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Reader's Digest

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MALE MENOPAUSE: MYTH OR REALITY?

PAGE 181

Nelak
PAGE 93

35 HOURS WITH A TRANSPLANT SURGERY TEAM

PAGE 75
DRAMA IN
REAL LIFE
RESCUE
IN THE
GRAND
CANYON

DeWitt Wallace: In Memoriam 1889-1981 64

How Not to Negotiate With the Russians
Lt. Gen. Edward L. Rowny 66

The Magic Sneakers *Ray Bradbury* 71

What's New Under the Sun? *Lowell Ponte* 82

Craig Claiborne's Salt-Free Gourmet Diet
"Craig Claiborne's Gourmet Diet" 87

Trails of the Pony Express *National Geographic* 101

Qaddafi: Libya's Lord of Terror *David Reed* 106

How to Survive a Hotel Fire "Warning:
Hotels Could Be Hazardous to Your Health" 113

Script Teasers *Quiz Feature* 116

What "Supply-Side Economics" Means to You
Rowland Evans & Robert Novak 118

My Flying Daze *William F. Buckley, Jr.* 123

Björn Borg: Matchless Tennis Ace *George Feifer* 126

Nuclear Power in Perspective *Ralph K. Bennett* 131

Okavango-Africa's Last Eden *Picture Feature* 138

Mickey Rooney Takes a New Bow
James Stewart-Gordon 151

Enduring Values for Your Child *Ardis Whitman* 163

While You're Up, Get Me a Grant *It's Your Money* 169

Scramblish, in One Easy Lesson *Christopher Lucas* 185

Hidden Blessings of Boredom
"What to Do When You're Bored and Blue" 191

TV's Footprints to the Future *Panorama* 195

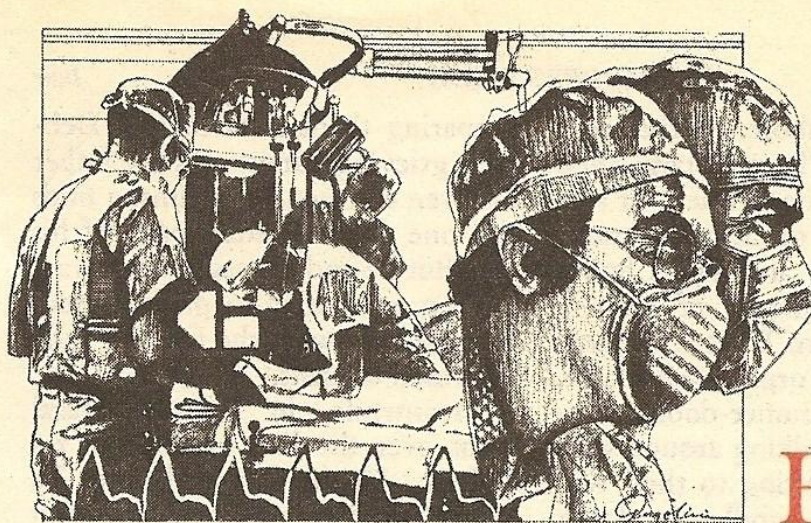
Book Section } Whole Again *From the book* 205

Reunion in Leningrad, 11-Long Sweet Days of June, 23
Sumptuous, Scrumptious Shrimp, 37

A Carillon of Prayers, 45-Houses That Love Builds, 52

News of Medicine, 17-Picturesque Speech, 35-Time Out
for Sports, 50-An Encouraging Word, 62-Laughter, 80-
Word Power, 91-Life in These United States, 99-Points to
Ponder, 111-Quotable Quotes, 147-Personal Glimpses, 179

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35 Hours With a Transplant Surgery Team

Condensed from GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

NILAH RODGERS

ON A sunny afternoon in April 1979, 16-year-old Debbie Dubose skipped down the front steps of her Chicago home. She waved to her parents and slid into her date's yellow sports car. At 4:30 p.m., a telephone call from the hospital sent Clyde and Naomi Dubose, Debbie's parents, reeling in shock: "There's been a terrible wreck and your daughter is in a coma."

When the Duboses arrived at the hospital, Debbie had been pronounced "medically dead." Her brain was not functioning, and only a respirator was forcing air through her lungs, keeping oxygen-rich blood flowing to her beating heart. The grief-stricken parents recalled that Debbie had written a term paper on organ transplants and had mentioned several times that she wanted her organs to be used in any way that could help others. Now, Debbie's parents gave permission for this to be done.

5:10 p.m. The beeper Paul Taylor wears on his belt went off. Taylor is coordinator of the organ-transplant program at the University of Colora-

ALL PERSONAL NAMES in this article have been changed except for those of Paul Taylor and the several transplant surgeons.

do Health Sciences Center in Denver. It had already been a long day for the transplant unit, which frequently begins work at 4 or 5 a.m.

Taylor called his operator for the message, cradled the phone and took down all the essential information

about Debbie Dubose. He then sent out calls to Dr. Thomas Starzl, then chairman of the department of surgery and director of the organ-transplant program,* and Dr. Charles Halgrimson, professor of surgery and vice chairman. The two doctors are pioneers in organ transplants, and more than 40 once-doomed patients are now walking around with donor-livers, attesting to their success. Halgrimson handles the donor part of the procedure, making sure the living organs are taken out properly. Starzl implants the livers in the recipients.

