

Doris Kriekhaus

prepared for Bob Kriekhaus on July 24, 2015



My Story

Our thanks to CaringBridge for hosting this site. We've created it to keep friends and family updated.

We appreciate your support and words of hope and encouragement and we will try to keep you updated regularly about Doris's progress.

If you have any photos or comments, please send them/post them. We would love to hear and see from all of you if you feel moved.

You might want to take a look at doriskrieckhaus.org, a website Bob prepared some years ago to honor her artistic accomplishment.

Thank you!

Bob, Eric and Clelia

Journal

What happened originally

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 16, 2015

Doris's stroke on Sunday evening, June 7, has left the family (Eric, Clelia, and me) riding a slow rollercoaster of hope and resignation for now some four days. Our report of the ride starts with the quiet pleasure of being a family again in these older times.

The stroke began Sunday later evening with small ischemic events that took us to the ER around 7 pm when number two, unlike one, failed to clear up right away after the usual aspirin. Given her responsiveness there, people gave me the feeling I might take her home the next day in the morning. But experience said to give her a night of observation first, and sure enough, that day and the next three saw progressive increase in the spread of the stroke despite repeated happy times of responsiveness and control that that gave us hope of moving to the therapy-specialized hospital nearby.

Doriskriekhaus.org

Comments

Hi Bob, Clelia and Eric.

Thank you for putting out this site. I hope I am doing this right. I have known Bob and Doris a long time and love both of them. I wish I could be of some use, but up here in Evanston, I can only send good wishes and prayers your way. It is too soon, I know, to draw any conclusions, but Doris appears to be in the best hands possible, and I know they will do everything in their power to heal her. I am so glad I was able to visit them before this happened, and I will always cherish the memory. God be with you.

—*Marjorie Mueller, June 17, 2015*

Hello family of Bob and Doris - I am a friend of your folks. I want you to know that I am very fond of both of them. Both my partner Bob Bevins and I are available to help you all in any way we can. I am a psychiatrist, therapist, and had a husband with dementia and a close aunt with post stroke aphasia, etc. Bob has spent time with dementia patients so that families can have respite. None of this may be appropriate now but just keep it in mind for down the road. Hope you are doing OK

—Joan Enoch, June 16, 2015

June 15, 2015

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 16, 2015

Today (Monday), Bob, Eric and Clelia took Doris out three times for rides in the wheelchair. There is a very nice, small, park just across the parking lot from Las Fuentes care center and there we find many trees, birds, etc. Unfortunately Doris is very sleepy all day. It has been difficult to get her awake and noticing the beauty of the park.

Earlier in the day she received physical therapy from one of the specialists at the center. He put her in a special harness and had her "stand" in order to stimulate the right leg in the hopes of getting a return of function. The specialist urged us to move and stimulate Doris's arm and leg regularly in order to help the process. We have been doing this but are now encouraged and vow to renew our efforts.

The staff is very kind and helpful and we are grateful to have this facility so close to Bob and Doris's home.

June 16, 2015 A.M.

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 16, 2015

Today, Tuesday, Bob has gone in early to take Doris out for a walk in the park. He reports that she is responsive and awake which is great! She has had some visitors already today.

Comments

Eric thank you for setting up this helpful site with Care Bridge.
I'm happy to hear that Bob is able to take Doris out to spend time in the uplifting sunshine.
My positive healing thoughts are with Doris and her recovery,
LOVE,
Jenna Brod

—jenna Brod, June 16, 2015

Our thoughts and prayers are with you both Bob.

—Loring Cannon, June 16, 2015

Busy Morning not much change

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 16, 2015

(Wednesday 6-16, bob writing.) Thanks to Eric for getting this up and running this morning. Please bear with us as we learn how this operates.

Doris's condition remains essentially the same. I'm home now for my break. Having Eric and Clelia here is an incredible help at this time. Thanks to all of you and others who have kindly offered to help as well.

This was likely Doris's busiest morning. Breakfast from a special aide. Didn't eat much. Drank OK -- big issue in strokes is whether or not there is control of the epiglottis for swallowing. She appears to have maybe 90% and seldom chokes. But sometimes a little.

When she came back from that, I took her out in her beautiful new Cadillac wheelchair (they substituted it of their own accord; don't know why). Sunny day with a small breeze, a good deal of shade. She was alert most of the time. Not clear yet whether or not she actually notices the crazy (likely Hispanic) roofers atop the Alta Vista complex singing while they work. But I feel she really recognizes me, and she gets out expressive gestures sometimes. For instance in taking water, she'll wave her hand palm-down from side to side to say No.

Sometimes she tries to get out words in an appropriate context, but that doesn't work yet. Over the now 9 days, we've heard a few, like "OK" and "Bye."

I went in to get her some water, which she drank quite a bit of. That's important. Very pleasing. We went back out for a second hour and were joined by visitors! Great thing. Dave and Joyce Steeves. We talked a long time, and she listened sometimes acutely, usually not, surprising us once with a bright and head-nodding response to my talking with them about our marrying in Paris.

After this a change by staff aides using the marvelous Hoyer (?) lift and back to Cadillac to fall asleep. Eric arrived and I'm home expecting a visit from Aditya, Clelia's 5+ son while she relieves Eric.

Ciao for now, bob

Comments

Bob, Eric, Clelia -- Although I've mentioned this small ritual to you before now, I'll repeat it here -- because we repeat it before each meal -- sometimes with variation. During our quiet times before our meals, we hold hands and say each of your name including Aditya's. We started with one person saying all four names, then we all said all four in unison, and recently, one of us says one of your names and then someone else says another until all are said. Pausing this way, hands clasped, eyes closed while saying and hearing your names is a simple way

to bring you into focus. Both grandchildren (Katie and Kyle) participate fully as do daughter-in-law, Margaret, and Eric's parents-in-law. Holding you and Doris closely in our thoughts. Hoping for a better day -- day by day.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 16, 2015*

I'm so glad you have set this up, Eric and Bob. We will check it daily. It sounds like Doris has made considerable progress since the last group email. We love you both, Ellen and Wil.

—*Ellen Blais, June 16, 2015*

Wednesday lunch time 6-17

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 17, 2015

Two aides went out of their way when I (bob) saw Doris today a little before noon -- we are so fortunate to be able to spell each other for these first weeks -- to tell me how responsive she had been since last I saw her -- just little things like a smile or squeeze or lack of fear plus pleasure in the shower. That's what it's about, of course, for now. Hope and tears keep springing up when you're not expecting them.

Thanks for the comments, friends.

Comments

Tell Doris that the alpine flowers she loved are out up here in wagon creek.

—*Bill Peffer, June 17, 2015*

Hi -- Bob -- so glad to get this journal entry. Caringbridge is a wonderful information conduit to keep us all up to date -- up to the minute -- and we appreciate Eric's setting it up and y'all's postings. MC and I are with Katie and Kyle who are bouncing around -- literally -- at an enormous facility filled with in-floor, so to speak, trampolines. We came here directly from Stardust, the children's theatrical summer day camp. I'll let them tell you later, about the parts they have for their production on Friday. Based on their last two years of participating in this camp (and we expect nothing less this year), it's amazing, really STUNNING, what the kid's (max age: rising 6th graders) accomplish in 4.5 days (and only 6 hrs/day) under the talented guidance of their counselors. With caring thoughts -- Margaret Sr (aka Mog)

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 17, 2015*

Wednesday, June 17

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 17, 2015

Towards the end of the day today Bob felt Doris move her right leg (the paralyzed one) slightly. He felt it move several more times, albeit slightly.

If this continues, it could be a very good sign of recovery. We will monitor it tomorrow. It's a great first step!

Comments

Good news.

May you Doris and your family be blessed.

—*Bob M, June 18, 2015*

Hope to hear more good news.

—*David Steeves, June 18, 2015*

Keep trying Doris!

—*Marty, June 18, 2015*

Wonderful news! I'll hope for more. Narge

—*Marjorie Mueller, June 17, 2015*

Good news!!! We'll be pulling for continued good news!!! Thank you!!!!

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 17, 2015*

Go Doris!

—*Bill Pepper, June 17, 2015*

Glad to hear the good news!

—Ellen and Wil, June 17, 2015

Thursday much the same

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 18, 2015

Eric and Clelia gave Oma an eventful, busy time this morning and she's sleeping soundly now, two hours after lunch on my watch. I (bob) am not noticing the new right-side movement just now, but it continues to give us a little hope. Family talk today centers on likely outcomes and choices. We are extremely pleased with this care home, which does long-term on the other side and is only five-minutes away from empty home. Full or empty depends on how she does. And that lies just as people great and small have always said, in the hands of the gods.

Comments

HI -- Bob, Eric, Clelia -- Just moments ago, I showed Katie and Kyle the photos y'all have posted on CaringBridge. They were intrigued by the ones 40/50 or so years ago and commented how much she looked like you, Clelia.

I wanted to upload some photos made tonight to CaringBridge but I don't see any way to do that. So, in a few minutes, I'll send the photos to your email addresses.

Katie and Kyle are very excited about their performance tomorrow. They each got the parts they wanted so are extra excited and have been practicing since they left camp today.

Thanks for the post. I think it is much better to sleep as a result of activity than to sleep just because. So -- good that y'all kept her busy. Caring thoughts -- Margaret Sr.

—Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 18, 2015

Flash Stop Press

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 18, 2015

Rick the RNA just zipped back to Oma's room from taking her to dinner -- after waking her from a long, sound sleep with a lot of good humor that she appreciated -- to announce that she had very clearly told him, "Thank you" when he got her there. That's a great first. b

Comments

I am SO glad to hear about the progress in the speech! Give Doris a big hug from me!

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 19, 2015*

Great news again. Keep it coming, Bob, and give Doris our love.
Ellen and Wil

—*Ellen and Wil, June 19, 2015*

Well, that's really big news!!! Don't know why I glanced back at the journal before emailing the photos, but very glad I did!!!! Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 18, 2015*

A beautiful day, Thursday 19 June

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 19, 2015

At first it was an ordinary day, no change you can feel sure about, not much eating, lots of sleeping. A couple of pleasant wheelchair outings in the mid morning. A visit by Clélia, some fun for Eric and me with Aditya at home. Uncertainty about cognition, no right-side leg movement.

