

## Written in 1992 by Tracy Hall

There have been some changes this past year. More and more we have come to recognize that neither of us nor the home and grounds in which we live are immortal. Consider the plumbing. It is now 36 years old. We used the very best pipe, valves, and fittings made by the Crane Co. upon building the home. Amazingly, the plumbing problems have been minor. Occasional "O" ring gasket replacement heads the list of problems. Outside the house the Globe type Crane valves in the lawn sprinkling system still seat well and securely shut off the water. However, the valves are manually operated and there are nine of them to open and close. Five are on the south side of the house and four are on the north.

I conservatively estimate that each valve has been turned on and off 8,640 times. Multiplying this figure by the number of valves equates to 77,760. Since my wrist has to do a 180° rotation seven times to open or close a valve, the total wrist operations can be calculated by multiplying 77,760 by two times seven, which equals 1,088,640 individual twists. Is this why I'm getting arthritis in my wrists?

These surprisingly large numbers motivated me to do something about this situation. I hired a company to convert my manual valves to electric. This is easily done now days, at least with the Crane valves, by screwing out the upper part of the valve and replacing it with a solenoid plunger.

The conversion was made and the main valve was turned on. Every one of the plastic solenoid valves blew its top and had to be replaced. You see, our city water pressure is 100 pounds per square inch (p.s.i.) but the installation of a reducer valve set at 60 p.s.i. solved the problem.

There are some analogies above that relate to my heart. The valves in my heart open and close over 300,000,000 times a year! But my blood pressure is too high and consequently could cause some other things in my system, including heart valves, to "blow their tops." There is nothing comparable to a water pressure-reducing valve that could work in my circulatory system to reduce my blood pressure.

Heart attacks are caused by poor circulation to the heart itself. If the arteries in the heart could be opened up there would be a greater supply of oxygenated blood for the heart muscles.

Roto-rooters, lasers, and balloons are currently being used to open up the heart's arteries.

In mid-February, I was given a treadmill test that indicated a partial plugging of a heart artery. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, while I was mildly sedated, Dr. Frischknecht performed an angiogram on my heart, which I watched on a TV screen along with the doctor. What the doctor saw, however, disturbed him and almost instantaneously a team assembled and I was put to sleep.

After I came to, I was told that an important artery was 80% closed, that they had worked hard to do a "roto-rooter" job on it but could not get the instrument past a sharp turn in the artery. Consequently, they did a "balloon job" (angioplasty). This consists of sending a thin elastic balloon into the artery and expanding it with air pressure. This compresses the fatty plaque against the artery wall and also stretches the artery. All these procedures are performed through a main artery catheter in the groin that extends all the way up into the heart.

After this procedure, the doctor turns his attention to medicines that lower blood pressure.

Certain snakes kill their prey by injecting a venom that drastically lowers the victim's blood pressure. This gives the chemist a starting point to design other drugs that may be useful.

Blood pressure lowering drugs currently on the market have notoriously bad side effects. A sampling of trade name drugs that have been tried on me include: Cardizem, Tenex, Dynacirc, Clonidine, Vasotec, Zestril, and Altace. Most of them lower my blood pressure but make me deathly ill. I've struggled with them for eight months.

However, two trips in September to the emergency room at the hospital finally got the doctors off on another track—treat me with benzodiazepines (mild tranquilizers). My blood pressure is now under control and things are fine.

## Addendum

About nine years have passed since the procedures, etc. written previously. It needs to be updated. The last sentence said that everything was fine, but that is not exactly the case.

While the mild tranquilizer (Ativan) calmed me and somewhat moderated my blood pressure, I became addicted to it. So I had to discontinue taking it by easing off gradually. When I finally got that taken care of I was back to where I started.

Dr. Frischknech said he didn't know what else to do for me, so I called the University of Utah hospital and told them my problem, and asked if they had anyone on their staff that might be able to help me with my blood pressure.

Fortunately for me, I was referred to Dr. Holbrook, who was an internist and associated with a clinic at the University of Utah Hospital. He first took me off of everything I was on and prescribed a simple diuretic. This worked marvelously for several years. As a matter of fact, all modern high blood pressure medicines contain a diuretic. From then on, I went up to his clinic in Salt Lake and he treated me for the high blood pressure.

For many years our family doctor was Dr. Scott Wallace. Generally, we took our problems to him, unless a specialist was called for, such as a heart specialist, i.e. Dr. Frischknech. Then our insurance required that we have a primary physician and we changed to Dr. Kirk Anderson.

While working on the farm, I noticed that my grandkids and the kids I had working for me occasionally on the farm all drank bottled water dosed with sugar. I thought I would try it too. But it really made me sick. I dropped into Dr. Wallace's office and told him my symptoms. He smiled and said, "You've got sugar diabetes." Sugar diabetes? I was stunned. A blood test at the hospital determined that my blood sugar was 400 mg/dL. They like to have the blood sugar stay below 140. Since my primary physician was Dr. Kirk Anderson, we went to him. He confirmed the diagnosis and sent Ida-Rose and I over to the hospital to take a course on diabetes and how to control it. Ida-Rose had to go because she's the one who prepares the food.

So new prescriptions appeared with my old ones. Currently (year 2001) I am taking the following medications:

1. Norvasc, one pill per day to help control my blood pressure.
2. Glucophage, five pills per day to help control my blood sugar.

3. Zocor, one pill per day for cholesterol control
4. Other sundry vitamins, minerals, etc.

During the years I have had to have the following surgeries:

1. Two hernias (one on each side).
2. Both knees scoped.
3. Left eye retina rupture, which flooded my retina with blood that makes that eye almost useless.
4. My hearing in my left ear is somewhat impaired since elementary school when I was hit by a hard baseball in that ear. This happened when I was about 10 years old.
5. I can be identified in several ways:
  - a. A crooked little finger on my left hand—injured while playing volleyball in the navy.
  - b. A 2 1/2 inch scar on the side of my left foot received when I dropped a bottle of water I had been playing with as a three or four year old child.