

Along the Sappa

Let’s See What I Can See

By Steve Haynes

I thought I might have to wait a week or two to give you an update on my cataract surgery, but here I am, a day later, driving without glasses and reading the ingredients on a cereal box.

Oh, Tuesday night when I got home, I couldn’t see much at all. The right eye, done first, could see for distance if I covered the left, but the left one, it just watered up. If I had them both open, they didn’t want to work together at all. And read? No way.

You might say I went to bed discouraged, but we were so tired, I didn’t care.

We had been up at 5 a.m. to get to Kearney by 8:45. By the time we got back, short of sleep and tired of driving in grey weather, we crashed. I slept nine hours straight, and at my age, that’s a rarity. Not getting up for anything, I mean.

Give it a day, and I could see. Boy, could I see.

At the day-after check in (which I did in McCook), both eyes clocked in at 20-20 for distance. They hadn’t been that good in years, but with new lenses, both are clear and sharp.

More important to me, anyway, I could read.

The right eye takes the lead for distance, the left for close. Together, they work pretty well. Already, I can look up and see signs, look down and see the dashboard or my book, without much thinking about it.

Since, probably unlike most people, I spend more time with a book than the telly, the close vision is important to me and I’d really hoped to avoid reading glasses.

I had asked the doctor to make it that way. And it seems to be working out.

When I had lasik surgery 30 years ago, my surgeon set my right eye up for distance and my left for reading. That worked well at first, and for quite a while, but then the right one started a downhill slide which left me needing glasses for distance. I could still pass the driver’s-license vision test, but just barely.

Now, I’ pretty sure I can pass it with either eye, without any expensive trifocals.

I’m hoping to have a long time to reap the benefits (and justify the costs) of this surgery, and for now, it looks good. My goal was to be able to read or drive without glasses, and that seems to be the case.

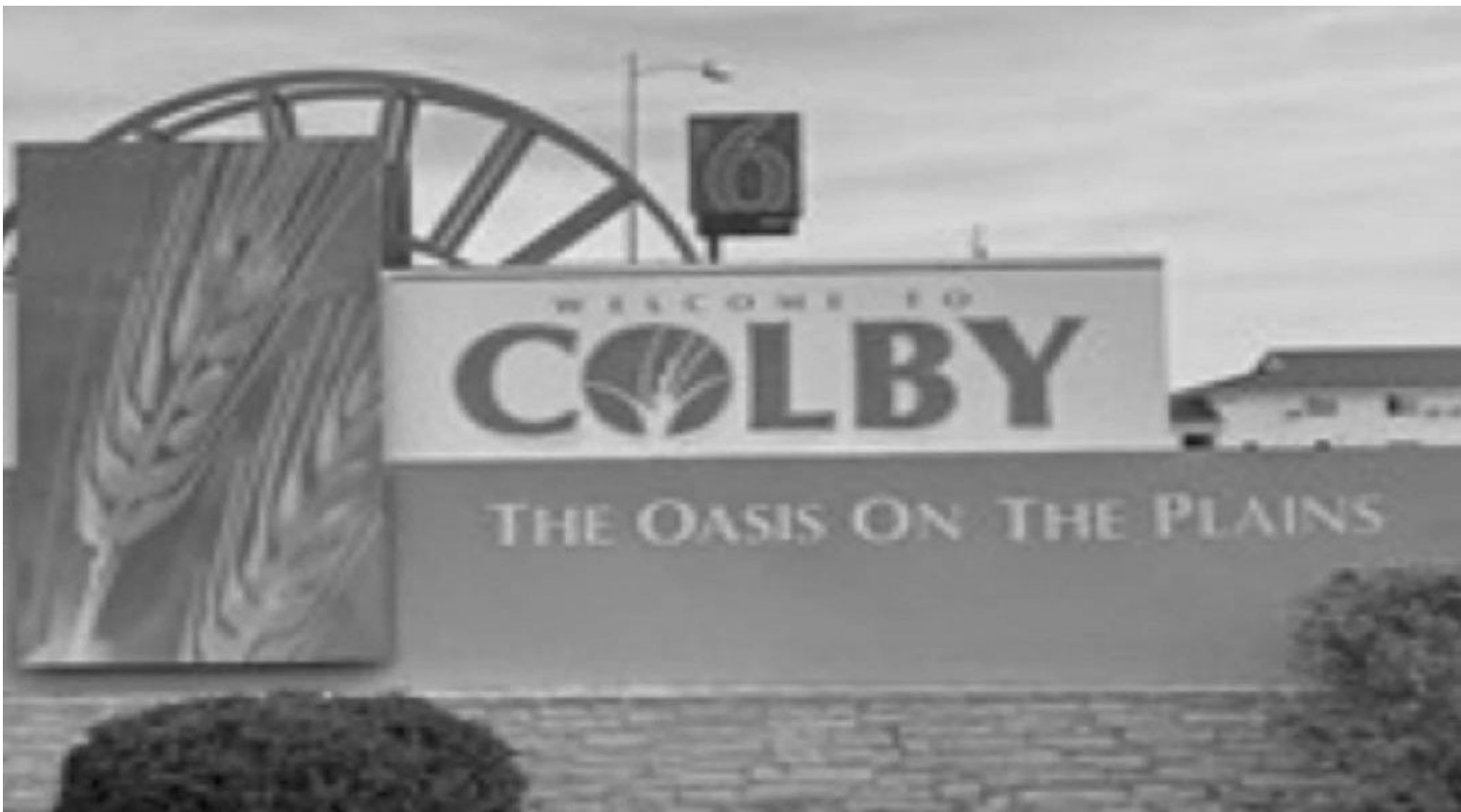
If you are facing this issue, don’t worry. Insurance will cover the cost of basic surgery. You may pay for anything other than single-vision lenses. The procedure is quick, simple and painless. You need a driver to take you home

