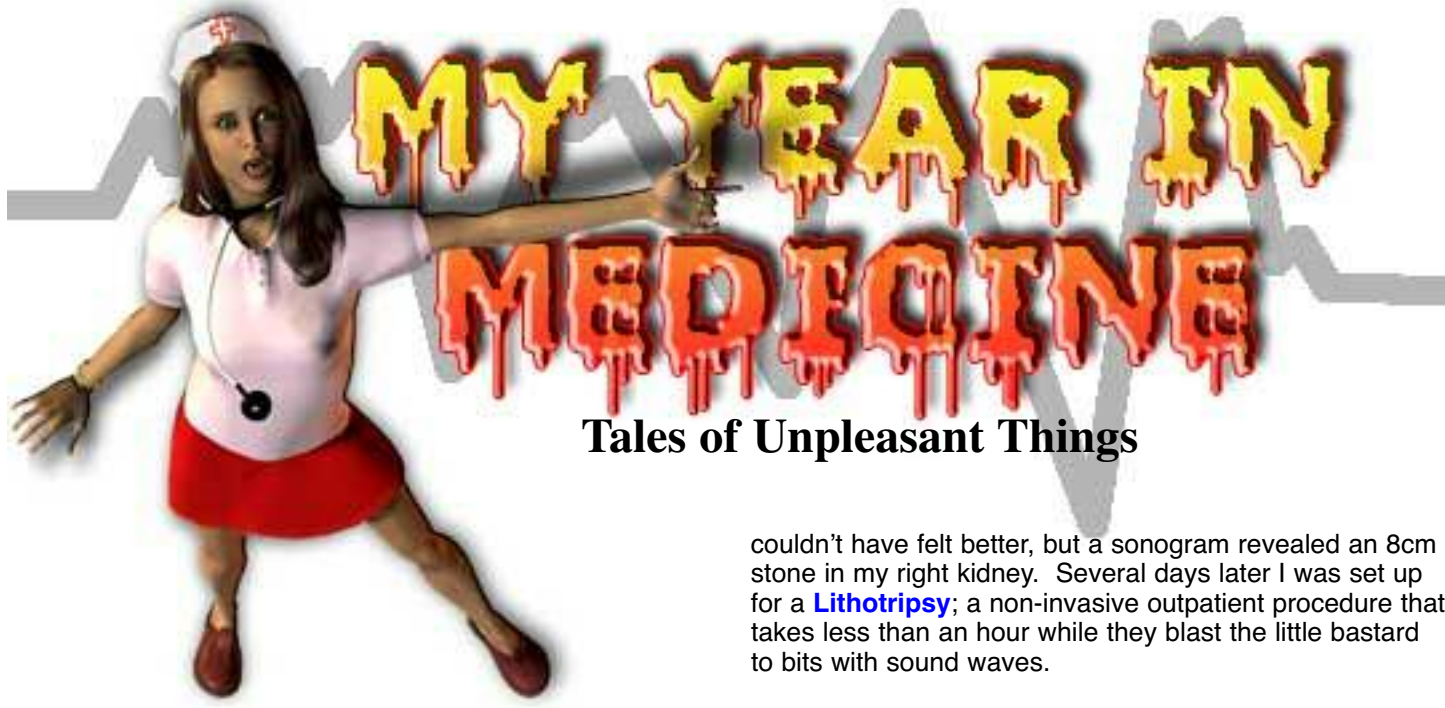


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This issue created entirely in Quark XPress 6.5 on the Mighty Mac G4. For info or to chat, email us at: Vegasite@ispwest.com.

Please visit our website at www.fansite1.com where you'll find some cool arty bits and a lot of free filler art for your own zines. See elsewhere for behind the scenes at the webworx.





Tales of Unpleasant Things

In the 70s I had the great fortune of spending an afternoon with Bud Abbott in his home outside L.A. Sure, he was old and frail, but in great spirits and looked spry enough. He said something I've never forgotten: "If you have your health, you have everything". The older I get, the more I realize just how true it is.

2005 hasn't been kind and seems I've spent a great deal of time and money on one medical calamity after another. In the end, I have nothing to complain about, believe me; there are a lot of people far worse off than myself and I'm soooo lucky to have dodged a number of big-ass bullets. One thing making medical things unnecessarily creepy, is you don't (at least I don't) know what's really happening or what's supposed to happen or for that matter, what shouldn't happen.

