

Bill - Biog. (colabor)

McPHEE, Bill

McPhee Toronto bound

City man - needing double lung transplant - off to await operation

By Jennifer Bell

The Intelligencer

Bill McPhee was on the road to recovery — literally — Friday morning.

The Belleville man — who needs a double lung transplant — and his wife Debbie left yesterday for Toronto and a furnished apartment in the city's downtown that puts him only five minutes away from the hospital where he'll await life-saving surgery.

And he says the move wouldn't have been possible "without the whole city's pitching in to help me."

McPhee, 35, suffers from a rare syndrome that has all but destroyed the capacity of his lungs. Physicians say he must have a double lung transplant within the next year.

McPhee's arrival in Toronto now means he will be put immediately on the waiting list for a transplant.

Although he has been a candidate for new lungs for some time, McPhee could not be put on the waiting list until he moved to Toronto and relocated near the hospital.

The McPhees have a year's lease on a Wood Street apartment, thanks to the generosity of employees at Belleville's Nortel — who raised \$15,000 — and people in the Quinte area. Cost of the apartment — furnished by the Toronto Salvation Army — and living expenses is estimated at \$20,000.

Now for McPhee, the waiting begins.

"We've been trying so hard to get there, and there's been so much pressure, that it will seem strange once we arrive and get settled and have all this time on our hands. It's a case of hurry up and wait, I guess," he said from his home just before departure.

He must report to Toronto Gen-

eral Hospital three times each week, so medical staff can continually assess his condition and determine whether he should be moved up on the waiting list. He must also continue an exercise program, to keep as healthy as possible for surgery.

He won't know until his first doctor's appointment next week just where he'll be placed on the list.

"There are approximately 1,200 people waiting at any given time for lung transplants, and I've been told about half that number actually get matched and have the surgery. I'm hoping I'll be on the good side of those 50-50 odds."

McPhee — who's hoping he'll be home by spring with a new set of lungs — will be given a beeper and will be notified by the hospital when a pair of lungs that match his size and blood type have been obtained. Surgeons have only four to five hours after a donor has been found to perform the surgery, as the lungs must quickly be removed and transplanted into McPhee.

McPhee's sister Carol Duffy and husband Bill, who have been coordinating fund-raising efforts for the family, drove the McPhees to their one-bedroom apartment, and will help them settle in before returning to Belleville to continue fund raising.

Carol will staff a booth at the Quinte Mall today from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at which Dr. Sylvia Allard will conduct stress screening and how it affects health. Donations will be accepted at that time for the McPhee's trust fund.

Intell. p1 Oct 5./96



Intelligencer photo by Jennifer Bell

Bill McPhee and his wife, Debbie say good-bye to son, John.

And on Sunday, Quinte Bowl is selling \$10 tickets that entitle bowlers to two games of five or 10-pin, shoe rental, free coffee, and a chance at several door prizes. All proceeds go to the McPhees. Bowling begins at 11 a.m.

"The community has been really great," said Bill Duffy Friday. "We hope they'll continue to support Bill now that he's in Toronto."

Financial donations are still needed for trips to the hospital — McPhee will be relying on taxis to get there — and for grocery shopping, and other necessary errands.

Bill and Carol Duffy can be reached by calling 966-4025.