

Marshall Jones

An MRSA Septicemia Survival Story

By Christina Jones



<http://www.mrsaresources.com/>

Introduction

Sometime during the 3rd week of August, 2004, I was giving my husband, Marshall, his usual monthly haircut, and a day later an ingrown hair appeared on the back of his neck. I plucked the ingrown hair out with tweezers, and went on with our day. His wound continued to get worse that day, and the next, and he went to the doctor several days later to get it looked at, as the infection had turned into a large boil.

Our doctor diagnosed it as a spider bite, drained the wound and gave him a prescription for Bactrim. He took the Bactrim as prescribed, and a few days later went back to see her, as the wound was not getting any better, in fact it was getting worse. She cut the wound deeper, as there were pockets of infection deeper down, packed the wound, and sent him home with instructions for me to change the packing daily, and continue packing it as long as we could. She prescribed him Leviquin this time.

The wound healed up beautifully from here, we continued packing it for about a week and a half. We went to have it checked on by the doctor again, and were told that the culture came back as a *Staphylococcus aureus* infection. I knew enough about the existence of MRSA to inquire at that point if it was MRSA or regular Staph, and the culture said regular Staph, and we were relieved. Other than a big scar, we thought we were finished with it.

Boy, were we wrong!

I have gone back from my notes that I took throughout this ordeal, and am writing them here in diary form. I am Christina Jones, Marshall's wife, and am putting this story down so that anyone who might need it might find some helpful information here. There are not many stories like Marshall's out there, and I have since discovered that this is because there are not a great number of survivors of MRSA Septicemia, so I hope and pray that if you or a loved one have been affected by this, that you will get some inspiration, and maybe some help from our story.

Pre Hospital—October 2004

Friday, October 8th

Marshall was having some back pain today-- you know, the kind that tells you, "be careful, I am about to revolt!" Marshall is 43, and on occasion, like most of us over 30, has a little back pain every so often. He played football in his younger days, and is just as strong today as he was at 18. He has had 3 knee surgeries during his football career, so the knees have never been his strong point, but the rest of his body is a lot stronger than the "average Joe." We live on a ranch in central Texas, and just doing our everyday chores here keeps him in good physical shape. I think that just about anyone who knows Marshall would say that he is the strongest man they know - both in mind and body. We went to the Bryan High football game tonight—with our son Noah and Marshall's brother Eric and his son, Braden. We had a ball, but Marshall was uncomfortable on those concrete bleachers. We sat with Johnny Herrera, and laughed through the whole game!

Saturday, October 9th

Marshall's back is still testy today. It is dove season, and he went hunting with his brothers Bryan and Eric during the day. This evening, we watched the Texas A&M game with Eric, and our great friends Shirley and Paul Sandel, and Rick and Selina Colwell. They guys played a lot of dominoes --they are dangerous 42 players, all of em)Paul: "Gimme That 6-4!")-- and we gals socialized. Eric's wife came over for a little while too.

Sunday, October 10th

Today Marshall's back pain was tremendous. He spent the day writhing around in pain, and dragging around pillows and chairs and positioning himself on them in order to try to relieve the pain. He has been taking all of the pain medication that he can find around here, and it is just not helping much. In all honesty, I was wondering if he was getting addicted to the pain pills that he had received from our doctor to treat a very, very nasty ingrown hair on the back of his neck that he got after we shaved his neck at the end of August. His father gave him some Celebrex this afternoon, and it helped more than anything else had. Marshall got feeling better enough to begin work on our "trash sled," a sled that we hook up to a 4 wheeler and drag down to the land fill to dispose of trash. Our plan is to tear down the old, worn out sled, scavenge any usable parts from it, and then build a new one. He got the old one torn apart, but that was about it before he started feeling badly again.

Pain Scale- 8/10

Monday, October 11th

Marshall is in MAJOR pain today. He is miserable, and has taken all of the pain pills that he could find, to no avail. As I said on yesterdays post, I still have a bad feeling about a potential pain pill addiction. For some reason, I am overly paranoid and scared of this. I know on this day I was a little bit short tempered with Marshall, and this is why. I had so much to do to get ready for the family reunion next weekend, and I needed help. Looking back, I have a bit of guilt about this, but that is what I was honestly feeling, so that is what I will report. I have been working on the house today, I put in a new screen door on the back door, and re-worked the watering system, so there won't be so many water hoses running through the yard. We have a ton of animals in the yard (not to mention out of the yard) and I have a system here which gives all of the animals fresh water, and allows me to have hoses to reach everywhere in the yard. It is a bit messy, but it works. We are expecting anywhere from 60-120 Joneses to show up here on Saturday morning around 10 am for the family reunion.

Pain scale 10+/10

Hospital – E.R. and General Medical Unit

Day 1, Tuesday

Somewhere around midnight Tuesday morning, Marshall began vomiting. At this point, I started looking on the internet for his problem, because we have (finally) ruled out normal back pain. And I have finally been convinced that he really does have a problem. He has big lumps of bunched up muscles at the small of his back, on both sides of his spine. I can be so hard headed sometimes. Ugh. The best I could come up with was kidney stones, and we thought it was a pretty good diagnosis. I asked Marshall if he wanted to go to the Emergency Room, but he didn't want to yet. He didn't want to get the children up in the middle of the night if he didn't have to, because they had school (they are 7 and 10). I fell back asleep around 2 am, he was still up, sick as a dog. He hasn't had a decent bit of sleep since Saturday night. About 5am, Marshall woke me up and told me to call an ambulance, that he didn't want me to have to get the kids up, but I got right up, got the kids, and we were on the road in no time. I am sure it was just as fast as waiting on an ambulance to get out to the country would have been. As if I am going to stay here with sleeping kids while my husband goes into the ER! When we got into the ER, Marshall told the man at the desk that he thought his kidneys were shutting down, and they got him right into triage, without the normal several hour wait in the ER waiting room. In triage, they asked him questions, weighed him (235lbs), showed him this ridiculous pain scale with smiley faces to try to get him to tell them how much pain he was in, took some blood, and his temperature. His temp was 104. They put him in a room in the ER, and pretty quickly came in with some insulin, as his blood sugar was 311, and they said he was diabetic. This was a first for us. Marshall had been told before that his sugar was a little on the high side, but never had he been told he had diabetes. Looking back, we should have known. His mother's side of the family is full of diabetes, and he has had a lot of symptoms during the last year. Dr. Daftarian was consulted, and Marshall was given some vicodin for his pain, but not too much, as they did not want to mask his pain until they knew what the problem was.

Dr. Daftarian ordered an X-ray and a CAT scan, which was done in the next couple of hours. I took the kids over to my father in law's house, and he took them to school for me. After several hours, Dr. Daftarian admitted him to the hospital, room 243, in the general medical unit. Dr. D came in around noon to see Marshall. We told her about our thinking that it was a kidney stone. We asked about appendicitis, and because Marshall's infection on his neck was the first time we had seen Dr. Daftarian, we reminded her of that, and told her that it had healed up beautifully. Marshall was still nauseous, we wondered if that could be a vicodin reaction. Dr. Daftarian started Marshall on IV antibiotics at this point, and again, I failed to note which one it

was (for the last time!). I left the hospital to meet the school bus, and to make plans for the children for the night. The Sandels took them for the night, and got them to school for me the next morning.

Marshall's friend from work, Lanny, stopped by. They are real estate agents at Century 21. Lanny said that already, one of the agents had said, "Oh, Marshall is sick? Who is doing his business?" GOOD GRIEF. This is just the beginning of us learning how the true nature of some people comes out at times like this.

Marshall did not get a bit of sleep this night either. He is going on about 3 days with no sleep, and only had short bits of sleep the 2 days prior to this.

Pain Scale- 10+/

Day 2, Wednesday

Dr. Daftarian came in this morning, early, and reported that nothing significant was seen in the X-ray or the CAT scan. She had both tests repeated. At this point, the staph infection in his neck from August was bugging me, and I was really starting to worry about it. When we had seen Dr. Daftarian the third time (in September, to check on his neck after we had been packing it), she told me that the infection was *Staphylococcus aureus*, but was NOT the antibiotic resistant variety (MRSA). I may have misunderstood her, but I remember that that was what I had heard her say, because I remember saying that was a relief that it was not MRSA. Regardless, I was still worried, because Staph in any form is dangerous. She said that his blood work results would be in soon, and then we would find out more.

Shirley took the kids to school, and reported that all was well with them. Did I mention I love my friends??? Dr. D came back in a little later, probably around noon, and said that a kidney stone could have possibly been missed by the X-ray and CAT scan, and ordered a sonogram, which would tell us something for sure. She said that Marshall was looking a little better to her this afternoon. After she left, they did the sonogram, which showed no stone. She told us she was calling in an infectious disease specialist. Marshall's brother, Bryan, and his wife came by to see him in the early afternoon. I had to go get the children from the bus, but on my way out, I told Marshall's nurse, Dee, that I thought Marshall looked worse, not better--his breathing was very rapid and shallow. While I was gone, Dr. Lemos had been there. He had the results of the blood work, and indeed it was *Staphylococcus aureus*, and MRSA to make things worse. When Marshall heard that, his heart rate shot up to 225 beats per minute (bpm), and they put him into the ICU immediately and started him on Vancomycin. In the ICU, there are strict visitation hours, but when the nurse (Dee) called me to let me know they were putting him in there, she said I could come find her, and she would take me on into the ICU when I got there. So, when I got back to the hospital, a cardiologist, Dr. Schwartz, had been consulted, and ordered an ECG. They were looking for the source of infection, and thought they might find it on the heart valve, which is apparently a common place for *S. aureus* to set up shop. Marshall's heart beat was too fast however, for a good evaluation, so Dr. Schwartz said they would repeat it tomorrow. They

are giving Marshall good drugs now (morphine) but he still can't sleep. I talked to TaShondra, Marshall's ICU nurse, about the possibility of a ventilator, because I really thought his rapid breathing was what was causing him to stay awake. She said she was just getting ready to mention this to me, and that it would be likely that that would be what happened. Dr. Lemos (infectious disease) thinks that there must be an abscess in Marshall's lower back (due to the pain there). He ordered an MRI, but the machine is not working today (and they said Marshall is too unstable right now anyway--likely story!), but they will get one just as soon as they can. I cannot remember what I did with the children on this day, but I know I slept at home, and I think they did too.

