

## Under Metro North

Every New Year's Eve I look back at the past year and make a judgment call as to whether it was good, bad, or indifferent. I'd like to look back with you at the year 1990, a year for me that REALLY sucked.

On New years day, 1990 my girlfriend resolved that she wouldn't marry me unless I straightened out my taxes. So on January second I filed three years of back taxes and began seven years of indentured servitude to the IRS. Actually, my relationship with the IRS far outlasted that with my girlfriend. Six months after filing my taxes she moved in with my accountant.

But 1990 really sucked because it was the year I got ran over by Metro North.

In early March before my girlfriend went to the accountant to "review some paperwork", she dropped me off at the train station in Poughkeepsie. Oh yeah, we lived in Poughkeepsie, another reason 1990 really sucked.

We pulled into the station at 7:28AM just as the 7:27 was departing for Grand Central. Even though there was another train 14 minutes later, I grabbed my coat and bag and ran for the train.

Now at the time, Poughkeepsie's platforms weren't elevated. They were sidewalk level, so as you go on the train you had to step up three steps to get to seat level. The platforms of the first few stops weren't elevated, so the conductors made it a habit of leaving the train doors open. As I ran along side the train, I heard someone shout, "Don't!" It was too late; I had grabbed onto the handrail on the train and I wasn't letting go.

As the train picked up speed, I couldn't run any faster, so I tried to jump on. I missed and my feet began feet dragging along the platform. Then my hand started slowly sliding down the rail and pretty soon, my whole body was dragging along the platform and the railing at the end, it was coming up real fast.

My only thought was, "I hope my girlfriend's not watching this."

Then, I let go.

What I didn't know is that my feet had fallen off the platform and when I let go, the momentum pulled me completely under the train. As the cars rolled over me, these huge battery compartments and air conditioning units under the train slammed into my head and body. Pieces of clothing ripped away as I somersaulted down the narrow path between the platform and the tracks.

My only thought was, "This is not the way I want to die."

I came to a crashing halt along side the track; my arm wedged tightly under my body. The two were still connected, so I wasn't complaining. I could feel the big steel wheels brushing along my side. I looked up to see oil encrusted power units and air conditioners whizzing by, inches from my face.

My only thought was, "Okay, I'll just lie here, let the train pass and get on the 7:42."

My life was saved when the conductors threw the emergency brake. The engine which pushes the train into Grand Central stopped ten feet short of bashing into the top of my skull.

I crawled from under the train and heard the horrified conductors shouting, "Lie Down!!"

I gestured to reassure them I was okay.

"LIE DOWN!" they ordered.

I told them I'd get the 7:42.

"Would you please Lie Down!"

I saw my hands covered with blood.

I lied down.

Within minutes the ambulance, police, and fire department arrived. The EMT's medical skills were so dismal that as they struggled to get the neck brace in place I sat up and put it on myself. One of them suggested that since I was already up, maybe I could "scooch on to the backboard." They strapped me to it across my head, chest, hips and knees.

As the cops and firemen settled on which donut shop to go to, the EMTs squatted down on both sides of the backboard. On three they both lifted, one lift the other dropped me. I flipped over and landed on the cold cement face first.

My only thought was, "Would somebody fucking help me!"

Blood filled my nose and mouth, as Poughkeepsie's finest and bravest surrounded the backboard, rotated me face up and slid me into the ambulance.

As the nurses cut off the remaining shreds of clothing at the hospital, my only thought was: "I should have followed my mother's advice about wearing underwear."

As the doctor was finishing the last of four stitches in the top of my head, my girlfriend, who was standing next to him, started laughing. Seems my head was so swollen, as the doc went to make the last stitch, he lost the needle in my head.

A month later the wounds had healed, but it took until the end of the year for the psychological scars to begin to soften.

On December 31, as I looked back, I asked myself, what was good about the past year. I had three thoughts: One that as much as 1990 REALLY sucked, I was there to welcome in 1991; two that to really appreciate heaven, you have to have been to hell or Poughkeepsie the next closest thing and three, if your accountant tells you you've underappreciated one of your best assets, grab your 1040, your girlfriend and run.