

13 April 1977

Dear Harold:

A short note to bring you up to date.

The enclosed clips from the Chronicle all are extras, so don't return.

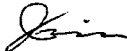
Jenifer now is well into her second week of radiation therapy and is responding well. Each day we both think she looks and feels better. So does her GP. She's eating well. Much less nausea.

Radiation itself is of course painless, but the positions she has to get into under the linear accelerator involve muscles and joints she has had to avoid using for more than two months. The first week was rugged indeed, but beginning with the two-day weekend lull she showed marked improvement and it has continued into the second week with each day's session involving less pain than before.

I continue to spend as much time as possible with her, conveying her to and from the once-terrible sessions under the accelerator. I get a tray from the cafeteria and usually eat lunch and/or dinner with her, then get her ready for the night etc. These things and the colostomy I can help her with as the nurses can't, although again the entire staff gladly stands on its head to do anything whatever that she needs or wants, arranging special things, spending many of their breaks just talking with her. This includes several from the floor where she was last year who have found out she's back. She draws them both as a patient and as a person, and their devotion is so constant and unflinching that she remarked the other day it's like living in a cocoon of love. All this helps immensely; particularly does it help a shy and sensitive person like Jenifer. For all ~~xxx~~ its fine personnel, the hospital is chaotic at times, particularly in the mornings when she's trying to get breakfast and lunch out of the way in time for the 1:15 radiation session and otherwise collect herself for what she knows is ahead. I may have mentioned last year that the whole thing reminds me of a Chinese street scene, with chaos the rule until the last minute when a miraculous resolution takes place and things fall into place ~~without disaster~~ without disaster occurring.

We both appreciate your 4/9/77 remarks.

And send our best.



jdw

response

looking and feeling better and

Thanks also for the clips. I'll read them later.

I'm sure the hospital staff shares Jenifer's appreciation of the help you provide. If in different degree and for different reasons.

Your account of Jenifer as a patient reminds me of Lil 50 years ago.

Being this kind of good patient is to do as much as one can for one's own recovery.

When I had to take her back and she was placed in a different ward it was as you say, nurses from the first ward came to visit her. One in particular had feared surgery but had decided on having it done from her observations of Lil.

Years ago I knew one whose radiation treatment was successful. With him the nausea disappeared after about two weeks. Of course I do not know how widely these experiences can be applied but they are encouraging.

Jenifer is a remarkable woman. I hope when she returns home she has the strength for what I'm sure she'll enjoy, the gardening outside.

I've just had our new (this year enlarged) garden spot plowed and harrowed after application of two loads of manure. In another couple of years it should be a real spot. We have a closer neighbor who will do the plowing and does it with better equipment. I plan to get wet manure from him the first freeze and let all the liquids go into the soil. We'll save much nitrogen that way. Wish we could get some of this really good fertilizer out there for you....Our best and our hopes for continued easing and improvement.

HW 4/16/77