

April 29, 2017

Dear Friend,

Happy Spring (or Autumn, depending on your hemisphere)!

This week, I spent most of my time in the hospital with my dad, who was admitted on Monday and released yesterday. He herniated two disks in his back five weeks ago, and then complications set in with pneumonia last week. He's home now, but he's going to require a lot of care!



Earlier in the week, I tried to set up the First Communion book cover so that I could take it with me, but a hospital room isn't conducive to that kind of embroidery. Then I set up a simple embroidery project one night to have something to work on during the day while sitting around at the hospital, but I never got to it! Isn't that the way of it?

Despite Dear Old Dad's back condition, my family enjoyed a terrific reunion the week after Easter out here in Kansas. They flocked in from Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Florida - 110 of my parents' decedents (my sisters and brother, their spouses, their kids, their kids' kids... you get the idea!) and two of my cousins and their spouses. So, all in all, we were 114. The first day, we had a kick-off picnic in a local park, where we "rented" the train so the kids (and adults!) could enjoy a few hours of train rides. That night, we had a big ole Kansas barbecue. After that, we barricaded the street for dancing. With family, friends and neighbors, we kicked up our heels at a contra dance (if you don't know what contra dancing is, look it up! It's heaps of fun!), with live musicians and a caller. The next day, we had a grand anniversary brunch with friends and family for my parents' 60th anniversary, followed by more park time. The third day, we split up into different groups for some local day trips, and that night, we convened again, en masse, for brick oven pizza made fresh in my sister's backyard oven. The three days were tied together with a tremendous three-day scavenger hunt, and we concluded the whole event with a family "talent" show (though talent, for many of us, is a loosely applied term!). It was a blast!

But alas, it took its toll on dear old dad. Hence, this week in the hospital.

On my own "hospital" front, I'm doing ok, though pretty wiped out this week. Many of you have asked for an update on my "adventures" with cancer, but I really don't have much to tell at this point! All in all, I'm doing well. I was scheduled for a follow-up CT scan in March to take another look at my spleen, which seemed to be a little problematic last time, but I delayed that until May(ish).

As those of you who live in the US are probably aware, the medical insurance side of things here is a bit messy. Until I've met my deductible (which is quite high - \$6,900), I pay full price for all procedures. Amazingly, the hospital charges my insurance company about \$880 for this particular CT scan, but they charge me \$6,100 for it, since I haven't met my deductible. This is a huge Pet Peeve of mine. How can a hospital charge me \$6K for a procedure they charge insurance \$800 for? It just seems a bit backwards!

So, given the fact that things seem to be going well on my insides, and given the fact that I feel great, I made the Executive Decision to get through tax season first and get the family reunion over with. Then I'll sort out the whole medical thing and face the CT scan and resulting expense a little later.

But, like I said, all seems to be going well, and I feel good overall! So no complaints on this end...except for the insurance thing, which makes me growl every time I think of it.

And that, my friends, is life in a nutshell right now. Hopefully, my dad will improve soon, and things can get back to normal again on the home front. In the meantime, now that all the planning and everything for the family reunion is behind me, I can concentrate solely on Needle 'n Thread

I am thankful every day - more and more! - that I have a fairly flexible life that can accommodate all these little interruptions fairly easily. And I'm thankful, too, that I have my needlework to keep me balanced and calm...and that I have *you* to keep me motivated and inspired!

If anything ever comes of the CT scan in May(ish), I will certainly let you know how that part of my journey is going!

In the meantime, I'm just plugging away!

I hope you are equally well, happy, and at peace!

Love,

*Mary*