

Heart transplant patient never quit

Missoula man's death Monday marked a decade-long battle

By MEA ANDREWS
of the Missoulian

Missoula resident Tom Dobak, who underwent a heart transplant operation in 1985, died Monday after struggling for months to overcome infections and rejection.

Dobak got sick last November and never improved completely, spending the last month in the hospital, said his wife, Sheri.

"The drugs he's been on are so hard on the body. He essentially did not have an immune system," she said. "He just couldn't fight things off" and he died at St. Patrick Hospital at the age of 57.

Dobak was 47 when doctors diagnosed an ailment that weakened his heart. In July 1985 he flew to Salt Lake City, where doctors transplanted the heart of a 22-year-old accident victim into Dobak's chest.

His operation and recovery were widely covered by the Missoulian and other news organizations at the time. Dobak, a faithful exerciser, has since been an inspiration to others facing arduous and uncertain transplant operations.

"His quality of life was never the same after the transplant, but he never complained," said Debbie McConaughy, who, with her husband Tom, are close family friends.

She said Dobak always was upbeat and positive. "He was very special, everyone's friend. I don't know anybody who didn't like Tom Dobak."

He suffered several rejection episodes after the surgery, and had trouble with pain and numbness

in his feet, "but he never gave up and never regretted what he'd been through," McConaughy said. "He'd have gone through another transplant if he could."

Dobak worked for Coca-Cola for 25 years before his heart ailment forced him to retire.

"Doctors told him before the surgery that he would have good years. After that, they couldn't guarantee much," Sheri Dobak said Tuesday.

"What he really wanted to do is to see his kids grow up. He's done that, sort of," she said. Rob, 20, attends school in Spokane; and Jimmy, 13, who was a toddler when his father had his surgery, is a seventh-grader at Target Range School.

Dobak was able to say his farewells to many friends, and spent time with family members be-

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Ecosystem lecture rescheduled; kick off for series March 23

Due to scheduling conflicts, the Helena National Forest and Carroll College must reschedule the first lecture in a four-part seminar series entitled "Perspectives on Ecosystem Management." The first lecture on the global aspects of ecosystem management featuring Dr. Ariel Lugo of the Tropical Forestry Institute in Puerto Rico was scheduled for Feb. 23 at Carroll College. Dr. Lugo's presentation has been rescheduled for May 11.

The Forest Service and Carroll College will now kick off the series on Thursday, March 23, at 7:30 p.m. in the Lower Commons at Carroll College. That presentation will feature nationally recognized fire ecologists Robert Mutch and Kathleen Davis.

6A

HELENA

Local skiers can still get their fix on Mt. Belmont

Remember when winter in Helena meant snow? I don't mean a squall here and there. I'm talking that week-long, waist-high, school-closing, traffic-stopping, tie-a-rope-to-your-waist-so-you-don't-get-lost-on-the-way-to-the-barn kind of snow for which Montana is notorious. While many locals welcome the balmy temperatures and clear streets that have become the winter norm for the past few years, hearty winter recreation enthusiasts are no doubt mourning those frosty seasons of yesteryear when a good pair of hickory skis cost \$12 and Chaucer Street provided members of the Mount Helena Ski Club some vertical drop and enough snow to practice their turns.

Although Helenans were quick to pick up on the relatively new sport of skiing, consensus is that Anaconda witnessed the dawn of organized skiing in Montana. In the early 1930s, Anaconda's Chamber of Commerce brought to town Casper Oeman, a Norwegian ski jumper, in an effort to attract visitors. Oeman provided jumping demonstrations in Sheeps Gulch behind the Anaconda courthouse and within a few years, enthusiasm for sliding down a mountain on wooden boards had infected Helena area thrill-seekers.

SPEARHEADED BY TURNER CLACK, a local ski devotee, recreationalists organized themselves in January of 1937, forming the Mount Helena Ski Club. The mountain for which the club was named became a popular haunt, as did Mount Ascension, MacDonald Pass, Unionville, McLellan Creek, Blossburg, and the snow-blanketed streets of town. In its first year, members undertook the clearing of trails on Mount Ascension and Mount Helena, installed lights at the foot of Ascension, and sponsored ski trains to a run at Blossburg, a railroad siding on Mullan Pass Road. With membership dues, the club provided the Helena area with its first ski tow and a chalet at Mason's Basin, just west of the top of MacDonald Pass, a welcome relief to those who preferred gliding downhill to hiking uphill. The Rimini Mine contributed materials for the 1,000-foot tow, which ran on a Buick motor and pulled five people per minute to the top of the course.

In 1941, the motor-powered tow on MacDonald Pass was replaced by an overhead electric tow, the ski run was lighted, and the chalet equipped with a telephone and furniture, all for a little over \$1,000. Carpenters donated their time and much of the equipment needed for the improvements came without cost to the club. When the National Ski Association president visited the Helena club, he remarked that members were among the most enthusiastic he had encountered in the country. Perhaps due in part to members' passion for the sport, the Mount Helena Ski Club was made host of the 1942 Northern Rocky Mountain Ski Races.

THE MACDONALD PASS COURSE was not long enough or steep enough to adequately challenge the caliber of racers who would be arriving for the tournament. Club members set out in the spring of 1940 to locate the perfect arena for the event.

After a strenuous tour of the sizable mountains in the area (Elkhorn, Baldy, Red Mountain, Edith, and Belmont), club members decided upon Mount Belmont as the site for the upcoming tournament, citing its 1,700 foot vertical drop, its accessibility, and the deep snow, which had lasted until May the previous year.