Pain scale- 6/10 (after Morphine)

Intensive Care Unit

Day 3, Thursday

Marshall is in the ICU. Visitation is at 5am, 10:30am, 1pm, 5:30pm and 9pm. When I went in this morning, Marshall is in MUCH less pain, the morphine is finally helping. The nurses are OUTSTANDING in this unit. Marshall's breathing rate is high and is still very shallow. When I came in for the 1pm visitation, they were wheeling Marshall down to the MRI. They let me go down with him. I have never felt so bad for someone in my life. He was absolutely miserable. His mouth was just as dry as a desert, and they wouldn't let him have even a piece of ice to wet it. His mind was very messed up from the morphine and lack of sleep. He was just unbelievably miserable.

When we got down to the MRI, there was a bit of confusion about his IV. The hospital had new IV pumps that were non magnetic to be used in the MRI area. Naturally no one knew how to hook them up, so it took a bit of time (and a very bright woman!) to get it going. During this wait, Marshall had to urinate badly. Imagine lying on your side on a hard plastic stretcher, dry mouth, messed up badly on morphine and lack of sleep, and having to urinate like this, into a plastic container, surrounded by people. He went a little bit, I think, but not much. Anyway, after 45 minutes or so of this, they wheeled him on into the MRI. Marshall had told me the day before that he had been taken somewhere for the CAT Scan and X-ray that was like a back alley abortion clinic. This was the place. It was so under construction, I could see exactly what he meant. When he got out of the MRI, I had an orange soda for him to sip on. I was so relieved that was over. When I left the hospital, around 3 pm, to get the children, he told me, "I'll call you before I come home, if it's tomorrow, you can come down and we can ride together!" I said Ok. On the way out, I talked to TaShondra again about his lack of sleep and again I mentioned the ventilator. She said that it was very likely that Dr. Spencer (the pulmonary specialist and the ICU chief) would put him on it and sedate him soon. I hope I am not going to have to beg for him to be put on the ventilator. I must be the only person in the world who is praying FOR their spouse to go on it! When I got home, TaShondra called, and got my consent for the ventilator. Thank God! Selina picked up the kids and they ended up spending the night that night. I spoke to my father in law that day, and he said "you know, they are coming." He was referring to the Jones family reunion. I told him I didn't need him to hire anyone to clean the house, that I had pretty much prepared it for the reunion prior to Marshall getting sick, and it just needed basic dusting and mopping, and I would do that on Friday night.

Day 4, Friday

At the early visitation, Marshall was sleeping peacefully. FINALLY! He looked SO much better already. I went by the Colwells at about 6:30am, ate breakfast with them (their venison sausage is INCREDIBLE!), and took the kids to school. I went to the kids' teachers and told them what was going on, so they would understand if the kids were a little troubled. Zoe's math teacher is Jennifer Morton, a high school friend of Marshalls. I burst into tears as soon as I saw her. I sure do understand why they all love her so much, she has the sweetest eyes! I cried the rest of the day. Pastor Bockleman from our church (Bethel Lutheran) came by, I bawled to him too. Marshall is sleeping peacefully all day. He looks so much better than he has in a week. He is not sweating anymore and his temperature is down. I knew he needed that ventilator. Lanny came by to visit again today. Marshall's father is here nearly every visitation, and Eric is here for most of them as well. Bryan asked me today if I had talked to Ryan, Marshall's son. I feel like an imbecile, but called him right away. I know he was a little upset with me, but I think (and hope and pray) he understands how messed up my mind is right now. Marshall's cousin Kyle's wife, Dee Ann, called today. She really thinks I should have him transferred to Methodist Hospital in Houston. I told her I would keep a close eye out, and at the first feeling I got, I would do something. I also asked her to please come in and see Marshall, and assess the situation, because this is all new to me. I hope she will. Dr. Spencer took me, Eric, and my father in law into a private room this morning to talk about Marshall's condition, and the ventilator. I think he was thinking that he was going to have to work hard to explain why they had done this to Marshall, but he didn't have to. He told us also that Marshall's kidneys were not working well, and that they would completely shut down, but they will be one of the first signs of recovery as well. He also said that 10 days to two weeks is maximum for the ventilator, if he needs it longer than that, they will have to do a tracheotomy.

I think they have us pegged as a rational family now. That is very important to me, to be seen as someone that has a brain, and that they can be honest with. Marshall's nurse, Betsy, told me that learning about all of this is my way of dealing with it. I am sure she is correct. During the off times today, I sat around the house and played with Petunia, our pet pig. She is so angry from lack of attention! When I came home from the 5:30 visitation, Rick and Selina were mopping and dusting and cleaning the bathrooms. They must be the best people in the world. I cried again....LOL Go figure!

Day 5, Saturday "The Family Reunion"

Marshall is still nice and peaceful this morning. The reunion was good, Marshall's cousin Liz had a bluegrass band with doctors from Scott and White Clinic, where she works. They made a truly miserable situation a good bit more cheery. Marshall and I both are huge fans of "O Brother, Where Art Thou," and they played most of that soundtrack. Cheers to Liz for the great idea, God works in mysterious ways every single day! No one at the reunion knew what had happened to us this week, so I spent a lot of time telling a few people, and a good bit more time hiding and wiping my eyes.

I left the reunion (about 70 people) at my house to go to the 1:00 visitation. During that time, a

couple of our relatives asked Rick and Selina how on earth they could have cleaned my nasty house. Weren't they scared? I have learned that apparently tact is another victim of trauma. I talked to my father in the afternoon, after all of the reunion commotion had gone, and he was so sad. My father never used to be as emotional as he is now. I called my father's cousin Janet, who lives in Houston, to tell her what was going on, and she said she would come tomorrow to help me out. Thank God!

Marshall was still sleeping well during the rest of the visitations today. I keep telling him over and over to keep dreaming about killing those bugs, and I think he is doing it! Pastor B. left a card some time during the day. Uncle Donald, Aunt Delores, Dana, Donny, Corina, and Lisa all came to visit Marshall today. Paul and Shirley took the kids home with them after the reunion so I could get some sleep, I am getting VERY sleepy. Naturally, I couldn't sleep. The minute I laid down, the comments that were made to Rick and Selina at the reunion invaded my thoughts. I wrote a letter to the relatives that I will never send, but it did help. I talked to my girlfriends about it, and that helped some too, but people sure can be hurtful. Ugh. After all of that letter writing, Shirley called to check on me, and then my brother called. Then Marshall's cousin Lisa came over about 10pm, we sat up and talked til about 1am, and she spent the night in Zoe's room. Although I am exhausted, all of that helped ease my troubled mind. It really did. Thanks so much to Lisa, you were sure there when I needed you!

Day 6, Sunday

Marshall is still sleeping away. This is the very best thing for him. Eric and his wife came to visitation at 10 this morning. A relative that came to visit handed me a card with the tip ends of her fingers, as if my cooties might jump on her. Is this what our life is going to be like now? I hope not, we are very much "people persons". We both would be miserable if our loved ones no longer cared to be around us for ANY reason, much less that they are afraid of "catching" something (that is not "catchable"). Janet came at 2:30 today. She will be such a huge help. Mother is coming in the next day or two from Colorado. Thank God.

I went to Paul and Shirley's after the 10am visitation. I totally forgot about Paul and Cade's birthday party. I went to Wal-Mart with Shirley, just to kill time. On the way home, she said: "I don't want to be morbid, but, what if Marshall dies? I don't want you to move away..." Zoe had asked just about the same thing yesterday. I am not going there, but have privately decided that we will move in with the Sandels. LOL This is all too unbelievable.

Day 7, Monday

Dr. Daftarian called me today, and said that Marshall was coming along very well, and that he was tough and strong and that was why he was healing so quickly. She said all of the levels were moving in the right direction. The nurse reiterated that later for me. Rick Colwell was here morning, noon and night today. Marshall started dialysis today. He was swollen up like the Michelin Man, but the dialysis took off 1.1 liters of fluid in one hour. They will increase the time daily until they get to 4 hours of dialysis. Sometimes people can't handle dialysis, and their blood pressure drops, so this is why they start off slow. He did well today though. Rick

had a book and a message for me this afternoon from the "cootie relative." The book was a bible study guide and the message was: "Someone better tell her to clean her nasty house." My house is cleaner than it has ever been in my life, thanks to the FlyLady (<http://www.flylady.net>). These troublesome relatives never come to visit anyway, so they have no clue what my house is like. I guess they just like to stir the pot. Nice folks.

Marshall's eyes were open this evening, and he was fairly alert. He was blinking yes/no to Eric, and sticking his tongue out to get drops of water and to point to where his lips needed Carmex. Hallelujah! Mark Dudley (another high school friend of Marshalls) left a note sometime today. I called him and asked him to contact their other friends for me, and keep them updated. I am spending so much time on the phone updating everyone.

Susan Hilton from Marshall's office came by today and asked if they could do anything to help. I told her that we could use some food, that getting everyone fed is the hardest thing for me right now. My mother is here now, but she has so much more to do, dinners would be wonderful. Susan said that that was great, that everyone in the office had been dying to help, but didn't know what to do. She had a huge tray of spaghetti and another huge tray of BBQ here one hour later. LOVE THEM!

Day 8, Tuesday

I talked to Dr. Lemos this morning. The doctors are so hard to catch in the ICU. I am sure they avoid visiting during visitation hours! I had a big list of questions: I have made a list of questions for Dr. Lemos.

- ❖ We need time to talk, do we need to make an appointment with you?
- ❖ Do we need to be gloved and masked when we are in here?
- ❖ Relatives think we need to move him to Methodist..any thoughts?
- ❖ Our animals at home, could they have caused this? (Petunia)
- ❖ Do the kids and I need to be treated for staph?
- ❖ Where did this come from?
- ❖ What are you looking for to know he is improving, and how fast should he beginning to improve?

