

## You've Gotta Have Heart

### Supply's 'Miracle Baby' Making Progress 8 Months After Transplant

BY LYNN CARLSON

You have to look hard to see the tiny white scar running down Logan Pottorff's eight-month-old chest. Beneath it beats the transplanted heart of an unidentified 2-year-old.

Logan at 5 weeks old became the youngest patient ever to receive a heart transplant at UNC Children's Hospital in Chapel Hill. But, as his family has learned, the miraculous surgery wouldn't be the advent of life lived happily ever after.

Still on the horizon are infinite bimonthly visits to his cardiologist in Chapel Hill, an annual heart biopsy and catheterization on the anniversary of the transplant, and lifelong doses of expensive medicines to prevent his body from rejecting the transplanted heart. The medicine works by suppressing the baby's immune system, leaving him vulnerable to complications from even the mildest type of infection. Ironically, the symptoms of rejection and infection are nearly identical.

And still piling up are thousands of dollars of medical bills, despite the fact that Medicaid has already paid \$200,000 for Logan's care. Add that to the expenses of daily life in a home where no one can work right now.

Logan was born with hypoplastic left-heart syndrome, in which the left side of the heart, which pumps oxygen to the body, is not developed. It is the fifth most frequent congenital cardiac malformation diagnosed among newborns. Until surgeons perfected the newborn heart transplant procedure, babies born with it were withdrawn from life support when diagnosed, since the condition was inevitably fatal.

With that in mind, the Pottorffs accept that hard times are a fair trade-off for the smiling, teething baby boy whose unique needs have changed their lives.

"We are blessed," says mother Alicia Pottorff, who'd spent the previous day weatherizing the roof of their Empire Road mobile home, a project she said "is good for depression."

*"I want to thank everyone who's helped and let them know that these funds go straight to the bank and are only for Logan's medical expenses—nothing else."*

—Alicia Pottorff

Logan is a "gentle, good" baby who's making remarkable progress. "He's still a little behind," his mom explains. "He has difficulty pulling up on his arms," because of the damage done to his sternum in surgery. "He doesn't really have a voice yet; his vocal chords are still paralyzed." He makes sounds, but they don't yet sound like cooing or crying. He takes more naps than the average baby his age would.

Nonetheless, the family tries to maintain a semblance of normalcy, taking Logan along on nice days for trips to the supermarket and such, even if he has to wear a little mask.

During Logan's months-long hospital stay, his father Eddie was needed at home to care for Alicia's 10-year-old daughter, Heather Nicole, who not only had to deal with extended periods without mom, but who would have to share everyone's attention with her special new brother. Eddie looks forward to being able to resume his job for an engineering company whose dredges he worked on before Logan's transplant. Being on a job that required him to be away for extended periods just hasn't been feasible for the past few months.

The next medical milestone is Logan's one-year workup, to include cardiac catheterization, a heart biopsy and possible balloon angioplasty. It's a procedure he'll undergo every year unless new technology comes along.

"But all in all, we can't complain," Alicia Pottorff said in an interview last week. She said Brunswick Countians have contributed about \$5,000 toward Logan's care through the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA). Local volunteers placed collection canisters for Logan on countertops throughout this end of the county. "They did a tremendous job," she said, adding she was dismayed to learn that some of the canisters were stolen.

"I want to thank everyone who's helped and let them know that these funds go straight to the bank and are only for Logan's medical expenses—nothing else," she said.

