

Young transplant patient recovers slowly

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

After months of watching her son's health go downhill, Sharon (Odom) Basgall, a Goodland native, has finally seen him awake for a whole day.

Jarrett Basgall, 19, has dealt with health problems his whole life due to a rare gastrointestinal disorder called pseudo-obstruction. His small intestines were removed in October, and a community fund-raising effort was launched because the Basgalls' insurance policies would not pay for a transplant. The family had to raise \$200,000 before he could go on the transplant list.

Sharon Basgall said her health insurance carrier, Blue Cross-Blue Shield, refused to pay any of the costs of the transplant. However, Central States, a Teamsters Union health insurance and pension trust

through Steve's job at United Parcel Service, approved payment of \$200,000 for surgical expenses and \$75,000 for follow-up care.

Jarrett was put on the transplant list late in November, after donors gave \$110,000 toward his operation and Medicaid, the state medical plan, agreed to cover part of Jarrett's expenses. Fund raisers were organized by Sharon's coworkers at Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball, a Hays accounting firm, and money was raised in Sharon Springs, where Jarrett's grandparents, Hubert and Vonna Basgall, live. Eventually, \$204,000 was raised and put in a fund with the Children's Organ Transplant Association, where it will be available for his continuing care.

Just when Sharon and her husband, a Sharon Springs native, thought hope was running out, they

got a call that organs were available for his transplant.

The call meant more tests to be sure they were compatible. They were.

But the family's problems did not end there. The transplanted pancreas had pancreatitis, and more surgery was required to remove part of the pancreas and reconnect Jarrett's own pancreas, which had been left in place but disconnected when the transplant was done.

Jarrett had the transplant Friday, Jan. 14, and has had two surgeries since. He has been in the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, spending a great deal of his time sleeping.

But Wednesday, his mother said, Jarrett was finally up all day and was sitting up in bed playing with a Gameboy.

"He's doing really well," she said. "Physical therapy has been coming in; he's getting up and walking."

She said her son is eager to get

back to the motel, where he's not so bored. She said he's bouncing back more and more each day. Jarrett may get out of the hospital in a couple of weeks, she said, but that's not certain yet.

They are bringing him the different medicines he has to take, she said, so he can learn about them. He will have to take drugs at least three times a day for the rest of his life, she said.

But the surgeries, the pain and the continuing medicine are worth it when comparing early January to now. Having Jarrett on the transplant list was good, Sharon said, but the waiting got difficult. He was getting to the point he was so weak he'd take three naps a day.

"You have to wait and wait and see your child get weaker and weaker and know he doesn't have much longer," she said, "and you wonder whether you will ever get the call. I was at the point of thinking it would never come."

Sharon said she "prayed so hard"

that Jarrett would get a transplant and then went to bed. The call came an hour and a half later, she said; Jarrett was on the phone with his best friend at the time and then had the nurse on the other ear.

But they couldn't know whether this was it. Sharon said they had been told they would get a lot of false alarms before an actual transplant. In six weeks of waiting, they hadn't gotten a single call, so Sharon expected this to be a false alarm. It wasn't.

When organs are available for transplant, Sharon said, the hospital calls more than one person on the list. First, she said, they had to see if the organs were compatible, then whether Jarrett was the primary person to receive them. He was.

Jarrett was up and talking the day after the transplant, and all seemed to be well. But then a week later, he had another surgery and was in critical condition after the new pancreas started acting up.

Part of the pancreas was removed, Sharon said, his own pancreas was reconnected, and the new organs were cleaned. He now has two pancreases hooked up, she said; his and the transplanted one.

The attack of pancreatitis was his second, Jarrett said; his own pancreas had also had the inflammation.

He had a second exploratory surgery later, Sharon said, and the organs were cleaned and checked again. A biopsy showed no sign of rejection, she said; that usually shows up in seven to 10 days.

"It was hard the first week (after the transplant)," Sharon said. "Now I know we did the right thing; it was the only choice we had."

The time she has been in the hospital with Jarrett hasn't been all bad. It's kind of nice to be able to sit and visit, she said, even though you see each other every day. You learn your priorities, she said; your life is not the same; you appreciate simple things so much more.

Farmers' ears bent by NBC show slamming ethanol

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

Area corn farmers are up in arms about an episode of NBC's "The West Wing" critical of government support for alcohol-blended motor fuel that aired Wednesday, Jan. 26. The Kansas Farm Bureau says the episode, "King Corn," allegedly depicts a "misrepresentation of ethanol, the corn industry and U.S. farm policy."

Amy Sederstrom, who is a bureau member along with her husband, Greg, who serves the bureau as County President, said they heard about the show in a meeting in Salina two weeks ago right after the show aired. She said in the meeting, the Young Farmers and Ranchers Board they both are committee members for, the group held lengthy discussions about the show's content.