Dr. Lemos said that the Staph in his neck and then in his blood was not caused by his ingrown hair. Diabetes made his immune system compromised, and the ingrown hair infection just went out of control. I told him what Dr. Daftarian had told us in August about using the Hibiclens soap, Bactroban, and Lysol, and he said that was fine, that the rest of us shouldn't have to worry about getting this infection. All we needed to do was to be aware of wounds, and appropriately cleanse and treat them. He said that Staph is on everyone's skin all of the time, and normally our bodies can deal with that bacteria if it gets into a cut, but sometimes, because of a compromised immune system, it can manage to take over. Dr. Lemos also said that it might take a while, but Marshall was going to be ok!

I also saw Dr. Spencer today, he said that the ventilator would come off in 3-5 days, when they get much more fluid off of him, and that he would probably be on antibiotics for another 6

weeks.

Marshall puckered up and gave me 2 kisses while I was there! His eyes are open about 50% of the time, and the tape across his mouth holding the ventilator tubing in place was bothering him. I told the nurse that it would be ok to shave his moustache so the tape would work better. He looks just like his son without his moustache!

They removed over 3 liters of fluid today in dialysis! They said we should start to notice this fluid loss soon.

Day 9-Wednesday

CB (my father in law) and I were there at the 5:30am visitation (as usual). Marshall was looking great-his fever was down, and he gave me a kiss and a smile when we came in! Water blisters have formed on his groin area and under his leg; I guess all of that fluid must have to come out somehow. He also has pustules (look like small pimples) all over, possibly a rash? Marshall had his first BM this morning, right after his bath. That is a great sign that things are starting to work properly again. It is a pity he is missing all of this (NOT) :)

His nurse, Betsy, said he is being a great patient, and I am so very thankful. I told most of his nurses that if he is allowed to wake up while on the ventilator, he will be a terror. His mother was in this same position not long ago (on the ventilator, with arms tied to the bed), and he has told me quite a few times that this very position he is in is his worst nightmare. I think that he will rethink that when he is done, this ventilator is saving his life. Marshall is following directions-squeezing hands, wiggling feet, stops messing with the vent tube when asked (he tries to wiggle it around with his tongue). His kidneys are starting to produce a little bit more, and it looks a more normal color (100+ cc's last night).

I spoke with one of Marshalls clients today, and gave him Lanny's phone number. I guess this would have been a good time for me to have had my real estate license. Not that I would really be working, I guess.....

I talked to Mark Dudley today--he has emailed all of Marshall's friends. That is a huge help to me. I did call Joe Gorzycki and Johnny Herrera today. At the 9:30 visitation the Pastor from the Methodist Church came to see you, as well as Pastor Bockleman. We have SO many people praying for him, and I do believe it is showing! TaShondra is the nurse again today. Hurray! He is BM-ing like a champ (or like a man who HASN'T in 10 days or so, I guess), and already has 50 cc's of urine (since 7am). I saw Dr. Spencer this morning--he said he is pleased with how he is doing, but waiting for dialysis to remove more fluid before they try to remove the ventilator. I guess it is harder for him to breathe with all of that fluid. My guess is Friday that it will come off.

Marshall sometimes gets very wide eyed and scared looking. He calms right down and smiles when I give him our old, "everything is good, everything is fine!" That is a phrase that has gotten us through more than one trauma! Oh how I LOVE MY HUSBAND!!!!

My father in law just doesn't think I have a clue sometimes. He is so negative, but that is his way of dealing I guess. I have always been a "glass half full" person, and he is not. I am sure it is VERY different when it is your child lying there, no doubt.

At the 1:00 visitation, Dr. Daftarian was there, and I asked the dreaded question: Is he out of the woods? And I finally got the answer I was looking for! Yes! I doubt Dr. Lemos would say that yet, but I will take what I can get!

I only stayed 40 minutes today, as he was on dialysis, and fast asleep. Dr. Daftarian said that it was best for him to be asleep during this, so I didn't want to bother him too much. I went to see Jeanette (my mother in law). She is good. I hope my glass half full attitude has made it easier for her. I have tried to make a real effort to give her all of the information first (well, the good stuff, anyway), as she rarely gets that opportunity. She subtly told me that she loves me, and that Marshall and I can do whatever we want, which is in reference to the family uproar about all of our animals, and how they have some messed up idea that they are the cause of this. She also commented on how you find out a lot about how people really are in times like this. No kidding!

At 9pm, Eric and Rick were there. Marshall's eyes were so sad. Not glazy now, but truly sad. He must be grasping this a little bit. His nurse today stinks--I can see a huge difference between her and the others we have had in ICU. This one sings lovely, but isn't doing near the job tending to Marshall as the rest of them have. Clay and Natalie from Marshall's office took up money and went to Sam's Club for us. OMG you wouldn't believe all of the things they brought. They called mother from Sam's, and asked her what we needed, and I don't think she told them a thing, but you just wouldn't believe what all they brought - enough to start out a new empty kitchen anyway. Bless their hearts!!!! Shirley brought my favorite "Sandel chicken" tonight! I love that woman too! YUM! I really don't know what I would do without my mother being here, and all of our friends (old, medium, and brand spanking new) who are here for us.

Day 10 – Thursday

5:30am--417 cc's of urine for 24 hours--YAY!

Marshall's eyes still are sad--they can look like the saddest puppy dog eyes you have ever seen--but he smiles and kisses me. He had 3 BM's over night, the last one is still there. Did I mention I am not fond of this nurse??

I have to laugh at Rick--he is the funniest thing--last night, he made THE biggest production trying to get me to tell him what Dr. Lemos said about Marshall's diabetes causing his MRSA infection, rather than the animals and my "nasty house" that the "relatives" are trying to blame it on. He was really just trying to bring the subject up again since Eric was there, so the word would get out to the relatives. I hope this makes sense. How he says things like that with a straight face, I will never know--he has a gift! Oh how nice it is to laugh!!!

I spoke with Marshall's friends Gerald and Sterling this morning, and visited Century 21 to thank them in person, and give them an update. I can never thank them enough for their kindness and help.

Alan Fritsche came at 9:30 this morning to see Marshall. He is a Biology teacher at Bryan High School (and football coach), and one of Marshall's oldest friends. He said he had just started their unit about bacteria. What an example to use. I called the Cub Scout leader this morning as well to tell them why Noah had disappeared the last couple of weeks.

Boy, the day nurse is even worse than the night nurse. She won't tell me a thing, due to the HIPPA laws. She says I have to page each doctor to get any new information from them, because she didn't hear-straight from Marshall's mouth-that she can tell me anything about what is going on today with him. Good GRIEF, he is on a ventilator! Surely there must be some sort of common sense law integrated in that HIPPA thing. I am calling the charge nurse and asking about this one.

Charge nurse says I am entitled to know all information regarding my husband and his care. She still won't tell me a thing. GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!

Somehow I managed to find out that they took 6 liters of fluid off of Marshall today in 4 hours of dialysis. Unbelievable!

Jack Anding brought brisket and sausage today. Thank you so much! My mother didn't know how much Texans love BBQ until now! LOL

At the 9pm visitation, Marshall was fast asleep. Rick, Eric, Mom and I were all there watching him sleep though.

Day 11 – Friday

Marshall has had a low fever all day (<101). Joe Gorzycki (our accountant and boyhood friend of Marshall's) and Paul Sandel were there with CB and I at the early visitation. It was nice to see them bright and early this morning. At the 9:30 visit, Dr. Spencer said that they tried to take the ventilator out earlier this morning, but he breathing was still too shallow and rapid. He says he will try again in a couple of days. He has been on the ventilator now for 8 days. They got an amazing 9.2 liters of fluid off of Marshall in dialysis today. I can finally tell a difference, he doesn't look like the Michelin Man anymore. His toes looked like they were going to pop!

We have the nurse again today who won't tell me anything. But, I have to say, she is taking extremely good care of Marshall. That is the important thing. I feel bad for being so angry with her yesterday. Ryan (Marshall's son, he is 18 and a freshman at LSU) came in today, it is a shame Marshall didn't make it off of the ventilator yet. Maybe he will before Ryan leaves. My dad and brother got here today too.

Saw Dr. Lemos (inf. disease). Marshall has pneumonia in his right lower lung, and it appears a little denser than before. They are putting Marshall on a second antibiotic, as he also is getting infection in his dialysis catheter (in his femoral artery) and the pic line in his neck. He said there is nothing unexpected about these infections, so I guess I won't worry.

Dr. Schwartz (cardiologist) is doing Marshall's endoscopy today. It showed a tiny bit of vegetation (bacteria) on one of his heart valves. He also said that there is no way that it is the source of the infection. His heart looks good, no murmurs. I just know there is something in his back that Dr. Lemos did not see, I just know it.

Dr. Schwartz said that antibiotics will kill the vegetation, and that it will take 6-12 months for it to dissolve. He is happy with the procedure. Dr. Lemos also said that the culture of the pustules on his legs was not growing bacteria after 48 hours, which is good.

White blood count-6

Uncle Donald and Aunt Delores are back. Ryan and I went with them to the night visitation. Marshall was more awake than he had been earlier; I know that was a relief to Delores, who had seen Marshall before. Marshall has an angry dark red rash forming between his legs and the underside of his forearms--->reaction to antibiotics? Marshall is allergic to penicillin.