I was put at relative ease when friends who have undergone similar procedures told their tales and thus I'm spilling the beans that anyone facing similar ordeals might find comfort. So herewith is a detailed telling of my medical adventures during 2005 with the hope that should you need the same procedures, you'll have an idea what to expect.

LIKE A ROLLING STONE...

I had just dropped DeDee off at the airport to visit the folks; leaving me with nothing to do that weekend but watch trashy movies and swath myself in beer and pizza but the fates had other plans. On the way back to the car, I had a small twinge in my right lower back; "I must have pulled a muscle" I thought.

Later that night, the pain grew from "What the hell is that?" into the "not funny anymore" phase and by 8:00, bent over in agony I drove recklessly to a nearby hospital. Barely able to walk into the emergency room, a nurse made an on-the-spot diagnosis "umm - **kidney stone**" and plopped me on a gurney. After a whopping shot-in-the-ass I

couldn't have felt better, but a sonogram revealed an 8cm stone in my right kidney. Several days later I was set up for a **Lithotripsy**; a non-invasive outpatient procedure that takes less than an hour while they blast the little bastard to bits with sound waves.

The gurney crashed into the procedure room... disappointing.

Not the grand operating theatre with concerned medical students looking on, taking notes; but an odd device-cluttered closet full of electrical gadgets, monitors, dials and such where you could build a spaceship, a time machine or change a tire in a matter of seconds. Here I was moved onto a table, so cold and uncomfortable I couldn't wait to be knocked out. I thought it a nice touch the doctor introduces the staff; here's miss so and so who will be catheterizing you; Joe Blow will be in charge of anesthetics and Mr. Sulu will be running the **Lithotripter**. Everyone gave a little wave; and the gas man matter-of-factly whispered he'd be stuffing a tube down my throat during the procedure and raised a little plastic mask in front of my face. In less than a heartbeat I became one with the table.

Instantly I awoke in the recovery room and DeDee was the first face I saw. The doctor came in claiming a rousing success and after an hour of recouping I was discharged and sent home; ready for work the next day.

Immediate Results:

Pain gone from back and except for peeing Hawaiian punch for the next few days, there has been no sign of kidney stones.

Long Term Results:

Increasing water intake will limit any reoccurrence.

Resolve:

I now drink an at least 64 ounces of water a day, thus keeping weight down and system flushed.

Observation:

Las Vegas is known as the "Kidney Stone Capital of the World". The heat is so dry, people are playing golf when it's 115° and aren't aware they are losing body fluids at an alarming rate. Rehydrate.





ONE FOR THE GIPPER...

I'm always amused when famous and/or political figures share the same indignities as the little guy. Nixon with his **phlebitis**, Clinton with his **bypass**, Cheney with everything, but particularly Ronald Reagan and his colonoscopy.

My doctor is a proactive sort and thinks anyone hitting 50 should immediately suffer a certain amount of indignity if only to prove the tests are completely unnecessary. Thus, being closer to 60 than 50, I was well overdue for my share.

I was scheduled for a **colonoscopy** and given the implements of preparation. Those being, a small bottle of saline laxative and a gallon plastic container with a handful of powdered crystals on the bottom. This was a two day operation; one day for (ahem) cleansing my cosmic being and one day for the deed itself.

The cleansing would be the toughest part of the procedure being allowed to eat only yellow or green **Jello®** for two days prior. At 8:00 a.m. the morning before I downed the entire 10 ounce saline laxative. At noon, filled the plastic bottle with water and began chugging the contents in the 8 hour allotted time. Now I must tell you, the taste is very much like flat **Tang®** with the consistency of Okra slime. But it's not about the taste, it's about the results, and the results were immediate, unforgiving and continuous.

Came the dawn, DeDee and I arrived at the hospital for another outpatient procedure. Being the doctor was 3 hours late, we were at last called into the pre-op room where I donned the gown and booties. This time, I would have to walk to a darkened office and hop onto a small but comfy table. Here I waited.

