

"A VALUABLE LESSON IN LIVING"

A Father's Ashes Spread Among Six New Trees

By Carol Pazandak Burmaster

Dad suffered a massive heart attack resulting in extensive brain damage while clearing snow from his front step.

As he laid in the intensive care unit with no hope for recovery, we made the decision to let him go. Clearly, the time had come to "open the window and close the door" for Dad. Death came four days later.

Dad must have had a sense of the end coming because he not only put his affairs in order but planned his last rite. He was a man who looked for good in all situations. He believed strongly that every experience in life had positive meaning and should be learned from. In making his prepara-

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tions, he chose cremation. He wanted us to plant a tree in his memory and mix his ashes into the soil around the base. Dad felt the part of him which we added to the soil would, in time, be drawn up into the tree and in a different way, he would be a part of life again. For a man with a masters degree in agronomy, a love of the earth and what grew on it, his request was so meaningful.

This past Father's Day, we gathered to scatter Dad's ashes and have a picnic. Picking them up from the mortuary on Saturday morning was the beginning of a highly emotional weekend. For a man weighing over 200 pounds, there wasn't much left. What we picked up was a brown plastic container the size of a shoe box. Weighing about 5 pounds, it was labeled "remains of Joseph Edward Pazandak."

Looking back, I can see the humor of that painful day. Dad spent a lot of time traveling on Saturday as he went from house to house. Each of his six supposedly enlightened, mature adult children was thoroughly spooked at the thought of keeping his remains in their home overnight. They finally spent the night on the shelf in his garage. We all learned that day how easily fear can take over and control one's actions. Sunday morning, I raised the garage door and said, "Good morning, Dad." Picking the box off the shelf, I felt a strong sense of love for the man who shaped the lives of his six children. My daughter was still a little uneasy over it all and suggested Grandpa ride in the trunk. I told her that he had never ridden in the trunk before and he wouldn't start now. Grandpa got the front seat as we drove to my sister's house.

Each of us wanted a bit of Dad close by, so instead of one memorial tree, we planted one in the yard of each

child. Opening his box, we found a plastic bag tied at the top. We expected to find ashes but what we found was off-white in color and felt like fine gravel. What some people might have expected to be a morbid experience was instead a family celebration completing a most important event in the life of a much loved man. Holding the ashes in the palm of my hand and gently mixing them into the earth was a powerful experience.

Looking back, I see how our lives can be positively shaped by events which are so difficult and painful. A few weeks ago, I read an article about how it is not enough for a parent to let a child go, but a parent must teach a child how to go. I am thankful Dad gave me the inner attitudes and values which enable me to live fully without him. Having personally experienced the death of a loved one, my attitude towards death has changed. I am not so afraid now. Even in his death, my father gave me a valuable lesson in living.

Someone once said "life is a journey homeward bound." I feel pride in knowing I helped my father home.

(Carol Pazandak Burmaster lives at 5921 View Lane, Edina, Minn. 55436 (ph 612 926-0693). She works for Cargill and writes as a hobby. Her father, who held a master's degree in agronomy from the University of Minnesota, was a well-known professional wrestler.)

RURAL SINGLES OF AMERICA UNITE!

Farmer Finds First Rural Dating Service

Single men and women in rural areas now have a way to meet new people of the opposite sex, thanks to the efforts of a Minnesota farmer who's founded "Rural Singles of America", a new dating service specifically geared to the farm population.

Budde, who was divorced several years ago and has patronized other dating services, says recent stories in the national press about troubles young men have meeting eligible young women in rural areas prompted him to start Rural Singles.

"Opportunities for meeting people of the opposite sex with similar interests is often difficult in rural areas," says Budde, who's service provides members with a monthly listing of eligible singles on a national basis.

Singles are listed by first name, phone number, city and state along with a brief description that includes likes and dislikes. Subscribers to the

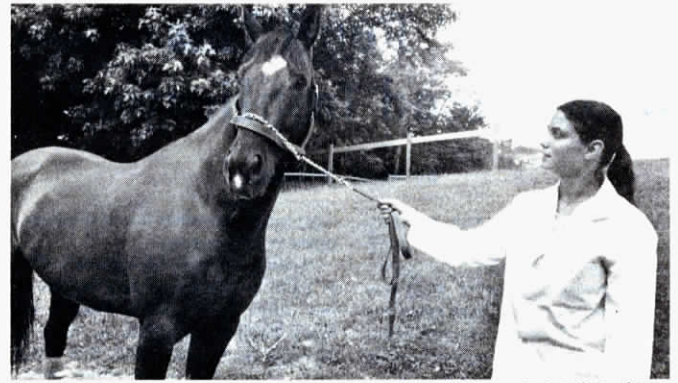


Photo by William Stoneback, Daily Local News
Bucky stands alert and watchful, apparently curious over the fuss paid him by his veterinarian Dr. Virginia Reef.

PATIENT "DOING GREAT"

"First Ever" Pacemaker Implanted In Horse

By Betty Lewis

As a seven-year-old Quarter Horse, Bucky had garnered his share of show ring blue ribbons. Then he started fainting.

Bucky had belonged to his Virginia owner for only six months when the fainting began. The first time she didn't realize what had happened. She had found his stall in disarray the morning after a show and thought he had been disturbed by some wild animal.

But the horse started fainting in the pasture. Once he fell into a wall and broke a tooth. He had to wear a helmet to protect his head. After the fainting spells grew more frequent, he was sent to specialists at the New Bolton

Center of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine at Kennett Square.

The diagnosis: Bucky had a complete heart block, rare in horses, that medications would not help.

Because of the lack of blood flow, his kidneys were failing and he had swelling around the heart caused by an accumulation of fluid. His only chance for survival was a technique never before performed on a horse — the insertion of a permanent pacemaker to stimulate his heart action.

Dr. Virginia Reef, head of large animal cardiology, said Bucky was donated to the center for the purpose of trying the implant.

According to Reef, one of the reasons a pacemaker had never before been implanted in a horse was that with the old type pacemaker the entire chest had to be opened up. Such a thoracotomy is fairly easy in man, or even a dog, but a horse's rib cage is so small a rib would have to be removed to perform the operation.

But, a new mechanism, perfected in the last five years, allows the operation without performing a thoracotomy. Called a transvenous pacemaker, the small machine, about the size of a regular cigarette lighter, was inserted in the jugular vein in the lower part of Bucky's neck. A catheter, 85 centimeters long, was fed down the vein to the heart and its tip attached to the inside surface of the heart's right ventricle with four prongs so the bipolar electrodes which stimulated the heart could not move. The pacemaker was set at 45 beats per minute, normal for a horse.

Since the operation, the horse has had no problems. In fact, the first time he was let out, he jumped a five-foot fence to join some horses in an adjoining field. He runs, but knows when to stop. He can be ridden at a walk, trot or canter, but cannot do strenuous work.

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