Day 12 – Saturday

Jason, the overnight ICU nurse said Marshall's rash was due to a reaction to Vancomycin. This is his opinion; I need to talk to Dr. Lemos. CB and I were here at 5:30, as usual. Marshall still has a low grade fever, still <101. Marshall was a little wiggly this morning, trying to adjust his position in the bed. He is moving his feet and legs, I think his knees are sore (he had 3 knee surgeries in high school--football injuries--and still has aches and pains in them). He is also raising his hands and arms. He hates the blood pressure cuff, that pinches his arms off every 15 minutes, and has since he entered the hospital. I am going to eat breakfast with CB and Jeanette. My brother Allen, CB and I are there at 9:30am. Marshall is on dialysis, and is out like a light. His blood pressure is kind of low; they turned down his blood pressure medicine and gave him 2 units of blood during dialysis: 112/57, 100/57, 94/57. His temperature is better now. We are waiting to talk to Dr. Weber, who is Dr. Spencer's partner (Dr. Spencer is off this weekend). He was sitting at the nurses' desk when we walked in to the ICU, and I asked him if he had seen Marshall yet--his response? (and I quote)," I haven't even seen my underwear yet." Nice to have a professional doctor as ICU Chief.

They took 8 liters of fluid off during 4 hours of dialysis. Unbelievable.

1pm visitation--Dad, Uncle Donald and I--All is well, temperature is still down and BP is better. Marshall is pretty groggy. I went to see Jeanette and Aunt Delores, and told them I was maybe going to skip the 9pm visitation today because I have to take my brother to Hobby Airport in Houston in the morning. CB and Eric are at the A&M v. Colorado game. Noah went to Chuck E. Cheese and to the movies with Derek and Christina Suthamennont.

5:30 visitation- Mom, Aunt Delores and Uncle Donald and I were there. All is well.

Day 13 – Sunday

CB and I were at the 5:30 visitation. Marshall has a 102 degree fever. His blood pressure is low, 108/56, he is sleeping like a baby. I have to take my brother to Hobby, so will miss 9:30am visitation. Rick brought Marshall's cartoon last night, what a special gift from a very very special family!!

1pm visitation--Dr. Weber was here (Did I mention I can't stand him??). He says that Marshall's lungs are about the same. He then went into a dramatic soliloquy about how we don't need to be asking specific questions. What a jerk he is. I guess he is of the old school that thinks that they are God, and we "mere mortals" have no business keeping an eye on things. Well, I have news for him.....

Dr. Daftarian expressed concern all the way around. I would like to see the X-rays they are giving him daily. Marshall's temperature is 101 today. She thinks it might be sensitivity to a drug. Dr. Lemos supposedly took him off of the Vancomycin and replaced it. I need to check that.

White Blood Cell count- 7.1

Ryan, Dad and I were there at 5:30. Marshall's temperature is back to 99.6, and is not Tylenol induced. BP is 108/57, a little low, but ok. Marshall was out cold. The nurse just sucked out his lungs (clears goop out of lungs via the ventilator tube--sort of a manual vacuum). Still BM-ing frequently--is like meconium.

I have to take Ryan to the (local) airport at 7:30, I am so sad that he can't stay longer, but college waits for no one, and I know his father wouldn't want him to flunk his classes on his account. Mom and I are there at 9pm. Fever is high (103). Not a reaction to antibiotics??? Something is wrong somewhere....

BP 100/57, Heart Rate is 110 (should be under 100), and breathing is fair.

They have turned the ventilator down, so Marshall is taking 3 breaths on his own, then one assisted by the ventilator. You can see on the monitor that his own breathing is much shallower than the ventilator breath.

Ask Dr.....

Lemos: Rash/Vancomycin????? When are we going to change his ports? Fever related to this?

Spencer/Weber: Progress of lungs? What is he on for the pneumonia? Can I see the X-rays?

Daftarian: Do we (the kids and I) need to be checked for staph?

Ugh, so many questions, so few can answer them (damned HIPPA).

His fever was 102, 103 today. Could this be lungs?? His breathing seems a little more rapid and shallow.

Day 14 – Monday

5:30am- Me, CB, Uncle Donald - Marshall's temperature is down, he is sort of awake. BP is a little low still.

9:30- I am here alone. Dr. Spencer is getting ready to remove the ventilator. He is now on day 11 of the ventilator. His breathing is rapid--he is having a hard time keeping it under control (he should be breathing under 40 breaths per minute). Frank, the pulmonary therapist said they may well pull it out and have to put it right back in. If that is the case, they will do it immediately, we won't see him in between. Dr. Spencer says that Marshall's lungs are better, he really thinks Marshall can do it.

I waited in the waiting room. Dr. Daftarian came in around 11:50, she went in to check on him, will come back and tell me what is going on.

Questions for Dr. Daftarian:

WBC--no bands--What does this mean with his fever??

Lungs-Weber said they were unchanged, you and Spencer say they are improved. (Weber is an ass)

Houston-do we need to move Marshall?

Do we need to be tested?

Fever-Spinal Tap? Person I read about on the internet that presented back pain, his infection was in his spinal column.

Antibiotics-How serious is the fact that they are no longer giving Vancomycin? Are there other drugs to fight this?

OMG He is doing great off of the ventilator!!! His knees are hurting, and he is coughing a little--it is WONDERFUL to see him!!!!!!

Marshall is loving his night nurse, LeeAnn. He is giving her a hard time, he is back!!!!!!!!!!

Day 15 – Tuesday

Marshall is a little depressed today. Seems that he has limited use of his left arm, and maybe a little confusion, he is hard to read. They took 4.2 liters of fluid off in 4 hours of dialysis today. Day nurse-Clara-sweet lady. Dr. Spencer says he is doing well, and his "lungs are no longer a problem." Hallelujah!

I told Dr. Daftarian that we need an order for ice for his knees. How ridiculous that is – no ice without doctor's orders. I brought in some contraband--Mineral Ice for his knees, Aveeno Lotion for his VERY itchy rash.

PM Nurse, Lisa (looks like Tatum O'Neal). Dr. Morgan (nephrologist-kidneys) says that Marshall will just start urinating one day, probably in a couple of weeks or so.

I got another card from the "cootie relative" today filled with handwritten bible verses regarding how lack of faith causes death.

Day 16 – Wednesday

Marshall is back in full force! His penis is sore-possible infection in catheter?

He had a Diet Big Red--"unimpressive" [he hasn't had one since!] Big Red was his favorite drink prior to all of this. Big Red probably helped put him into full blown diabetes, along with his favorite HEB "Pineapple Cheesy Ring!" He is itchy all over--"itchy and bitchy."

He had dialysis at 5:30 this morning. He is very talkative today.

Telemetry Unit

Day 17 – Thursday

Marshall was moved to room 256 (telemetry unit) at 10:30am today. The nursing care here is unbelievably bad. He is hooked up to a remote monitor, which is in a room with constant supervision, I guess this is why the nurses don't have to be very attentive. We are in the very end room of the hallway; it is like being in the dungeon. The hospital is renovating the room next to us, so all we hear is the sawzall going all day long.

I talked to Dr. Daftarian about Marshall's confusion, and we decided it is probably the morphine. He keeps telling me that he needs to know what is going on, that he doesn't understand. I try to explain, and this is all he says back to me. He keeps picking off the monitor leads, almost as soon as the nurse puts them on. Sometimes she is not even out of the room yet. Dr. D cancelled the morphine and changed it to Vicodin (for his back pain, which he still has).

They started him on Imodium at 4pm today, to try to slow down his bowels, which are still moving like crazy (loose as well). The night nurse, Mary Beth, at 7:50 gave Marshall 2 benedryls, 2 vicodin and one Imodium.

Dr. D changed his meals to solids. Dr. Morgan (kidneys) decided to not change his catheter.

Day 18 – Friday

Rough day today. 4 hours of dialysis, removed 4 liters of fluid. Dr. Morgan changed the dialysis order to every other day. Marshall loves dialysis. This cracks up the dialysis techs every time. They say that NO ONE loves dialysis, but Marshall always says “Hooray” when they come, because he says it makes him feel better. I hope he brightens their day a little. I think we all need a round of dialysis every so often to mechanically clean our blood! It would probably do us all some good.

Marshall had Vicodin this morning, and it lasted him all day long. He is in a bad mood, has a bad attitude. He is probably coming off the 2 weeks of Morphine. The crappy day nurse,

Karen, is too busy to take care of Marshall and is just letting him lie in his stool. Dr. Daftarian ordered a stool sample, so I called her in when the time came, and she brought her little jar, filled it up, and told me that it would be at least an hour before she could come back to clean him up. I took over that job from here on out. In fact, I took over most of the nursing care from this point on.

Marshall has a fever of 101 today. Dr. D. thinks there might be a clue in his stools.

Dr. Morgan is going to change his catheter tomorrow, in case there is infection forming there.

Marshall won't eat. He has lost a bunch of weight (opposite of the Michelin Man now!), I don't know how much, but I am worried about his eating, he hasn't eaten hardly anything since coming off the ventilator (and feeding tube). His blood sugar is low now. Pastor Bockleman, Dr. Daftarian, and CB all talk to Marshall about eating, and he just is so agreeable with them. Then the food comes, and I have to fight for every bite he takes. I cannot believe that after all that we have been through, we are fighting about him NOT eating. I never thought in a million years that we would fight over this!!!

He is giving the Physical Therapists a very hard time. He is so weak, he can hardly lift his leg up.

Day 19 – Saturday

Nurse Mary Beth is back again, and is an idiot. I guess she could be overworked, but I think she is just tired of her job and going through the motions. I popped awake at 5 am this morning, when my subconscious heard her giving Marshall a shot of Morphine. 2 days after that had been removed from his orders. GEEZ. I was so angry with her. I called the charge nurse about the poor care in this unit, and she told me that these 2 nurses would no longer "care" for Marshall. Thank God. No dialysis today, and no urge to urinate either. Marshall's Blood Glucose was dangerously low this morning, 30 (should be 100). Mary Beth gave him a dextrose injection and he was put on IV dextrose. Glucose went up to 110, but lowered the rest of the day (down to about 60). EAT!

He ate a little bit more today, CB brought him a Sausage, Egg and Cheese biscuit from McDonalds, he ate a little of it. They started him on Zyvox antibiotic today, and it caused his blood glucose to jump up to 330

Day 20 - Sunday (Halloween!)

