

## **Where Did R.J. Poje and Company Go?**

It and I did not vanish; on Sunday July 20, 2003 I had a stroke which left me incapacitated for nearly two years. I am still exploring if I have the strength to function in a professional capacity again.

I went out for a smoke between the *Sopranos* and *Sex and the City*, and I collapsed. I assumed it was not a big problem. I was apparently alert, though I could not remember my name; I could move my arms and left leg but had no feeling in my right leg. Lying on the grass, trying to alert my family that I had a problem, I guessed that a week or so in the hospital and I would be fine. But the initial symptoms were deceiving.

When the paramedics got me to the hospital, I could not speak, the right side of my body was paralyzed, and as I discovered in the weeks after the stroke, I could not read, spell, figure the tip at a restaurant (or for that matter, cut the steak) and I lacked short-term memory. I remembered phone numbers I hadn't called in fifteen years but I could not remember who visited me at the hospital.

It took nine months to learn how to walk with a cane, use my left hand for writing (I was right handed) and speak without relying on pantomime. It took another year to recover basic mental acuity; today, I can spell, remember, balance the checkbook, and write email. And yes, I did quit smoking.

Reading and walking without a cane remain a challenge and, despite several injections of Botox, my right arm is still paralyzed.

To say the stroke "bruised" my ego is an understatement; it beat my ego to death. I can't drive; I have to rely on someone to take me places. When I decided to order an anchovy pizza, I couldn't remember my phone number, or precisely, I couldn't remember that a "3" was pronounced "three" so I had to apologize and hang up the phone. When we had people working at our house, no one trusted me to give instructions; the best I could do was point to Charlotte's cell phone number on the bulletin board because I could not remember the phone number or enunciate it correctly.

When I got tired of mentally crooning Warren Zevon's song, "Poor, poor pitiful me," I decided to look for things that made me feel glad to be alive. It was a struggle. Before the stroke, I had conducted a church service for the patients at a rest home in Barrington. With help, I decided to try this again; I only do it once a month. But I am looking forward to doing it weekly when I regain my strength.

I looked forward to visits with my children and grandkids, especially when my son and daughter-in-law presented us with Nathan, our new grandson.

Gratefully, I was introduced to the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). They provide books-on-tape for the visually handicapped. The history collection is very strong and has allowed me to brush up on the pre-civil war period in American history; reading has encouraged me to try writing again but not about treasury management stuff.

I don't want to be a treasury consultant, at least not the kind who flies around the world fretting about "best practices" or the cost of processing a lockbox item. Truth be told, I lost interest in that kind of consultancy before the stroke occurred.

But in 2002 I wrote an article titled "Nigel and Son: Real Innovation is a Thousand Years Old;" it was about Treasury Management in Norman England. I would like to continue writing articles focusing on Treasury, with an historical and political context, maybe even some humor if the situation justifies it. With this in mind, I have completed the first of my new essays; I call it "The Patriot Act and the Mayberry Machiavellis." Check my webpage ([www.poje.com](http://www.poje.com)) in the "white papers" section if you would like to read it. And please, I invite your feedback.