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It's been 5 long months in between writing. The last was in December and this is the longest break between communiqués since we came to Minnesota. Besides writing the column every 3-4 weeks, I haven't felt the urge to write very much. You'll find the last two columns attached to this email, by the way.

Right now it's the first week of May, skies are grey and it's raining. Actually, it's been kind of depressing. Some spring flowers are peeking through and trees are beginning to burst, but still, spring seems to be taking its sweet time taking hold around here. I guess I'm ready for some real color and sunshine.

I'm a little infirmed at the moment with a fractured right foot, which has restricted my activities. I clipped the edge of my grandmother's huge cedar chest, fractured my foot and didn't realize I had done that to my foot for about 3-4 weeks. I could walk on it fine, but one day Howard massaged my foot and Oh, my God –the pain was excruciating. I had surgery to correct it 3 weeks ago; stitches came out last Tuesday and I'm told that I have about 4 more weeks to mend.

I have two little screws holding the bone I fractured, the mid-bone between the metatarsal and the small bones of the little toes. I found myself a good bone man –nothing like our dear Paul Berman of course, but a close second. He seems to know his stuff. Anyway, I'm going stir crazy being laid up like this. Regardless and fortunately, I've been able to drive. Going to rehearsals and singing services has been a saving grace, but by the end of it, my foot is screaming! It complains like the devil when I'm upright for too long. Guess it's clear I make a terrible patient and as my orthopedic doctor keeps pointing out, "You did break your foot, dear. So stay off of it."

During those weeks I walked on my broken foot, we made a quick one week trip to California to visit the folks in LA and the girls in Santa Cruz. It was such a whirlwind drop-by; we didn't bother to notify a lot of you because we knew we wouldn't have had the time to visit with any of you. And it would have been hard to choose whom to see or not see. We would have wanted to see everyone and one week could not do justice fulfilling that wish. So my/our apologies to anyone who might feel the slightest bit insulted that they didn't know we were even in town.

In June 16-20th I will be on a singing tour to Carnegie Hall. So before I die I can say I've stood on stage at Carnegie Hall. Some of you who know Cheryl Anderson should know that she and her group will be joining our group on stage with orchestra. It turns out my conductor and she and John are great friends. We were able to spend one hour with Cheryl at Bittersweet that week in California, grabbing something sweet and disgusting. The restaurant had to kick us out, but we managed to get caught up with each other and our crazy schedules. We can't wait until June when we're all together in New York.

Howard is not coming with me, of course, because it's just too expensive. We thought it would be cool if he came, and then we could make a trip to the Smithsonian (which I've never seen) and then fly back from Washington, DC, but after figuring out all the costs of airfare, hotels, eating out, or just plain traveling, the whole thing would have cost over \$6,000. That's nuts. The 4-day tour alone for me is costing \$1500 and that to me was outrageous already. I almost decided not to do it in the first place, but I've been so starved for cultural stimulation and the prospect of seeing Cheryl, John and the gang, was too much to pass up, so I decided to do it.

Howard is getting quotes to make parts on the clock he's wanted to build for over 30 years. When we moved to Minnesota, the agreement was that he had to build that "infernal" clock! So every Shabbos, he plays at the computer doing fun stuff –not work –that's *verboten!* Now the clock seems to have taken over his life. It's taken him nearly six months figuring out all the mechanical drawings for the parts, gears and whatnot, so now the quotes are coming in. I haven't heard any numbers yet, but I imagine it will be a small fortune. It's only money, right? It's about time How

spends a little mad money on himself. Lord knows, he's been more than generous with me. Now it's his turn.

Finally, in other news, I'm in the running for a very large commission on a new library in St. Cloud. They had entries from all over the US, and I found out I made the first "cut" whatever that is. I should be hearing within the next week or two, but to be honest I'm not counting on it. There are simply too many great glass artists to choose from. That would be a million in one chance to win the lottery and we all know that's slim to none ☺. Enjoy the read until next time...Love, Maria

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