

Jay recovering Heart patient returns home; 'best he's felt in five years'

By Lisa Nutting
Staff Reporter

"Don't take your organs to heaven — heaven knows we need them down here."

That's how heart transplant patient Phillip Jay's new bumper sticker reads. But he hasn't put it on his car's bumper yet — he says he'd like to get similar ones made for distribution in Lincoln.

Jay recently returned to Lincoln from Cleveland, with a new heart and "a second chance of life." His Feb. 7 operation at Cleveland Clinic was followed by a speedy recovery. A crowd of nearly 100 people greeted him and his wife, Harriet, with song and a kazoo band when he walked into the Lincoln Municipal Airport.

It wasn't until after seven "unsatisfactory hearts that a good heart was found for Jay. Jay said that the many unsatisfactory hearts had Mrs. Jay and the doctors worried he wouldn't make it to the operation.

When the doctors told the Jays of the seventh unsatisfactory heart, Jay just replied "that wasn't the heart for him, and turned over and went back to sleep," Mrs. Jay said.

Now that the transplant is complete, Jay says he feels better now than he has in five years.

It will be one year this April since Jay's second massive heart attack left him with three-fourths of his heart damaged and little hope for survival.

Doctors told him he "wouldn't have a life," Mrs. Jay said.

"When they told me I wouldn't live very long, I told them I was going to," Jay said.

Last fall, the Jays realized he needed a new heart. Through the Lincoln Foundation and other fund-raising

drives, Jay raised enough money to get the heart transplant. The groups raised about \$65,000, which will pay for the hospital bills and medication. Medication could cost more than \$6,000 a year, Jay said.

Jay said he has two rules for recovery: a positive attitude and listening to his doctors.

On Feb. 11, four days after his transplant, Jay began his recovery by walking in the hospital halls and riding a stationary bicycle. When Jay took his first walk outside his room, accompanied by a nurse, his children at home heard about it.

Jay had told the nurse that if she wanted to walk with him, she had to hurry up.

"I loved that when you said that — 'Hurry up then,'" said his daughter Autumn, 7.

Jay still is walking. He walks 1 1/2 to 2 miles, three times a day, he said.

His life before the transplant was quite different. He had two oxygen tanks in his home. One was portable, which he took with him when he left the house. And he got little exercise because he was so weak.

"It's just easier to move around now. I don't get tired from moving around and exercise," Jay said.

There are some "little" inconveniences that come with a transplant, Jay said. He cannot eat fresh fruit for the next year as a caution against infection and germs. And if he goes fishing with his son Neil, 12, Jay must avoid puncturing his skin with a rusty hook by letting Neil bait the hooks.

"But that's not much of a sacrifice for a second chance of life," Jay said.

Now that Jay is on the road to recovery, he hopes to continue his education. He was a graduate agronomy student at UNL when he had his April heart attack, and had to take incompletes for the semester. He plans to finish each course one at a time, and possibly return to school full-time next January.

Jay says that one of the toughest things he has ever done was to write a thank-you letter to the family of the donor.

"What to say, how not to say too much, but to say thank you," Jay said. "That took a long time."

The last scheduled fund-raising drive is a basketball game between UNL's football team seniors and Delta Upsilon fraternity. The game will be on April 14 at 2 p.m. at Lincoln High School, 2229 J St. Donations will be accepted indefinitely.

UNL hosts participants for wildlife convention

More than 200 college students from 10 universities and one state college were in Lincoln Friday, Saturday and Sunday, for what some consider "the most significant event that has taken place on East Campus this semester."

These students, most of them natural resource and wildlife scholars, met in the East Union for the 15th Annual North Central Region Student Wildlife Conclave.

The conclave featured several speakers who spoke on important wildlife topics. Speakers included: Carol Odell, founder of the Wildlife Rescue Team; Roger E. Gold, UNL professor of entomology; and Betsy Hancock founder of the Nebraska Raptor Rehabilitation Program.

Students participated in a quiz bowl, answering questions that pertained to natural resources and wildlife. They also took field trips, including one to

Grand Island, where they looked at sand hill cranes.

Other activities included a banquet, dance, party and an art and photo contest.

Luke Lionberger, chairman of this year's conclave, said the event "was well worth everyone's efforts."

"All the hard work really paid off," Lionberger said. "UNL students handled themselves professionally. We presented the university in a positive manner."

The 11 schools that participated in this year's event were UNL, Colorado State University, Purdue University, Michigan State University, Michigan Tech, University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, the University of Minnesota, University of Missouri at Columbia, Iowa State University, South Dakota State University, University of Southern Illinois, Wayne State College.