At last a fellow came in and hooked an IV to my left hand. I couldn't help but look around at all the gadgets and implements. What's that? Could it be **Indiana's whip** or just the colonoscope? I would soon find out. Zero hour... "Turn on your left side" said the doctor. The assistant brandished a huge syringe and screwed the nozzle to the IV on my hand. "Is that the lights out?" I asked. "It sure is", he replied, and hit the plunger. I had just enough time to say "I feel tingly all o...". I was beginning to like this stuff.

Instantly I awoke to the sounds of gunfire. Could I be tripping through time like **Billy Pilgrim** waking up in Gettysburg or Dresden? I focused on a nurse sitting at a desk near me who said nonchalantly "During the procedure, your colon is pumped full of air" and added "It's OK to fart in here". And thus, I spent the next hour in a room full of old men farting in some ghastly colonic fugue.

DeDee showed up in time to whisk me away that I may fart in the comfort of my own bed.

Immediate Results:

Like Reagan, a **polyp** was found and determined benign ("10 feet in" bragged the doctor).

Long Term Results:

Because a polyp was found, I have to go back in 5 years for another go.

Resolve:

Will not stick any hoses up my ass.

Observation:

Since my entire system was blown completely empty, the next time the (ahem) train came through the tunnel proved to be a half hour of intense pain, profuse sweating and shakes.

THINGS OF A MANLY NATURE...

The **prostate** is an evil creation. Nobody thinks much of it unless it's on the fritz and it's been said that should any man live long enough, it will, without fail, cause problems. Every 3 months I routinely have a blood test. Of the things they check is my **PSA** score that generally comes in a reliable "4". Over the period of just a month, a tenderness and low grade pain coming from the general direction of my prostate caused the Doc to do another PSA which came in a whopping 28! **Prostate Cancer** is usually a slow moving critter but evidently, something was awry and doctor suggested a biopsy.

Once more, the fates had me baring my ass for strange men and this time, without benefit of anesthetic. You are, however allowed to watch a sonogram monitor as the doc earns his keep. Much like those aluminum cigar tubes, the sonogram plies it's way up your ass. An insidious wire device with a pair of nasty jaws at the end is introduced to do the actual dirty work and what happens next is not for the faint of heart. Sure, the doc gives you a heads up, but there is a sudden and loud ca-chunk! - exactly like that made by a power-stapler and quite frankly, the sensation of having your prostate power-stapled is right on the money; it took my breath away! What happens is, the jaws burst through your colon wall travelling at 200 mph (really) into the prostate and take a small bite.

By the third ca-chunk I had lost interest in the sonogram and was ready to call it a day yet we were only half done. The doctor quipped "You're taking this better than most men!" which I took as a meaningless comment to keep me quite OR most men actually run screaming off the table into the street which is what I had in mind. After 6 ca-chunks I sat upright; stunned and sure that should I stand, my entire blood supply would pour from my ass in a matter of seconds.

While no such calamity ensued, I was informed I may see some "blood in your semen". I am here to tell you there was in fact no blood therein. There was however a fucking geyser of blood shooting from my cock like a low budget splatter film turning a mere Big O into a "What the Fuck?!" And in deference to your partners, it took a good half dozen such bloodlettings before things returned to normal.

I was hardly over that trauma, when the biopsy reports came back claiming 4 cancerous tumors were found residing within the confines of my prostate. The Doc was emphatic my prostate had to be dealt with immediately and outlined several procedures, from blasting with photon rays, to implanting radio-active "seeds" to an utter "radical prostatectomy".

From the beginning of my family tree, no male had lived past the age of 60, succumbing mostly to cancer. Sure,





they were all power-smokers, but seeing my father, his sister and my mother's brother all die of cancer within a year of each other, prepared me for an early demise. Perhaps early detection and modern technology would get me out of this one.

The pain was growing unbearable so I asked the Doctor to chuck out the whole thing. And thus it came to pass, that on August 18, 2005 I made a 6 a.m. hospital visit for a **radical prostatectomy**.

I named my prostate "Roger", in hopes he would soon be "Roger... Over and Out!"

If I may digress. . .

Every eight weeks since 1974 I have donated blood.

When the Doctor suggested having a few pints put aside for the operation (just in case), I called the local blood services clinic but was stunned when the gal said there was a \$500 charge for the service. I made a comment that after all these years of giving blood, I should get it for nothing. "Bingo" she said, "You said the magic words". She explained they aren't allowed to offer the free service, but if you bring it up yourself, you're in. Thus, in one sitting, we took two bags of ummm-good A negative blood and put them on ice till the operation.