Marshall woke up at 4am complaining of terrible back pain- he took one Lortab and that helped enough for him to get back to sleep. The overnight nurse was a very vivacious Spanish woman, but she couldn't set Marshall's IV to save her life (he is picking the IV out, as well as the leads now—thanks for the extra morphine “nurse” MB). She poked him about 5 times before finding someone who could get it in (on the first try!). That is a gift that some nurses have, and some

don't. Of course, if Marshall hadn't been crawling out of his skin and pulling his IV out in the first place, we wouldn't have had this problem. Maybe this will inspire him to stop picking.

We had a new day nurse, Ann (YAY!). She did a fantastic job, by anyone's standards.

I am worried to death about Marshall's eating (or lack thereof). Is he using this as a show of control? Probably. He has lots of leg pain today. My guess is that his body is eating up his muscles for energy.

We saw Dr. Morgan today, he said NO MOTRIN for pain, it is toxic to the kidneys; use Darvocet. He said the leg pain was due to atrophied muscles. He also gave Marshall a BIG lecture about not whining to him about his lack of appetite. He said "I have seen it in every kidney patient for 30 years. I know it tastes like cardboard, but eat 4 meals a day-it is medicine!" I pray it works.

Marshall had dialysis this morning--4.2 liters of fluid in 4 hours. Where is this fluid coming from?? He has no urge to urinate yet, but is STILL BM-ing a lot.

I showed Marshall's back to Dr. Lemos today, he still has large lumps at the base of his spine. Dr. Daftarian is in Houston for the weekend, but has called daily to check on Marshall. She is fabulous! About 3 pm, Ann noticed a rash starting. Dr. Lemos took Marshall off of all of his current drugs and went back to Vancomycin (antibiotic) and Candiclas, which is an antifungal.

Zoe trick-or-treated with her friend Kayleigh, and Noah went with Cade. Thanks MOM for getting them all ready, and for everything else you have done to help us!

Day 21 – Monday

Dr. Daftarian is back. We sure do miss her when she is gone!! I need to ask her about putting ice on Marshall's back, and tell her about Dr. Morgan telling us about Motrin toxicity. I also need to show her the lumps on his back, and ask her about his continuing confusion, and find out about the ingredients in Lortab. We got a breathing machine for Marshall to use today. His breathing is still not quite deep enough, and this should help him expand his lungs more (if he will use it, of course). The diabetic teacher came to see us today, it was pretty useless. We had already read everything she said to us in the books they gave us early on.

Marshall did not eat supper tonight.

Day 22 – Tuesday

Well, after not eating supper, Marshall woke up at 2 am with signs of low blood sugar again. I got him some juice, and naturally we overcorrected it and about 3 hrs later came up with signs of high sugar. Grrr. His belly is upset this morning, is a little nauseous.

I went and voted this morning (is Election Day). Since my mother is here, she can't vote, and of course Marshall can't vote either (they should do something about hospital patients being able to vote), I thought I had better make our family appearance at the booth. Not that Bush isn't going to win TX anyway...

Marshall went to dialysis at 7:30am until 11:30, then they took him to surgery to put another central pic line in. They said it would take about 45 minutes, but at 3:30 he still isn't back. He is going to be in a GREAT mood (NOT)! When I came back from voting, the nurses were packing up all of our stuff, they were moving us out of telemetry and back where we started in the general medical unit (room 306). One step closer to the door! Telemetry wasn't doing Marshall any good anyway, he has still been crawling out of his skin and picking off the leads almost as soon as they put them on him.

Day 23 – Wednesday

Marshall's belly is upset again this morning. He had medium sharp abdominal pains most of the day, starting after his insulin dose this morning.

Dr. Young consulted today, he is a urologist. He wants to keep Marshall's catheter in for now, until his output decreases and gets back to normal. He says Marshall's bladder is stretched out because he has let his bladder get overfilled due to lack of sensation.

Marshall has his days and nights all mixed up. Dr. Daftarian put him on Ambien to help him get changed around. We decided we think it is the Lortab making Marshall confused and his skin crawl. Dr. Daftarian said also that we are looking at next week to get out of here. We are waiting on him to improve in his physical therapy, and to get his catheter out. She also said she wants him out of here because he will eventually get sick being in here.

Dr. Morgan said that Marshall's blood toxin levels are the best they have been, and that tomorrow will probably be his last dialysis, but they will keep the port in until they are absolutely sure. Dr. Lemos put Marshall on a new antibiotic today-Synercid. Cautions on the label say "central line only-not compatible with saline." This means they have to put it in with dextrose, which means sugar, which means...you guessed it, high blood sugar, more insulin.

Day 24 – Thursday

Oh misery. Marshall had another MRI this morning at 10 am. I cannot tell you how much he despises that. He has perfect memory of the hell that was his first MRI (see Day 3). To make matters worse, when he FINALLY got done with today's MRI, at noon, just when he got comfy, they came back (12:30) and said the doctor wanted another few pictures of the base of his spine which they said looked suspicious. No kidding. Oh he was not happy. But he survived it. I went to Noah's teacher conference today at 2.

MRI Results--Marshall has abscesses all up and down his spine, along with several infected

vertebrae and lots of scar tissue all up and down his spine. Dr. Briner (Dr. FrankenSpine), the neurosurgeon, was consulted. His decision was that the abscesses are not causing Marshall enough problems to go in and drain them, and that the antibiotics were obviously working well, because of all of the scar tissue. Lanny came to see him this afternoon, Marshall was more social than I have seen him yet.

Marshall had his last dialysis (hopefully) at 7pm.

Day 25 – Friday

We had a great day today, although Marshall had some back pain and nausea, his attitude was excellent! Finally! I think he is finally through with morphine withdrawal. At lunchtime, he asked what was on the tray before I told him. Yay! I think his appetite is coming back!

Dr. Young had Marshall's Foley catheter removed this morning with instructions to catheterize him every 6 hours to check for residual urine in the bladder. His first catheterization was at 6pm, and there was no residual urine :)

Nausea is still seeming to coincide with long acting insulin. Marshall also had a headache most of the afternoon. He took Lortab, and it didn't mess up his head like before.

Dr. Lemos came in and told us about Marshall's back, just like we were hearing it for the first time. I coerced Marshall into telling Dr. Lemos about his eye bothering him. He checked Marshall's eyes and didn't see anything, but said he would dilate them tomorrow morning and get a closer look.

Dr. Daftarian and Dr. Morgan are both out of town this weekend.

Marshall is still on the IV Synercid and Candicidas, and he is having no reaction and his rash is greatly improving. I mailed out a bunch of thank you notes today. Dad is coming next Thursday, November 11th at 2pm. I have to remember to pick him up!

Day 26 – Saturday

Sucky A&M vs. OU game today. Ugh. Good day for Marshall, he had a mild headache most of the day though.

Noah came to visit for a couple of hours, he is getting a cold I think!

Dr. Kuhl (retinal specialist) came to check Marshall's eyes. His diagnosis--Where the right eye was partially open while he was on the ventilator, it is abraded. He prescribed lubricating drops to help speed the healing

Day 27 – Sunday

Dr. Tan (in for Dr. Morgan) pronounced Marshall's kidneys FULLY RECOVERED! He will wait until Dr. Morgan returns tomorrow and will let him order the dialysis catheter removed. Dr. Lemos told Marshall that he is going to put in a new central pic line in his arm in preparation to go home this week.

Marshall has pretty bad back pain this evening. His skin is shedding like a snake, Dr. Lemos says this is due to toxic shock, and I guess the dead bacteria coming out of his system. Nice.

Reverend Mosley came by tonight, he is the pastor of a nearby Baptist church, and is the sweetest man. I have been talking to him a lot in the smoking room of the hospital.

7:50pm-Darvocet and Periactin (?)

8:40pm-got headache again. The vein in his left temple is visibly throbbing. The nurse thinks he might be dehydrated. They brought us the diabetes video to watch.

Day 28 – Monday

Brother Bryan came to visit early this morning, then CB, then Eric.

Susan Hilton (from Century21) came in about 1pm. They put in Marshall's pic line early afternoon.

Dr. Lemos said that if our insurance will cover IV antibiotics, that we will be going home soon. Marshall looks good today!

Dr. Morgan: Marshall has 60% kidney function, this is good. He had the dialysis catheter removed. He is changing Marshall's diet from renal to diabetic.

Pain meds: Tylenol 3 w/codeine every 2-3 hrs.

Day 29 – Tuesday

Good day today, still has back pain and nausea though. He walked to the end of the hall and back this morning with the PT's. Dr. Daftarian came at noon and gave him his walking paper orders for tomorrow!!! They also told me I have to learn how to catheterize Marshall--he is still on the every 6 hours thing. Oh boy. I hope he doesn't fight this too badly.

Day 30 – Wednesday

Marshall still doesn't have the dialysis catheter removed, I am calling Dr. Daftarian. He is nau-

seous this morning. I removed 1100 cc"s of urine by catheter this morning. ME!

Oh boy am I ticked off. Dr. Lemos has decided that he wants to try putting Marshall back on Vancomycin before we get out of the hospital. I guess for good reason, the antibiotic Marshall is on now is \$500 a bag, 2 bags a day, for 2 more weeks. Our insurance will not pay for it at home. So, we may be stuck here for 2 more weeks, because they WILL pay for it if we are here. Makes a lot of sense. However, Marshall is allergic to Vancomycin, I am POSITIVE. I went outside to watch for Dr. Lemos (his office is right across from the hospital. When I "gently reminded" him of this fact, he disagreed, and said that he was sure it was something else that he was on that was causing an allergic reaction. BS. He has had 2 reactions since this started, both when he was put on Vancomycin. <sigh>

Mom has to get back home to work (Tennessee), she has held her trip off hoping to see Marshall come home from the hospital. Boy am I ready to get out of here too. So....here we sit, all packed up and nowhere to go.

Well, guess what. I was right. 15 minutes after they started the Vancomycin, Marshall started itching all over, badly. They took him off of it immediately. Good grief. What now.

Back to the Synercid. Might as well get as much more of the expensive stuff while we can.

