

NOT a Race Write-up, but a Write-up Nonetheless!!!

Well, as most of you know, my last outing to the track wasn't quite up to my normal racing performance level.

I had the right equipment, the right frame of mind, but not the perfect body for racing, even though I had now got my weight down to an almost 14% body fat level of 200 pounds.

No, it was the nagging, constant dull pain in my left forearm.

I had had a small inclination something was wrong, more than just a small irritating pain that usually goes away a few days after a major race weekend, when the pain persisted 4 weeks after leaving Infineon Raceway after the May AMA Super Stock event.

I chose to race in June at Willow Springs to test my now more experienced, higher level of competition bike and body, but knew full well I might not be at 100% body-wise.

Today, I found out exactly what will be needed to make myself 100% race ready with regards to my body.

The constant pain in my left forearm was my body describing the problem to the doctors and to me in a way.

Since I had a bone spur on my neck vertebrae pushing on my spinal cord, the pressure was causing the pain in my arm.

If you look closely in the MRI between the 6th and 7th vertebrae, I think you can just make it out.

I saw an Orthopedic Surgeon this morning to discuss the remedy to this problem.

After having an MRI and C.T. Scan, it was determined that we would surgically remove the bone spur, and I would be able to return to racing in about a month.

If the spur was larger or more difficult to remove than was seen in the two internal pictures my doctor looked at, the second, more dramatic surgery would include fusing the 6th and 7th C-Spine vertebrae together while removing the slightly dislodged disk between them.

The disk would be replaced with a cadaver's bone chip, and the two vertebrae would be bolted together with a titanium plate and two screws, one in each vertebra.

The only major difference between the two procedures would be the recovery time.

The fusing process would take three times as long for my body to recover from, and most likely the same amount more in cost, but as the doctor said, "I don't actually know how much either procedure costs."

I appreciate everyone's support in the past with regards to my following of my life dreams, and hope to have all of your support in the near and far future with regards to my healing and racing.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any words of encouragement or just to say, "HI!"

As always, I want to thank each and every one of you who have had an impact in my life so far.

THANK YOU!!!

I will be going in to surgery next Friday, July 28th, 2005 and hope to be home

recovering the very next day.

Once the operation is over, I plan on getting my "new" 2005 GSXR-1000 race bike ready to attack the 2006 AMA Super Stock race season, and hope to take a few of you with me on my journey.

Unfortunately, I had just accepted a job this week, but due to the enormity of this bodily change, I will not be able to start anything, let alone a JOB, for the next few weeks.

Hopefully, this great opportunity will still be available in the near future, once my body has had a small chance to recuperate from the slicing and dicing.

I know being a little secretive might have put some of you off, but let me assure you, I only did it until I knew exactly what was wrong with my body and how to fix the "problem".

Now that the tunnel's light is bright, I look forwards to launching through it at about 194.2 miles per hour, or at least as fast as the "new" bike will go, once geared for the track.

I hope to hear from some of you soon, and see some of you just as soon.

Bring on the knife!!! (But just make sure you knock me out first!!!)

Marcel (possibly the Bionic-Man) Graeber

Hey All,

Sorry for the short notice, but since I will most likely only be in the hospital for about 36 hours, I thought I would at least let you all know about visitation.

I will be going in to the hospital around 8 a.m. tomorrow, and the operation will begin around 10 a.m.

The wonderful drugs of recovery will take affect just after leaving the operating room, and I will be there for a 24-hour observation period.

Please feel free to come by Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center at 215 West Janss Road in Thousand Oaks, CA 91360, and ask for Mr. Marcel Graeber.

I have no idea what will be a good time to swing by, but it will need to be after noon on Friday or even better the morning of Saturday the 30th, but just call first at either the front desk of the hospital (805) 497-2727, or my cell (805) 404-4191.

Hope to see at least one or two of you, but if the timing doesn't work out, just keep your e-mail addresses on the ready for my after surgery update.

Thank you.

Marcel (soon to be cut open) Graeber

Hey all,

First let me say thank you for all the support, via phone calls, e-mails, or just your hopes for a speedy recovery as I was in your thoughts.

I am the first person not to take things for granted, and today that was put to the test.

Today was the first time I went number 2 on the toilet since the morning of the surgery.

How is that for taking things for granted???

I also went almost half the day without taking any pain medication, but after lunch I finally caved into the need to sedate my neck pain.

The surgery went fairly well, as it took just over three hours to go into the back of

my neck to remove some of the damaged, dislodged disk, and to scrape off the bone spur from my 6th vertebrae.

I now have much more appreciation for those that have had to be laid up for one reason or another, and have made recoveries from their own personal battles.

I hope to decrease my need for pain medication and become a more regular patron of the bathroom for duty number 2 in the very near future.

Also, since I have not worn a neck brace since they handed me one before my surgery, I expect to be turning my own head more and more in the very near future. The bandages on my neck limit my head movement slightly, but I try to do as the doctor's say, and exercise it regularly.

I had one minor hick-up with the recovery process, due to the pain returning to my left forearm, but I have introduced my body to steroids, on my doctor's advice, so hopefully the neck will heal and the pain will go away.

Thanks again for everyone's support.

Marcel