When you open your, eye (they do them one at a time, a couple weeks apart), everything is new and bright. Colors are more true, free of the brown wash I now realize had covered everything. The light indoors is brighter, almost too bright, with everything turned on. I’m sure I’ll get used to that.

And I began right away to notice the 60-cycle frequency from fluorescent lights. I suppose I’ll get used to that, too.

It remains to be seen whether I will need any glasses at all, but for now, the answer appears to be “no.” My vision is good and getting better. My astigmatism is better, if not gone. I haven’t tested my night vision, but it seems to be fine.

I certainly couldn’t have asked for more.



Life’s Outtakes  
Pets

from other pens

• Daris Howard



will be heartbreak when they’re gone.”

Emma thought about all of this as they were preparing to move to their new place. They liked to call it “their little farm.” She decided the first thing they would do once they got there was to get a dog. They couldn’t have pets in the apartments, so, even before they finished loading the moving van, she had been online looking for the best dog for her children.

Her son, Peter, was four, and her daughter, Aria, was nine. Peter was excited about the dog, while Aria was not. She was a very logical little girl and somewhat of a neatnik. She had to have everything just so. Having grown up on a farm with mud, straw, and animals, Emma was quite the opposite. She didn’t know where her daughter got her extreme-clean behavior, but she felt a pet would help moderate it.

When the day came to pick up the dog, Peter could hardly contain his excitement and kept asking if it was time to go. Aria wanted to talk about what they needed to do to make sure the house was “dog proof” so it wouldn’t make a mess.

As they drove, Peter and Emma kept

up a continual conversation about the dog, Aria had a doubtful look on her face, and Richard just smiled at the personality differences.

The dog was cute, and Peter wanted to have the box it was in sitting on his lap.

“Be my guest,” Aria said. “If it wets, it will be on your side of the car.”

Of course, it did wet, but even that couldn’t dim Peter’s excitement. Aria just looked on in disgust. They chose the name “Dusty” because Aria said he was dusty and needed a bath.

As the days went on, Dusty seemed to think he was Aria’s dog. He wanted to go everywhere she went. Aria even began to warm up to him. She would pet him and let him sit beside her. But she drew the line on him licking her.

One day, as the dog was licking Emma’s face, Aria expressed her disgust.