Gowned and gurnied, I was wooshed down one corridor after another until we plowed through the doors of the O.R.. "Humph" I thought, another room full of old radio parts. "This is Kiesha", said the Doc, pointing to a small gal tending a veritable wall of shiny instruments. Hundreds of them, reminding me of the wooshing gun racks in "Matrix".

"How many of those you gonna use?" I inquired.

"All of them" she said with a wicked smile. That shut me up.

So we're on the same page, the prostate is this garlic clove shaped organ wrapped around the urethra at the base of the bladder. To remove the thing, you snip the urethra above and below the prostate and stretching the urethra, stitch it onto the bladder. Also during the procedure, a number of lymph nodes and surrounding tissue is removed.

I moved to the operating table, under a nova-bright light and had just gotten comfy when the gas-man surreptitiously raised the mask and I was out before it touched me. 6 hours later I awoke in a comfy bed, in a comfy room. The operation took 3 hours and the rest of the time, I was parked in the hallway, awaiting an empty room. Easing in and out of consciousness, a nurse came in and detailed the goings on of my environs. "Here's the Morphine button" which, every 10 minutes allows you a quick pain killer.

The Doc appeared saying the operation was a complete success and the nurses... "will have you up and walking around tomorrow!". "Fat chance" I thought and went back to sleep. The rest of the day proceeded in vignettes. I awoke to find a bowl of ice cream in front of me. I awoke



to find the ice cream melted. I awoke to find the bowl gone. I awoke to find a bowl of Jello® in front of me. Only able to move my arms, I clumsily grabbed the bowl before it too vanished and tried eating. I never realized just how delicious Jello® was.

Exploration.

I decided to see what state I was in and slowly lowering my hand under the covers, skimming over my stomach... there it was... from pupik to pubis, a row of 23 metal staples. "They've installed a zipper" I thought. Moving further south, I found... the horror of a rubber hose protruding from my pecker, taped to my thigh and snaking over the side of the bed.

A visit from the nurse would remove any mystery of my circumstance. The hose terminated in a plastic bag hanging from the bed. At regular intervals, she would empty the contents into a plastic canister and holding it up like a trophy, showing whatever was coming out of me, was thick, black and nasty. Also, she would empty this hand grenade size, clear plastic device called a Jackson Pratt Pump. A thin hose, pushed through the abdomen into the operated insides, with the grenade thing squeezed, it returns to original shape while slowing sucking the goop from your guts... clever.

The next day, between visits to empty bag, bucket and grenade, the nurse, as promised showed up to pry me from the bed. Sitting up was an effort, not only from the morphine, abdominal pain and fear my guts would explode! I shambled down the hall, hunched and inching along, pushing my drug dripper with one hand and toting my catheter bag in the other. Clearly, under duress, the first thing to go is vanity. If you look more like Yoda, feel like crap and your gown is flapping open, you just don't give a fuck.

Thus, three times Friday and Saturday I was pried from the bed and mushed down the corridor and back, but the fun didn't stop there. Also three times a day came the ritual urethral backwashing where 66 CCs of saline are shot up the tube into the bladder. I would have confessed to anything, easily given up the formula for the secret rocket fuel and divulged the names of the leaders of the underground.

It amazes me you can be cut open on Thursday, and sent home on Sunday but such was the case.





It was good to be home. Yes, I was still toting the catheter bag, which I named Betty and for the next foreseeable future, we would remain very close. Fortunately, the night before entering the hospital, I rented a dozen movies and was hungering for entertainment when upon my return. It was impossible to sleep in bed, so I set up shop on the living room couch and like Cleopatra on her barge, reigned over the living room for the next two weeks.

Those two weeks consisted of waking, sleeping, trying to eat and trying to walk. The catheter is a miserable device and wagging Betty to and fro was a dreadful experience. Now catheters aren't all bad however. With a catheter installed, you can drive from Vegas to San Francisco without ever needing a pee break and you can sit through the entire "Berlin Alexanderplatz" without moving. Alas, however, you feel like doing neither.