Unpacking....grrrrr.

Day 31 – Thursday

I am so irritated today, and Marshall is just cool as a cucumber. I need to change my attitude, because it looks like we could feasibly be here for another 6 weeks. How ridiculous is insurance anyway? Marshall is getting his regular physical therapy, and is doing very well. I am unpacking.

They came to take out Marshall's dialysis catheter today, that is a little bit of a scary process, they make you sign a paper telling you all of the horrible things that can happen when they do this. I guess poking holes in major arteries and veins can be a problem sometimes, but today, it went just fine. We are still catheterizing him every six hours (well, I am--I am sure we are not getting a discount either). It's not so bad, and really pretty easy to do. We have tested out every catheter size in the hospital, and have found one that works without giving Marshall too much discomfort (which in turn causes ME less discomfort!).

Day 32 – Friday

Still here. I have been "retaliating" by not taking notes like I was. Who is this hurting? Just me, when I want to go back for reference.

Everything is going just fine, Marshall took a big walk around the hospital today, he doesn't

want to go outside anymore though. I guess all that sunlight is irritating when you haven't seen it in a month! Looks like it might be another month.

Mom had to leave today, Dad is still here. What a blessing to have all of this family here to help. My poor kids, they haven't seen their mother for more than an hour or two at a time in a month. I am so glad they are able to see Marshall now, I know they were so worried. Noah stayed with us for a couple of hours today, all he wants to do is go eat in the cafeteria (their food is unbelievably good!). Of course, that is about all that we can do, not too much going on in the hospital for kids (and grownups for that matter!).

Home at Last!

Day 33 – Saturday, November 13

Can you believe we have left the hospital?

Dr. Daftarian came in this morning, and asked us if we were ready to go home! Boy, were we (me--I think Marshall was happy either way)! Dr. Lemos wrote Marshall a prescription for 2 months worth of Zyvox, the nurse came in and gave us a fistful of prescriptions and instructions, and catheterization supplies for home (yikes), and just sent us on out the door!

Coming home was very strange. Marshall is so different, he is so laid back and doesn't really care about much of anything. He is 185 pounds, after entering the hospital at 235 (and was very fit and trim at 235), and is now skin and bones. We have a wheelchair, and two different walkers, a potty chair--and a teeny house to try to get all of these supplies around in. Marshall wants nothing to do with the cats, and very little to do with his dog. He is having a hard time moving around in the bed. Our bed is very, very soft--I have been trying to get him talked into a new mattress for eons, it is way too soft for me, but maybe he will agree now. But so far, nope.

Dad is here, and is very helpful.

November 14th Did We Do The Right Thing?

I wonder if coming home was the right thing to do. I feel like I have come home with my first new baby, and have no idea what to do with it. Marshall is miserable in the bed, he can hardly move around in it. The mattress is so soft that it makes a hole where you lay, and you have to work to get out of it. That is when you are well and strong! His blood pressure is good today, but his pulse is a little high (111).

His back is hurting pretty badly still, probably 7 on a scale of 10. He is eating well, and drinking well. He came to the kitchen chair to sit for about 30 minutes, got nauseated and went back to bed. He is taking phenergan for the nausea. His sugar has been a little high (150-200) and I give him insulin shots accordingly. I remember when he was on IV Zyvox his sugar ran high

all the time, I wonder if it will still be that way.

Monday, November 15th Pulled Muscles!

This morning, at 5 am, Marshall woke me up in agonizing pain. His groin was just killing him. Bladder problems? Or is it that darned bed???

He is eating Tylenol 3"s like candy. He cannot hardly move, which means he can't do any kind of physical therapy. Oh this is not going well. He is grouchy and in pain and isn"t eating, yet his blood glucose is over 200. Big Sigh.

High point: Catheterization is going well, I am getting the hang of this, and we are getting his bladder emptied every 6 hours like clockwork!

Wednesday, November 17th Getting Worse By the Day!

I think he is getting days and nights mixed up again. He has been sleeping all day, his groin is still hurting but he says it is not as bad as it was. Still no physical therapy though.

I did manage to get him to sleep in Zoe's bed, as he pulled the opposite groin muscle in our bed. He said he was feeling better almost immediately. I am ordering a new mattress today, I don't care what he says. We cancelled the first appointment with Dr. Daftarian-it is POURING down rain outside, and he can't hardly move. I disagreed with doing that, but even as weak as he is, he will not go, and there is nothing I can do about it. We ARE going tomorrow, rain or shine.

He ate some chicken and dumplings and grapes for dinner, that was about it for the day. He did a teensy bit of exercising, about 5 minutes, but just in the bed. He is totally bedridden.

BP is good, Cath is good, he has a low grade fever (100).

It is my brother"s birthday, I managed to squeak in a phone call.

Marshall threw up right after taking his nausea pill. I hope he isn't going to throw up his \$50/ pill antibiotics. He still has the lumps in his lower back. I still don't know if they are infection abscesses or bunched up muscles. I can't wait to go back to the doctor. I think Marshall is ready too. They may put us right back into the hospital. He is not doing well at all at home.

Thursday, November 18th First Appointment with Dr. Daftarian

We went to see Dr. Daftarian today, finally. It is still pouring down rain, but I think even Marshall was ready to get there today. All of us thought that he wouldn't come back from her office

today, that she would put him right back into the hospital, but she didn't. She wants him to go to physical therapy so badly, but our insurance won't cover it, and we just don't have the money to spend, unless he really needs it. He is very strong willed, I don't worry that he will work himself back to health. She removed his pic line from his neck, and sent it off to the lab for culturing. I hope his fever will go away now that that thing is out of his neck.

Eric had to come help us get him to the doctor, he had to carry Marshall to the car, it was so sad. He weighed 195 pounds. I got the Suburban stuck in the front yard when I drove up to get Marshall, the ground is super saturated with water. That is wintertime in Texas!

I ordered a new mattress this morning, hopefully it will be delivered today. I bought it sight unseen (unlaid?) from the place that made Zoe's mattress (very comfortable). So who knows. It will be better than what we have, I know that, and I just don't have time to go lay around in mattress stores! If it is horrid, we can get another one at a later date.

Dad is still here, he is cooking up a storm filling up our freezers (as if they are not already overflowing!). I asked him if he wanted to bring his wife and daughter here for Thanksgiving, as it looks like he will not be home by then. He is thinking about that.

Friday, November 19th New Bed!

The new mattress showed up about 10pm last night. Hallelujah! We managed to get him into it last night, even though he didn't really want to move. That thing feels like sleeping on cardboard, it is definitely not the same mattress as Zoe's, but oh well. It is firm, and that is what I was looking for. I will go get an eggshell cover, or feather bed to put on it tomorrow. Marshall's day was better today.

I set up his first appointment with Dr. Lemos (Infectious Disease) for Tuesday, Nov. 30th at 10:15 am. He still has a mild fever (100), and his heart rate is still high (133-143 all day). I wish I knew what was going on in his body. Dr. Daftarian put him on phenergan 20 minutes before he takes all of his medications, in hopes that his nausea will subside.

I picked up his handicapped tags today-that is a ridiculous process that is a pain in the rump. The doctor has to write just exactly the required words on the prescription, or they will not give it to you. We had to get our prescription updated because Dr. Daftarian did not write the exact word TEMPORARY on it, rather she wrote "6 months" on it. Ridiculous. Do people fraudulently apply for those things so frequently that they have to keep them under lock and key like gold treasure? Maybe they should move that department to the bank...

Saturday, November 20th Going Better

Things are better today. Fever is down, heart rate is down (107). Back still hurts a lot.

We are running out of Zyvox and Phenergan already. I must come up with a better system for keeping track of medications. Will put that on my Walgreens list.

Monday, November 22nd

Well, we have been out of the hospital for a week, and things are still looking up. Heart rate is much better (90-105), sugar is still high (Zyvox?), fever is gone (thank God!). Tried to make an appointment with Dr. Young today (urologist), and, naturally, there are 2 brothers sharing the same office. Do I know which one he saw? Of course not. Can their office tell me? Nope. We saw Dr. Daftarian today, does she know? Of course not. So, I took a stab at it. We will see if I got it right in a couple of weeks when we go. I guess we will be catheterizing him until then. I am sure he is thrilled about that.

He is still feeling nauseous. I have researched all of his medications, and tried to highlight drug interactions, and food interactions that could be making him sickly. We have to watch other drugs and lots of foods (cheese--which he loves/lives on) and hopefully this will help his nausea, not to mention make his medications work more properly. He is on Toprol XL for his blood pressure (which might be elevated due to his bacterial endocarditis), Glucophage XL and Glipizide for his diabetes, Tylenol 3 for his pain, Zyvox for his infection, phenergan for his nausea, Zanaflex (muscle relaxant), and Ambien to keep his sleep regulated better. I am pretty sure that Ambien isn't working, it allows him a few hours of sleep, then he pops awake. But he is hard headed and won't listen to me about that. I will bring it up at Dr. D.'s next appointment.

November 24th, 2004 Chart Keeping

Saw Dr. Daftarian this morning. She added Nexium and Bextra for his stomach problems and his pain, respectively, and added another Glucophage (horse pill) for his diabetes.

I decided to keep a chart of all of the things that I am watching in Marshall, it will be much easier this way, I think. My chart has 10 columns across the top, with these headings: Time, BG (blood glucose), BP (blood pressure), Heart Rate, Temperature, Meds, Insulin, Void (normal urine output), Cath (catheter urine output), Other (food, feelings, ect..).

Dad's wife and daughter (Kathy and Rachel) are coming for Thanksgiving. He has to pick them up in Houston (Hobby) tonight. Marshall has been doing pretty well, about the same as the last few days.

November 25, 2005 Thanksgiving Day

We had a great day today. Kathy and Rachel were here (and Dad, of course), Rick and Selina were here as well. I invited my in-laws (CB and Jeanette), but they didn't come.

Marshall socialized a little bit today, and ate 2 big plates full of food. I guess we should have a Thanksgiving dinner every day. We are so thankful this year for so many things- our health, first and foremost, and our family and friends that we would not have made it this far without.