She said with Kansas corn being

used to make fuel, and an ethanol plant just 50 miles east of Goodland at Campus, we should "take pride in our corn" production and let NBC know how we feel about the issue.

"I think ethanol's important," she said. "The more markets you find (for a crop), the better price you get."

She said a lot of money has been invested in the Campus plant and people in this area should support ethanol fuel.

Marty Melia, owner of radio stations KLOE, KKCI and KWGB, said he watched the program and was upset about the content.

"It was pretty much bashing ethanol all the way through," he said.

Ethanol, the kind of alcohol found in beer and whiskey, is blended with gasoline to make clean-burning fuel for cars and trucks. It can be made from most any grain or fruit, but corn is a com-

mon feed stock. The government subsidizes its production for motor fuel, a program more popular with farmers than people in cities.

Melia said he featured a program about ethanol on his evening show the day after the episode aired to dispel some of the information brought fourth.

"It's a fictional show," he said, "but they're defaming a real industry that we have in our own area."

Melia said the episode focused on candidates at the Iowa caucuses and their decisions to support or oppose the ethanol program. One of the main issues in the show, he said, was the charge that it costs more to produce ethanol than it is worth.

"Those who support it," he said, "feel that's not true."

The American Coalition for Ethanol web site says in a Renewable Fuels Standard article from May of 2003, "adding ethanol to our gaso-

line pool could reduce the cost of gasoline to consumers by 6.6 cents per gallon."

The U.S. Department of Energy web site lists benefits of ethanol that it "reduces our dependence on foreign oil because it can be produced domestically." The site calls ethanol a renewable fuel that helps to reduce air pollution.

The Farm Bureau said "The West Wing" episode referred to ethanol as a "waste of taxpayers' money" and a corporate "subsidy" for oil companies, agribusinesses and farmers.

"We're troubled that a misinformed Hollywood script writer chose no to do his homework," said Steve Baccus, an Ottawa County farmer who serves as president of the Kansas farm bureau.

The bureau release said ethanol is responsible for creating more than 200,000 jobs and has reduced

gasoline prices, cut crude oil imports, increased farm income and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The farm bureau encouraged people to email concerns to NBC at www.nbc.com/nbc/footer/Contact_Us.shtml. The farm bu-

reau can be reached at www.kfb.org, the American Coalition for Ethanol at www.ethanol.org and the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy web site at www.eere.energy.gov.



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TRUCKS • PICKUPS • TRAILER

1980 GMC model 7000 tag axle truck, 366 V8 eng, 5&2 trans, saddle tanks, 20' Tradewind steel box, 50" sides, 900 rubber, Harsh dbl ram rear hoist, rollover tarp, 56,000 miles, red color, very good, shedded. **1979 GMC model 7000 tag axle Sierra truck**, 366 V8 eng, 5&2 trans, 900 rubber, 20' Parkhurst steel bed, 52" sides, Harsh dbl ram rear hoist, Sherlock rollover tarp, saddle tanks, blue color, 43,100 miles, very good, shedded. **1973 Chev C-60 single axle truck**, 366 V8 eng, 5&2 trans, 16' Knaphide steel box, wood floor, 900 rubber, saddle tanks, single ram rear hoist, 48" side w/12" tip tops, red color, 19,500 actual 2 owner miles, nice truck. **1971 Chev C-50 single axle truck**, 350 V8 eng, 4&2 trans, 16' steel box, wood floor, 36" sides, stock racks, single ram rear hoist, 8.25 rubber, red color, 34,000 one owner miles, shedded. **1950 Chev 6400 truck**, 6 cylinder eng, 4&2 trans, 8.25 rear tires, 7.50 front w/FarmHand manure spreader box, single chain. **1994 GMC 1500 SLE 2x4 pickup** 350 V8 eng, auto trans, AC, cruise, maroon color, 91,760 one owner miles, always shedded. **1991 GMC SLX Serria 2500 4x4 pickup**, 350 V8 eng, 4 sp trans, AC, cruise, trlr ball, blue color, good rubber, running boards, 45,560 one owner miles, nice. **1982 GMC High Serria 2x4 pickup**, 350 V8 eng, auto trans, high mileage, runs good. **1957 GMC straight 6 pickup**, 4 sp, tow hitch, runs. **1971 Dodge D100 pickup**, 318 V8 eng, 4 sp, needs repair. **1991 Trailman 24' full top good neck stock trailer**, 80" wide, 6.5' tall, 1 center gate, torsion 7,000# tandem axles, wood floor, good shape. **1947 Chev. and 1946 Dodge truck chassis for parts.**

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