

A really long day that needed a bit of humor



The photo above makes fun of Tom Doumolin, leader of the Giro d'Italia bike race in Italy, having to stop riding his bike during the middle of a stage and, er, make use of a field for a toilet. Riding to work this morning, Kevin spotted someone with a toilet in their front yard, terribly convenient (but not terribly private) for a cyclist in need!

This, as mentioned, was a very long day for me, starting late yesterday, when blood test results came back indicating that there were some anomalies that were entirely unrelated to my breathing issues but potentially serious. The sort of thing that, when the "New test results available" email comes from Kaiser, you open with some degree of fear & trepidation. Definitely had some trouble sleeping last night, going over in my mind all the worst possibilities, and those fears weren't softened when the Hematology department said I needed to come in today. Ummm... ok?

Did I tell you some (most?) aspects of getting older suck? When the nurse first took my blood pressure, I did the usual spiking thing, kicking it up to 160/90. I explained that's just what I do in a doctor's office, so she gave me a chance to collect my wits (calm down a bit) and bingo, 135/83. For me, in a medical environment, that's darned good. The problem is that I have this real fear of needles, and guess what I associate with needles?

After spending quite a bit of time with the Doctor it turns out what I've got isn't really that big a deal (very high platelet count) and can be managed with a pretty benign medication. That's the good side. The bad side is that I'll be on an every-two-week blood test regimen for a while as they figure out the best dose for an appropriate response. Did I tell you I hate needles?

If I was younger, there wouldn't be much reason to bother with bringing the platelet level down, but man, if you're over 60, you might just as well forget about whatever warranty you thought your body had! Platelets are a good thing in normal numbers; they allow your blood to clot so cuts can heal. But in too-high numbers, platelets can essentially over-react and cause blood clots in aging bodies. Hate that.

I will say that I'm getting better at facing up to the mental challenges of having blood drawn. One of the funnier things the Doctor mentioned was that I must be new to Kaiser, since I had no real lab work on file prior to 2009. Yeah, well, I've been with Kaiser since, what, 1972 or something like that? Just stayed in "stealth" mode.

Stealth mode no more. It was a long and successful non-medicated ride for 55 years I think? But time to embrace better life through chemistry I guess. And less fear of blood test results. You just deal with it and keep on moving.

Message to mom- the doctor said there are no limitations whatsoever on what I can do. It's possible the new meds could make me a bit fatigued at times, but she said no biggie, just rest up a bit. I asked her if there's an issue if I just "push through it" and she gave me the strangest look, as in why would you do that?, but said no, you're not going to hurt yourself doing so. Also, had the moles checked. All good. No need to call me. I'm fine. :-)

Oh right, the ride report. Just myself and Kevin (kid) today, which was a bit odd. Sure, it was wet and cold up on Skyline, wet and cold enough that we skipped with West Old LaHonda section, thinking it would be really fogged in. And thinking in the back of our minds, what if it's actually really beautiful on that side of the hill? We'll never know.