

## Finally getting somewhere; Karen's surgery at 3pm today

Hard to believe it's been such a long time since my wife was diagnosed Stage 4 breast cancer, and the journey that took us on as I very quickly figured out the questions and sought answers and a path forward. I was frustrated by things taking mere days to figure out, and getting the hook-up with the specialist at Stanford, an essential part of the process of getting the best-possible care, almost didn't happen. But things did pull together, rather quickly actually, and we had a plan. Even though Stage 4, which means the cancer has "escaped" and is now likely to pop up anywhere at any time, it was determined that there was, at this point in time, just a singular instance, a small tumor in her lung, and it made sense to remove it surgically. There was, seemingly, very low risk of this quickly becoming a whack-a-mole thing in which surgery makes no sense.

And that was... a long time ago. The gap between then and finally getting that darned thing out seems to have taken forever. Delay after delay, then the Kaiser strike which messed up scheduling when it looked like we finally had a date. And the information came in bits and pieces, sometimes contradictory. The October 20th date was revealed in a side-conversation with my own Oncologist and didn't appear anywhere in Karen's medical info then, or for the next 3 or 4 weeks. We just didn't know for sure.

What we did know is that there was a firm "No flying for 30 days post-surgery" (probably because it's her lungs involved...makes sense) and that this thing wasn't going to be shrinking while we waited, because that's not what cancer does. And the #1 priority was not our vacation plans in December but getting that thing out of her ASAP, which meant we also had to be a bit cautious in how we presented things. Karen's health is the priority, not the vacation, yet we had these plans in place... but you sure didn't want the health care people thinking we wanted to surgery taken care of because it would be inconvenient to delay and have to change our plans.

It's 12:02pm Friday; we leave in 18 minutes for Kaiser Santa Clara. She gets signed in at 1pm, operation 3pm, should take 1-2 hours (fairly quick surgery). She'll stay overnight and will be back in her own bed tomorrow night. Yay. About time.