November 26, 2005 Day After Thanksgiving

Marshall is still doing pretty well, considering.

He is still very nauseous. We are trying Gas-X, and it seems to be helping. He is eating mostly soup today. His temperature has been low (97.6, 97.9), and his sugar a little high (150-160). He still looks like a strong breeze will blow him away.

November 28, 2005 Making Progress

Yesterday (Saturday), Marshall went out with his father for 2 hours to check on the cattle. I think getting outdoors helps him a little. He still doesn't want any of our animals anywhere near him. This is hard, as we have about 10 cats who dearly love (and miss!) him. He isn't very interested in the dogs either.

He is eating better, I even got him to eat Dad's quiche (Marshall does not eat quiche--man thing). Dad makes the BEST quiche!

I went with Dad today to take Kathy and Rachel back to the airport. It was nice to see them while they were here. Marshall was alone from 12:30-8 pm. His father and Eric came by to check on him, but he did well. He urinated on his own twice while I was gone--he says it is getting easier, but he still has to take lots of time to "talk it out."

His headaches are coming back--prior to his illness, he had frequent headaches that have been gone since the illness.

All of his vitals have been good over the weekend, his temperature seems to be staying around 97.5-98 degrees. I don't know what that means.

November 29, 2005 2 Weeks Out Of The Hospital

We have passed the 2 week mark now. Marshall had a ROUGH day today, he has been very very lightheaded today, and a little bit over the weekend. His blood pressure this morning was 138/100 and his temperature was 94.6, and I took it several times. Very weird. He took a hot shower and drank some coffee. We went to see Dr. Daftarian after lunch, and everything was pretty much back to normal. He has gained a few pounds, and is up to 200.

It is our anniversary today, and would you believe he managed to send me flowers? He is so

thoughtful, and precious to me, I am so thankful he is still with me.

Recovery- Winter 2004-2005

December 1st 2004

Blood pressure is a little high today (156/103), but everything else is going pretty well. He has a terrible headache today, but his sugar seems to be a little better controlled. Maybe it is the drop in sugar causing the headaches, and he will start feeling better soon!

December 2, 2004

Light headed!', 'Today he has been very lightheaded for most of the day and his blood pressure is still up there.

He had a big pee today--got the urge and everything!!

December 5, 2004 Feeling Better

'The weekend has gone pretty well. His back hurts, and he has spent a little time outside. He still is getting short of breath quickly, but it is improving.

December 8, 2004 Hypoglycemia

We have been learning about Hypoglycemia this week. Hypoglycemia is the term for when blood glucose levels drop to below normal.

Marshall exercised about 10am today, and his sugar levels were actually higher than before he started.

About 7pm, he was feeling weak, and his sugar had dropped to 78!! I looked that up on the internet, and found out about delayed hypoglycemia, which happens to some people. Lovely. So, he got a snack, and all was well.

I think he would much rather be low so he can eat, than be high. Makes sense, but from what I understand, low levels are much scarier. I think Dr. Daftarian's switch in his diabetes medicine is working though.

December 18, 2004 Things are fair...

Marshall has been a little lightheaded still, we took him off of the Bextra, thinking that might be it, and I think it has helped. He says he has been feeling "weird," it is hard to tell what that means, and he won't elaborate too much. I guess he doesn't know either.

His sugar has been all over the board, he is due to come off of the Zyvox at the end of the month, I think that will help.

We saw Dr. Young (I got the correct one!), and he was very pleased with Marshall's progress. He is a very nice man, with a good manner, but we have heard from more than one doctor that he is a little preoccupied with catheterization. We digress.

Christmas is coming, am I ready? Of course not. I was so together the last couple of Christmases, cards sent, presents bought and wrapped early--not this year, but I don't think anyone will blame me. Dad left last Thursday, so things are getting back to normal. Again, I feel like I have been left alone with my new baby, but I am figuring out how to care for him now :)

December 19, 2004 Neuropathy

Marshall says his thighs feel like a cheese grater has been run all over them, they are very sensitive, as are his feet. He has also been having problems with his bowel movements, not getting the urge. Dr. Daftarian has put him on a prescription laxative, maybe that will help. She says that you can go for a long time without having a BM without it causing problems, so not to worry. Ok. Marshall's dad tells us to try Milk of Magnesia, that it WILL work, but we will stick to Dr. D.'s concoction for now.

December 26, 2004 The Holidays

Well, we made it. Mom came back, the kids were here, and it was a great Christmas! Marshall has been feeling pretty well overall, I just wish he would gain a little bit of weight, he is still hovering right around 200 pounds (which sounds like a lot, I know, but he is 6' 3", and is a muscley guy that is skinny at about 225)!

December 30, 2004 New Antibiotic

The Zyvox has ended! Much to our dismay, Dr. Lemos has ordered 3 months of Rifampin and Bactrim combination. But, we surely do not want this infection back, so here goes!

December 31, 2004 Lightheaded again!

Marshall is seriously lightheaded again, and short of breath. He nearly passed out in the kitchen this morning, and every time he sits up he thinks he is going to faint. I think he might be allergic to the Rifampin. Going to call Dr. Lemos tomorrow, and quit taking this tonight before something bad happens.

January 1, 2005 Happy New Year!

Ok, I forgot I can't call Dr. Lemos today, so I called Dr. Daftarian's answering service, and she was on call. Hooray! She told us to cut out the Rifampin and keep taking the Bactrim until we reach Dr. Lemos. By 3pm Marshall was already feeling better, his blood pressure was back down, but his pulse was still high (up to 154 at one point).

By night time he was better (111), but his blood pressure was back up (147/109). Good grief.

January 2, 2005 Feeling Better

Although Marshall threw up first thing this morning, and felt crummy (short of breath, nauseous, racing heart), he got much better by the afternoon, and all of his vitals are back to normal. My poor baby, I hope he gets better soon!

January 4, 2005 Improving

The last couple of days have been ok--his nausea has been better, and he seems less lightheaded to me (although he insists he still is). His sugar has been high as a kite for the last couple of days though, and his temperature is just a few points above his normal, but still well within ok range.

His back has been hurting more--he still has the lumps in his lower lumbar area, I hope this is scar tissue now, and not abscesses still.

He is still not having the urge to have a BM, and is taking Dr. Daftarian's laxative as prescribed. His dad is still pushing the Milk of Magnesia. Maybe we will have to give it a try. Marshall isn't too uncomfortable though.

Dr. Lemos took Marshall off of the Bactrim and Rifampin, and put him on Dynocin (Minocycline) for 6 months. SIX MONTHS. Thank God it is not expensive. I made the grave mistake of mail ordering Marshall's entire 3 month prescription of Bactrim and Rifampin, I won't do that this time. Pray that he reacts better to this drug. After all of this, I wonder what is going to happen if he gets an infection that needs antibiotics. Will he be breeding the resistant superbug of all time? Let's not think about that just yet.....

January 11, 2005 Minocycline is Good!

For the most part, Marshall has been feeling good all week. Nothing too significant to report. He is having more pain in the evenings than during the days, and is still taking those dang sleeping pills. I hate that. I don't know when I became so opposed to pills of all sorts, but I did somewhere along the line. I guess I have had one too many friends addicted to pills, it has made me ridiculously paranoid about all of them.

His sugar has still been high as a kite (200-260) all week, but have been giving insulin regularly. I guess the Zyvox-sugar thing might just be related to all antibiotics, or he just is plain ol Type I diabetic.

I have spotted something bizarre on my nose-it is flesh colored, but appears to be getting larger by the day-I am going to see if Dr. D. will cut it off and send it in at Marshalls appointment next week.

January 19, 2005 Dr. Daftarian Appointment

Marshall's appointment went well. Dr. Daftarian wants him to go see a pain specialist, as she is now worried about his becoming addicted to pain meds. She started him on Zoloft, she says that along with the antidepressant effect, it can have some pain relieving effects as well. We will see. We hate going to new doctors, we wish she would just totally take care of us! She also prescribed Clonidine for when his heart rate jumps up.

At the end of his appointment, I told her to look at my nose. She looked at it and told me to wait a couple of weeks and see what it does. I told her (almost bursting into tears!) that I have already waited a week and a half, it has grown from a pinpoint to the size of a pencil eraser (but flat), and that either she will cut it off, or I will, and will bring it back to her in a baggie. I have plenty of scalpels down in the barn to take care of it with. So she did. LOL Even if it is nothing (I know it is something...it is growing too fast) I feel better to have it off of my face. Happy 7th birthday to Noah!

January 23, 2005 Plodding along...

All of a sudden, Marshall's heart rate has just dropped right down to a normal level. It has been ranging from 71-88 for about the last 5 days, and he is feeling pretty good. Maybe it is the Zolofit relaxing him? Whatever it is, it is working, and he is seeming more normal than he has in a long time. He is warming back up to the animals! Yay! I would hate for him to have lost his love for animals through all of this, although it is minor.

January 25th, 2005 My Turn

Marshall took his first big adventure into the office today. I went with him, and he just wanted to see what was going on in there since he has been gone. While we were sitting in his office, and he was going through some mail and things, my phone rings. It is Dr. Daftarian. She said, "Well, you were right, it is cancer." Oh boy. I hate it when I am right.

Thankfully, it is basal cell carcinoma. I have an appointment with Dr. Rude, a plastic surgeon, in the morning to plan the next move. We left the office with me a wreck this time

January 26, 2005 Dr. Rude

Marshall came with me to see Dr. Rude today. He was very nice, and we both liked him very much. He told us that hopefully it won't be a big deal, and it will leave me with a nice scar down my nose, but one that should be all but invisible after a little time. I will have the surgery January 31st.

I don't care what it looks like, just get it off!

He also told me that statistically, at my age (36), having a basal cell cancer, that I am very likely to have another one within 5 years. He said to not ever see the light of day without SPF 35 sunscreen on my face again. He recommended Shiseido, I need to go find it.

