

Hospital Experiences, Advocate Needed

Update on brother Thom Brack: esophageal cancer created a tumor in his esophagus so he couldn't swallow food. Lost 65 pounds (185 to 120) before being diagnosed late summer with stage 4 esophageal cancer. Brother Jeff and wife Gretchen drove from Colorado twice to be with him during these initial hard times. He was in the hospital twice for IV's, etc., to "re-hydrate" the first time, but with no nutrients — just sugar water, until wife Jayne begged for and insisted on a nutritional drip to build his strength. He gained back 12 pounds. They put in a feeding tube to bypass the tumor, and said cancer had spread to other organs, so radiation was too great a risk. Sent him home weighing 132. Wife Jayne was concerned as he kept regurgitating whatever food was inserted in feeding tube. Back to hospital for 23 days, continuing to regurgitate food, losing another 15 pounds—down to 117. A chemo treatment nearly killed him because his body was not strong enough to withstand it. Diagnosed with "nausea" and "stomach failure." They prepared Thom for hospice and Jayne for grief counseling. Jayne insisted something else was wrong. Finally they put dye in food to trace where it was going. Discovered feeding tube was 8 inches too long and was doubled back, shooting food back up through his esophagus!!! They cut off excess tube and sent him home.

He arrived home the same day Bex and I arrived. Brother Hud also just arrived from NC, where he had just moved from Florida. Brother Ben from CA, an hour away, arrived with Hud. We were there one week, during which time Thom had regained 5 pounds and was out of bed cleaning/organizing his recording studio/bedroom and garage, pruning hedges and doing yard work with his brothers! When Bex and I left, he gave us a hug and said "See you in August!" for our family reunion. If Jayne hadn't insisted on nutritional feeding, and then on checking for something wrong, he could easily not be here. He is now receiving radiation treatment on the tumor in his esophagus, via a different doctor/clinic.

I was relaying this story to a friend who mentioned his 98-year-old mother went to the hospital with back pain, and suddenly went into a coma. His brother happened to be there and reviewed her charts. He noticed she had been inadvertently given an anti-seizure medication which had been intended for another patient! When he notified the doctor, corrective medication pulled her out of the coma, but the doctor hadn't even thought of the patient for whom the anti-seizure medicine should have been given!

Moral of this story: If you have a loved one in the hospital, **BE THERE** as an advocate, pay attention to what is being done, and push for things that make better sense than what the hospital is doing!

Bex's Root Tonic While we were in California, Bex prepared a root tonic for Thom, which we have used before to build up our immune system. This recipe also purports to fight cancer. Thom and Jayne were taking it when we left. I have made more at home. In researching herbs for tonics, we came across some interesting information. Besides using equal parts of onion, garlic, turmeric and ginger roots finely chopped and covered with apple cider vinegar (stir every day for a week, strain, and drink just one ounce per day), Sour Sop (aka Guanabana, Graviola) leaves may be crushed and added to the tonic. "Properties of this Central American and Caribbean fruit tree have been shown to be 1000% more effective at fighting cancer cells than chemotherapy." Then, I learned that Paw Paw bark does equally as well medicinally. We have Paw Paw trees in the woods behind our house. In fact, ate some fruits this fall for the first time. Yum! Lot's more research needs to be done.

Thom and Jayne music. Thom and Jayne are professional musicians; have been members for a couple decades of Big City Review, a well-known band based in the San Francisco area, and more recently Kinky Machine Band Reboot 2016. See the following for original songs Thom and wife Jayne Hendricks have composed, recorded, and/or videoed: <https://soundcloud.com/hendricksandbrack>, and [/jayne](https://facebook.com/findinglulurant); <https://facebook.com/findinglulurant>; www.youtube.com/jaynegogo; fandalism.com/jaynehendricks, and more.

Thom is awesome guitarist, harpist, vocalist, recording artist; Jayne vocalist, saxophonist, and videographer.