Taylor reached Starzl first and told him about Debbie. "Where's Halgrimson?" he asked.

"He's on his way home," Starzl answered. "When you get him, tell him he can sleep on the plane to Chicago."

5:15 p.m. Starzl burst into the transplant office. "Start pulling files of those waiting for livers and kidneys," he ordered. "Find out who's got the blood type and antigen profile that match the donor's. See if we've got a pancreas candidate."

6 p.m. As members of the Denver team rushed for their plane, eye specialists in Chicago were examining Debbie's corneas. Corneas must be removed within four hours of death, and the eye-bank team was already at work.

7 p.m. Halgrimson, his assistant and Taylor settled into their seats for the flight to Chicago and began

preparing themselves to face Debbie's grieving parents. As the father of seven children, Halgrimson finds this one of the hardest parts of his job. But he and his assistants always explain everything in precise detail because they want the family's fully informed consent.

Meanwhile, in Denver, Starzl went over the lists of possible recipients. Debbie's liver had to be transplanted as soon as possible, but definitely within 18 hours of its removal. He remembered the recent desperate visit to Denver by a New York couple named Jennings whose 12-year-old daughter, Shayla, had been born with a defective liver. For two years, she'd lived in isolation to avoid contracting an infection her frail body could not combat.

Starzl compared blood types and other characteristics. Yes, Shayla was about to have her transplant. He dialed the Jenningses' number in New York.

7:25 p.m. As the Denver team flew toward Chicago, the Jenningses hastily packed and took Shayla to the airport, their hopes soaring.

8 p.m. The phone rang in the Denver home of Dave Sadler. Dave had been on the kidney waiting list for many months. He had been sick so often and had to spend so many hours a week on dialysis that he no longer held a steady job. Now, maybe, he could plan a future.

8:40 p.m. Alice Wiggington answered her phone in Cheyenne, Wyo. "John," she cried out to her husband, "I'm going to get a kidney!"

*Starzl and a liver-transplant team have since moved to the University of Pittsburgh.

Quickly, she packed her bag and hugged her two girls. But as her husband sped her along the interstate to Denver, Alice began to cry. "Someone had to die for me to get a kidney," she whispered.

10:05 p.m. As the plane set down in Chicago, Paul Taylor marvelled at the number of persons who could benefit from the generosity of a single donor. Corneas, liver, heart, pancreas and kidneys could all be transplanted. With bone marrow, dentists could fill gum-line depressions and treat gum diseases to allow for properly fitting dentures for many persons. Burn victims could benefit from microscopic layers of skin taken from the abdomen and thighs. Growth hormone from the pituitary gland could help youngsters who are stunted. Inner-ear structures could aid the deaf. All this, and it could still be possible for the donor's family to have an open-casket funeral.

10:20 p.m. The three men hurried off the plane, hailed a cab and sped across Chicago. At the hospital, Halgrimson and his assistant made preliminary examinations of the donor, and arranged for nurses and an operating room. The OR would not be available until 2:30 a.m. Meanwhile, Taylor talked gently to Debbie's family, explained the procedures, and got their signatures.

3 a.m. Debbie lay on the operating table. She breathed with the aid of the respirator, her blood circulated, and her heart beat. She was a "heart-beating cadaver." Halgrimson swift-

ly made an incision and studied her organs. "The liver is normal in size and appearance," he told Taylor. Taylor rushed to phone this news to Starzl. He'd call again when the liver and kidneys were out.

Meticulously, Halgrimson isolated the arteries of the liver. If an important blood vessel was accidentally severed, the organ would be useless.

5 a.m. Finally, Halgrimson carefully lifted Debbie's liver out of her body and placed it in a thick, sterile plastic bag. He placed this package inside another sterile plastic bag, sealed it, then put a sterile towel over the ice in the cooler and placed the liver on top.

The rhythmic *whoosh, whoosh* breathing sound of Debbie's respirator continued. Next, Halgrimson began removing the girl's kidneys. One hour later, each shiny kidney lay immersed in preservation fluid in a round plastic container.

6 a.m. Halgrimson let out a ragged breath. "That's it," he said. "We don't need the respirator anymore."

At first no one moved. Then, slowly, Taylor turned off the machine. For a moment everyone stood silently. Then Taylor picked up the cooler and the three men left. Later, bone marrow, the pituitary gland, inner-ear structures and skin were taken by assisting surgeons.

7 a.m. At O'Hare air terminal, Taylor asked that the coolers be hand-checked instead of going through X-ray inspection. The at-

How to Donate Parts of Your Body

Who may become a donor? Almost anyone over 18 years of age and of sound mind. And parents may sign their consent for minor children. Eye donors should be at least a year old, and kidney donors younger than 65. The spouse or nearest relative of a suddenly deceased person may also sign consent forms.

Do doctors want donations only from those who were healthy? Not necessarily. Only healthy organs are used for transplants; others can be used in medical research.

