

How to Move a Mountain? One Rock at a Time

- Dony Wynn

First off, let me state for the record, Chris Johnson is my new hero. It takes a lot of courage and out and out guts to have done what he has. What has he done, you ask? By founding MedSavers Pharmacy, Chris has openly challenged and defied the AMA, pharmaceutical giants, and insurance companies, and even more pointedly, the virtual hellbroth they've force fed the people of this once great country of ours for far too long. For his courage alone he's deserving of a standing "o", but there's much more to this story, and I'd be remiss... Rather than piss and moan and gripe about the ruthless injustices that these corporate entities subject us to -as many have and continue to do, as he could've done as he got more and more wealthy and jaded- Chris has actively gone and done something about it. In the very face of rationale and capitalist good sense, Chris has found a way to offer you, the customer, a radically more affordable alternative than what is currently offered by the drug companies, retailers, and insurance companies. His sole mission is for you to keep a bigger portion of your income and sustain a quality of life.

In truth, a quality of life is the antithesis of what these corporate giants stand for. They aren't concerned about your financial welfare, nor your health, either (though their PR arm would greatly argue this fact), cause if you can't pay their outrageous prices... well, tough luck, way they see it. And for the longest time it seemed we, the consumer, were powerless to do anything about this woeful state of affairs as a reasonable alternative simply didn't exist. But Chris isn't one to join the nutless, geese-stepping line of upwardly mobile status quos. And by questioning the wrongs he's witnessed on a daily basis -over the course of 8 years working for over 80 pharmacists after graduating from UT- he continued to dig and sift for the key that could unlock the help for ones who truly need it. Once he discovered said key, Chris began actively doing something about it, quite literally putting his money where his mouth is.

When all was said and done and the dust finally cleared, MedSavers Pharmacy was the answer, a business at the right place at the right time, a business formulated to be able to lend a hand to those who currently are left to fend for themselves against the current system which either rejects or

extorts them of everything -not the least of which, their dignity. His customers, once without help or sympathy, now know there are such things as angels on earth, and this one's name is Chris Johnson. Finally! Someone doing the right thing for all the right reasons! Gives us hope in this day and age of darkness and skullduggery, it does!

The timing of this assignment couldn't have been any better, as when Wendy asked that I write about Chris and his business I'd just come out on the other side of a near death experience where -since I'd taken a vow of poverty to find out just what's important in this life- I was left crumpled on realities doorstep only to rudely discover for the first time just how corrupt the current medical system is, as until this near death experience I'd not been sick for one day of my life since I was 16 years old. Unconcerned and oblivious for all those health filled years, it didn't take long to realize not only just how important is one's health, but just how callous the medical community has become; a hammering, unreasoning, downright belligerent, bully of a system which continually rendered me irate, bewildered, and plumb flabbergasted! More to the point, screwed and tattooed, good-bye, so long, and thanks for all the fish...

A fear based business -legal extortion by any other name- the insurance companies and their partners in crime, the pharmaceutical companies -as well as many doctors- have rigged a game that is impossible to engage unless you're very well off or your employer carries insurance for you, and even then the prices for their products and services are still ungodly, unreasonable, patently unfair, plain wrong, criminal even!

Chris explained, "The situation worsened when all the participating bodies signed contracts that pushed the small pharmacy out of business and left the consumer without recourse over the long term, especially ones without health insurance."

And trust me, that's a very long line, folks, a line that gets longer and more somber by the day.

MedSavers wouldn't have ever come into being had Chris not found someone in power who was willing to offer a helping hand. Most all he approached during this discovery phase fare you well called him a fool, laughed in his face, said his idea wouldn't ever fly. But, to Chris' credit, he never gave up.

Finally, one person at Mckesson Suppliers,

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one of the three major suppliers for the entire retail drug business in North America, said he could see a way for Chris to make it work. And not only could he see it, but was willing to work with Chris to make this altruistic dream a reality. MedSavers was born.

Basically, Chris has struck a deal with Mckesson where he can buy drugs -all USA made and FDA approved- at a reduced rate to be able to offer the consumer unbelievable savings.

Now, Chris doesn't bring home as much as he would as a big drug retailer, but, as he explains it, "I have a thousand less headaches too." He doesn't have to hire a team of people to deal with the paper mountain of insurance claims, for instance, having to ultimately pass these charges onto an

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already beleaguered customer. As a matter of fact, Chris doesn't accept insurance at all! He has found a way to have peace of mind, spend more quality time with his family, exercising proper stewardship for them, as well as his customers, by making less, but providing more. One thing's for certain, I'm sure Chris sleeps well at night; the sleep of redemption from a job worth doing, providing a service so needed by many.

