

Publisher's note: Jacquie Scarbrough shares her healing journey with the Cape Women who have inspired and encouraged her. She will update her progress in the Winter issue.



Jacquie: the eternal optimist

What Lies Ahead?

by Jacquie Scarbrough

In the Summer 2009 issue of Cape Women Online, I discussed what you leave behind when you step into the next stage of life. How could I envision that my next stage would include partially paralyzed legs? So much to leave behind – and no easy stepping.

While on vacation, sailing near Prince Edward Island in early September, I experienced numbness in my right leg and rushed to Massachusetts General Hospital where a neurosurgeon had been following my case for years. I have an anomaly - a cavernous malformation of blood vessels near my spine - that is very unusual. And now it had irritated my spinal column which reacted by swelling, cutting my sensation and movement, and shutting down all nerve signals to my legs. It was totally surreal to watch; I felt like a bystander as my legs shut down.

So I contemplate what I leave behind: an able body.



Determined to walk again.

As a runner, walker, biker, rower, sailor, hiker, Pilates practitioner, I will have to accept a very different body and, hence, a very different life. I am so glad that I have made the most of my active body while I had it and am determined with rehab to work hard to regain as much as I can. The outcome is unknown, but hopeful. The doctors hold out the possibility that I will walk with crutches or a walker and only need a wheelchair when I need to go some distance.

I am a crass optimist so I am sanguine about what lies ahead. I am also determined to use my mind and body

to regenerate as much function as I can.

I have seven weeks of rehab which includes a robotic machine that “walks” your legs with both electrical impulses and walking simulation. It is so exciting to be “walking” again and to be told that my legs are doing 60%! I trust my body will do all it can.

But the next stage is still a waiting game.



Jacquie's new best friend

I am so glad that I have grabbed life. I've traveled, visited family and friends, explored, partied, played with grandchildren, sailed extensively, enjoyed my work, and followed my dreams. I have a wonderful relationship with my husband of nearly 40 years and with my two sons.

Now my dreams will have different parameters and my husband and I will have to re-design our roles. But since the outcome is unknown, I dream the best outcome as I learn to deal with the worst.

I luxuriate in the tremendous outpouring of support, love, and caring from friends and family. In this respect, I have realized how important love and relationships are.

No longer will I be too busy to call, visit, or invite someone over. In the next stage, I vow to always put relationships at the center of my life.

I am in a life changing transition. I do not know what the next stage will bring, but I am hopeful and determined to make it the best that I can and to learn how to accept and deal with the hand I am given.

Jacquie Scarbrough is a regular contributor to this magazine. She lives in Harwich with her soul mate Lee. She plans to journal her road to recovery and share the wisdom this process offers her with her Cape Women Online family.



Cape **Women** rally to support *Jacquie Scarbrough*

Jacquie, a vibrant member of our Cape **Women** community, recently suffered an AVM rupture that left her paralyzed in both legs. Her long term prognosis is uncertain, but she is facing this challenge with humor, determination and valiant optimism. You can follow Jacquie's journey through the website listed below, where you can read her journal, send her your good wishes via a guest book and even upload photos.

Please join us in rallying around our wonderful friend and spur her on to recovery with our healing prayers, thoughts and humor.

Visit Jacquie online here: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/jacquiescarbrough> Send photos to Kathy Cronin kathyacronin@comcast.net