How does a person become a donor? Fill out and carry a Uniform Donor Card, which is available from the American Medical Association, independent donor groups and many hospitals. The card is a legal will under the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act. In addition, 49 of the 50 states now allow a notation on a driver's license that the driver consents to be a donor. A bracelet or other identification jewelry also is recommended.

The donor should make his intentions known in writing to relatives and also send a letter to his attorney, physician or spiritual adviser. Most physicians still ask consent of the next of kin.

Can a donor change his mind? Yes, but the donor card should be destroyed. Also, if donor consent appears on a driver's license it should be changed by contacting the state motor-vehicle bureau.

Which organs can be readily transplanted? About 25 kinds of tissues and organs are used for medical transplants. The most common are bones, skin, corneas and kidneys. Middle-ear bones and eardrums, the parathyroid gland and blood vessels also are transplanted. Heart, liver and lung transplants are being performed, but surgeons still consider such operations to be in the experimental stage.

—U.S. News & World Report

tendant opened the cooler and asked, "What's this?"

"Kidneys," Taylor answered.

"Yuck!" the woman said, and waved him through.

In Denver, Starzl began preparing young Shayla for surgery. He made an incision from side to side under Shayla's ribs like a big, upside-down smile. By the time the plane from Chicago landed, he would have the child's blood vessels isolated and stripped from their connective tissue. But Shayla's own liver would

not be removed until Halgrimson arrived and Starzl was certain the transplanted liver would function.

9:35 a.m. Back at the Denver hospital, Halgrimson again scrubbed for surgery. Every artery, vein and vessel leading to and from Debbie's liver was indelibly printed on his mind. His knowledge would now save crucial time.

10 a.m. Starzl, Halgrimson and many associates, using powerful loupes, began working on Shayla. For five hours, they connected blood

vessels no larger than a pencil lead.

3 p.m. At last the doctors watched the liver take on color and firmness

the kidney from the plastic container. The hours ticked away as the surgeons and nurses worked. Finally Weil said, "That's it." The

ORGAN DONOR CARD

Print or type name of donor

In the hope that I may help others, I hereby make this anatomical gift, if medically acceptable, to take effect upon my death. The words and marks below indicate my desires.

I give: (a) _____ any needed organs or parts
(b) _____ only the following organs or parts

Specify the organ(s) or part(s)

for the purposes of transplantation, therapy, medical research or education;

(c) _____ my body for anatomical study if needed.

Limitations or special wishes, if any: _____

and begin producing bile. Their eyes met. Wearily, the two chief surgeons stepped back and motioned for colleagues to take over the closure.

5 p.m. After resuming their daily routine of seeing patients and training residents, Starzl and Halgrimson returned to surgery. They joined transplant surgeons Drs. Richard Weil and Lawrence Koep in an operating room where Dave Sadler was now ready to receive Debbie's left kidney. In an adjoining room, Alice Wiggington was being prepared to receive the girl's right kidney.

10 p.m. The transplant surgeons had already removed Alice's non-functioning kidney. Now, Weil slipped a chilled wet piece of gauze over the donor-kidney to get a better grip on it. Gently he removed

surgeons then closed the incision.

4 a.m. The two kidney transplants had taken ten hours. It was 35 hours since this grim contest with time, life and death had begun.

"I'm going to crash," said Halgrimson. Starzl nodded. Each went to his home and took a long and well-deserved rest.

THE NEXT DAY, in Chicago, Debbie's parents dressed for their daughter's memorial service. At the funeral home, the director asked if they preferred an open- or closed-casket service.

"Closed," they said, "but first we want to see her." With tears rolling down their cheeks, they stood looking at their child. But their agony was eased with the knowledge

READER'S DIGEST

that through Debbie, others lived. Already they knew that a 14-year-old boy who had been blinded three years earlier had received one of and woman who had received the kidneys, giving them complete details except the recipients' names. He reassured them that their daughter's

Signed by the donor and the following two witnesses in the presence of one another:

_____	_____
Signature of Donor	Date of Birth of Donor
_____	_____
Date Signed	City & State
_____	_____
Witness	Witness

This is a legal document under the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act or similar laws. It can be signed by anyone of sound mind who is at least 18 years old. For further information on all types of organ donations, contact: National Kidney Foundation, 2 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

their daughter's corneas, and a child born with thinning corneas and glaucoma had received the other. A month later, Taylor got in touch with the Duboses. He told them that their daughter's liver was functioning in a 12-year-old girl who had been bedridden and doomed to die. Next, he told them about the man identity would not be revealed either. The Duboses thanked Taylor for his report. "Thank *you!*" he replied. And for years to come, people whom the Duboses will never meet will say thank-you to their daughter and ask blessings on her—without ever knowing her name.



Housing Developments

THE FIRST THING YOU LEARN when you buy a new house is that you don't live in the house. You sleep in the house. You live in the hardware store.

—Orben's Current Comedy

MY FRIEND SAYS he can't understand it. His house has appreciated \$20,000 in four years, but the roof still leaks.

—Jim Fiebig, NANA

UPDATE: "Oh, I'd like a mortgage just like the mortgage they gave to dear old Dad."

—William D. Tammeus in Kansas City Star