

# TABOO OPINIONS #88

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## **2-5-07      Here I am again --- not dead yet.**

Almost a whole year has gone by and I thought perhaps a Report is appropriate. There still are a few of you who give a shit.

I'm now 79 years old and closing in on July 19, my birthday, and completing my 8th decade.

I'm continuing to lose the battle of balance. Walking is even more of an adventure ---- more a desperate few steps of lurch & stagger ---- when attempted without a walker or walls & furniture as aids. In any case, even with a walker, my walking is limited to about three hundred feet. After that approximate limit I have to rest a while. The problem is lack of balance and the terrific amount of energy and stress required to keep from falling over. It is more and more an ordeal.

Also of note is the erratic and sudden assault of weakness in my legs caused by the spine damage in my lower back (two surgeries in my spine low, two in my spine high) which can simply force me to my knees in seconds. I never know which erect position or stress causes it.

Peering into the future, when even a walker will be too dangerous, I recently bought a Transport Chair, a "wheelchair" with four 8" wheels which I --- after taking off the front foot rests ---- can use to scoot around the house in, using my feet for propulsion.

Of course eventually my legs will get too weak to use for mobility power, and at that point (assuming I haven't croaked of a stroke or heart attack or whatever) I'll have to go into an assisted living facility or a nursing home.

The longer you live the fewer your options.

I can be happy with a computer, a radio and a TV.

Back to the Transport Chair. I use it now once a week to scoot around the house and do the dusting. Then I drag the vacuum cleaner from the closet and do the carpets. I've learned to maneuver the Chair pretty well as I do my weekly chores.

I still use my three-wheeler bike (with its marvelous big rear basket) to peddle my ass twice a week to the post office to get the mail and to Safeway for groceries. I am almost always able to get a shopping cart near where I lock the bike, and use the cart as a walker. I go slower and slower, but I still manage.

It is serendipitous fate that the walker fits into the bike basket so neatly, for use when I must have aid in getting into the bank or into a medical office.

When I can no longer manage the bike/cart/walker combo, I'll use the Safeway.com delivery service to get the food, and have the mail delivered to the house (after 35+ years of P.O. Box 11408).

We have a 'stair lift' (a chair rides a track up and down to/from the basement) and it, alas, needs new rechargeable batteries, which I'm sure will cost my left arm and leg...but after five years you gotta expect it.

Another sudden expense is the plugged-up kitchen sink which will cost about \$100 to have opened.

So it goes. The older and more infirm you get, the more you are dependent on professional assistance.

We "order in" a meal from a favorite restaurant about twice a week. We used to go there in person, but Paulette's vision is so bad now she dares not drive much, and never in rain or dark.

Oh. Our cat, Phantom, had to be put down. Poor guy was skin and bones, wouldn't eat, could barely walk. Just one injection by the vet. into a vein in his leg --- and a second later --- BAM! --- he was limp and gone. We miss him, but feel we couldn't do a new kitty justice. This above all makes me weep. Self pity emerges so easily.

My arthritis and cerebral palsy and prostate continue to be controlled by drugs, as is my high blood pressure. I continue my regimen of vitamins and minerals, and watch my salt and sugar intake

Well, that's enough geriatric news and musing. Next time I'll get into my professional writing and my reviews and current event opinions. Better watch out, for even my death may not release you.

**END TABOO OPINIONS #88**