But there was a special moment as the aide was putting her to bed just now, changing her and making her comfortable. I asked him about his family and he talked about how tricky that question was for him, an answer that included mentioning that a very real brother for him, not technically related, had died in the much-reported Yarnell fire south of Prescott two years ago. He was one of the nineteen who were trapped. The aide told a long, very emotional story that closed with his trip to the brother's grave some days after the burial, which he did not attend. As the aide is gay and the firefighter strongly Christian, he had worried long about how the brother regarded him. His answer had been that God would not have created the rainbow if he didn't love gays. And then, in tears, he showed me the photo he'd taken of the grave that day, with a beautiful rainbow over it.

When we remembered Doris and went to tuck her in again, she had a lovely relaxed face with open eyes and a real smile.

Comments

We and everyone in Stein am Rhein, Ramsen and Rafz are sending you our love and we hope you make every day some progress.

Many greetings from Urs and Family in Ramsen, Martin and Family in Rafz, Annemarie and Bernadette in Stein am Rhein.

—love Yolanda, June 20, 2015

Wow, we know how fires are even though our home never was in danger in the two fires we had in the past 4 years here in Colorado Springs. But it was really close and we saw the flames and had the smoke in our nose every day those fires were going. Thankfully not too many people feel victim to the flames "Just" property, but still very traumatic. My heart goes out to the Aide who could not attend his brothers funeral for reason of peoples ignorance, especially when they say they are religious. The bible and Jesus teachings can be turned in many fashions I guess. I belief he welcomed everyone!

—love Yolanda, June 20, 2015

A beautiful message--both about Doris and the aide. Thanks, Bob & Eric.

Love to all,
Nancy

—Nancy Lewis, June 20, 2015

Family Day - Saturday 6-20

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 20, 2015

Lots of visitors today -- Katie and Kyle arrived from Atlanta early morning (their first solo) and Eric brought them to us at Las Fuentes around noon. Clélia and Aditya were already there, and so was I, and we'd even had another nice visit from Marty Miller early on. Nice for Doris. Nice for me, bob, as I could be with all three grandkids at home while Clélia stood watch. Then in the afternoon a lovely set of flowers arrived that came from sisters Annemarie and Berta, along with their families in Switzerland. Also some chocolate (happy face) -- we'll see what the nurse says about that. Yes, I'll wager. Thanks, Switzerland !

Doris's state was much the same except that she ate a lot more breakfast than usual and drank juice and water without choking -- as reported by the woman who has fed her a good many times this week.

Comments

Wonderful family day for you both in Prescott and beyond - all the way from Switzerland!! Great to hear about increased appetite. Very good sign!

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 21, 2015*

The healing love of others is always a blessing when we are going through physical challenges. May you, Doris, and your family be blessed.

—*Bob Miller, June 20, 2015*

Just read today's post. Katie and Kyle were real troupers -- had a degree of uncertainty but they boarded the plane in good spirits. We waved through the large window at the gate as the plane pulled away from the gate -- having no idea, of course, that they would actually be seeing us wave but wanted to do it anyway. Hope tomorrow is a good day!!! Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 20, 2015*

June 21 (Summer solstice and Father's day)

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 21, 2015

Today we experienced a pretty big shift in Doris's behavior.

In the morning she was active and ate 100% of her breakfast (and later lunch and dinner as well). She and Bob spent time out in the wheelchair exploring the park across the street. Doris had lots of energy.

After lunch the whole family (Bob, Eric, Clelia, Katie, Kyle and Aditya) came by to visit and we played a new board game (Splendor) with Doris watching beside. At this time she became more animated and tried to speak on several occasions. She got out many sounds and twice made distinguishable words... "Okay" and "Yeah."

She seemed to be seeing us more clearly and experiencing the world much more.

We left her with Clelia and went to the local YMCA to swim with the children. She was tired and slept until dinner.

Just now (late evening) I went to see her and she was up and sitting in her wheelchair watching TV. Although her attention was definitely wandering and she periodically had a distant stare. When I asked her questions, though, or commented on the TV program, Doris answered with sounds and half-words. I should say that she reacted rather than answered.

She seems much more aware of her surroundings. She fiddled with the wheelchair arm, constantly examined the bedsheets and pillows. She looked outside and at the TV with what looked like recognition.

On the downside, however, she also seemed very confused by what she was seeing. She looked at me with astonishment several times over the 2 hours I was there. She examined and re-examined her bedding and seemed worried on more than one occasion.

It seems as though her environmental awareness is returning (Yeah!) but maybe not yet her self-awareness or cognition.

It is progress, though, and we are very happy to see that.

Many thanks to everyone for your comments. We will let you know as things progress.

Eric

Comments

That is awesome. We are in thought with you and Doris and hope the improvements keep coming in small but steady doses.

Love Yolanda

—love Yolanda, June 22, 2015

Hi Eric, Thanks for your post, most of which, I read as good news -- very positive. I can imagine all of you there playing Splendor (and the chatter associated with a game) by Doris' bedside. I hope it was a very good thing for all of you!! Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 22, 2015

Thanks for the progress report, Eric! It IS progress! We all want to see fast progress, of course. But this IS progress! Wonderful!

—Gunvor Peffer, June 22, 2015

shade and light

by Clelia Lewis, June 22, 2015

(Entry from Clelia) This has been such a tender, painful, and sweet journey so far. The lovely part of it all is the love and tenderness between us as a family. Sometimes when the outer aspects of life are stripped bare, you get to see what lies underneath, and the simple truth of pure being and honest love shines forth like sunlight through the leaves of a shady tree. I have had some beautiful moments with my mom, starting with one in the hospital after the stroke had run its devastating course and she was left with so little ability to move or communicate. Sitting by her side I noticed a look in her eyes as though she wanted something. Carefully avoiding complicated questions I followed her gaze to the tray of drink and food on the table next to the bed. I touched one item at a time, "Would you like water?" A head shake no. "Food?" Another no. "Something sweet?" I was pointing to the pudding/jello option--another head shake no, with a look that was getting tired, maybe a bit frustrated. "Cranberry juice?" She opened her eyes a bit more in a pause of thought, and then nodded yes. I helped her hold the cup and she drank. At this point her swallowing had been badly affected by the loss of muscle control, and she was drinking quite heartily, which resulted in some choking and coughing. Once she cleared the way she reached for the cup again and drank quite a bit more, with the same result of having to cough quite a bit. After that was done she had a look of some relief, but also continued to look over at the food and drink tray. Then it hit me that she often said that it was hard for her to drink water, that she liked flavored drinks, which may have been why she went for the cranberry juice so heartily. Of course, her favorite drink? Red wine. "Would you like some wine?" Her face lit up with a mixture of surprise and delight! I had hit the mark! "Ok, I will see what I can do." I called in the aide who asked the nurse who came in and opened one of the cupboards to reveal a small jar with an inch of red wine in it--contraband brought in by Opa a day or two prior. Thanking the nurse, I poured a bit into a clean cup and helped my mom to put it to her lips. She drank two dainty sips, no choking. Then leaned back with a gentle, crooked smile on her face, looked at me and nodded. That was all she wanted--she declined when I offered more. The nurse and I agreed that anyone in such a tough situation deserves to have a little wine, or what have you! My mom nodded in assent. We held hands, then she closed her eyes and drifted off. I sat quietly for a bit, listening to the hustle and noise of the hospital halls--beeping machines and alarms, aides and nurses talking about patient needs and their various duties or making small talk, new patients being admitted. I decided to try putting on some quiet music on my phone to lay a more pleasant veil of sound over things as my mom rested. I found Vivaldi's Four Seasons and put it on quietly. After a minute or two my mom's relaxed face had scrunched up a bit. I thought maybe she didn't like the music so I turned it off. She opened her eyes and looked around. "Did you like the music?" A nod yes. "Do you want me to put it back on?" A nod yes. So I put it on, and we held hands and listened. Soon she started moving our clasped hands to the beat of the music. We looked at one another and smiled. She kept moving our hands up and down and around to the changing sway of the melody. "We are hand-dancing," I said. She nodded and smiled and took her hand and moved it, and her face was sweet and glad, and I moved my hands, and we danced like that for quite a while. "Kurt Vonnegut once said that music is proof of the existence of God," I pointed out. My mother nodded. We continued, and the music evoked the seasons, sweet and gentle, vigorous and intense, and we swayed and

danced our hands to each in its own. Soon Opa and Eric returned and new business was at hand. As the nurse came in and I got ready to go, I took my mom's hand and said, "That was so nice." She nodded. "I have to go now, but I will see you tomorrow." I kissed her forehead. She held my hand tightly and clasped it to her and said, "Muh-hun," which I knew meant, "Thank you." "You are welcome. I love you." She clasped my hand firmly to her and said, in her best mumbled sounds that which I knew meant, "I love you too..."

These are the kinds of moments I look for. We have no way of knowing what this circumstance will bring, how it will all unfold. But in those moments when I can connect with my mom, when we look at one another like that, I know that in essence, simple being is all there is anyway, underneath the variety and activity of life, and I want to be there with her, as much as possible.

Thanks to all our friends and family who are staying connected with us through this journey. Your encouraging thoughts and words are so helpful, your kindness and prayers deeply supportive. Love and blessings to you all.
Clelia

Comments

Clelia, such a beautiful entry! When my beloved Aunt Betty was in a nursing home, I made sure there was always one of those four packs of screw-top, one-serving Cabernets in her bureau. There's something very comforting about daughters who know you want a sip of wine!

—*Ellen and Wil, June 23, 2015*

Thank you for sharing, Clelia. I am glad that you can be with you Mom and enjoy such beautiful moments.

—*love Yolanda, June 22, 2015*

Clelia -- Beautiful! Seems too little to say -- but you said it all! Thank you -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 22, 2015*

Thank you, Clelia, for that beautiful post. It felt as if I was there together with the two of you. Very touching and beautiful!

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 22, 2015*

Thanks for sharing this, Clelia. Your mom is indeed fortunate to have a daughter willing to practice the "simple-beingness" that is always available to see us through stressful times and situations and to show us how to provide what's truly needed. Blessings and love to you all.

—*Nancy Lewis, June 22, 2015*

Clelia - how lovely your writing about you and your mom is. Write more, for yourself and your family, and maybe for the wider world. Thank you for that. I have so much more of a sense of who your mom is, in her

deeper being. I hope to meet you at some point.

