

Greetings all! A long overdue “Susan Update!”

Page One: Life

There was a time when the days flew by... now it's the weeks! The regular routines of cooking, laundry, keeping the gas tank full, and working in some monthly meetings is plenty enough... but there are some special projects underway, too.

As mentioned before, Susan's Dad and Stepmom passed away last year and there have been some inheritance issues to work through. For us, that is a multi-step process since I must first prove I am her legal/financial/medical guardian before anyone will talk to me. These extra steps take a lot longer.



A treat to have all the girls together with Mom!

Veterans and community groups are changing and growing, with the publicity and accounting I assist with. And I'm keeping my mind engaged with reading and research... twenty books read thus far this year. (Just wish I could remember them!)

And very importantly, at 93 years young my Mom has just moved to an apartment in a care center! Thanks to Kris and Scott and the extended family for their sacrificial efforts to arrange and accomplish this major event. They have led the way, and we participate as we can. Life is not boring at all.

Page Two: Susan

“Everything's the same; everything's different.” Contradictory, but true. I've come to see that we are in a changing context or “frame” where for a season one thing is easy and another thing challenging... and then they switch roles.

Six months ago, we were brainstorming ways to get the medicine down (Spoonful of Sugar or Applesauce, anyone?) with no success. Two weeks later we had a three-month run of “one-swallow-and-down-the-hatch” with no issues... then back to “not todaaaay!” One time she looked at me and admitted, “I don't know what to do.” And that's after I “led by example” taking my own meds. Same issues... but what will it be tonight?



Told her to head for the truck and I'd be right there. Had the right idea, but not quite!

And there were a couple of surprises... eating potato chips with a fork (Yes, you can... scoop, don't stab), and getting stuck in the seatbelt (Yes, you can... when you don't unhook it by your hip before getting out). Thankfully, these are not every day occurrences, but there are enough surprises to keep me watching for new creative life-hacks!

The other part of “same” is “slow progression.” Anomia—inability to name objects or recall words—has increased. Reading is like “billboard phrases” only... art and coloring has stopped. Sometimes she “gets” what I’m saying; other times not. Within the “frames” there is a variety of behaviors, but the frames themselves are on a downward trend.

And yet, the intuition remains strong, and the ability to “read” emotional expressions in your face and tone of voice is uncanny! Watching the news she will remark, “That’s mean,” or, “That guy is creepy.” She’s right.

And music is still a friend since it stimulates every part of the brain (to the point where I’ll play music as we go to bed and in the middle of the night in her sleep, she’ll sing along with a familiar song that comes on! THAT makes a fella wonder!!) She’s still sweet, patient, cooperative, responsive, and hums to herself when content... I’m thankful for the good days together!



Time with sisters Linda & Jan!

Page Three: Gary

We finally came across a grant that is helpful! Most offer “education and information and referral,” but as the doctor said, we are beyond that. This grant focuses on the caregiver!! It provides needed supplies to care for a loved one, reimburses my expenses for some respite care (someone to watch Susan while I take care of business... or myself!), and gives some home technology support. So, we have received some supplies and reimbursement for the home cameras that allow me to check on Susan without interrupting her (like when sleeping). And now when Susan opens the bedroom door a chime sounds in the main room, so I know she’s on the move.

Page Four: Lessons

There are many others who live with a foreboding, formidable medical situation in their family. Hospital visits were once a routine part of my week, but the trip to the hospital was the only part that was routine. Every person, family, and situation were different. And yet the Lord’s grace and strength was available to all... and now that includes Susan and I on a personal level. And that grace is available to us, too. She seeks grace to bear up daily; I seek grace to support. The goal is not to make troubles go away, but to live fully in their midst... by means of His grace. And it was Paul, that pioneer of the faith in theology and experience, who reminded us “... **his grace is sufficient.**” Know you are appreciated by us both, and we pray His Grace for you! **Gary**



Susan came with me to pray
over the new Adjutant
General for the Missouri