DeDee was doting enough, bringing goodies and seeing to my needs. Showering was an experience, tethered to a bag and all, but I just stood in the shower and let DeDee hose me down. It was a necessary thing, as evidently, the drugs leaching from your skin give you a cadaverous odor and a shower was always welcome.

I was only taking one drug for pain, several times a day, which boasted on the label "Avoid rapid head movement". I had no clue what that meant, until DeDee offered to brush my hair. Sitting down, I let her have at it and at one point, the brush caught a bit of twisted hair jerking my head not more than a half inch to the left. Suddenly my head began spinning, faster and faster, then Pop! I passed out colder than a mackerel and remained so for the next few minutes while DeDee keeping her cool, preventing me from sliding to the floor. Phew! I immediately stopped the drug to find I really didn't need it. The pain was minor and a Tylenol at night to help me sleep was all I really needed.

I watched Betty's contents go from black, to **Hawaiian Punch**, to **Kool-Aid** to **Bud Lite**. Two weeks passed and an early Monday morning had us at the Doctor's ready to make Betty just a memory. The divorce proceeding was impromptu and ungainly. Standing over a tall waste bin, the Doc cut the cord, letting Betty tumble in. Giving a yank on the remaining stub, the catheter slid quickly from my bladder into the bin and while not a painful experience, felt like pulling a pound of liver through a keyhole.

Free, free at last. A joyous occasion, not only to be without Betty but to get news from the Doctor on the outcome of the operation. There was good news and bad. The bad being, there were not 4 cancerous tumors as originally thought, but a whopping 9 of the bastards. The good news was, there was no apparent evidence the cancer had spread outside the prostate. He was most emphatic on my good fortune saying "Another few weeks would have made the difference". A sobering thought. No chemo or drugs will be needed.

I thought for sure, another week and I'd be back to work - at least in moderation and we celebrated Betty's farewell with a visit from Joyce and Arnie and screening a dreadful potboiler called "**The Ghouls**".



Later that day I looked forward to getting back to some sort of normalcy. Sure, I had to walk with a cane, certainly I couldn't sit up straight but it would all pass. Hell, we were only two weeks from the operation. Looking back, it wasn't all that bad. Sure, it'll take a few weeks to get up to speed, but the worst part is over.

Uh Oh...

It couldn't have been later than 8 p.m. when it was clear there was a problem. I had stopped peeing at some point and the pressure building in my bladder was becoming painful. DeDee called my doctor who said flee to emergency and get re-catheterized immediately. By the time we arrived, I was actually screaming. The pain was incredible and more intense, coming in waves. DeDee found a wheel chair and there I sat, screaming my head off in the crowded emergency room.

Interesting to note, that should you not actually be dripping blood, you sit, regardless with everyone else in the emergency room. There I sat, watching (between screams) of fat little families, hopping, laughing and dancing in to see the doctor, for over an hour. Meanwhile, the entire populace of the waiting room had backed themselves into a corner as far from me as possible without sitting in the parking lot.

At last, I was called in and placed in Room 13 (of course). Once on the table a young, female doctor came in with a huge syringe in one hand and a (ulp!) catheter in the other. She gave me the shot - 60 CCs of morphine. "There!" she said, "That would knock out an elephant!" and certainly, a majority of the pain vanished quickly; but since I hadn't been knocked out, I paused to reevaluate my opinion of elephants. She grabbed my pecker slathering it with lubricant. "So far", I thought, "This is pretty nice". Then came her snaking that thing into my bladder. No go... she brought it out to find it caked with blood clots. Again, with the same results. Again and again. Each time eliciting screams of agony. Something was blocking the catheter. A dozen times she tried, all with the same results. Oddly, if snaking out my plumbing wasn't peculiar enough, at one point she broke into an odd tale of how hard good men are to find in Las Vegas. "Oh crap" I thought, "I'm in big trouble". The head doctor on call came in and gave it a go... no go.

My doctor showed up about 10:30 p.m. and surveyed the devastation. Another operation was in order and off we went to the O.R. his Mission Impossible Team once again at the ready. Whatever he was going to do had to be better than what was happening. The gas-man bypassed the pleasantries and I was out in a microsecond. I awoke in the Intensive Care at 3:00 am. DeDee was there and so alas, was Betty.

What a night. The Doc brought me up to speed; part of my urethra had collapsed after the catheter was removed that morning, packing me with blood clots and setting off this chain of events. To make things even more ridiculous, in her catheterizing frenzy, the nurse had punctured my bladder.