—*Joan Enoch, June 22, 2015*

Happy Notes Monday 6-22

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 22, 2015

Two people today went out of their way to share their delight with me about a Doris moment. First Marty Miller He met me in the entrance hall as I was coming in this morning He'd been in the neighborhood and stopped by, and he met me with elation to explain how much improved she seemed to be, greeting him with enthusiasm in her face and a word ("OK") or maybe even two Then just now an aide who feeds her came to pick her up for dinner (she can't eat by herself yet). Doris greeted her with real pleasure in her face, and the aide went out of her way to explain that she has been gone for three days, and when she came to Doris for her lunch earlier today, she greeted her with the same enthusiasm and spoke aloud two words, "where buh?" The aide and I are taking that for "Where been?"

b

Comments

Glad to hear she is making these positive steps, I look forward to more good news each day as you do. You are all in my thoughts and prayers

—*Jim Burtle, June 22, 2015*

Thanks Bob,
Wonderful to hear about more and more progress!! Love it, love it!!

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 22, 2015*

MORE good news!!! We're hoping for more and more!!! Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 22, 2015*

ShockTuesday-- moved across the hub 6-23

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 23, 2015

Eric was shocked to discover this morning (while I stayed home to tend to paperwork in re LTC arrangements in AZ -- and start a new hamster hutch for KnK's two cute but toy hamsters) that the Care Center was about to move Oma across the hub to room 305). Apparently we would have been advised of that if we had made a meeting yesterday that they knew about but we didn't because the invite didn't come until our mailman brought it late in the afternoon. (Right, we thought they might have said something to one of the six of us constantly coming and going on the hall from morning to night, but the people who saw us all the time didn't know, and the people who knew didn't see us. Nothing new here.) And I was still shocked when I came in about noon. Of course, in fact, this move is to the LTD side and is what we wanted and had told them we wanted when the time came. It's just that we didn't know the time had come.

And yet it actually appears that the insurance coverage time had come-- the Medicare 10 days at full coverage in a skilled nursing facility. As far as I can make out now, we wouldn't see any difference in cost one way or the other, and the care appears to be the same or better for Dons on this side -- same therapy treatments from the same people as before, and even the same nurses and aids (who are numerous and who work now one hall and now another). True, there are twice as many patients per nurse/aide, but the patients look to be much less trouble. The only downside would be sharing the room with a roommate, but Doris's is a nice one-legged Hispanic grandmother with lots of children's drawings and family photos around. She likes to watch Spanish-language TV, thank goodness, and keeps it low. We are all busy now figuring out how to manage our new life under new circumstances, and get over our shock.

Doris, oblivious to our confusion, continues quite as before. Sometimes she's pretty lively and smiling, othertimes sleeping but quiet.

b

Comments

i guess this is good news. She must be enough better not to need constant surveillance. My comments will be brief for a while. I fell & broke 3 fingers on the left hand, so typing is slow & laborious. i am still thinking of you & Doris, though, & will-read each post. keep thinking positive.

—*Marjorie Mueller, June 24, 2015*

Wow, not easy for you all - but happy to hear that the change didn't upset Doris. From what it sounds like, she will get the same care from the same people as before. The best to all of you!!

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 24, 2015*

Well, y'all, that's a perfect example of left hand/right hand scenario!! I hope that the change isn't upsetting to Doris but sounds like it won't be if she continues to see the same care givers as before. I know you'll keep us

posted. Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 23, 2015*

Next Day, some small good news

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 24, 2015

Bob here -- it gets exhausting late in the day, so will try to find time to edit or reenter later, but want to say that the facility has decided to extend Doris's therapy treatments (pt, ot, st) for what I think is the maximum -- specifics later -- on the grounds that there has been some improvement. (For all I know this is routine, but it reads as big news emotionally.) AND an afternoon visit for me found her listening to a country-western duo with wide-open eyes and smiles. I stayed with her there for the rest of the show, maybe 45 minutes, and she was alert 90% of the time, squeezing my hand and giving me smiles and keeping time. This is the longest sustained period of attention I've noticed so far. Also, the facility social worker who seems to have moved Doris yesterday (who knows who's in charge of what?) sought me out to apologize for leaving me dismayed yesterday about the move. Seemed sincere and I appreciated that.

Also, she was keeping a nurse's dog in her office, which is right adjacent to the hub where staff huddles surrounded by variously vacant or alert patients on the LTC side, and the dog, a small, young dachshund, seeing me sit down, beelined over to jump in my lap and comfort me by letting me comfort her. Eric says, as always, I should get a dog. Something to that.

Comments

Great news!! Very, very happy to hear about the progress Doris is making and the extended therapy treatment. Very good news, Bob!!
Bill & Gunni

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 25, 2015*

Hi Ellen -- We do read to Doris quite a bit. You may think she's dozed off, but when you stop, she opens her eyes. Of course, who knows? But we like to go on the hopeful side. b

—*Bob Kriekhaus, June 25, 2015*

Wonderful news! I've seen therapy dogs and cats in action at local nursing homes and have been amazed. Of course, the cats primarily jump on residents' beds and look as though everyone who can feeds them

unmercifully. But the dogs are all business and very good, so get a dog, not a cat. I was wondering whether you had read to Doris. I've been doing that a lot with Win Neff, and I can tell she enjoys it even though she can't speak much.

—*Ellen and Wil, June 25, 2015*

Hi -- Bob -- I know this comes from a distance, but sounds like "some big good news!" and I'm glad to read it!!
Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 24, 2015*

Dining with the Residents -- 6/25/15

by Bob Kriekhaus, June 26, 2015

Wow, I just looked up to see Oma raise her RIGHT knee and pull her foot back two or three inches! She's sleeping in an uncomfortable (for sleeping) wheelchair stretched out beside her bed while we wait for the nurse's aide to do the folks ahead of her. Down in 313 Lily steadily alternates between singsong chanting and calling for help. I don't like not being able to put Oma to bed by myself. I'm not able and staff don't want me to.

But dinner. People enter the roomy dining hall at 5.30, all in wheelchairs. There are groupings. Lily and some 2 or 3 others have a feeder. Doris is usually fed separately, but Rosie is out sick with no replacement. I am directed over to a long, empty table against the far wall, but end up at an empty round table for ease of feeding. Three men at another round table are rejecting the efforts of another guy to join them. "Not for you!" "Go away!" I've long since noted the separateness of this younger, silent fellow. He ends up alone at a table next to Doris/Oma and me.

We are joined by a conspicuously audible and well-spoken woman named Helen. Turns out she lives across the hall from Oma. We talk easily and I quickly discover that in 2007 Helen had a stroke very much like Oma's except that she was able to drag herself about the house somehow on a walker. Moving from Maryland to Georgia to Paulden just north of here, she lived with relatives and learned to speak again and use her arm and leg much better through PT and time. Hard times forced her to join Las Fuentes only this month. She can use a walker but prefers the wheelchair for dinner.

Helen gave me lots of hope for Oma. For one thing she said that her mind had functioned pretty well even when she couldn't speak. She pointed at Doris, who was awake and listening, and would say, "There, you see, she understands you." She said her recovery had been slow but steady. Never assume she isn't aware of things you say.

Well, lots more went on. Much more interesting than our usual dinners at home. We were joined by another woman, who insisted that Helen move from her place at the table. She was hard to hear from across the table, and I'm not sure how lucid she is. They started serving at 6.15-- 45 minutes after we got there. Doris's food was puréed. She drank some juice and fed herself a little food when I put a filled spoon in her hand. Mostly,

I saw her as enlivened by all the strange activity.

Comments

Helen's story is another good reason for lots of hope that Doris will improve steadily since she's already shown so much improvement. Good to hear!

—*Ellen and Wil, June 26, 2015*

Looks like things are improving. Glad to hear it. Wonderful that there was some new motion.

—*Marjorie Mueller, June 26, 2015*

June 26, 2015

by Eric Kriekhaus, June 26, 2015

This morning Katie, Kyle and I went to see Oma first thing. We found her in the common area and took her promptly outside to the park across the street.

There we read a chapter of Harry Potter and met with Marty Miller.

During the walk, though, Oma voluntarily pointed to our white VW van as we passed - she seemed to recognize it without trouble.

Later, we came back inside and played chess and read another chapter with her. then we took her back to her room and set her up near her bed.

She seemed tired but stayed awake watching our game of Spendor on the bed. When I left the room she Kyle and Katie noticed that Oma was beating out a rhythm with her good hand. They joined in and Oma became very animated and sang/talked while keeping the beat. (Kyle says: I started with a simple beat that Oma counted out. Then she started singing and keeping time with her good hand.)

It was a case of many good signs. Oma was very alert and interacted with us a lot.

And she also didn't fall asleep - which she has done in days past.

Comments

HI -- All -- This is WONDERFUL to read!!! Children have MIRACULOUS POWERS to generate energy in others!!!! I believe that in general, and it sounds like it might have been so today with Oma!! ;-) I know you will all be happy to reunite with MC and to have her there with you. You all are held closely -- Margaret

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 26, 2015*

Really great news! We are happy to hear it. Having her grandchildren and children around as well as Bob must do her more good than anything else could.

—*Ellen and Wil, June 26, 2015*

Excellent news!! Love to hear it!!

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 26, 2015*

An Addition for Friday 6-26

by Bob Kriekhaus, June 26, 2015

Just wanted to add that when I got there in the afternoon, Oma was in fact in bed and sleeping. Stuff happened, like another dinner where I fed her at the table with Helen and Marva, and she showed great interest and ate quite a bit, but what I mainly want to say is that in some interaction at bedside shortly after I arrived, she looked at me and quite clearly and slowly said, "I ate ..." That was the beginning of a sentence she couldn't complete, but she tried a while. I told her how great it was and not to worry about all the words just now.

Comments

The best news yet, Bob. I'm thinking that all of the time and attention you and the family are giving Doris is bringing her along more steadily.

—*Love,bEllenband Wil, June 27, 2015*

Fantastic, Bob!! Fantastic!!

Bill and Gunni

—*Gunvor Peffer, June 27, 2015*

Hi -- Bob -- All of this is so good to read!!!! Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 26, 2015*

Saturday June 27

by Bob Kriekhaus, June 27, 2015

Except that Margaret, Eric's wife and Katie and Kyle's wonderful mother -- OK, wonderful wife, too ! -- has arrived and visited Oma, nothing much different today -- sleep and wakefulness. Helen, Doris's table mate who has recovered from a more or less identical stroke over six years, told me at dinner time that when at lunch time she asked Doris if she was ready to eat, she got a resounding "Yes." Rather too loud, she said. So that's good.

Comments

It looks like you may be leaving careingbridge soon, sorry to hear that, but i guess they can' afford to keep it up forever. maybe bob could rig up something we could all check in at. i do want to know what is going on. i am pleased with her progress.