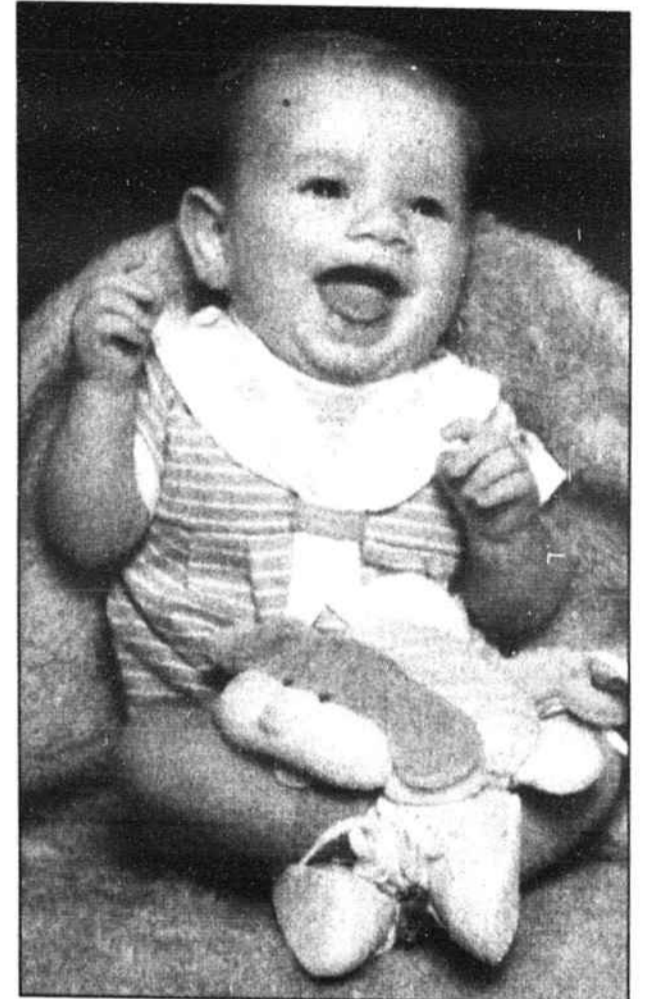
The family continues to owe about \$60,000 in medical bills, but hopes that more than half of the sum will be covered by Medicaid. In the meantime, the Pottorffs live off credit cards, paying as they can, getting help from family, and raising money with occasional yard sales.

It will be a happy day when Eddie can go back to his job again, and Alicia has dreams, too. Before Logan's birth she was a volunteer emergency medical technician and going through the transplant process has added to her knowledge of, and interest in, health care.

"I'd like to go back to school and study nursing," Alicia said. "But I know I'd have to have someone in the home to care for Logan," who'd never be able to risk a day care center environment.

For now, the family optimistically takes things as they come, though Alicia jokingly admits she begins every day "wondering what's going to happen next."

But she can't look into the crib without being reminded that a miracle sleeps there.



LOGAN POTTORFF at 5 months.

## Reading Forest Planned As Memorial To Beloved Teacher

BY SUSAN USHER

Picture it. A curved wooden bridge leading into a small forest in a corner of the Union Elementary School courtyard. On one side as you enter there's a small bog garden, and perhaps a goldfish pond on the other side.

In a small glade beneath the green canopy, seated on shellac-coated log segments or polished chunks of rock, students gather round for storytelling or a hands-on science project using the plants and critters that live in the wood. A discreet plaque welcomes visitors to the Martha Russ Memorial Reading Forest.

A group of Union Elementary School teachers and supporters are working to turn that dream into reality. It will take the help of parents, students and former students and others who knew and loved Mrs. Russ, a second grade teacher who died shortly after the fall term began, said Sylvia Pullen, head of the school's Building and Grounds Committee.

The reading forest was already planned as the second phase in developing the school's underutilized courtyard. Last year, the school and its PTO created a performance area with a concrete stage and wooden benches for seating, landscaped the surrounding area, dedicated a sundial that anchors the weather station work area being developed with the help of local weather watcher Jackson Canady, and built a bench around an oak tree.

Connected to the performance arena by a winding path, the reading forest will grow between the main building and the music building, not far from the dogwood students planted in memory of their late schoolmate Emily Truesdale.

Martha Allen Russ, a resident of Ash, began her career as an educator in 1962 at what is now Shallotte Middle School after graduating from East Carolina Teachers College (now East Carolina University). She taught there through the 1968-69 school year, then spent a year as a speech specialist for the county, assigned to the same school. She had spent the past 24 years at Union Elementary and had begun her 33rd year in the classroom this fall. She died in September at age 53.

Leading nowhere yet, the wooden bridge stands waiting. A teacher has donated equipment for the proposed bog garden and goldfish pond, a parent has helped design the forest installation. School faculty and staff and the Brunswick County Chapter of the North Carolina Association of Educators have donated \$400. Cost is expected to run between \$1,500 and \$2,000 because the committee wants to use mature trees and shrubbery so the forest will form a canopy more quickly, Pullen said.

Tax-deductible contributions to the Martha Russ Memorial Reading Forest Fund can be sent to Union Elementary School, 180 Union School Road, Shallotte, N.C. 28470, made payable to the school and designating the fund.

For more information or suggestions on ways to help, contact teacher Sylvia Pullen at the school, 579-3591 or 579-3592, or cafeteria manager Randy Hohnstreiter at the school cafeteria, 579-6998.



RUSS



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

### Blue Eyes, Blue Food

Zachary Miller of Fayetteville and Alex Kurtz of Supply share a messy cloud of cotton candy at the recent N.C. Oyster Festival. Kids will be on the prowl this weekend with Halloween and harvest activities scheduled throughout Brunswick County. The N.C. Festival By The Sea opens Friday at Holden Beach.

