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GLO

During a painful ordeal, one superintendent bares his soul on social media.

I met Jason VanBuskirk a year ago at the GIS when Bill Brown introduced him to me as part of the fledgling Turf Republic team. Honestly, the only thing that struck me about him at the time was that he was another sharp young guy committed to using social media to communicate with his members at Stow Acres CC in Massachusetts and industry peers. I knew him more by his Twitter handle – @URITurf – than as a person.

That's a funny thing about social media. It's sometimes awkward when you actually meet people with whom you've chatted endlessly with on Facebook or Twitter. There's a disconnect for a minute. The virtual relationship gets lost in translation when you're actually shaking someone's hand.

Flash forward to early December. I was talking with Bill and he mentioned Jason was dealing with something unexpected and terrifying: His wife Gloria was hospitalized after suffering a series of horrendous seizures. No history, no warning signs, no nothing. Her brain was short-circuiting badly. The doctors had no idea what to do and the picture was bleak.

I looked at pictures of Gloria on Jason's Facebook page. Young, healthy, fitness nut, pretty, always smiling... vivacious! Yup, that's the word: vivacious. Full of life and madly in love with her husband and two toddlers.

Then I imagined that same woman lying in an intensive care unit, wired up to a respirator to keep her alive and surrounded by physicians who apparently had no clue why this woman's central nervous system was going completely haywire.

Then I imagined Jason facing the reality that his wife was gravely ill. It must feel like the world has turned

upside down. Every bit of hardship I've gone through pales in comparison to sitting next to the woman you love in an ICU and wondering why something so terrible could be happening.

I talked with Bill again and he confirmed the seizures were getting worse and the doctors were putting Gloria into a medically induced coma.



Jason VanBuskirk with his wife, Gloria.

Not good. Then he told me Jason was blogging about the experience. I gulped hard and clicked on the WordPress link he sent and found... well, something completely unexpected.

For two months, Jason has been sitting in her hospital room at night and writing about Gloria. To me, he seems to be trying to capture both the beautiful and mundane moments of their life together. Each entry is a warm memory... some little thing she'd done that exemplifies what kind of person she is, something funny she'd said. He's painting a lush and gorgeous portrait of her with words and images. Promise me you'll follow this link to go read Jason's blog. You absolutely won't regret it.

<http://bidmcgvb.wordpress.com/>

Jason's writing is magnificent because it's coming from the very core of his soul and he's doing it for the highest possible purpose. No matter what the future holds, Jason has given an amazing gift to his children, his family and all of us by portraying the vivacious, funny, warm and wonderful woman he loves very, very deeply.

Each blog entry ends with an update on Glo's condition. As I'm writing this on Jan. 31, she was out of her coma, breathing on her own and showing signs of recovery. She's still trapped inside a dysfunctional body and unable to speak, but she smiles and giggles! And she gives kisses! She inspires everyone around her by fighting through this crazy awful thing to be a wife and mother again... to again be the vivacious Gloria that Jason has animated so beautifully with words.

This is chancy business writing this now. Much is still unknown about Gloria's condition and the road ahead is risky. But I have faith. And that faith is powered by the fact that many, many people are praying for Glo and thinking positive healing thoughts for her. I'd appreciate it if you'd join us.

I'd also appreciate it if you'd consider doing something more to help. Jason, Gloria and their children are already facing enough without having to worry about stupid medical bills. Just pitch in and help with any gift big or small. If everyone reading this just gives \$10, we can help the VanBuskirk family focus 100% on the important business of healing. Please help... it's the right thing to do.

(You can help support Jason & Glo by going here and making any donation you can: <http://www.gofundme.com/Medical-Bills-for-Gloria>) GCI