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Orthopedic surgeon orders CAT scan as publisher's bones mend



These X-rays show two views of the bones and metal parts holding them together in Jeff Hardison's left arm and wrist. The newer X-rays are on the left. Those are from July 11. The other X-rays (on the right) are from Feb. 28.

X-rays by The Orthopaedic Institute

By Jeff M. Hardison © July 11, 2019 at 4:39 p.m.

GAINESVILLE – Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Jason T. Shinn of The Orthopaedic Institute ordered a CAT scan to better evaluate what appears to be mending bones in publisher Jeff M. Hardison's left arm and wrist bones.

A CAT scan is also known as a CT scan, or computed tomography scan. It allows doctors to see inside the body, according to WebMD.

"It uses a combination of X-rays and a computer to create pictures of your organs, bones and other tissues. It shows more detail than a regular X-ray," the WebMD website notes.

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An X-ray and consultation session Thursday (July 11) at the Orthopaedic Institute in Gainesville, led the surgeon to seek a better view via a CT scan to evaluate the progress of the patient's bones fusing. Some bone parts in Hardison's left arm and wrist are being held together by a plate, four screws and seven metal pins.

Hardison, a multiple Florida Press Association award-winning reporter and editor, fell while attempting to take a picture of a float in the Dec. 8, 2018 Chiefland Christmas Parade.

The former daily and weekly newspaper reporter and editor, who now owns a daily news website, was attempting to catch up with a float that had passed by.

"I was running backwards at a relatively good pace," Hardison said, "when the back part of my left sneaker did not clear a square reflector in the middle of U.S. Highway 19 (Main Street), just north of Park Avenue in Chiefland. So, I fell down fast and hard, hitting with all of my weight on part of my left hand. That caused bones to break."

Although his wife Sharon had succeeded in persuading the intrepid, illustrious and prolific writer to simply watch the parade, because he had paid an independent contractor to take pictures, the man was moved to take one shot.

He did not succeed in taking that picture.

"I appreciate the people who helped get me to the operating room," Hardison said. "Thanks to Chiefland Police Officer Kyle Schultz and his K-9 partner Blitz, the Levy County Department of Public Safety found me to transport me to North Florida Regional Medical Center."

Dr. Shinn conducted emergency surgery that Saturday night from 9 a.m. until 3 a.m. on Sunday (Dec. 9) morning.

The patient said he is very happy with the care and attention given to him by several nurses and other people at North Florida Regional Medical Center.

"Those folks need to buy an ad in *HardisonInk.com*," he added, "so that more people can know to be healed there."

Now, more than seven months after the accident, X-rays show some gaps may exist where the bones have not fused together yet.

"This is about 400 percent longer than I thought it would take for my bones to mend," Hardison said. "Apparently my body is agreeing with the biology and physics of human bodies and time. I guess I expect more from my body than is possible, given my age and everything. I can't shape reality to be like it would be in Jeff World. Oh well. It's all good."

Dr. Shinn said the X-rays did not show him conclusively that the bones are healed. The CAT scan will show Dr. Shinn the details he seeks.

The orthopedic surgeon said that none of the metal aids he added to connect the various parts of bone are coming loose from the bones, and this is good news. When bones do not fuse together as they should, including with the metal hardware, the metal parts are known to separate from the bones. This causes mandatory surgery.

"I have some relatively minor chronic pain in my arm and wrist," Hardison said. "I believe this is from the bones still doing what they must to repair themselves. My plan now is to visit the CAT scan people, and wait for Dr. Shinn to call me to say the results show that I can return to all of my activities 100 percent – except no more running backwards on highways with reflectors."