

29 April, '81

Dear Mrs. Weisteg,

Thank you for your letter of the 25th.
We are sorry to hear of Harold's surgery
and that he will be unable to attend the
reunion. We had looked forward to seeing
him again. Many a day we met in
Eighth St. Park and walked to High School
together, and many after we walked home
together as far as Eighth and Broome.

Please convey our best wishes to him
for a full and speedy recovery.

Enclosed is order form and check for
Harold's latest book.

Best regards,
Jim Nichols

Dear Jim,

5/9/81

I'm sorry I'll not be at the reunion (and won't be able to see my mother for some time, too) but I'm glad I'm still here and apparently I'm lucky to be here.

Suddenly there was a total blockage on the entire left side. I was able to get the Georgetown Univ. Hospital fairly rapidly, phoned ahead, and of all the possible wonders, the chief surgeon was there to operate - until about 2:30 a.m.

Remarkable man - inventor of the first heart valve. He operates 6 a.m. daily but still squeezed me in, beginning with a perfect diagnosis of the invisible.

I was in for 18 days. This is the beginning of my second full day at home. And did the weather turn lovely for me!

We live on the side of a mountain, in a woods (mostly pine) in real privacy yet close to good neighbors of our age - all also handicapped and all vigorous in various ways. The richness of the colors of the reborn earth is so magnificent a contrast with the drab colors of hospital life. Now if I can keep a high school sophomore more interested (and more diligent than his not being here by 11 a.m. when he is to work each Saturday) I'll keep it under control again. Otherwise it will go wild, as it was when I latched onto it in 1967.

I remember those walks to school very well and what you forgot, those afternoons in the rear, third-floor room where I was less than an apt chess pupil. That walking was the best medicine we could have had as youngsters. I continued walking, even more, when in college and thereafter. After we moved here I walked up to the top of the mountain daily. After the initial thrombosis in 1975 I walked my way back with such diligence that teens and young men in their 20s copped out before I did. Even the morning after the arteriogram this past September I walked all the way to downtown DC from the hospital, which is at the western and northern ends of the Georgetown area. I guess this is really why, after ~~major~~ surgery and when at rest in the hospital my blood pressure was that of a boy, 110-120/60, pulse also 60. As the nurses said, the heartbeat of an athlete.

This may well have been what kept me going from what not uncommonly causes death from heart just quitting.

So, if you don't do it, start that walking of your youth again! I'm beginning a new walking campaign, from the bottom up. I'll walk a little and I'll gradually increase how long I walk and how often. I must stretch the minor vessels so they can carry the load of the lost larger ones.

I'd have liked to be there so much! Please remember me to our friends I haven't seen for so long.

And may you all have the most wonderful reunion and recall of a past that in so many ways, despite the hardness of the times, was so very good.

Best wishes,