Marshall was worn out after that appointment, might be the stress factor. He is having a follow up MRI this week as well as all of the other goings on. He has managed to talk the powers that be into sedating him for it. It is amazing, but one of the few things he remembers about his whole hospital stay is the horror of the MRI. He also has a real mental block about it, so sedation will be good. Let's hope the results are good!

February 2, 2005 MRI

The MRI went great, he was happy as a clam under sedation. The results came back, and were good. Lots of scar tissue, but no apparent abscesses. Antibiotics are doing the trick!

February 2005

The first part of February has been a blur. My surgery went well, the recovery went well, it was a relatively painless process. And I am left much more aware of my mortality than before. I guess I am no longer 18 and immortal. Oh well.

Marshall is doing well, it probably did him good to be the caretaker again for the first time in awhile. He says I am a much worse patient than he is, I am sure that he is right. He is getting outside more, we have taken a few walks through the pasture lately, and he is not getting short of breath or faint anymore. I am so glad the Minocycline seems to be working without giving him any horrid side effects.

Dr. Daftarian started him on Lexapro, as he did not think that the Zoloft was doing much for him. She said it would also stimulate his appetite. Good! He still weighs about 204, and is just frail looking--every pair of pants he owns will fall to his ankles if not cinched tight with a belt. She also started him on Allegra, thinking that his headaches might be allergy related. I hope that works for him! This is getting to be my Allegra time of the year as well.

February 14, 2005

My precious hubby sent me flowers for Valentine's day. He is the dearest man ever.
February 18, 2005 More Family Illness

Now my father has had a stroke. What next?

Kathy called in hysterics a few days ago, but things have settled out now, and dad is doing ok. Meaning he is alive, and going to stay that way for awhile. He has pretty bad damage to his right side, and his speech is just about non existent. I am going to fly up there for the weekend ASAP. Marshall is doing well, he is being nice and strong for me, when I feel like I am losing all of the "cool" I have had for the last 6 months.

February 25, 2005 Golf!

Marshall played golf a couple of days ago, with his brother and father--and I swear it did him more good than any other course of treatment he has had so far! He actually made it 18 holes, which he, nor I, thought he would be able to do.

I can't decide what to do about going to Tennessee to see Dad. Marshall wants to come too, but I don't think he would be very comfortable up there at all. In fact, I am pretty sure he would be miserable, which, in turn, will stress me out terribly, and I will be highly stressed anyway. And then there are the kids to figure out. Sighhhh. What to do?

March 5, 2005 Making Plans

Ok, I am going to Tennessee during the first half of the kids spring break, and I am going alone. Marshall will stay here and watch the children for 4 days. He is still doing unbelievably well, I attribute it to that one golf game. Maybe it made him feel normal again, and he remembered what that was like? Whatever it was, I am a happy golf widow! His feet are still terribly sensitive, as well as his thighs. His BM's are back to normal (the Milk of Magnesia did the trick--we should have listened to his father from the start), he is feeling the "urge" again. Just about everything from the waist down has had some sort of problem, but they all seem to correct themselves with time. I hope his feet get better as well, they bother him a lot.

March 10, 2005 Marshall's Mother

We have displeased the universe, I think. Marshall's mother is now in the hospital with breathing problems (again). This was the morning after Marshall was comforting me, saying that we had gone through our 3 traumas (the "bad things come in 3's" speech) and all would be ok now. She is doing pretty well though. We went and saw her today, and other than a highly irritating roomie, she seems to be ok. They are going to give her an MRI and see if they can tell what is going on with her.

My father is doing pretty well, he is in the Patricia Neal Rehab Center in Knoxville, and Kathy seems to be very happy with where things are going. I will be up there in a few days to see for myself.

March 19, 2005 Home Again

I made it back to Texas safe and sound, and found my husband and kids no worse for the wear. Marshall said the kids were exceptionally good, and helpful. I knew they would be. I am still loving golf, that day turned his recovery around!!! Marshall saw Dr. D. just before I left, and she told him not to come back for 2 months! Hooray!

I managed to have a great time with my brother in TN, he and I haven't spent any alone time together in years and years (probably since we despised each other as teenagers). Dad was on the news in Tennessee just before I went up to see him. Patricia Neal was visiting the rehab center, and Dad got to be in the news clip. Kathy said he was SO excited. I contacted the TV station, and asked them if there was any way they could send me the video so I could see it, and they posted it on the internet for me to see for a few days. I felt so much better after seeing Dad on there--he looked so good, it took a huge load off of me to see for myself, even though it was only a TV clip. Thank you WATE 6 in Knoxville! I have always loved that station--and they still are my favorite, all the way!

So, Dad was much better than I expected him to be. He looked better anyway. In fact, he looks healthy as a horse, but his speech is really coming hard for him. I think that a stroke's effect on the brain is amazing and terrible. I can tell that the words he wants to say are in his head, he

just can't get them out of his mouth. That is so frustrating to him, I just know it. I can almost see him reaching for them in his head.....But he looks good, and healthy!

Baseball starts next week. Back to the 2 months of living off of ballpark food. I wonder how Marshall is going to deal with all of that.

Spring 2005

April 1, 2005 Living Baseball

We are spending what seems like every waking hour at the ballpark. Our coach is supposedly great, and he likes to practice every day, until the sun sets. That is a lot for a 7 yr old, I think, but I guess it will teach him some much needed discipline. Opening ceremonies are next Saturday, we will see what happens from there, I hope they kick butt and don't have to practice so dang much.

Marshall is doing better than I expected with all of the nights at the ballpark. He hasn't missed one practice. Sometimes we walk around, sometimes we sit...but he is enjoying it, I think.

He ran into Allen Fritsche one of the first nights, and they talked for 2 hours I think, just standing there. I was surprised Marshall was feeling that good! It was nice to see him "normal" though, he is a social butterfly by nature, and has been cooped up in the cocoon for months now!

April 25, 2005 Neuropathy Testing

At Marshall's appointment with Dr. Daftarian, he had his feet tested for neuropathy, as he has been having real problems with swelling, burning in his big toes, and general hypersensitivity. The tests were so painful for him--they hooked his feet all up with electrodes and shocked them all over, he was miserable! I am not sure what the tests are supposed to tell him, other than he does indeed have neuropathy! Duh!

Oh--he has gained 20 pounds! His pants fit him again--I think it must be the Lexapro. She put me on it at our last appointment (in February), as I was just about to flip out with all of the trauma in our family over the past 6 months. I put on 20 pounds in a matter of weeks, and have quit taking it now. I will just deal with the trauma.

May 12, 2005 The Pain Doctor

Dr. Daftarian finally talked us into going to the pain doctor, Dr. Stonecipher. We actually liked him a lot. He knew just what Marshall's problems were with his feet, and prescribed Gabapentin (Neurontin) for his neuropathy.

One of our biggest questions to him was whether the neuropathy was caused by the diabetes or by the MRSA infection, and he told us that most likely it was caused from the MRSA, as diabetic neuropathy generally takes a good bit longer to appear. This is good, there is some hope for improvement!

He also told us about some shoes, called Z-Coils, that were designed for people with diabetic foot neuropathy. We looked them up on the internet, and boy are they interesting looking things! We are going to Tennessee just as soon as school lets out for the summer, and there is a Z-Coil store in Gatlinburg, where we will be spending our first weekend in Tennessee. We are anxious to see how they feel!

May 20, 2005 Eyeglasses

Marshall has been complaining of needing glasses for the last couple of years, but his eyesight has gone down a good bit more lately. I don't know if it can be attributed to MRSA effects or not, but the time has come to get glasses. He finally went to the eye doctor and got a prescription. After looking all over town for glasses, and seeing the astronomical prices of them, he decided to try my method and buy them online for a huge savings. I hope he loves them as much as I love mine!

June 20, 2005 Tennessee / The Jigglin' George!

Well, we made it to Tennessee and back. I was not so sure how Marshall was going to do, but he came through it pretty well, although on the way up, his feet were so swollen and painful that he spent a good bit of the trip in the back of the Suburban with his feet propped up the best he could. That is one LONG road trip!

While we were there, in Gatlinburg at the Z-Coil store, we discovered a product for neuropathy called the Jigglin' George. The claims were that it brought life back to feet that were damaged by diabetes, as well as lowered blood sugar approximately 15 points after just one session. It purported to cure swelling in the feet, as well as bring back feeling by increasing the circulation to the feet. Marshall laid down and tried it out, and did see some immediate results. However, the machine itself was \$300, and we were spending \$200 already on a pair of Z-Coils (and in fact had already spent \$200 on another pair of Z-Coils that we found in Nashville a few days earlier). So Marshall had decided against the Jigglin' George.

Just before we were going to pay and leave the store, an older man came in, and was just gushing over what the Jigglin' George had done for him just in the weekend that he had owned it. He had used it about 4 times a day for the 2 or three days since he had purchased it, and he was

just overwhelmed with the progress his feet had made. He was telling Marshall and I about how his feet were swollen, his big toe had been burning, and his feet were super sensitive to pain--he had ALL of Marshall's symptoms--and how much better they were now. Well, it was like God sent someone to make sure we did not leave without this machine, and so we did not. The Jigglin' George has made more improvement in Marshall's feet than any drug or doctor or type of exercise has done for him, by a long shot.

Summer 2005

July 7, 2005 Going Out of Town

Happy 44th birthday my love! What a blessing that you are here to celebrate it!!

Marshall is going out of town for 2 weeks starting July 11th. He promises he is going to take care of himself, eat when he needs to eat, and put his health before other needs. I hope that he will do that, it is not in his nature to take care of himself above other things, as he has always felt pretty indestructable. I hope that through this last 9 months he has seen his mortality and knows that if he is going to live a long full life, that he must continue to take care of himself. He had better!

For now, our story ends here. As of the anniversary of Marshall's infection, he is still doing very well, and feeling very good. I live every day with the fear of his diabetes getting out of control and his infection returning, but for now, all is well.

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For more information about MRSA, see <http://www.mrsaresources.com>.

