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Cool Action Helps Smith Survive

Cindy Pitts; Staff Writer

Jimmy Smith credits the power of prayer and the actions of EMS that he is still walking this Earth. Smith, who helped start the Newberry County Rescue Squad, began Jan. 16 like most days by helping out in his son's flag store. Around lunch time, son, Jamie Smith, had arrived at the store early and asked his dad to run some errands.

While out of the store, Smith stopped by his Adelaide Street home.

After walking to get his mail and waving at a neighbor, Smith collapsed to the ground. He was later spotted by his wife, who was visiting her mother up the street.

Family, at first, thought Smith was unaccounted for around 30 minutes, but have since narrowed the time frame to five minutes.

Smith's mother-in-law and wife called 911, and his son-in-law, Josh Parsons.

Josh being home sick from his job with Union County EMS was just one thing in Jimmy **Smith's** favor. Parsons, who also **lives** in the neighborhood, ran to his father-in-law and started CPR.

Paramedics Joe Rooney, a neighbor of the Smiths, and Tim Streets, a family friend, were working the EMS shift in Newberry and arrived on the scene in minutes-another plus for Jimmy Smith.

As the medics hooked Jimmy Smith up to a defibrillator, they shocked him 11 times as they told their friend to hang on.

"He turned totally blue," describes Jamie Smith. The son also happens to be a Columbia firefighter, and had a heart attack at the Clemson and Carolina football game in November.

Once Jimmy Smith was at Newberry County Memorial Hospital, Parsons begged his father-in-law be sent on to Spartanburg Regional Memorial Hospital where a new treatment that cools body temperature called "Code Freeze" or therapy-induced hypothermia is in use in such cases.

The rapid **cooling** of a person's body slows all the processes down and allows for less damage in the brain.

The Regional One helicopter crew began to cool Jimmy **Smith's** body when they reached the Newberry hospital. He was also given drugs to temporarily paralyze him, put in the cardiac care unit, and 24 hours later he was slowly warmed back up. As Smith warmed up and regained consciousness during the next 12 hours, he was taken off a respirator.

"We spent those 36 hours praying," said daughter, Bridgett Parsons, who works for Newberry County EMS.

Things for Jimmy Smith began to turn around.

Doctors determined he had no major blockages in his heart, but that his heart had suddenly stopped, sending him into the cardiac arrest. The arrest may be attributed to an antibiotic that he had taken.

To prevent his heart from stopping again, doctors put a pacemaker into Jimmy **Smith's** heart. The pacemaker is also able to transmit a daily report to **Smith's** doctors.

“They tell me how I am doing,” said Jimmy Smith.

For 13 days the family stayed in its RV in the parking lot of Spartanburg Regional Hospital in order to be by Jimmy **Smith's** side.

But now, the Shriner, set to become the state Shrine leader in 2011, has a clean bill of health.

“They call me Lazareth,” said Jimmy Smith of a journey he does not remember. “The good Lord was looking after me, and so many things fell into my favor, like Josh being home sick.”

Since his full recovery, Jimmy Smith is now talking about his experience at conventions and on radio spots.

Josh and Bridgett Parsons say they are both working to educate other EMS workers about Code Freeze in hopes of saving the **lives** of others.

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SUCCESSFUL RESCUES ARE THE GOAL

Dear Editor, I would like to applaud you for your recent coverage of the Jimmy Smith story and your recognition of May 18th through the 24th's National EMS Week. The men and women of EMS throughout Newberry County are a dedicated, hardworking and highly trained group. This story is just one of many of their great successes.

This story highlighted the goals of EMS and the American Heart Association in America: Early Recognition and 911 ... Early CPR ... Early Defibrillation ... Early Advanced Life Support ...

This is defined as the "Chain of Survival" by the AHA. Fortunately all of the pieces fell into place on that day for Jimmy Smith and the system worked as it is designed.

It is our hope that this happens more often than not. We encourage all citizens to take CPR and basic first aid training and to teach their families what to do in case of an emergency. For information about community CPR and first aid classes contact The Wellness Center at Newberry County Memorial Hospital at 405-7484.

It is my hope that together we can write many more success stories like that of Jimmy Smith. The EMS system starts with you ... please be prepared to do your part!

Sincerely, **Kelley Carlton**, BS NR CCEMT-P

Training Coordinator Newberry County Emergency Medical Services