



## Tips on Summertime Sprinkling

with Bob Quinn

Dear Bob Quinn,

We have never had any problems with our well—plenty of water for our needs and more than enough to run a sprinkler for lawn and garden. A neighbor tells me that during warm weather we should run enough sprinklers to keep the pump running continuously. Why should that be?

The first reason is that if your pump is going on and off during sprinkling, the power demand is significantly greater. This increased demand to phase the pump in and out can be as much as 30-40%, according to the experts.

That translates into a real dollar cost and wasted power resources. Just as important is the fact that such on-off, on-off cycling also takes its toll on your pump, and over a period of time will shorten its life expectancy.

Both of these costly conditions can be avoided simply by turning on enough sprinkler heads to keep the pump in operation continually, or install cycle stop valve. Look for future article on cycle stop valves.



Would You Believe...  
Water expands about 9% as it freezes!

Bob Quinn is the owner of **Quinn's Well & Pump Service** located at 6811 Williams Hwy. We provide well drilling, plus we install, maintain and repair complete water pumping systems. Contact our professional staff by phone, e-mail, or visit our office.

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## TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

# Regret and relief

BY RAUNO PERTTU

One of the cruelest things about the slow loss of a loved one to Alzheimer's is that you are forced to grieve a thousand times. A recent Friday was one of those times.

Since her diagnosis eight years ago, I have been able to keep my wife Janice at home, while working full time. During the first years, it was not difficult, and we continued to share and enjoy many of the things we had enjoyed throughout our earlier years. Our concessions were few, and Jan's cheerful nature helped us to maintain a hopeful and positive outlook. We thoroughly enjoyed travel to new destinations and to favorite places,

and maintained an active outdoor lifestyle. The whole family kept a close watch for new treatments and potential cures that never came.

About three years ago, Jan's disease progressed to a level where we ended our travels. Two years ago, she lost the ability to talk and progressively lost the ability to care for herself in basic ways. As I slowly switched from husband and partner to full-time caregiver, I watched the subtlety and spark fade from Jan's eyes and face, to be replaced by uncertainty and increasingly difficult attempts to maintain the appearance of normality. She would study my face to see if she was acting appropriately. It's painful to write about this, because I'm forced to revisit many earlier moments when I saw the disease take another piece of Jan, and admired her strength in coping and remaining cheerful, when I don't think I could have been as strong. However, I hope in this telling I can in a small way help someone whose loved one is earlier in the progression. Those earlier in the process may even get the promised help from a medical breakthrough that was too late for Jan.

In my metamorphosis into a caregiver, initially disgusting cleanups became simple matters of washing Jan, changing her clothes and doing additional laundry. My routine included doing a variety of necessary tasks for Jan, while carrying on a business conversation on a portable handset. There were moments when she refused, or didn't understand, to do something I considered important. I would occasionally lose my cool and scold her in frustrated anger. She would look at me in uncomprehending nervous fright. Realizing

it wasn't Jan but her disease, I would quickly and ashamedly apologize. She may have forgotten those moments, but I haven't. Alzheimer's also wounds the caregiver.

When I traveled in my work, our son Kirk, who lives locally, came over to house-sit and to be a temporary caregiver. As Jan's condition continued to deteriorate at an accelerating rate, I could see that it was becoming difficult for Kirk to provide the necessary level of care that he was required to perform when I was traveling.

I planned to bring in an outside caregiver on a part-time basis, progressing to full-time. In investigating, I found the rules for bringing in qualified caregivers wouldn't work for me. For example, I had to give several days advance notice before traveling, and most of my trips firm up the day before I leave—sometimes on the same day.

I then reviewed the local care facilities and found an excellent one that allowed me to drop off Jan on my way out of town and to pick her up on my way home. Jan seemed to like the place, and other than our missing each other, she had more to do there, and was reportedly as happy as she was at home. This made sense because at home, I am working

much of the time and couldn't give her my full-time attention. There, she has constant supervision and interaction. Despite her inability to talk, she has made friends with other patients, and the staff is fond of her. Our children, friends and work colleagues all told me I should place her in the facility full-time, but I remained reluctant. That changed on that fateful Friday.

Friday was a typically busy workday. I have projects in several states, and spent several hours Friday afternoon in conference calls discussing business details. When I wrapped up a particularly long series of calls, I looked for Jan, but she was nowhere to be found. After a search inside and outside, I called 9-1-1, a call I was able to cancel moments later.

When I went out to use the car to search the nearby roads, I found Jan slumped down between the driver's door and the steering wheel. I hadn't seen her in the car before because of the way she was wedged into her spot. She had put her coat on and sat in the closed, stiflingly hot car on a warm, sunny day until she passed out. Her coat and other clothes were drenched in sweat. After I removed her clothes, wiped her down with a cool

wet towel, and got her to sip two glasses of water, she recovered, as if nothing had happened.

I realized how close she had come to dying, and she could as easily have wandered out the gate onto our busy Upper Applegate Road. She no longer notices speeding cars. It was obvious she couldn't safely continue to stay at home. I took her to the care facility an hour later.

Sunday, I took her to Lithia Park for a walk. During the past two years, our hikes have become walks. In the past weeks, her walking had continued to decline. Sadly, this walk through the park turned into a prod, push and pull ordeal that told me her take-a-walk days have ended. She was happy to be taken back to the facility, where she immediately wandered off to her quickly established new routines. My concerns on what to do with her caregiving situation had resolved themselves in the nearly fatal incident on Friday.

I am left with a strange mixture of guilt, loss, sadness, relief, and the feeling that I have just been released from a confinement that she is accepting with apparent ease. At the point when Jan wasn't able to go to restaurants or stores, or to travel any significant distance without

worry and difficulty, I had largely confined my activities to work and caregiving only. Mixed with the sadness and guilt, I have an awakening sense of coming back to a life I want to enjoy for as long as I have left. I'm starting to downsize all the retirement plans Jan and I made together into a one-man act, but I've also learned what life can do to any plans.

Incidentally, everyone has told me that I shouldn't feel guilt, but, as anyone caring for someone they love knows, guilt comes, however unreasonably, with the territory. I think one basis for that guilt is the knowledge that it's our loved one, not us, suffering from the disease. We forget about ourselves. In reality, Jan, with her limited cognition, seems happy, and I am left to miss her and to regret. One thing I do not regret is my decision to place her in the care facility, because she is safer and at least as happy. Mixed with my sadness, I feel a freedom I haven't felt in years. Eventually, I hope mostly to remember our happy times and that wonderful Jan of yesteryear. With time, I hope my regrets will fade into memories of our exciting life together, and of lasting love.

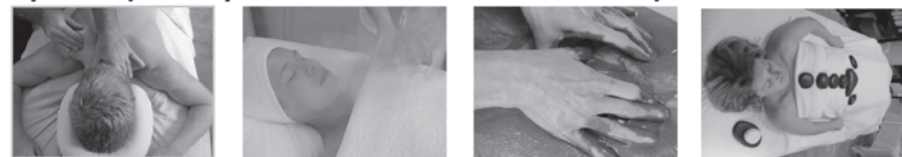
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