—*Marjorie Mueller, June 28, 2015*

Doris, in the photo on the blog's homepage, looks beautiful as always. The descriptions of her recovery among such a loving family are heartwarming. All of you are in my prayers. Rochelle

—*Rochelle Ferran, June 28, 2015*

Another day-- June 28

by Bob Kriekhaus, June 28, 2015

Nice to hear from Rochelle. Thanks. And Marge, not to worry about leaving Caringbridge soon. I emphasize every hopeful thing I see, but, of course, most of what goes on is sleeping, Today the good news is that as I sat at bedside watching her sleep, she raised her right knee three or four times in close succession by several inches. Must have been a dream. And when I stroked her cheek at dinner time and reminded her of how the TAS kids would ask her if they could touch her wrinkles, she gave us a BIG smile. Also, note new photo from the care center reception room this evening.

Comments

Hard for me to picture Doris asleep, without that ever-present smile on her face. I'll take whatever good news comes along... including what she gave Bob yesterday (Sunday). That's hopeful.

—Chuck Post, June 29, 2015

Tuesday June 30

by Bob Kriekhaus, June 30, 2015

No significant-seeming changes to report. Still sleeping a lot, still waking up cheerfully enough to recognize me or Clélia or Eric or the grandkids or the occasional other visitor we have -- you can all drop in any time (room 305), but it's likely better to call me first (the cell is getting a lot of use now -- 928-458-5829 transfers to the cell if I'm not at home or with my tablet at the center.

If you've not spent much time in a long-term care center, there's an inherent interest in that, I might add.

I've fed Doris dinner at the table with Helen I think I've mentioned before, for maybe five evenings now. Very pleasant because of her real face-expression interactions with that lively woman. This evening Clelia and Aditya joined us, and we all had a good time.

Major hygiene idea for all who find themselves caretaking somewhere like this in the future is providing some version of brushing the teeth after a meal -- we do that with the swabs on sticks and plain water that are in the room. Doris does appear to appreciate this.

Comments

i thought i did this once. keep the comments coming. i can/t say much - down to one hand & a thumb. but read

eagerly. keep it up.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 1, 2015*

keep the reports coming. i won't be able to make too many comments, but am always interested.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 1, 2015*

Hi -- Bob -- It does seem that human animation is very therapeutic -- probably good for all of us!!! So, it's nice to have a "Helen" or two around! Y'all are still very much in our thoughts!!! Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 30, 2015*

Wednesday July 1

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 1, 2015

This morning Clélia and I had an interview with Terry the Nurse Practitioner who comes in every Wednesday. We wanted especially to know about possible side effects of her drug regimen, whether they might be responsible for some of the sleepiness we see. Terry thought drowsiness was not a common side effect, but that she has simply had a massive stroke (her language) whose effects are what we see and are unlikely to change. We like Terry, who seems a kind and highly competent person.

And yet we saw a lot of liveliness in Oma in the morning and later, with me, at dinner. Once again they misplaced her dinner, which was finally found waiting for a trained aide to feed it to her. The aide is out sick, however. Dinner with hearty Helen was again full of life. Doris ate pretty well and drank all her nutrition supplement.

Later, she was awake quite awhile. We just held hands. I gave her a choice between Amy Goodman's news program (our regular) on a tablet or listening to her favorite Dixieland band, and she chose the music. When they put her to bed I left her dozing off to the music. Her father always said, she told me several times when we were first married, "La vie est dure sans confiture."

Comments

Hi -- Bob -- I think Doris' choice to listen to music was, by far, smarter than the news!!!! I've just recently gotten hooked on Yo Yo Ma -- such mellow sounds -- at least its mellow on the CD I have of his playing. Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—Kin and Margaret Patterson, July 1, 2015

simple pleasures

by Clelia Lewis, July 2, 2015

Yesterday after Opa left, Aditya and I stayed with Oma outside by the front of the facility. The monsoons have begun visiting the mountains, so it was cooler and there was a very nice breeze. It was full of activity, people coming and going, families coming to visit, residents going off for errands or appointments, or returning, or walking dogs, or just coming out to enjoy the air. Aditya built inventions with his K'NEX building toys, and I read from a book by Laura Ingalls Wilder, whose writings Aditya and I enjoy, and which Oma seems to be enjoying as well. She was awake and full of interest and smiles as she watched people, nodding now and then at some funny or clever part of the story.

I was offering her lots of water, as this has been something I have felt concerned about--when she is super sleepy she doesn't drink much and I wonder sometimes if not getting enough hydration could be one factor contributing to the sleepiness (a bit of a circle). At one point she gave me "the look," as her neighbor Helen laughingly calls it. She leans forward and gives a bit of a scowl over her glasses, which seems to say, "Yes I heard you the other fifty times you offered, and no I do not want any more right now, Thank You." I laughed and apologized for being annoying. "It just seems to be part of the way it is," I admitted. I think she likes being able to express that little bit of humorous drama, especially when it helps loosen up what can often be an excessive seriousness we fall into in our helplessness to ascertain her needs or wishes.

This echoes well Bob's reference to the saying, "La Vie est dure sans confiture," which in English means "Life is hard without jam." How dour, or "dure" I can get in response to this unexpected turn of events! I know those moments when we can bring lightness and enjoyment to Doris are greatly appreciated. It is why she perks up and drinks in the playful mood when the children are around.

Much love to all,
Clelia

Comments

re Doris' sleepiness. maybe it is just her body trying to rest and recover. my very mild injury has caused feelings of sleepiness and exhaustion. i feel the need of more sleep. perhaps she does, too.

—Marjorie Mueller, July 2, 2015

Dogs and such -- 6-2-15

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 2, 2015



It's like there is this narrow window of view Doris has. The photo I uploaded with this entry shows her outside this morning where I usually take her (it's shady and there's a slight breeze no matter the sun in the mornings), looking at me through her window. That's the place to stick your head if you want to be recognized with her still big smile.

Or appreciated if you're a visiting hospital dog. Two were getting some training this morning, and they got a LOT of positive feedback from Doris and me. It's a big strangeness this dog (dolphin, cat) link. It tells us something our rationalist upbringing makes it hard to hear. I wish I'd had the presence of mind to take a photo of her face as she petted the dogs or thanked their kindly owners.

@Margaret Sr -- concur Yo Yo Ma. I'll be adding some items to her playlist. Know, though, that this set of 14 When the Saints or Ain't Gonna Fight War Nomore types has a peculiar and special place in her life here in Prescott. I've never seen her happier than when we visited the library to hear this group (local, the Geritol Hipsters) perform maybe three years ago. The bass is our good friend and next door neighbor. He gave us the band's CD and we've played it a lot in the car.

More broadly, I'm wondering if her happiness then was so great because the then there Alzheimer's was affecting the speech-logic brain side but had left some other-side stuff still operative and perhaps even more sensitive and appreciative. Today all the more-so perhaps.

Comments

What a wonderful photo of Doris--she looks lively and canny. I've seen therapy dogs in action, and they are amazing. When Wil's father was in a nursing home here, there was a dog who made his rounds, stopping at each bed for petting and then moving on to the next--all this without a human handler!

—*Love, Ellen and Wil, July 2, 2015*

The healing power of music, art and our fourlegged furry friends is amazing!!

Very interesting, indeed!

Enjoyed reading Clelia's writing about simple pleasures to share - like humor and written stories. Glad to hear that Doris has such a fun table mate in Helen. It is all very good!! Great to hear!!

—*Gunvor Peffer, July 2, 2015*

Thursday

by Clelia Lewis, July 3, 2015

Yesterday Aditya and I went to visit Oma in the afternoon, 2pm or so. She was resting in bed, looking very relaxed. When I gently woke her she gave me a sweet smile and seemed ready to engage. I asked if she wanted to go outside again, since the monsoons were offering a bit of cool moisture and breeze. She nodded yes. So I found an aide to help get her ready and into the chair. That took a little while, but finally we were able to go out. I got us all settled, Aditya with a game of balancing metal sticks (called Suspend), and making sure Doris was comfortable as possible. Then I sat down to read some more from our book. The story was very engaging and we stayed there for a couple hours, chatting, playing, reading. Doris stayed awake, occasionally closing her eyes, and just had the most relaxed smile the whole time. I felt grateful, and also instructed by the possibility of her being at ease.

I have heard from several people that the amount of sleep may have a lot to do with just the body needing to recover from injury, so I am relaxing a bit around that issue. Still, I am glad for the wakeful times when we get to have a bit more exchange. It is also nice on days like these, to see her face open and soft, as I know it means she must be getting proper treatment and respect, which of course she needs from the people who are giving her care. That is always a concern for me in this situation too. Although the staff seems harried at times (perhaps not quite enough of them in ratio to the residents--and right now they are busy changing over from the previous owner company to another one), most of them are pretty good at communicating with kindness and respect.

Comments

Clelia uses the phrase, ""open and soft", in ref to Doris's expression. That is the face I remember from our many lunches/discussions over the last couple of years. Bob's lunch group is called the "Squares", a hastily-invented moniker back when we were just four. Now we are double that.

Doris has lunch with us and hangs in there for any part of the following discussions, around the coffee table at home, which she deemed engaging enough. That open and soft expression has always been a part of our group energy. I look forward to more of it in the coming months and years.

—Chuck Post, July 3, 2015

Another good day-- Friday, 7-3

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 3, 2015



Margaret with Katie & Kyle came in this morning to bring their good cheer and inspiring élan vital. Also to put up two of Dons's Chinese watercolors around Clélia's recent flowers. (Sorry, no D in photo because after dinner she's waiting in her wheelchair for the aides to find time to put her in bed.) Reports are that she was alert

and interactive. Tonight it was the same with Helen at table and she ate more than usual. Now she's sleeping. A good night to all and many thanks for the ongoing energy of your presence with her here.

Comments

What a beautiful corner! Doris must love having her paintings around, and the flowers pull it all together.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 4, 2015*

Wonderful idea to put Doris's paintings in her room around her bed! Love the idea!! And - it it looks great!!