“He only licks you to show he likes you,” Peter said in Dusty’s defense.

“That’s true,” Emma added. “It’s his kisses.”

“Well,” Aria said, “just before he started kissing you, he went to the bathroom, then licked his butt clean. And just before that, he was drinking out of the toilet. No one who does that is going to kiss me.”

Aria’s description almost made Emma gag, and it helped her consider that her daughter probably had good reasons for her feelings.

Emma was excited to move to a rural community. She and her husband, Richard, had always planned to, but his schooling and training in his company had taken almost ten years. They had lived in rental apartments in the city, but now his work allowed him to work from anywhere. They had just signed a contract to purchase a home with a few acres.

Having grown up on a farm, Emma was most excited about having animals. Most of their farm animals were considered valuable for what they could produce or the work they could do. But her favorite animal was her dog. Emma had received it as a birthday present when she turned six. It was small and had curly hair, so Emma wanted to name it Curly.

Emma’s father told her that the dog was a girl, and Curly was more of a boy’s name. So, the dog’s name was changed to Cally.

Cally went with Emma everywhere she could take her. Emma had even planned to take Cally to college with her, but Cally was getting old, and few apartments allowed pets.

When Cally passed away, Emma was heartbroken. However, as she mourned the loss of her dog, her father said something that made her pause. “Emma, would you give up having Cally to not have the grief? Truly loving someone or something means that sometimes there

Elon Musk ‘s wealth mainly comes from his ownership stakes in two companies: 1. Tesla – around 37% of his wealth is from Tesla stock, although it was as high as 75% in 2020. 2. SpaceX – valued contracts include a \$20 billion deal with the United States federal government. He also earned money from selling PayPal to eBay for \$1.5 billion in stock, receiving \$175.8 million personally. His net worth is estimated to be around \$424.7 billion but this varies from week to week depending on the stock market.

Other business ventures of Musk’s are Neuralink – brain machine interfaces and neurotechnology, The Boring Company - underground tunnels and infrastructure and SolarCity which is solar energy, but was sold to Tesla in 2016. In 1995 Musk owned Zip2 which was an online content publishing company that was sold to Compaq. He also owns Starlink which is an internet constellation company.

No doubt Musk is a a true visionary, entrepreneur and one of the greatest geniuses of our era.

Musk is still a young man, born June 28, 1971. The world may be yet to see what he will achieve.

However, anyone can spread himself too thin. Obviously, he has a lot of great people working for him, but anyone can



from other pens

• Glenn Mollette

overdo their capabilities or overestimate themselves.

In my opinion, it was a terrible idea for Musk to become so heavily involved in government and politics. He makes billions from the government contracts with SpaceX. I think that is definitely a conflict of interest. However, he is now out of his leadership role in Washington. After his temper tantrum last week and saying all kinds of dumb stuff about President Trump he probably won’t be returning to any leadership roles. He further over elevated himself and his role in Trump’s election. This reminds us again of this truth: Intelligent geniuses can do and say stupid things. Throwing mud at President Trump on social media has made Musk look like a spoiled brat who has seemingly always gotten his way. Again, we are reminded, no one always gets his or her way in this life.

Is Musk too rich to go broke? Probably, but anyone can fail financially. Musk’s

wealth is mostly tied up in stocks, making him “cash poor,” or having low liquidity. But with SpaceX capturing 70% of the global launch market, his financial downfall is unlikely. Unless, he continues to hurl ill-will at President Trump which could potentially cost Musk a lot.

The problem is that if the US cancelled its contracts with SpaceX, it could impact our manned missions to the International Space Station. New space projects like NASA’s Artemis moon program could be impacted. Dozens of NASA science programs would be affected plus the impact on national security as SpaceX provides critical space launch and communication services to the US military. These and other consequences could significantly affect the US space program and national security.

Trump, Musk and all the others on Capitol Hill need to work together for the common good of our nation. Musk has proven his genius and capabilities. However, his temper tantrum and verbiage last week make me wonder a bit as to just what he is really capable of doing in a moment of rage?

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