The events of this one night had eclipsed my entire 4 day stay in the hospital. Instead of returning to work in





another week, it became two more weeks on the catheter and on the couch.

Time Marches On...

So here we are, two months later, Betty has finally gone the way of other old bags as the staples; I am off the couch and back to work. At this point, all that remains is a little incidental pain here and there and an immense scar - a surefire ice-breaker at any party, but all is fading slowly and perhaps we'll find 2006 a year free from medical calamities. Should anyone ask however, I'll relay the tale of devastation from 4 weeks on the catheter.

Immediate Results:

Prostate gone forever; any sign of cancer gone for the immediate future and hey, I'm down 24 pounds; if I could just stand up straight, I'd look great!

Long Term Results:

Every six months getting another PSA test and hope the cancer levels remain at "0".

Resolve:

Give an occasional thought to cleaner, if not clean living.

Observation:

Because of my family history, cancer will no doubt reappear some day and smite my ass... but it ain't today.



On the Mend

Here are a few celebs that have dealt with prostate cancer. Most are still alive.

- Arnold Palmer • Richard Petty • Colin Powell
- Harry Belafonte • Robert Goulet • Robert DeNiro
- Louis Farrakhan • Merv Griffin • Rudy Giuliani
- Charlton Heston • John Kerry • Nelson Mandela
- Michael Milken • Pat Robertson • Bill Bixby
- Norman Schwarzkopf • Marion Barry • George Foreman
- Bob Dole • Jerry Lewis • Sidney Poitier • Frank Zappa
- Sean Connery • Roger Moore and many others.

I'm 100% certain the only thing saving my bacon was early detection. Thus I implore all fans, yes, gals too, to get a cancer screening soon. Just a few drops of blood can save your life.

WEBSITE IN THE NEWS

(My Website, My News)

I love the word "Languish" it's soft, squishy and kind of sexy. I've been using it a lot lately in regards to my website which has been unattended for so long now. Finally I've gotten a chance to update the thing with some of my latest arty bits, plus plenty of **FREE, FREE** filler art for you faneds out there!

It's in the works and only the gallery is open as I write this. The **FREE ART** bit would be open except for my loaning a box of newer cartoons to Woody Bernardi. A week later he moved to Boston and has been "unresponsive" to my e-mail pleas. Either I'll get the stuff back or give up and just upload the same old stuff from last time (sigh).

In the meantime, drop by, check out whatever is there at the moment, drop a line and so on.

www.fansite1.com

Geritol Entertainment

Growing up in Hollywood, there was scarcely a night I couldn't be found at the Roxy, Whiskey, Troubadour, Hollywood Palladium and so on. Entertainment was everywhere and seeing new performers was a nightly routine. All these years later and living in Las Vegas I find it funny as hell just who is still around and making a Senior Citizen's comeback. The other night we saw Neil Sedaka and found him much more enjoyable that I ever could have the first time around. He was absolutely fabulous. It's these times that remind us just how much these old timers contributed.