—*Gunvor Peffer, July 3, 2015*

Hi -- All -- I think I blinked yesterday (7/2) and failed to write to y'all. Then, all of a sudden there are more journal entries, making me feel like I missed several days. The posts (along with the photos) are so revealing of the days there and each one, in its own way, is special and means a lot. What a nice cherry spot, in Doris' room, now, with the flowers and her paintings!!! Great ideas all around!!! Warm thoughts to all -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, July 3, 2015*

Saturday morning visit

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 4, 2015



Fourth of July featured two fighter jets honoring my arrival at what is now called Granite Creek Health and Rehabilitation Center (or possibly the huge, annual parade Prescott stages starting at nine). General overcast and sometimes rain here made for a pleasant morning outing in which I recovered a nice yellow flower for Doris from behind the facility, which looks out on the small piece of Indian reservation the Yavapai have here. Yes, there is a casino, but that doesn't show from here. So here's a picture from our usual morning perch. Doris really enjoyed the flower, which pleased me a lot, and I was not surprised when after a while she tried eating it. Then as we returned to the air conditioning we encountered our dinner table-mate Helen, and when I wheeled Doris around to where she hove into her view, she (Doris) gave a really big and happy sign of recognition that included a wave of the hand.

A good morning with this caveat -- I had to leave her arranged as comfortably as I could manage in her luxury wheel chair and in her room. I'd really like to have put her to bed to rest in a different arrangement of the flaccid limbs, but I can't by myself and, of course, they don't want me even to try it. But even in a pretty good place like this one, you can't just snap your fingers and get the help of an aide to do this. People are just parked in their chairs or left in their beds where the morning's protocol and processes will eventually reach them.

Comments

hi Bob was it a dandelion? Sort looks like one but I have a tiny picture on my phone. You know that dandelion leaves (young ones) are edible and are used in salads from time to time. I don't know about the flowers. As Kin liked to tell the story, once upon a time, he contends, he insulted our neighbors when we lived in B'ham by

going onto their front lawn to harvest dandelion leaves, explaining that we didn't have any dandelions in our lawn!!!! That, BTW, is a great picture of Doris -- love her hat! Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrrt Patterson, July 4, 2015*

i understand your frustration. every place is short of help. nothing to be done about it. try to bear up. i talked to my ex-daughter-in-law today. she had a mild stroke some years ago - 10? she said sleep and rest were essential. she has made a fairly good recovery, which would have been better if her live-in person had taken her to the hospital when she asked him to. it looks like time and rehab is what is needed now. hang in there.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 4, 2015*

Bob, you are doing so much for Doris. We think about you both and the grace you are both bringing to this part of your marriage.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 4, 2015*

Two Videos

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 4, 2015

This evening saw another great visit from all three grandchildren. This led me to remember to upload two videos of them to my Dropbox account, where people can access them by the links I am about to give. The first one was taken back on June 21 when we were still in the rehab side, a double room whose unused bed Eric and the three grandchildren are playing a board game on. Clélia speaks to Oma as they play. This gives an excellent sense of just how responsive and non-so Oma is. [Here is the link](#). {200 MB, 2 min 20 sec.} The second one was taken June 29 in the large reception room of the care center. Eric is dancing with Katie and Kyle to the Dixieland jazz Oma is playing from the mp3 player she holds in her hand. [Here is that link](#). {61 MB, less than a minute.}

Comments

Bob, we enjoyed both of these. It is great to see adult Clelia and Eric and their children. And it's good to see Doris's responsiveness. Love to you all.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 5, 2015*

Thanks for sharing these, Bob. The videos bring the verbal entries alive and allow us to "meet" the whole family. Doris is blessed to have you all.

—Nancy Lewis, July 5, 2015

Monday 7-6

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 6, 2015

I wasn't going to do an entry for today just because I don't want to be constantly pushing out announcements at people, BUT I'm rather astonished at the number of right (bad) leg movements I'm seeing right under my nose as I sit here after dinner watching her sleep in her wheelchair. It's over 20, I'd guess, and has included one quick little bunch of three or four. Some of these came while she appeared to be dreaming.

Also, Eric, Margaret, Katie and Kyle left this morning for Atlanta and the summer family things that go on over there. They have been a wonderful presence here for me and for Oma and are already sorely missed. Reminds me to say that we've learned a good approach to exercising Oma from Katie, who had the brilliant idea of encouraging Oma/Doris to draw with her good but left hand. She enjoys this and Katie plainly enjoyed playing teacher. So I mean to continue this great practice.

Another also -- on the side a friend suggested that Doris might be self-conscious and embarrassed in the video I made of her watching Eric and the three grandchildren playing a board game on the unused bed. The thought is that she may be more aware than we think, and the embarrassment keeps her from looking at the camera. My take on that is that I agree she may be a lot more aware than we think -- it's something we tell ourselves all the time, and Helen the table mate who had a similar stroke tells us this, too -- but her behavior in the video is no different from usual. That includes not responding to my voice calling to her to look at the camera. It appears that she can only think and see down and out a particular lane of vision; voices from elsewhere must seem to her something like a hallucination might to us -- you hear a voice and look around everywhere you can, but see nothing, so you just keep on keeping on.

Comments

Very encouraging to hear about all the movements in Doris's right leg. Wonderful to hear!

Great initiative of Katie to encourage Doris to use her left arm for drawing or painting! Doris will like that - with all the creativity that Doris has!

Wonderful for the two of you to have had the kids and grandkids around at this time. Very therapeutic! There is no better medicine!!

—Gunvor Peffer, July 7, 2015

Hi -- Bob -- On the way back from the airport last night, I heard from the new arrivals here in Atlanta about Katie's engaging Doris with drawing -- quite insightful for Katie!! And Doris was apparently receptive to Katie's caring instruction and help. Now, this morning, your words reinforce the image I have of the engagement of teacher and student. I love your idea of continuing!!!! Take care -- Margaret Sr. PS - Hope you will keep posting!!

—Kin and Margarrrt Patterson, July 7, 2015

Wound on ankle

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 9, 2015



I was assisting the aide put Doris to bed about 7.30 or eight last night -- she had been unusually lethargic at dinner and afterwards in her room -- and when she had changed Doris and cleaned her and was just finishing up, we suddenly noticed a very serious looking wound just above the right ankle bone. This was quite shocking to both of us. This aide had put her to bed last night, too, and had not noticed this conspicuous dark and deep wound.

The nurse was called and was also shocked. And puzzled. For the apparent dried blood did not clean up

with saline solution. It was not on the skin, but under it. The skin was not broken. She checked with the morning nurse and found that no one had noticed this conspicuous wound when Doris was changed. Given its location, above the ankle and under the slacks Doris always wears, no one would have noticed it during the day. So there's probably no way of knowing more about when and how it was inflicted.

I watched the nurse measure the thing carefully. It's about a centimeter round and 8 mm deep, in the middle of a sloping sort of crater around it, with also an impression/depression in the skin that runs down into and through the main wound and extends beyond the crater a bit running parallel to the leg-ankle itself. So you'd think this could be matched to some protrusion on the wheelchair or to some such out in the hall or dining room, but I looked around and could find nothing to match.

They called the doctor and he or his practitioner will check into this farther in the morning.

But what about Doris! Of course she cannot speak, and apparently did not much feel the infliction of this thing whenever it occurred. (She has no feeling in that right side at all.) If she is conscious of suffering from it, she does not show it. We await the doctor's evaluation of the situation.

Another aspect of this is what it tells us about the physical condition of her right leg down there after a month of inactivity -- that it is soft enough to permit this deep infliction without breaking the skin. I find that almost as disturbing as the fact of the wound itself. Push into your own ankle in that area and you will feel bone, cartilage, resistance. So, more later...

Photos



Comments

this is indeed disturbing. i hope they can find the cause & do something about it. it does not seem to be a case of

negligence. keep us posted.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 9, 2015*

Bob -- so sorry to hear about this wound. Does Doris have touch sensation on her stroke affected side/leg? Please keep us posted on any revelations about it. Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrrt Patterson, July 9, 2015*

Wound mystery (probably) solved

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 9, 2015

(Preferatory apologies to those who, like our daughter, consider this right on the edge of falling into the reality TV camp.)

Visited this morning to take Doris out in the open air, and, of course, to see what was new on the wound front. Told to wait for the wound nurse. After an hour or two, I had to go and, Glory Be ! the wound nurse was just walking in. We talked at the hub and I showed her my photos. Right away she suspected and by the photos was confirmed in her suspicions -- Does she suffer from peripheral artery disease? Yes, in that calf and ankle, about which she often complained. -- a hidden ulcer (or some such term) under the skin that finally broke through.

Now this remains to be confirmed by her physical examination of Doris, but makes such sense and explains so much mystery that I wanted to get this out to folks right away. I am super relieved, but must, of course, wait for more info, which I will post.

Comments

It's good that you took those photos, Bob. Glad the medical mystery seems to be solved, and I hope this can be treated quickly.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 9, 2015*

Updating the wound situation

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 9, 2015

Julie the wound nurse got around to Doris at about 3.15 this afternoon, just as Clelia. Aditya and I were bringing her in from outside. I got to sit with her as she examined the wound under good light. She could see bone and cartilage ! But measured it as only 6 mm -- very deep, she says, and unusual. Not your usual arterial ulcer. Likely some bump sometime earlier (as in, months earlier) had bruised her there and the blood coagulated and festered and eventually broken through. She dressed it with good deep stuff and said she'd talk to the doctor about antibiotics. I'll see her there tomorrow morning.

On another note, Clélia and I were talking about how lively and awake Doris usually is when several people are around talking. She appears to show some degree of comprehension then. No words recently, but efforts at speech sometimes. We tell her to take he time because it will come in slowly.

Comments

interesting solution to the wound puzzle. who would have thought? good sign that she enjoys seeing and hearing people. is she having any actual therapy at all? don't recall you mentioning any. i suppose they know what they are doing. i do think there has been progress but it looks like a long slow road. hang in there, bob.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 10, 2015*

Wound and Therapy

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 10, 2015

No alarms about the wound yet. Tonight the wound nurse sought me out at dinner (feeding Doris) to tell me the doctor would look at the wound tomorrow, She still finds it strange because she's never seen one this deep. On the other hand, the hall nurse told me as I went home that she HAD seen wounds like that before, specifically that deep, on both buttocks and ankle,

After eating a pretty good meal (= 25% rather than 10%) and being fairly lively, Doris dropped into a deep sleep and I went home early.