Mount Belmont, known to Marysville miners as Mount Pleasant, had occasionally been trod upon by skiers, as roads in the area were usually hard packed by horses and equipment servicing the mines. Unemployed miners helped clear the trails and the mountain assumed the name of one of the numerous adits that dotted the area.

The run established for the tournament began at the top of Mount Belmont and ended a quarter of a mile from the end of Marysville's main street. Residents of Marysville welcomed the new industry to their town, and predicted that with the incursion of skiers, their little burg might soon be transformed from a mining community into a destination ski resort.

Not surprisingly, America's involvement in World War II sharply curtailed skiing, as it did most recreational pursuits. Gasoline was at a premium and many of the young people who participated in the sport were defending their country across the Atlantic. The Mount

LEANNE KURTZ



MORE QUARRIES FROM LAST CHANCE GULCH

Helena Ski Club's focus turned from recreation to assisting in the war effort. Members advised the army in its formation of mountain troops; a branch to be "equipped and drilled to battle in rugged areas where operations are difficult for average troops." The army asked ski clubs all over the country for assistance in training soldiers and ensuring that experienced guides would be available should mountain warfare in the States become a reality.

FORTUNATELY, THE LOCAL ALPINE guides were not needed, and in the winter of 1946, skiers were again ready to take to the hills. As a Forest Service official told a reporter in the fall of 1946, "We believe this season, the first post-war period when everyone will have full opportunity to revel in winter sports, will find more persons availing themselves of the area's incomparable advantages than ever before." Skiers returned to Mount Belmont, where they were greeted by two rope tows and a lodge. Patrons were welcome to spend the night at the lodge, provided they were equipped with blankets and sleeping bags.

Ski clothing and the necessary gear have certainly come a long way in the last 60 years. Before the days of lightweight Patagonia underwear, waterproof anoraks, quick release bindings and high-tech Rossignols, there were hickory and maple skis, cable bindings, heavy wool parkas, leather boots and gabardine "trousers."

As is true today, however, high-performance fashion was considered vital to the overall experience. White Stag advertised that all of their "togs" were "ski tested by 'Skier Stylists'" the year before they hit the stores. A White Stag advertisement in the Helena Re-

(More on SKIERS, page 7A)

The Smartest Ski Outfits on the Marysville Run . .



... Reflects all the "know" of White Stag Skier stylist; has the lines, the details, the color appeal!

GREAT SEASON



Five of the 22 team members qualified as state finalists, including Rehanna Zuelke, Heather Knowles, Chris Keegan, Jennifer Sept and Rachel Brennan.

Capital team members place high in key speech meets

The Capital High School speech team wrapped up a successful season with several members placing at the state Class AA meet and the National Forensics League district tournament.

Five of the 22 team members qualified as state finalists, including Rehanna Zuelke, who placed first in expository speaking. Other finalists included Heather Knowles, second place, original oratory; Chris Keegan, fourth place, extemporaneous speaking; Jennifer Sept, fourth place, memorized public address; and Rachel Brennan, seventh place, original oratory.

Four members qualified as semi-finalists: Jennifer Dreyer, extemporaneous speaking; Hillary Biehl, original oratory; Mary Skjelset, memorized public address; and Heidi Schneider, expository speaking. Hi-

lary Fairbrother (serious interpretation) and Hannele Arvela (expository speaking) qualified for quarterfinal rounds.

The school's final tournament of the season was the National Forensics League (NFL) district tournament in Missoula Feb. 10-11. Keegan placed first in foreign extemporaneous speaking and qualified to compete in the NFL's national tournament in June in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Biehl placed third in original oratory and qualified as an alternate. The only other finalist was Rachel Brennan, fifth in original oratory.

Dreyer (domestic extemporaneous speaking) and Knowles (original oratory) qualified for semi-final rounds.

Conference here expands interest in math, science

On Wednesday, March 8, students in grades 6-8 in the Helena area, will be attending a conference geared to increasing their interest in taking more math and science in order to prepare for expanded career options. The Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Carroll College.

The opening speaker will be Melissa Anderson, KVTH, who will provide an overview of the conference and explain its purpose.

Over 40 women, who work in math and science related careers, will present workshops for conference participants. Workshops will include hands-on experiences of actual career activities, as well as discussions about career preparation. Students can attend workshops such as;

- "I Can See Clearly Now" by Diane Gray, doctor of optometry, Helena Vision Center.
- "What's In Your DNA?" by Katherine Berry, genetic counselor, Shodair Hospital's Montana Medical Genetics Program.
- "Are They Scientists Or Are They Vampires?" by Kerstin Raye, clinical laboratory scientist, and Sandy Merchen, clinical laboratory scientist, both with St. Peter's Community Hospital.
- "Women In The Military" by Judith Morgan, major, and Carol Fox, captain, both with the U. S. Army Reserves.
- "Taphonomy-Dinosaur Detective Work" by Frankie Jackson, geologist/paleontology instructor, Museum of the Rockies.

For more information or for registration materials, please call 442-7784.

FOR ROAD CONDITIONS, 1-800-226-7623

SKI AREA	Base (Bottom/Top)	NEW SNOW	% OPEN	Conditions*
Great Divide 449-3746	10/25	0"	20	S Open Wed - Sun Mkts Th - Fri - Sat
Big Sky (406)955-4211	50/71	0"	100	S Open Daily
Discovery Basin (406)563-2184	36/60	0"	100	HP Open Daily
Snowbowl (406)549-9777	18/52	0	95	S Open Daily

* CONDITIONS KEY: P - powder; PP - packed powder; FP - firm pack; HP - hard pack; MG - machine groomed; S - spring snow; NA - not available.