

Just before Christmas, I sustained a stress fracture of my lower femur, the big bone in my right leg. How I found out is a story to share because it celebrates Missouri's medical community.

My diagnostic journey began first with me playing internet doctor. After a painful week of limping around, my own clumsy brace, and my wife Danita's nagging—I meant pleading—I made an appointment with our local clinic. After examining my leg, the doctor there thought I had a condition called "jumper's knee," or a form of tendonitis that would go away with a little rest and some ibuprofen. This was a logical diagnosis, as I spend a lot of time walking creeks, jumping down banks, over logs, and from rock to rock.

But three days later, I could hardly walk and decided to seek a specialist. I called Columbia Orthopaedic Group and got in to see Dr. Patrick Smith. He ordered x-rays, but they didn't show anything. He then ordered an MRI, which was done the next day, Friday. He had told me he would be in Detroit teaching a class on Friday but would call me on Sunday with the results. I said I could wait until Monday, but on Sunday afternoon, he called and told me that the stress fracture was "very apparent" and that this was a "big deal."

I was outfitted the next day with a brace, which I may have to wear for three months, and I'm using a crutch. The reason it's a "big deal" is that my leg can't heal if I don't stay off of it. And, if it gets worse, we could be looking at surgery.

The moral here is to seek help, and second opinions, until you get solutions and are satisfied you're getting the best possible care.

Plus, thanks to all who work in the healthcare field. You give your best effort, and we are all the better for it. I have had life-changing experiences because of Missouri's doctors and health practitioners. Read my sleep apnea experience for another story on my blog at MissouriLife.com.



Greg Wood, Publisher

SECOND OPINIONS

AWARD-WINNING

MISSOURI LIFE ...

- 2009 FINALIST, MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
- 2009 SILVER AWARD, OVERALL ART DIRECTION, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
- 2009 SILVER AWARD, SINGLE PHOTOGRAPH, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
- 2009 BRONZE AWARD, DEPARTMENT, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
- 2009 BEST ISSUE, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2008, MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF PUBLICATIONS
- 2009 BEST SINGLE ARTICLE PRESENTATION, MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF PUBLICATIONS
- 2008 MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
- 2008 GOLD AWARD, OVERALL ART DIRECTION, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
- 2008 BEST MAGAZINE DESIGN, MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF PUBLICATIONS
- 2007 GOLD AWARD, TRAVEL FEATURE WRITING, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION

OXYGEN-INSPIRED THINKING

OUR ADVENTURE floating the Missouri River is described on page 34, but I'd like to share more here.

First, many people thought we were doing a dangerous thing, floating the Missouri River. Of course the Big Muddy can be dangerous, as can any body of water, including the swimming pond in my back yard. But we found the float easy, mild, and relaxing, except for one evil buoy that seemed to chase us.



Danita Allen Wood, Editor in Chief

Second, there is magic in mixing a mild physical challenge, the outdoors, and leisure time with special people. My friend at Wapiti Adventures, Kevin Miquelon, aptly calls it "oxygen-inspired thinking."

Third, the adventurers on this trip became totally relaxed around each other easily and quickly. I've traveled with many groups, and in my experience, it's rare to be so totally comfortable around strangers. The Wapiti Adventure leaders get a lot of the credit for turning us into friends.

Fourth, I've had the privilege of rafting white water in Alaska, climbing Dunn's Falls in Jamaica, backpacking in the Wind River Range in Wyoming, horseback riding on a few ranches in Colorado, hiking a volcano in New Mexico, snorkeling in the Caribbean and Hawaii, parasailing in Puerto Vallarta, and biking up (and down!) Copper Mountain in Colorado. I can assure you that biking the Katy Trail and floating our Missouri rivers are prime adventures that compete with the very best.

Fifth, we had this amazing wilderness resource running through the heart of Missouri almost entirely to ourselves. Over and over, I thought to myself, *this vista might be the very same thing Lewis and Clark saw when they rounded this bend*. There are a few reminders of humans, of course, but there were so many times, with no other boat or canoe in sight, that I felt a million miles from civilization, right here in Missouri.

I'm going again. In 2010, the second annual Safari on the Missouri will be August 27-29. Visit MissouriLife.com if you'd like details.