@ Marge-- There has been PT, OT and ST (physical, occupational and speech) all along, but it stopped on Monday this week (July 6) a month after the stroke. All along the therapists have been looking for signs of improvement, and while I am elated to see the knee raise itself and various sudden articulations of a word, they have not seen improvement. In fact last week Monday I went to the PT head to say that I had been finding Doris's good leg stiffer than before, resistant to moving with me or pushing against me, and she said someone had already noted that the Friday before, and that it was not a sign of recovery, but the reverse. I felt the same "tone" (I think they call it) today. Three weeks ago she would push back on my hand with the ball of her left

foot, but no longer. So this is discouraging. More encouraging is that there continue to be efforts to say words and lively head nods and expressions that appear to indicate comprehension.

Comments

Bob, I'm sorry to hear that the PT, OT, ST people aren't more encouraging. Get after them about continuing if you can. For three or four weeks Win Neff was unresponsive and sleeping when I visited, and then suddenly last week she was more alert and interested in being read to (We are doing *The Crock of Gold*). When I talked to her friend Clark, he said she had been getting PT again, and that seemed to have affected everything.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 12, 2015*

Do they know the cause of the wounds?

—*Marty, July 12, 2015*

oh dear. what does this mean for you? are they giving up? if they do, will she have to leave los fuertes? i hope you can keep you courage up. it is a hard time for you.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 11, 2015*

I'm very sorry to read your post tonight -- as with everyone else, probably, I've been hoping that there had been improvement and hoping for more to come. We'll just continue to hold y'all in our thoughts. Take care -- Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrrt Patterson, July 10, 2015*

Perhaps she's moving on

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 12, 2015

Eric, Clélia and I have been concerned, as has staff, that for 24 hours now (Sunday evening) Doris has refused to eat or drink or take her meds. For four meals, supper to supper. It is our thought that, while this may be temporary, the likely situation is the beginning of the death process. That not only just naturally comes to mind, but a visiting missionary woman feeding another patient in the dining hall tonight (a kind and thoughtful person I'd spoken to the night before) noticed Doris again not waking for food or for water and plainly said as much to me, adding that I should just let it happen. I thanked her for her concern and told her that it was also the family's

instinct and decision to go that way. Indeed, as many of you reading this know, Doris had a near-death experience as a child and has always been convinced that death is a transition to a splendid place of love and light where those who have gone before await us. My retirement reading has also convinced me of that truth. A couple of staff people have suggested directly to me tonight that we might want to consider hospice. The doctor looking at her wound this morning and reviewing her medical history with me asked, "Does she want to live?" I could only guess from the context that he was thinking she might be ready to move on now. It has been a month of struggle with the stroke, and it does appear to be getting the best of her. Although we are indeed aware (@Ellen-Wil) that major recovery can occur, and we are not giving up, I will be asking the right people tomorrow, Monday, morning about hospice. That would bring her home with good help for me and care for her. And, come to think of it, I just met a cornet player who is back playing in his (Geritol Hipsters) band, back from hospice!

Comments

as i read your latest post, i found my eyes filling with tears. if it is time to say good-bye to Doris, i am ready. i think she knows what is best.i will grieve but accept what must be. you both remain in my thoughts.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 13, 2015*

Bob, my thoughts are with you and my hope is that you can find some comfort in family and friends and memories of better times. May Doris find peace and may you know that you have done all you could in loving her. Dave

—*David Steeves, July 13, 2015*

We are thinking of you both with love. We hope Doris will have a peaceful passing, whenever it comes, with you and the children around her at home.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 13, 2015*

Dear Bob, I know that she will be happy to be at home with you. My heart is with you, Marty

Let me know if I can do anything.

—*Marty, July 13, 2015*

Dear Bob, Clelia and Eric -- Usually, in what seems like an inevitable outcome, words are difficult to find or can't be found at all. But, Bob, I think you found words for all of us. When my mother died three years ago, with Hospice, she was able to be at home. Being with Mamma, rubbing her hands, feet, arms as she took her last breath, was one of the most powerful experiences of our lives. I am so grateful to have been there. Just know, that you are held in our thoughts as you make this side of the journey, whenever it comes, with Doris.

With caring thoughts -- Margaret Sr

—*Kin and Margarrrt Patterson, July 12, 2015*

dear Bob - your note is sad but so sweet. Doris is fortunate to have a husband who is prepared to let her go if her life is moving in that direction. My thoughts are with both of you for the most peaceful transition in whatever direction that is necessary, given the situation. Sincerely, Joan Enoch

—*Joan Enoch and Bob Bevins, July 12, 2015*

One's flying over the cuckoo's nest

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 13, 2015

Thank God for Hospice ! It's just 48 hours now since Doris decided to stop eating and drinking. She sleeps instead. Megan the hall nurse doesn't know anything except what's in Doris's big 3-ring binder. I waited half an hour to find this out because she was too busy for me at the computer with another nurse. I believe this is because the new owners have dramatically improved this place by introducing new computers and new programs. I wanted to know what happened when Dr. Duncan visited Doris in the mid-afternoon. She points to a page in the binder and says, "This is all I know -- she's scheduled to go to the wound clinic." I say, well, I'm wondering about this moving to hospice thing. She says I don't know about that. I say I've been talking with hospice and we're making preparations at home to receive her tomorrow. And after all there was never a better candidate for hospice care than Doris with her massive stroke and 48 hours of not eating or drinking or responding. "I don't know about that." Pointing to another page in the binder, "There will be an evaluation tomorrow." So I ask about Doris's vital signs. She had a temperature of 99.8 last night, she has this big wound, and I'm worried the fever may have gotten worse. "I don't know about that. The records haven't been entered yet. The aides have them."

So I go off to find the aides. No one in sight down the hall. Then someone comes out of a room and I ask her. No luck, she doesn't do vitals, she's new here, and she doesn't know where the list is. No other aides around. But down the hall I see a patient moaning loudly. She goes on moaning. I wonder what's up and walk down to see her. As I get closer, I realize this is the lady I waited the half hour with at the nurses' station. I crouched alongside her and talked quite a bit. She was ahead of me in line, I informed her, and she said I was a gentleman. That pleased me. Her problem is that she can't get anyone to fix her other wheelchair, motorized, and she needs that one to take better care of herself. Also, she needs someone to put her to bed because she likes to nap at 3 pm. When Megan glanced at us once, I said, "She's ahead of me." Megan said something like, "Oh I know her story already."

So while Megan was talking at me, this lady went down the hall and set up her station and started moaning. Why? "To get their attention," she said.

I decide to give up on the vital signs. Doris looked peaceful, no signs of fever, and the doctor was just here

checking her out. Also, I know one of the aides with duty on her hall tonight; we've talked a good bit; she gives Doris excellent and possibly special care. I've got to get home and clear out the office for Doris tomorrow.

Hospice details to date, Monday evening

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 13, 2015

This morning I called Granite Mountain Home Care and Hospice. Maybe half an hour later, they call back and set up an appointment for me at 3 pm. Then Debbie, the rep, has a cancellation and comes in early afternoon. She has a lovely face and radiates sympathy and kindness. She's married to a retired cop and they do volunteer work on the side with vets. She knows everything, she has all the time in the world, and she talks to me like a human being with some intrinsic worth. (It is after this interview that I speak with Megan -- see preceding entry.)

My first question has been troubling Clelia, Eric and me. If a person doesn't drink, she can't live very long. We can give Doris saline by IV, which will prolong her life, but she seems to have made a decision to die. Yet if we don't give her liquids, won't that be very painful? Direct answer, no bush beating around -- it's easier on her not to give her fluids. Something about ketones and the body's way to prepare for death. This is what the body does. People usually live 4-5 five days, a week at most, when they do this.

Hospice will transport the patient; provide a hospital bed and the briefs, pads etc. needed for care, as well as training in their use. The case nurse comes once a week; the on-call nurse is on call all night and will come to the house in an emergency; the CNA (certified nurse's assistant) comes twice a week for bath and cleaning; there is a social worker, a chaplain, and there are volunteers to give you a break. (Debbie's husband volunteers.) There is a respite house (near the hospital) in case the patient needs special care to be stabilized. And get this -- this firm employs a doctor full time to care for their hospice patients. He has no practice on the side. They have about 50 cases altogether for him to watch over. It also happens that some accident of modern times brought him to my attention as a super good-guy doctor back in January. When I got to the care center later in the afternoon, that Dr. (Doyle) happened to be in an office doing some work at a laptop. The door being open, I popped my head in and introduced myself. He gave me five minutes of useful info and seemed willing to talk more, but I left him to his work.

The rub is, at home Doris needs 24/7, and no caregiving husband can give that much care. Someone needs to sit with her all night. This the husband must pay for -- the rest is covered by Medicare. It will be about \$20 an hour, and I can see that I will need someone for the night time. I'll meet with their "private duty" rep tomorrow morning. She comes to the home, as did Debbie. Eric and Clélia are already making arrangements to fly in, so I'm seeing a good situation here soon.

And what about Bob? many of you ask. I am thankful for your comments here and what I get on the side. I definitely understand that the caregiver needs care and I do make arrangements to walk and talk with friends pretty often, about other topics. So far, I actually think I'm feeling fine and doing well. However, I do have this tendency to suddenly tear up to the point of not being able to speak, especially in the presence of a kind and caring person like Debbie, and quite to my surprise and embarrassment. I don't know if this is so much a sign of stress as just one of my character traits. It is of course a sign of grief. There is also a self-indulgence about it, a

self-pity that troubles me, and I struggle to find some way to control myself. After all, it gets in the way of wherever a conversation was going. That's my main personal concern just now.

Doris, I find, is somewhere else and doing just fine. Debbie mentioned the well-known myth to which there must be some truth, of wanderers in the desert (without water) hallucinating a lovely oasis in the near distance. I notice no signs of pain or distress in her sweet face and think she's experiencing some version of her out-of-body near-death experience back when she was seven and went along a sort of tunnel towards a lovely, loving light -- until she felt the call of her family's love and returned to her body.

Comments

It is small wonder you are occasionally overcome with tears. i would be surprised if you were not. you are experiencing a profound change in your life. hospice is a wonderful thing. you have explained just how wonderful. this Cambridge site is good for you, too. you can express your feelings here instead of keeping them inside. It gives you something to do. Megan is a prime example of the average hospital health worker. as you said, thank God for hospice. Keep your chin up.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 14, 2015*

Bob -- Thank goodness for the Debbies of this world. I guess we all have our own callings, but they are the angels for the rest of us humans. I'm glad that you have found her, and Hospice. The coming days are a special time, made more so by Clelia's and Eric's being there so that you are all together. You can hold each other and all can hold Doris. And, Bob, it's OK to cry. Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrrt Patterson, July 13, 2015*

Bob - both Bob and I could possibly sit up with Doris thru the nite while you slept if that would be useful to you. Bob, as you might know was a CNA for a time. I also would like to invite you to cry with me if that felt at all useful to you. I know that sounds like a ridiculous sentence but I think you know what I mean. We both would like to help and are comfortable around death but don't want to intrude. Let me know if we can be helpful to you.