One thing made itself apparent as Chris and I spoke; he truly cares about each individual customer very much. He truly does. Chris relayed a story which provided a major catalyst for fueling his dream. As he told it a woman -now his customer- contracted a most debilitating disease a while back. Even though she'd dutifully paid her insurance premium every month for years, her insurance provider dropped her once diagnosed. No excuse given. None needed, way they saw it. Now she couldn't begin to afford the drugs she needed to simply live! And to make matters worse, the next week her husband was fired from his job as his employer feared a load of insurance claims from this man's spouse, who was then covered under his employee plan after she was dropped.

I can hear the executives now, "Tough luck! Next!" while casually stirring their martini and depositing their bonus checks for a job well done... ..Nauseating doesn't even begin to sum it up.

Well, now Chris can offer the woman much needed prescriptions for a fraction of what she would've had to pay otherwise. And to sweeten this pot, a number of doctors in Chris' area have also decided to forego dealing with the insurance companies. Now the woman sees these doctors, gets her prescriptions, and has

discovered that the monthly total was hundreds of dollars less than her monthly insurance premium! ...Now there's you some poetic justice.

And guess what? This plan, this way of life through medical sensibility and responsibility is available to all of you who need it. Right now! Take heed...

Open for several years now, Chris and MedSavers Pharmacy have proven this alternative approach works. So much so this convergent idea has taken root and more have seized the torch as a few pharmacies across this nation have also drawn a line in the sand and refuse to deal with insurance companies on any level. There are now two in Atlanta, one in Philadelphia, and one in St. Louis, and of course, the Austin location. And more and more doctors are heeding the call of reason and sanity and are jumping on the bandwagon, too! God willing, more will follow in these courageous footsteps.

To help Chris in his new venture, both KVUE and KEYE have done features on him, as has Fox. Also -and I feel it bears mention- Laura Stromberg, Kinky Friedman's PR person, took time from her busy schedule and was instrumental in getting Chris's story to the masses via various media outlets. God bless her. Power to the people!!

The word is getting out. The myth has been exposed. Just like when the curtain was pulled back at Oz, this giant behemoth of power and greed has finally been exposed to be the sad, pathetic little men they are for perpetrating this heinous, costly farce on the American people. These executives, lobbyists, and their minions have been having a mighty big party at our expense, folks. The time has come. This paradigm of power must shift.

MedSavers Pharmacy, Chris' brainchild and our Godsend is located at 3810 Medical Parkway, Suite #115. The phone number is (512) 465-9292. Fax is (512) 465-9287. Their web address is medsaversrx.com. Their hours are Monday thru Friday, 10AM - 6PM, and Saturday from 9AM- 2PM.

Finally, someone dared make a difference, for you, for me, for the betterment of mankind.

As I said, Chris Johnson is my hero, truly an angel on Earth. Spread the word.***



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**GET DOWN WITH THE GET DOWN!
 (FOOD REVIEW)
 BY MAGNUS OPUS**

Ooo Lah Lah

My first introduction to French cuisine was a most unusual one, but as authentic as it gets.

I was working a lot in Nassau Bahamas at the time and had befriended a French couple who owned a seaside villa there.

During my first tour of Europe -where I eventually performed in Paris- I found out my French/Bahamian friends were in town and eager to introduce me to their culture.

Our first stop was a quaint little cottage on the banks of the Seine. We were seated at a great wooden table in a darkened room that appeared to be hundreds of years old and the smells coming from the kitchen were downright mesmerizing. I was geezed! I was in Paris!

When questioned what I'd like to order I naturally assumed the "when in Rome" rule to be in effect -when in doubt, you know- and asked our hosts to order something the restaurant was noted for.

Without hesitation my friend ordered, what sounded like, "Pot of Feu!" I inquired just what this "Pot of Feu" was and my host answered my question with a dismissive wave of his hand and a sneer that intoned, "trust me you fool!" He then added, "You'll love it".

When my order arrived -a large, white porcelain bowl filled with a clear broth- there sat a large bone cut in half in the middle of this tureen. The waiter placed both a spoon and a small fork like device next to me. I stared for a few moments, slightly embarrassed in that not only didn't I have a clue what this dish was, I certainly didn't know how to exactly go about eating it, either. In time, what seemed like a hundred years, my host guessed my quandary, more than likely by my stupefied, blank, thousand mile stare, and told me that what sat in front of me was essentially bone marrow soup, the specialty of the house.

As unsavory as that dish might sound, admittedly, after some lessons on just how to properly consume the critter, it was danger-




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