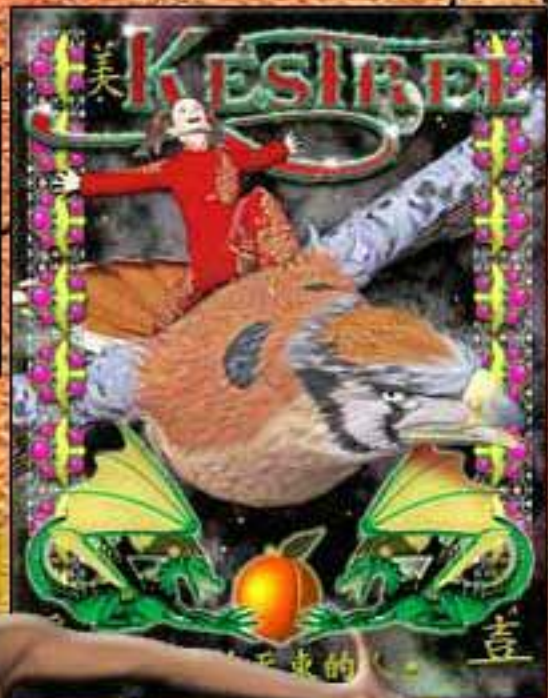
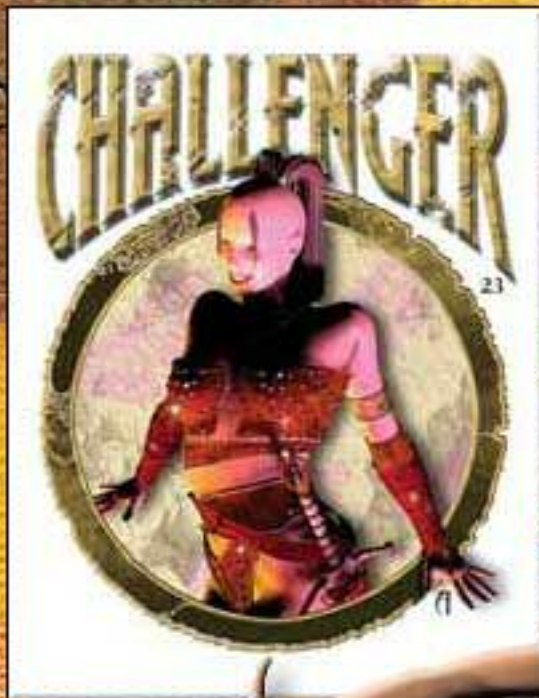
Others we've seen in the Geezer Rock circuit are Jefferson Starship, War, 3 Dog Night, Little Feat, Moody Blues, ELO, Alan Parsons, The Checkmates, Les Brown, Queen, Pointer Sisters, Righteous Brothers, Stones and so many others. Just as interesting is seeing who is replacing the dead band members.

If nothing else, you can always tell you are watching old-timers by the hair color of the audience.