—*Joan Enoch and Bob Bevins, July 13, 2015*

Home at last

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 14, 2015



This is beautiful. Clelia arrived from Vancouver just as Oma was brought in by ambulance and the admissions nurse showed up by car. Eric will be in late tonight due to weather delays. We have employed an aide to sit with Doris overnight while we sleep. Today supper time marks 3 days without water or food for her. The new bed puts her right in the spot she always sat in before the stroke, reading or watching old sitcoms and movies. My little office is just at the foot of her bed and off to her right, as it was before. We have placed her paint brushed and family photos along the window sills where she can see them when she decides to take a look around. We think she knows she is home.

Comments

After catching up yesterday on all the posts while I was gone I find myself thinking of you all every few minutes. Now I'm checking for updates frequently. It seems from your reports that Doris is not suffering too much from pain. That's a blessing. Thinking of all the times our lives have crossed and how knowing each of you has been rich and rewarding.

—*ann sawyer, July 15, 2015*

Bob, Doris looks very peaceful and "at home." You and Clelia and Eric are doing wonderful, compassionate work.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 15, 2015*

She will be at peace with family at home.

—*Marty, July 15, 2015*

July 15, 2015

by Clelia Lewis

Getting on a plane soon I thought I'd mention here the sweet/odd moment I had when saying goodbye to my mom just last week. I was kissing her goodbye and saying that Aditya and I needed to get back to Vancouver to check on the other kids there. I said it looked like she was in good hands, that Opa is devoted and will stay by her side, and "We'll be back in a couple months." She was nodding yes to all of it until i said the last part. She gave me "the look" over her glasses--a kind of sternly humorous look. I was puzzled. What was she saying there? Looking back on it I project it may have been something like, "Two months? I don't think so." I paused, and just hugged and kissed her again. "I love you. See you again soon."

A day or two later my dad said that she had very clearly turned away from offerings of food. Annoyed or angry at the constant attempt to get her to take it? Of course we don't know. Only that her decision was clear--she was open-eyed and responding by turning her face away.

None of us liked having to have her in a nursing home. It never quite felt authentic to her, to us. None of us could see another option with the level of physical care she would need. None of us could tell what her true state was. So Eric and I left, the grandchildren with us, staying open to the unknown as we continued to live the other aspects of our lives.

It is easy for me to wonder now (having arrived again yesterday) if she was already on this path--heading toward the open door--but seeing us all around her, the joy and freedom of the young children, she came back a few steps to be with us as best she could, enjoying our love for her and her love for us. Once we were not there, I can imagine the open door beckoning...light and freedom, no heavy, broken body holding her in.

Now here we are. It is truly so good to have her home for however long we can. This is right and true. A journey as a family--the great mystery that we all face. In some places, such as India, death is not seen as the opposite of life. Death and birth are the opposites that are both contained within the continuum that is Life. We share this time, and I feel this is a mother's greatest gift, as much as there are parts in us that continue to protest.

Comments

Clelia has such a beautiful way of expressing her feelings. i am sure Doris is fully aware of what she is doing. i must repeat that i am so glad i saw her in April. i am proud to say i possess one of her beautiful paintings, & cherish the weavings she taught me to do, even though my efforts were far from perfect. May she rest in peace.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 15, 2015*

Doris and I only met a few times (the NM wedding time of Eric and MC, in Atlanta with MC's parents), but now reading these pages of comments, Clelia's thoughts, and especially the portfolio that Bob has created and put on this site, I know not meeting her more than I did was my lost opportunity to know a unique and creative

soul. Here in NC, Haydee and I will continue with Doris and those dear to her in our thoughts and prayers.

—*Walter Patterson, July 15, 2015*

I love the thought that it's death and birth that are opposites, not death and life !
The moment of turning away, eyes quite open and to me seemingly reproachful, was Saturday supper.

—*Bob Kriekhaus, July 15, 2015*

Beautifully said, Clelia. A reminder to all of us of what "death with dignity" is about. Thank you.

—*Nancy Lewis, July 15, 2015*

Good things happening

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 15, 2015



Doris is resting very peacefully this evening. We sit with her usually one at a time and tell her what we feel, which is that all is well with her and we love her and understand that she is moving on to another place, along a path that we ourselves must wait awhile to enter. Her face is relaxed and sweet.
The photo is from just now.

Comments

What you three are doing is amazing. Doris looks very relaxed and peaceful. All of you are constantly in our thoughts.

Bill and Gunni

—*Gunvor Peffer, July 15, 2015*

Relaxed and sweet indeed.

—*ann sawyer, July 15, 2015*

Waiting in peace

by Eric Kriekhaus, July 16, 2015

Today was a very peaceful day at 620 Coronado. Oma has become much less anxious - sleeping much more peacefully. We have had fantastic talks with nurses, aides and social workers; they have shared information as well as stories and wisdom. I think that we are at a place where we are supporting Oma and giving her encouragement without worrying about pain or physical discomfort. There is, in fact, very little pain or discomfort.

One of the things that we were told that really spoke to me was when a night nurse spoke about how Oma was negotiating an incredible, unfamiliar and unknowable (by us) journey. Almost all of her energy and focus is, naturally, pointed inward. So we need to respect and support that journey. Stay quiet and offer words of support and love. She doesn't see, hear or understand the outer world nearly as well as the inner world now.

That really put things into perspective for me and I sit with Oma now with a lot more focus and calm. It helps that the body has a natural defense against the pain that could come with the lack of food and water, etc. I believe that she is at peace and not in pain or discomfort at all.

In any case, a good day. Thanks to everyone who is holding Oma and the rest of us in the light :-)

eric

Comments

I found, with Mamma, that within the peace is a powerful, special experience -- unlike any other experience. These days and the experience will stay with you forever. I was grateful then and I still feel grateful for the peace and I'm very thankful that you all have this special time to be with Doris. Continuing to hold you in our thoughts. Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrt Patterson, July 16, 2015*

i am glad you are at peace with what is happening. it is wonderful that it can be done this way. blessings to all of you.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 16, 2015*

Whose truth? Whose journey?

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 17, 2015

I appreciate Margaret senior's comment on Eric's journal entry yesterday -- "that within the peace is a powerful, special experience -- unlike any other experience. These days and the experience will stay with you forever." Although it is surely true that, as Eric says, referencing the wisdom of one of the hospice people, "Oma [is] negotiating an incredible, unfamiliar and unknowable (by us) journey," it is also true that the family with her here, each of us, is also on a journey with her. Like Margaret at her own mother's death, I have found with Doris powerful, special experiences. These entail my interpretation of Oma's own experience, of course, and so are inevitably subjective. My readings. But I want to note them briefly here.

The first came with her fierce and sternly steady refusal to take food or water Saturday night, a refusal also to recognize me or even our friendly table-mate Helen. Her eyes were open and she kept their gaze averted from us. I sensed a great power and determination in her, and could only wonder in a kind of fearful awe whence it came.

The second came yesterday morning early when Eric and I stood beside her as she came out of her steady resting state of eyes closed, face generally relaxed and left arm often restlessly moving through its range. All at once she was quite awake and still, steadily gazing up and slightly left towards the ceiling, definitely not to us when we would dip our heads into her gaze. She held this gaze for a minute or two, maybe three, and then turned her head a bit to the right and continued her intense attention to something far beyond our ken. And this shift repeated slowly for a total of perhaps ten minutes. In all this time her facial expression never varied from an amazing attentiveness, not anxious or fearful at all, but more submissive or passive. Lips relaxed and straight, no frown, eyes very wide open. My summary label would be The Lesson. To me, she was attentive to some teaching, some master far beyond our limited vision down here in space-time. And this lesson was of an ultimate seriousness, beyond surprise, awe or amazement. It was real. It was really real, and I knew in my

bones that I ought to pay close attention to the fact of this transcendence of my ordinary life. This should change how I live.

Comments

Thank you, Bob, for telling us this. I know there are not many more years left to me, and i feel that i gave received a preview of what is to come, and it is nothing to fear. this is a wonderful experience which you are sharing with us.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 17, 2015*

I'm happy that Doris is home surrounded by all those that love her. Much love to you all.

—*Ruthie, July 17, 2015*

I think of Doris and you every day, of what you are going through. Doris's journey is touching many people. I wish you and the family well.

—*David Steeves, July 17, 2015*

Such beautiful observations, Bob. I'm in awe and appreciation of your attention to the tiniest of details of Doris' state, and think how in observation lies such love and respect of her journey. And, how simultaneously powerful and so very difficult this must be for you. But what a gift to Doris, that you're by her side supporting her decision and gently seeing her through it. My heart goes out to you, as this takes great strength and fortitude.

—*Liz Arney, July 17, 2015*

Bob, I really appreciate your ability to perceive what's going on with Doris and then record your perceptions. Even though these are filtered by your own mind and experience your observations are beneficial to me. Recently I have been reading Thanissaro Bhikkhu (AKA Ajahn Geoff) who advises that we contemplate death every day. I don't, of course, but today I am doing so.

Once again I am grateful to have such fresh memories of the two of you from my recent visit. It was such a pleasure looking thru the photos with Doris of her trip to China and then seeing again how she manifest these scenes in her marvelous paintings.

—*ann sawyer, July 17, 2015*

Changes

by Eric Kriekhaus, July 17, 2015

Late this afternoon Oma began breathing much more rapidly. Around 2pm, perhaps, her breathing changed from even and slow to even, open-mouthed and quick; perhaps double speed. This is one of the natural stages, we are told, and is completely normal.

As the body begins to struggle without enough calories or hydration we will also soon see a cooling of her legs and arms as her body hoards resources for the heart and lungs. She isn't in pain (according to the experts) but we are more attentive now as we keep space for her all the time.

Clelia has decided to spend the night here, in town, in order to be closer in case things progress to the next stage.

Thanks to everyone, again, for your thoughts and messages and for keeping Oma in the Light (as we Quakers say

Love to all...

