

Long-term Disability

by Bobby R. Woodall

Dear Sirs;

I have been on LTD (Long Term Disability) since January 1, 1974. I also receive Social Security Disability (\$960.00 mo.) I get by (barely) on this meager pittance. Having only one meal a day, that is gruel with some pottage thrown in for good measure, I exist. Lord only knows how long this will last.

Once a week, my family goes through the downtown trash containers for any metal cans to sell to the local purveyors of scrap. But lately, I have been experiencing an almost excruciating pain in my left shoulder, when I try to hold up the lids on the Dempster Dumpsters. Them dudes are heavy let me tell you, and I don't lie!

To solve the problem of the heavy lids, and here the magnitude of my intelligence simply amazes me. I use one of my daughter's leg braces (polio) to prop the lid in a vertical position. I was using my son's crutches (he was ran over by a slow moving freight train while trying to save some poor sod's cat from almost certain death) until the crutches broke. Now he uses a small circular platform, which I have attached with Super Glue to the top of an old pair of roller skates for mobility. Of course he wears out a pair of gloves given to us by the Salvation Army in a little over a week. The just don't seem to make them they way they used to do. Too many foreigners, I figure.

My wife's Black Lung condition makes her almost too weak to push the shopping cart we borrowed from the local super market last week. She takes a few steps, then hesitates to hack and cough until she is blue in the face. This action causes the shopping cart to immediately halt, and thereby pulls the harness taunt that I have made for our Pekingese to jerk, which in turn causes my frail daughter to stumble and pitch headlong into the cart holding my young son on the bottom to tumble out and suffer innumerable bruises.

I had to hock my false teeth last week to secure the funds to pay our electricity bill. No, we do not use the electricity for light or anything that frivolously. The electricity is used to power my wife's dear, poor, sainted mother's iron lung.

When warmer weather returns, we are planning on burying my father-in-law. Right now, because of the coolness, we have placed dear old and very dead Gramps in the shed out back. We are in no hurry, as the kids love to go out and sit with the gentleman. My daughter even likes Having him in attendance at her tea parties. She says that he makes the perfect guest, don't talk, don't smoke, and doesn't get in her way. Above all, he never makes demands on her. When he begins to smell, we may have to move our planting date up sooner. But such is life, or in this case, death.

All in all, we get by. There is talk in town of an organ bank locating down the street from our humble abode, near the old battery acid recovery station. On a clear day, the smell is not that bad, sort of like a decomposing body, or one left in a hot motel room to get bloated. I tell everyone to breath through their mouths, it is not that bad. My wife and I sat down on our orange crates the other evening over a cup of cold gruel and discussed this latest development. America is truly the land of golden opportunities. Listed below is our assets:

TEETH: 3 sets good (I have false teeth)

FEET: 3 sets (crippling arthritis got one)

TOES: 2 sets good, 1 damaged (frostbite) 1 set no good (daughter's polio)

FINGERS: 30 good, 2 thumbs missing, 8 crippled

EYES: 2 sets good, 2 bad (wife's cataracts and I have a glass eye and am blind in the other)

LEGS: 3 sets good good, 7 legs in all, 1 bad (daughter's polio)

LIVER: 3 good, 1 bad (I may have cirrhosis)

EARS: 7 good, 1 missing (bit off in a bar room brawl)

LUNGS: 7 good, 1 bad (my emphysema)

HEARTS: 2 good, 2 bad (weakened through shock)

I am able to pull in a little money by hiring out to the local funeral home as a professional mourner. I can sling snot on cue. I have stood (lain) in as a prospective corpse, so the grieving family can make the proper selection in caskets. I have been nominated for an Academy Award at my performances. The only problem I have with this, is in cases of multiple deaths. But having perfected the art of perseverance, I am sure that I can overcome this obstacle.

The reason for my missive is quite simple. I ask for a raise in my monthly check (now get this!) Of \$35.00 (LTD) to help defray the exorbitant fee made by my family (should everyone be so lucky) doctor, in processing my waiver of premium. The charge is \$30.00 every six months. As you can readily see (put on your bifocals to help) this charge has now reached in excess of \$1,500.00. I implore you to help us out in our dire time of extreme distress!

Your humble servant,

B. Richard Woodall