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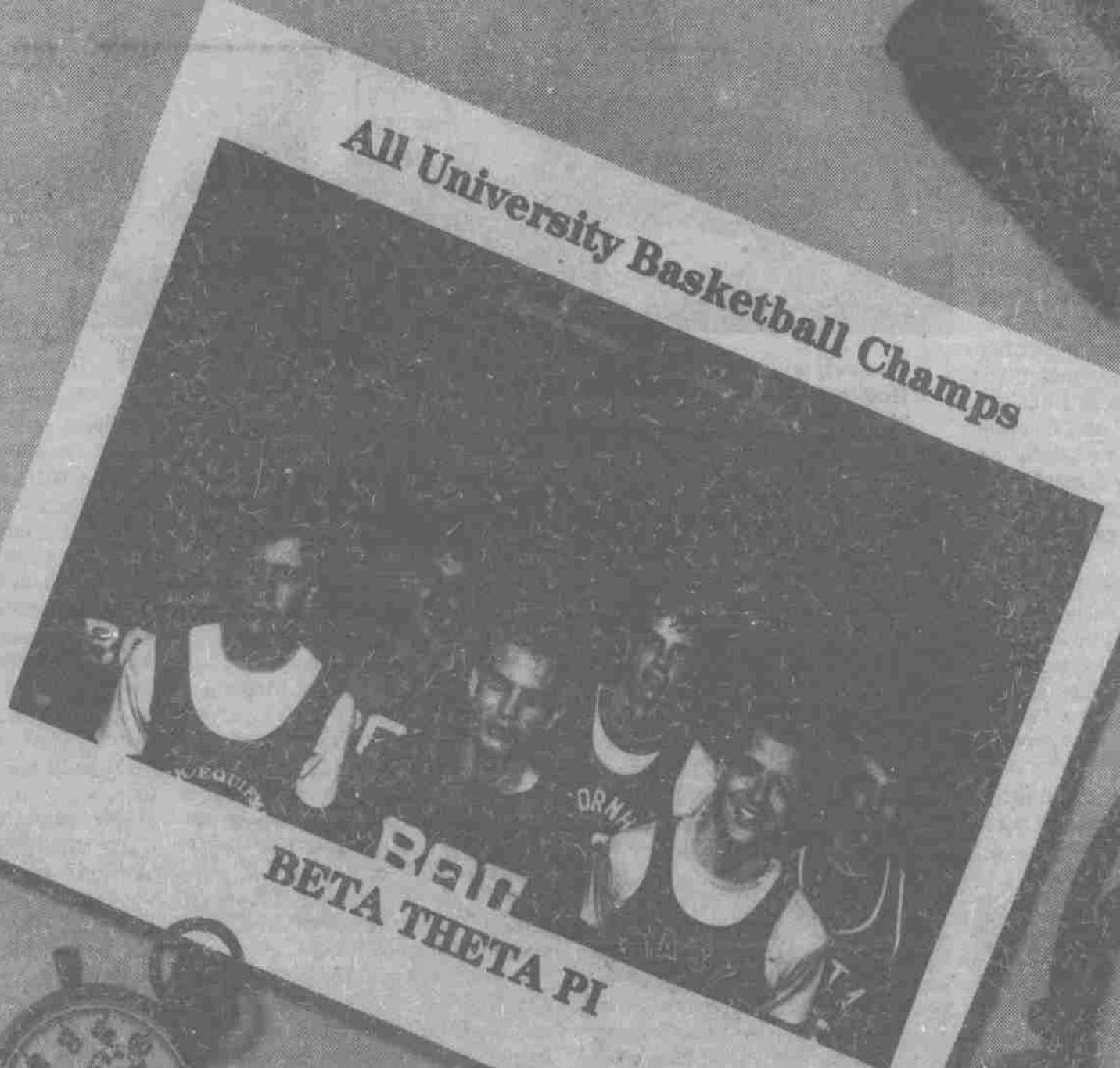
Future fund...

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"It's got good implications for strengthening the state of Nebraska," she said.

But LB133, which could establish a work-study program at Nebraska's post-secondary institutions, "may just sit" awhile before the Legislature discusses it further, she said.

Morehead said her priority in the Legislature this session is to see LB496, which would require the use of seat-belts, approved.

Looking Good!



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competition to keep you looking good.
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Back row (l-r): Robb Bunde, Bill Olsson, Scott Morris, Rob Salerno. Front row (l-r): Mike Homa, Steve Ferrarini, Paul Hollingsed.



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