Eric

Comments

We picked up two exuberant grand children from camp yesterday and found there exuberance to be infectious. But, underlying that enthusiasm in our small band of six (MC, K & K, Miriam, Larry, Kin and I) were some tears and other expressions of sadness. So, deep feeling for Oma, and for you who are there caring for her, from across the miles from the mountains of North Carolina. We are there with you in our thoughts. Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrt Patterson, July 18, 2015*

i think that this is the way the passage from life into death is supposed to be. i am sure that Doris is grateful to you for making it possible.

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 17, 2015*

Rain and Roses

by Clelia Lewis, July 18, 2015



It is raining outside. The smell of the earth rises up and fills the air--all kinds of secret smells released by the life-giving moisture. As I sat with my mom this morning she opened her eyes, perhaps brought out of her depths (only a little) by the sound of the three men talking on the porch outside the window. I told her there was a visitor, and that they were just talking outside. I assured her all is well, that she can relax into her innermost being and trust its voice. Everything else is just passing phenomena. She gazed at me for a long time from out of those immense depths. Did she recognize me? I felt so--as her daughter, as someone who loves her, as Being not separate from her Being. Her face is so soft and open, vulnerable. There is no push or pull, only surrender and softness. The image of a pink rose came to mind. Gentle, feminine, innocent, totally open and receptive--these are words that describe the mood. I feel protective of this time with her, protective of her and the delicate space she is in. Silent attentiveness seems like the most natural expression. No sudden moves or loud noises. Of course the rest of us must eat, sleep, talk, and continue with occasional activity. We come and go, always aware of and respectful of the mystery of her unfolding. Fear, awe, joy, sadness, gratitude, wonder, affection, even humor alternate, like beads dancing on a string adorning our hearts tender with love. After a while she fell into a very deep and relaxed sleep again. Eric sat with her as I went for a quick drive and

found the roses I wanted. Now their smell mingles with the smell of the rain and the spices of the desert earth.

Comments

Perfectly beautiful and beautifully perfect, Clelia. Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margaret Patterson, July 18, 2015*

Death Makes Life Possible is a DVD/streaming video and a book I've watched and am reading. It's good for this dying process. (<http://deathmakeslifepossible.com/about-the-film/>) Reading Clelia's lovely and moving entry above put me in mind of some of its ideas -- as in the two splendid children who unfolded out of her flowering and my hovering about. The beauty of flowers and the beauty of Doris also came to mind, which made me think of a well-known poem that fits the roses and the situation here. By A. E. Housman (19th c.) The poem is known by its first line. --

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

—*Bob Kriekhaus, July 18, 2015*

A long night.

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 19, 2015

This is day eight of Oma's retreat from food and water. Her decision to depart. Last night around 10 pm there was some irregularity of breathing that made us think the departure imminent, and we all sat together at her

side, touching her and encouraging and loving her for quite a while. But back came the body with its amazing tenacity, and we spent our vigil on sofas around her, one always sitting and watching. This morning she is as before, but noticeably cooler. We do not see pain or suffering, just the steady, rapid breathing, and sleep.

Comments

When my time to transition comes, I ask to be blessed with similar caring of those I love and who love me. I can feel the peace and love.

—*Bob M, July 19, 2015*

She is so fortunate to have her husband and children by her side during her transition to her next phase.

—*Marty, July 19, 2015*

The Soul Breaks Free

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 19, 2015

Just before eight tonight, the eighth day of her fast, Doris passed very, very peacefully. Eric, Clelia and I were present in love at her bedside in the corner of the room where she loved to sit.

Comments

Bob, Clelia, and Eric, although it's painful to know Doris is now gone from this life, your thoughtful comments and observations have made her passing beautiful and memorable. May you all be peaceful and at ease as much as is possible in your bereavement.

—*ann sawyer, July 20, 2015*

Bob, we will always remember Doris with the greatest affection. And we will always remember the loving care you and Eric and Clelia have given her through this time. Love to you all.

—*Ellen and Wil, July 20, 2015*

oh, it is finally over & Doris is at rest. i know you will never stop missing her but you have the good memory of having dine all you could to ease her passage. i'm sure she was pleased. blessings to all of you as you pick up the pieces and go back to living your lives without her

—*Marjorie Mueller, July 20, 2015*

Dear Bob, Clelia, and Eric, We start this day knowing of your loss. Please know that we are sending caring thoughts to you and holding you closely. Margaret Sr.

—*Kin and Margarrt Patterson, July 20, 2015*

So many joyful memories of Mama Kriekhaus and happy childhood summers. Peace and much love to all of you.

—*Ruthie Keyes, July 20, 2015*

Doris will be missed. Peace be with you all.

—*David Steeves, July 19, 2015*

To Bob and the family,
Our sincere condolences. Doris will always be in our hearts.
With love, Bill and Gunni

—*Gunvor Peffer, July 19, 2015*

Peace, Love and Blessings to you all

—*Bob M, July 19, 2015*

Morning Beauty

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 20, 2015



Clélia surprised us this morning by the lovely presentation of Oma with rose petals, rose and restfulness you get a sense of in the photo. The fragrance of roses was in the air.

Thanks to all for the kind words of condolence.

There will be a memorial service in our home, a Quaker service, Thursday morning at 10.30 followed by a light lunch. Informal dress.

Comments

Lieber Bob, Kinder, Grosskinder und Familienangehörige

Herzliche Anteilnahme von uns allen in der Schweiz! Wir trauern alle um Doris.

Schön, dass sie nicht lange Leiden musste und friedlich eingeschlafen ist.

Ein lieber Mensch hat euch verlassen. Euch allen wünschen wir viel Kraft in dieser schweren Zeit.

Wir in der Schweiz haben Erinnerungen an unsere Doris. Diese sind, in den letzten Wochen und besonders heute, wieder aufgelebt.

Wir werden Doris in unser Gebet aufnehmen.

In den nächsten Tagen wird eine Kerze brennen. Wir denken an sie.

Der Weg für Doris geht weiter. Irgendwann sehen wir uns wieder.

Doris' Geschwister und Familienangehörige in der Schweiz!

—*Martin Rupf, July 20, 2015*

Bob,

We share your grief over Doris's passing. She was a lovely woman and a fine artist.

Bruce and Jenna

"Everything is changeable, everything appears and disappears; there is no blissful peace until one passes beyond the agony of life and death." The Buddha

—Bruce and Jenna, July 20, 2015

My Closing Entry

by Bob Kriekhaus, July 21, 2015



I appreciate very much the opportunity this CaringBridge website has given us to journal what turned out to be the closing days of Doris. (And also Jenna Brod's initial suggestion to me that I do this.) From the comments, I gather that this information has been of value and use to some people. Certainly my experience with Doris and

hospice has been profound and, I hope, life altering.

The memorial service at our home on Thursday, July 23, will be the only service for Doris, following her wishes, and the family intends to spread her ashes both in the Colorado mountains where we lived from 1999 to 2011 and in the Swiss mountains where she grew up.

The photograph is our last of Doris. It shows her twelve hours after her death as Clélia arranged her in the windowed niche where she spent so much of her last years reading in her comfortable chair.

Comments

Good-bye, Doris. I am so glad you shared your journey with us. And thank you, Bob for making it possible.

—Marjorie Mueller, July 21, 2015

Thank you for sharing the beautiful picture of Doris.

Doris has been on our minds and others in the Kincaid family during the time of our reunion, but no more strongly than, at our "last supper." Tonight, a candle, (in actuality, a digital candle) was lit. One of the cousins spoke for all of us in celebrating life -- that of two brand new babies (a girl baby 7 weeks and a boy baby 3 weeks) who have just begun their lives and that of Doris as she departed this life. We turned off the lights in our gathering room and silently watched the glow and flickering of the lovely candle.

Unbeknownst to most of us, Eric was going to participate in the evening's talent show -- singing a South African duet with Katie, with Eric in northern Arizona and Katie on the NC coast. Very touching and very beautiful.

We will be thinking of each of you during Quaker meeting in the morning. Margaret Sr.

—Kin and Margarrt Patterson, July 21, 2015

Bob, what can I say? Doris makes death look palatable. Love, Ellen

—Ellen and Wil, July 21, 2015

Guestbook

I'm not sure what happened with the guestbook -- I didn't make an entry -- just checking to see if there had been a journal entry today but probably a little early yet. Hope all is going well. Good to talk to you, Eric, and Katie and Kyle earlier today. Take care -- Margaret Sr.

— *Kin and Margaret Patterson, June 21, 2015*

Dear Doris and Bob,
Just got back from vacation with kids and grand kids and I know what a great boost it is to be with the young, healthy, and happy crowd. I'm glad you and Doris had them all there around you for the Fourth of July celebrations as well. How insightful of Katie to paint with Doris! Yes, I think you should definitely continue! Anything that is Doris' love and passion is sure to help her get as well as she can be. Even though I have not communicated enough in the last few weeks I sure thought a lot about you and Doris and am wishing you both the very best recovery for Doris.
Here, all is well. Everyone sends greetings, Nana, Erika, even the doggies -including Havana who misses you. Ugur is still dealing with escrow finalizing in CA.
All the very best from an old friend,
Ilse

— *Ilse Ortabasi, July 8, 2015*

— *David Steeves, July 13, 2015*

Having returned from travelling I just today read all the entries made by Bob, Eric and Clelia. While the news is sad and sobering, it's easier to accept in light of the tender recording of Doris' days by her loving family.

— *ann sawyer, July 15, 2015*

Dorisy, I will always remember you. You were a wonderful person and a very good artist. i am proud to have one of your paintings hanging in my living room.

— *Marjorie Mueller, July 20, 2015*

The greatest tribute to Doris is our two children, Eric and Clelia, whose loving support for me has been strong and unstinting, and carries on in commitment to their own families. Something of Doris continues in that and honors her well.

— *Bob Kriekhaus, July 21, 2015*

Tributes

Having returned from travelling I just today read all the entries made by Bob, Eric and Clelia. While the news is sad and sobering, it's easier to accept in light of the tender recording of Doris' days by her loving family.

—With love and fondest memories, Ann Sawyer, July 15, 2015

Dorisy, I will always remember you. You were a wonderful person and a very good artist. i am proud to have one of your paintings hanging in my living room.

—Marjorie Mueller, July 20, 2015

The greatest tribute to Doris is our two children, Eric and Clelia, whose loving support for me has been strong and unstinting, and carries on in commitment to their own families. Something of Doris continues in that and honors her well.

—Bob Kriekhaus, July 21, 2015

Doris was such a creative soul. Stunningly beautiful Asian paintings. And quiet but caring. She leaves a hole in our hearts.

—Loring and Jeanette, July 23, 2015