POD PEOPLE UNITE

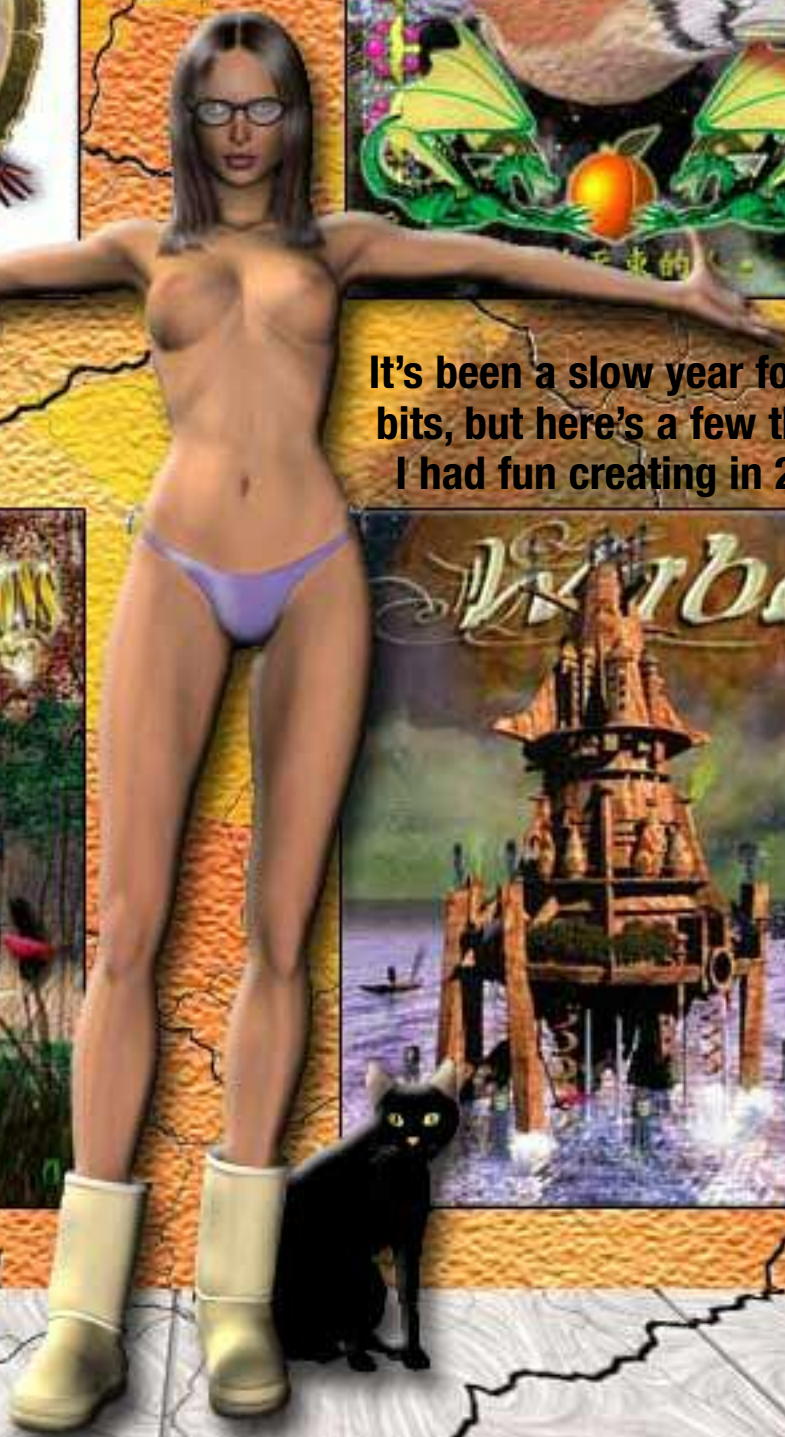
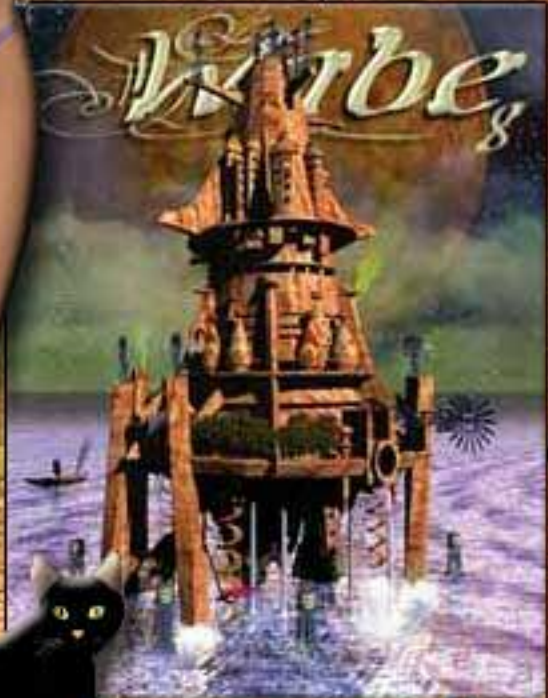
Dilettante bastards that we are, continually pursue some intriguing pastime that in the end will remain elusive and confusing, but in the meantime, we'll have lots of fun. When the art website is completed, our next challenge will be podcasting. Thus, we are looking for those who have similar pursuits, have produced their own or just enjoy listening to them. I'd love to hear your experiences. We have our url ready to go so let's see what happens.





the gallery

It's been a slow year for arty bits, but here's a few things I had fun creating in 2005





When I did my first fanzines in 1960, I could barely crank the mimeo handle and the results were ridiculous at best. Over the years, zine creation has taken an amazing leap off the stencil and onto the computer screen. Still, even with the benefit of digital technology, the fundamentals of a fanzine were still the same. Height and width are the dimensions that define the page, whether physical or digital.

Rod Taylor explained it best in “The Time Machine”, but now, thanks to Adobe Acrobat®, zine creation has taken a staggering leap into the future and the 3rd Dimension.

Those downloading the [FREE Acrobat 7 Reader](#) will have the ability to not only look at a piece of art, but interact with it as well. Granted, right now we’re at the “Mr. Watson, come here I need you” stage, but by this time next year, Acrobat 3D known as U3D (Universal 3D) will be everywhere. Soon, interactive environments on the page of a fanzine won’t be far behind.

At this point I can’t create my own stuff, but the ability to do so is only months away and when the explosion comes, it will be huge. At this point, in an attempt to be first showing off this new shiny thing, all I found available is this clothing display by way of the technologically savvy Wal-Mart.

Opening “Black Cat” in the new Acrobat Reader, you can click on this image below. In a moment a control panel will pop up giving you control to move, spin or turn the display topsy turvy. Quite amazing.

