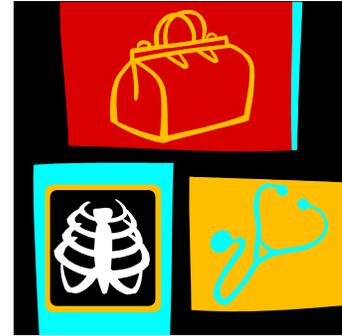


Happy retirement doc (20, 07, 13)

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Only a few hours, but already withdrawal feelings, sharp, intermittent pangs informing one that something vital is missing, something expected on a regular basis that makes one feel better if not content. Something reliable, always there when needed. If you haven't guessed yet – my drug dealer is gone!

My dealer procured pain killers, sleep enhancers (doesn't that sound fancy!), mood disorder pills, and a variety of potions that would impress the three weird sisters in Macbeth, those shocking ladies who chant “double, double, toil and trouble.” But I digress from the tale of my, let's call him my “drug consultant.”



Forty-five years ago when Miriam and I first settled in St. Catharines, leaving Hazel McCallion's Mississauga (Was there ever a time when she was not mayor?), our two-year old acquired a malady that required a doctor. We opened the phone book, and I can't remember if it was Miriam or I, but one of us stuck his/her finger in the middle of a page at the letter “L.” That was the scientific basis for our health care decision in Niagara that lasted for close to five centuries.

Today, armed with much needed prescription renewals and a gift certificate to the Pillar & the Post restaurant, I ventured into St. Catharines to bid a fond farewell to my longtime doctor. I timed it perfectly, deliberately arriving at 4 pm because I knew that there would be many long farewells prior to me. He was just ushering out a gentleman and welcomed me into his office which reminded me of a municipal convention, littered with bottles of booze, wine, a rather large plant, cards galore, and more of the regular retirement detritus. Surprisingly, there were no balloons, perhaps a sign of his aging clientele.

So, what does one say to someone who is as familiar with every crevice in one's body as one's wife? In fact, maybe even more familiar with some, now that I think about my prostate! But let's not dawdle there lest we get into trouble with some readers who might not have yet successfully graduated from Freud's murky anal stage.

To get the ball rolling, I decided to reminisce about my vasectomy, performed decades ago by the good doctor right there in his office. My recollection is that I was propped up watching the entire operation with his nurse quite anxious that at some point I might jump up and race out of the office screaming about my lost manhood. On the contrary, I was fascinated by the whole show, even secretly wanting to watch it again like when I was a kid at the movies. When the deed was done, we celebrated with a sip of scotch! Miriam was so pleased that she had a copy of Playboy magazine waiting for me at home!

Over the years, this clever, caring and thoughtful man employed an old-fashioned concept of time management, each visit an opportunity to chat, examine our worlds, confide in each other, and then of course, attend to myriad maladies. I'm pretty sure that his philosophy was that time heals, and I think he is right.



Apparently, he was often asked at the outset if he was going to be “just a GP” or a specialist. I'm lucky he chose “just a GP.” Any time I visit a specialist, I feel like I'm on that speeded-up assembly line featured by Lucy Arnaz of “I Love Lucy” fame. A widget with a dollar sign, not really good for my wellbeing.

At the end, we exchanged a firm hug, unfortunately

an uncommon practice amongst men. And knowing his love for the Canadian Forces and the fact that he is an officer in the reserve, if I had it in my power, I would arrange for those capable Snowbird pilots to fly their noisy jets up the Welland Canal in a neat “wineglass formation” as an appropriate salute that befits this extraordinary fellow. Dr. Dave Lorenzen, happy retirement!