

# Heart attacks: No 2 are exactly the same

By MARY CONNELLY-SZCZESNY

No two heart attacks are alike. They are as different as the people who are their victims. And while reaction to living through a heart attack varies from person to person, all victims share some common worries and problems.

The Oakland County Heart Unit of the Michigan Heart Association wants to bring together heart attack victims and their family and friends to talk about getting back on course after a heart attack.

A new program, in which those who lived through heart attacks share the ups and downs of their convalescence, will be offered in May.

"Birmingham has many retirees, an aging population. We hope to reach more and more of them," said Dr. Norman Samet, a Birmingham psychiatrist.

"We're concerned about the convalescence period when people are out

of the hospital and trying to get back into life."

"We've tried a variety of techniques but this year we're getting together a panel of people who will speak from their hearts. We try not to lecture anybody but to have people share and care."

**COPING WITH** limitations following a heart attack, resuming a job and handling its stresses and re-shouldering family responsibilities frequently face heart attack patients.

Accompanying physical recovery must be emotional and psychological health, Samet said.

"There's something unique about a heart attack," Samet said. "It's a catastrophic illness occurring to people who a very short time before were very able-bodied. Illness was the last thing on their mind. They were ambitious, hard-driving."

"Most of us who have suffered a heart problem felt it couldn't happen to us," said 60-year-old Leroy Lyon. "I've had three heart attacks, two close

together. It wasn't until after the second one I said, 'Wait a minute, I can't go back to my normal life style.'"

"I was and am still a hard-driving type and to try and give up that attitude and lifestyle is extremely difficult. I led a pretty rugged life. I was number three in the company I worked with. I was entertaining. I enjoyed what I was doing. To turn it completely around took a lot of discipline," Lyon said.

At 50, Lyon, a sales representative, switched jobs and began accepting the

changes forced on him by the heart attack.

"Some things still bother me," he said. "There are some things I can't do physically. One is shoveling snow. It sounds funny but I loved to go out at 5 a.m. in the morning and shovel snow. It aggravates me I can't do it anymore."

**HOWEVER**, SAMET said, most heart attack victims are unable to radically alter their lives and instead must learn how to make changes in their old lifestyle.

"One thing we hear is: I know I should change, scale down our living; my daughter doesn't need piano lessons; my son doesn't have to go to an Ivy League school. But people are locked into their style of living and standard of living. Most people go back to the same stresses. So you try to consider how they can handle stresses."

"Reaction varies significantly to heart attacks," said Samet, who is a member of the board of directors of the Michigan Heart Association and the Oakland County Heart Unit of the association. "But the problem of accepting that something terrible has happened and rebuilding your life is very difficult."

Most heart attack patients go through several phases including denial, anger, depression and finally acceptance, he said.

"I think the emotional aspect of the recovery is the hardest. The physical part the doctor takes care of," said Kaye MacMillan, a heart attack victim.

"I had no real symptoms. Then one morning it felt like King Kong had me under the arms and was squeezing me."



Kaye MacMillan



Leroy Lyon



Dr. Norman Samet

## Joe Zajac wins 'Best in Show'

Joe Zajac has won "Best in Show" in jurying that took place for Michigan Ceramics '79, the Michigan Potters Association's annual competition.

The Farmington resident took a \$300 prize, donated by Hiram Walker, for his large raku vessel.

Another Farmington winner was John Glick, who took a \$100 prize, donated by the Kemper Tool Manufacturing Co., for his lidded box.

A total of \$1,000 prize money comes from area businesses for the competition, show and sale, that is given to support Pewabic Pottery.

The show and sale is open to the public May 6-26, when about 2,000 pieces of pottery will be on display in Pewabic Pottery, 10125 E. Jefferson, Detroit.

Guests are welcome on Sunday, May 6, from noon to 4:30 p.m. Thereafter, the show continues on Monday through Saturday, from noon to 4:30 p.m., except Sundays.

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