



# Grossmont College Campus Scene

Newletter for Grossmont College Faculty & Staff

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## CVT Student Aces Test

Talk about a test.

Michael Savage, a student in Grossmont's Cardiovascular Technology program, was studying for a test on heart attacks when he had one.

It was Thursday, Oct. 17, the day after Savage's 54th birthday. He was studying at home when he felt pain in his left shoulder. It rose and would not go away.

"I was thinking, I can't be having a heart attack while I'm studying about heart attacks," he said. He hesitated. Maybe it was pain from an old shoulder injury and it would go away if he took a minute to lie down. Then he started to feel light-headed. He stopped hesitating.

"It crossed my mind that if I lie down now I might not ever get up again," he said. "I called 911."

Paramedics arrived just as the pain – wouldn't you know it – was subsiding.

"Quite a lot," Savage said. "I was starting to wonder if I shouldn't call it off."

But then the pain flooded back, stronger still. He got on the gurney.

The paramedics stabilized him on the way to Scripps Memorial Hospital. They put something under his tongue. He knew it was a nitrous application that essentially stops the attack. For some, life imitates art. For Savage, life was starting to imitate education.

At the hospital, he looked at the person treating him and recognized the name on his badge. Michael Low. The same name on a plaque in Grossmont's CVT Lab honoring distinguished students in the program.

"I told Michael I recognized his name from school and that I was in the program as well," Savage said.

"Michael Low graduated Grossmont CVT the top of his class last June," said Rick Kirby, Grossmont CVT program director. "He was hired by Scripps Memorial even before he graduated which tells you what a 'Super Student' he was."

Low was part of a team that operated on Savage. When he woke up, he felt great and was not at all surprised to hear he had three state of the art "drug eluting" stents in his left anterior descending artery, inserted through a catheter in his femoral artery.

The next day a man pushing an echocardiograph machine arrived at Savage's bedside. The machine would take "pictures" of Savage's heart and assess its condition.

"My favorite piece of equipment," Savage said. "It's what I'm training to do at Grossmont." In fact nearly all "echo" operators in the area received their training in Grossmont's CVT program.

"The first thing I noticed about the technician was that he was older than I was," Savage said. "I thought that was a good sign that my age wouldn't be a factor in this profession." The procedure takes about half an hour and in that time Savage learned that the operator was a former Navy fighter pilot who when he retired was



base commander at Miramar Naval Air Station.

"David Bouck," said Rick Kirby. "Graduated from the Grossmont CVT program in June, 1998. When he entered the program in 1996, he had just retired from the Navy and was Commanding Officer at Naval Air Station Miramar."

"Wow," said Savage, impressed. "I was being echocardiographed by the retired base commander of Miramar. I must say it confirmed my feeling that I had made a great choice in CVT as my future field of work."

If Savage was impressed, imagine the students in the classroom when Savage walked in five days later, Oct. 22, to take the test they all had been studying for.

"A room full of dropping jaws," he said. He had been discharged the day before, in good health. "CVT technology is just amazing stuff these days," he said.

He got an "A" on this test but everybody knew he and CVT had already passed the big one.

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