

*Preface, 12/30/2011:*

*These are the notes I sent Dr. Sands in advance of my annual physical on 12/29/2006. The shoulder item in these notes led a few days later to an x-ray that discovered a shadow in my lung.*

*Five years later, I'm looking back, to recall that experience. When I wrote this I'd never heard the term "e-patient," and what we now call "patient engagement" was simply what any ordinary responsible person would do: I was letting my doctor know everything I thought would be relevant to him in his efforts to care for me. I told him what was going on in my life.*

*At the end I've removed some items that aren't pivotal to the story, and which I'd rather not have public. As is true with many people, they're things that live in my underpants, and aren't particularly informative.*

## **Life circumstances**

Lots of things are very different from 3 years ago.

- There's a lot of money-related stress.
  - We moved back to NH this summer. The Minnesota house is still unsold. I thought I had a job lined up (98% sure) but an hour after the NH closing I got a call saying I wasn't getting that job.
  - We ended up with 2 houses and I had no income for 2 months. We dodged bullets juggling and borrowing money to get through. The MN house is rented but we're still losing \$1k/month on it and the lease is only until 5/1/07, then our carrying costs go up \$2k (if it's not sold first).
  - Basically our savings are wiped out and we have a mountain of debt.
- For the first time in my life I'm upset about age. My wife turned 60 on 11/4/06. I'm still 56 but for the first time ever I'm aware that it's not going to last forever.
  - It's 17 months since my father died at age 83. I visited often in the final months and grieved then. Wanting to be closer to Maryland family was a major reason for moving back.
- For several months I've found myself crying for no apparent reason. I never feel depressed (like "what's the point" or "why bother") – it's more of a sense that there are more endings than beginnings in my future, and the economically disastrous Minnesota round-trip means that retirement is now a remote possibility. Others I know are tapering off and going on lots of vacations; that's improbable for me in the foreseeable future.
- This was the first "blue Christmas" I've ever had. I cried often during the season and I was no fun Christmas Eve or morning. That seems to be in the past now – it ended when I spent Christmas night with my daughter at her mom's house, with all her friends, playing games.

- Work is going great. I'm learning a ton (Ajax, social marketing, blogging) and working with stimulating people whom I like.

**BP & weight**

- Weight 214-219. Best in 20 years.
- BP currently 118-130 over 78-83 (since the recently adjusted dosage of HCTZ)

**Falling / balance issues**

Message Date: 12/10/2006 7:56:22 AM

- In the past 10 days I've twice been standing, motionless, when I realized I was starting to tip over sideways. Never had that happen before.
- This morning getting out of bed I realized I felt like I was slightly swirling, so I stopped moving and it settled down. That's not common but it's happened before.
- This summer I fell twice. I don't suspect either is related to vertigo-like symptoms, but that's up to you: in the first case I was in a hurry running into an apartment building and didn't notice the first step was oversize; the second was a nasty wet-floor tumble in the bathroom, where I bumped some things on the way down. I no longer put my bare feet on wet floors.

*Update 12/28: no recurrences. BP med was adjusted the same day (12/10).*

**Ophthalmic migraine?**

- Shape of the disturbance is exactly as shown at right (from <http://www.richmondeye.com/simulation.asp#migraine>).
- But the interior is dazzling, not the pattern shown here.
- Behavior is as described at that site and others (see log below)
- The shape may point left or right.



#	<u>Date</u>	<u>start</u>	<u>gone by</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1	30-Oct		(approx)	
2	4-Nov	8:58	9:22	Wife's 60th birthday
3	21-Nov	12:35	12:50+	Long gone by 1:30. Different shape this time - almost a mirror of the other, right of center, below center. Note - Thanksgiving was 11/23
4	25-Nov	19:40		The usual Nike-like chevron. Note: with both eyes closed it's like yellow & black stripes.
5	6-Dec	12:05	before 12:50	Start: non-specific sense of dazzle; 12:07 shimmer; bottom right quadrant
6	26-Dec	1:02	before 1:30	Lower left quadrant; tip pointing to left

- Was examined by ophthalmologist 12/18 – no problem found. Subsequent call with another doctor mentioned that this can happen *after* a stress incident is completed.

## **Shoulder**

- Range of motion complaint: “right shoulder is having range of motion trouble. No discomfort, but it just doesn't seem to work right: I find myself lifting my shoulder instead of the arm.”
- Made a Jan 2 appointment w/ Dr Zilberfarb

## **Carpal tunnel?**

- Symptoms: cold or tingling in left thumb & index finger
  - Occasional similar feeling in right toes (big & “index” toe)
- Incidents were common 1-2 months ago; now < 1x/week

[Two items redacted here]