## Halloween, Harvest Themes Of Upcoming Festivals, Events

The annual carnival/costume contest Friday night at Tri-Beach Volunteer Fire Department kicks off the N.C. Festival By The Sea, but is only one of several events planned to help youngsters and their elders enjoy the spirit of the season in a safe and sane way.

Here's a list of community activities reported to the *Beacon*:

**Festival By The Sea**  
Costume contest registration is from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 28. Booths are open from 6-9 p.m., and the costume contest begins at 7. For complete details, see Section E.

**Autumn Fest At Bolivia**  
An old-fashioned cake walk, a "gobbler contest," a costume contest and karaoke are just part of the "fun-filled night" planned Friday, at Bolivia Elementary School's Autumn Festival. Hours are 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the school.

Other activities include a sweet shop, "Wheel of Fortune," funnel cakes and other goodies, and a costume contest.

**Carnival, Haunted House**  
Grissetown-Longwood Volunteer Fire Department will be the site of a Halloween carnival and haunted house on Saturday beginning at 6 p.m.

Admission cost will be \$1. Refreshments are 25 cents, and all candy, prizes and games are included.

**Fall Harvest Fest**  
First Baptist Church of Shallotte will celebrate with a Fall Harvest Fest Saturday from 6 to 8 p.m., said the Rev. Landis Lancaster, pastor.

The event promises food and fun for all ages. Participants are required to wear costumes of Bible charac-

ters—"please, no satanic-type characters," a church spokesman said.

**Brunswick Stew Cookout**  
Holden Beach VFW Post 8866 will hold their seventh annual old-fashioned Brunswick stew cookout Saturday during the N.C. Festival By The Sea at Holden Beach.

One of 20 food vendors at the festival, the VFW post will be selling quarts and walk-around containers of stew from their booth beneath the Holden Beach Bridge off Jordan Avenue.

Soft drinks will also be available.

**Noah's Ark Is Theme**  
An animal, an ark, Noah or even a rainbow—youngsters can dress up as anything they like as long as it isn't scary and it relates to the "Noah's Ark" theme of an Oct. 31 carnival at Ocean View Baptist Church.

Offered by the church for the fourth year as a safe alternative to trick or treating, the carnival will run from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., said Phyllis Turnage. It is open to three-year-olds through sixth graders. No admission is charged and plenty of games, prizes and refreshments are planned. Photographs will be available at one booth for \$1 each.

Ocean View Baptist Church is on N.C. 179 between Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach.

**Civietown VFD**  
Civietown Volunteer Fire Department will host a Halloween party at the fire station beginning at 7 p.m. Monday.

Door prizes, games for children and a cake walk will be included in the festivities.

The department is on Civietown Road just off N.C. 130 (Holden Beach Road).

## Fungi In The Fall

BY BILL FAVER

The majority of non-flowering plants fall into the classification of fungi.



FAVER

The plant-like body consists of fine threads that mass together to form the mycelium. In mushrooms this mycelium grows under the ground and in parasitic fungi, the mycelium invades the host of the parasite. Fungi reproduce by tiny spores rather than by flowers and seeds.

Fungi can grow all year, but fall seems to be the prime season for these materials to flourish. When falling leaves and other debris and the usual moisture are present, conditions are right for the fungi to grow.

Fungi take many forms, such as the gilled mushrooms, tube mushrooms, bracket fungus, cup fungus, coral fungus, jelly fungus, puff-

balls and others. Mycologists are the scientists who spend their lives distinguishing the hundreds of species and their characteristics.

Mushrooms and other fungi are among the decomposers, those organisms involved in helping to recycle plant and animal matter into minerals and nutrients to be used by new growth. They are the third group, following producers and consumers, in the food chain and energy cycle.

Fungi have no chlorophyll and are unable to make their own food, so they depend upon an outside food supply. This can be decaying wood and other dead plant material. Some fungi get food from living plants and animals, sometimes causing them to die. Other fungi actually benefit live plants and animals as they depend upon them for their food supply.

Mushroom names are varied and descriptive and include a few of these from the many in the Southeast: Destroying Angel, Blusher, Parasol, Green-gill, Lactarius, Milky cap, Golden Trumpets, Jack-o'-lantern, Silky Volaria, Shaggy Mane, Brick Top, Involute Paxillus and Gray Urn.

Take time to notice the fungi in the fall this year. A walk in the woods, or along a stream, or sometimes in your own back yard can reveal a few of these marvels of the plant world.



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

These cup fungi specimens probably can be identified as Gray Urns.