

Albany teen seeks second liver transplant

■ 15-year-old Rhyson Houser received a liver transplant at 10-months-old and now that liver is failing

By Suzanne Adams-Ockrassa

The Register-Guard

EUGENE — Chrystee Houser is hoping for a second miracle. Fifteen years ago, Houser's son Rhyson was just 10 months old when his failing liver was replaced with a healthy one from a donor.

Now, that liver is failing, and Rhyson and his family are hoping for another.

"I'm very proud of him. He's still going to school full time, and he's not falling behind in school," Chrystee Houser said.

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, about 114,575 people in the United States are waiting for an organ transplant. About 10 percent of those waiting for an organ — 13,792 people — are waiting for a new liver like Rhyson. In Oregon, 153 people are on the waiting list for a liver, said Leslie Brock of Donate Life Northwest.

How long Rhyson will have to wait depends on how sick he is and if there's a donor available who is a match for his needs, Brock said.

Rhyson was put on the national organ donor list for a liver two weeks ago, said his mother, an Albany resident who grew up in Eugene. The wait for a new liver and a pending second transplant are a roller coaster ride she hoped the family wouldn't have to go through again.

Fifteen years ago, The Register-Guard published a story about Rhyson's first liver transplant in 2003. He was diagnosed with alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency at 9 months. The disease is a genetic disorder that causes a protein deficiency leading to scarring of the liver and a buildup of fluid in the abdomen. It also can cause lung and breathing problems. In order to develop the disease, a person has to inherit the gene from both parents.

For Rhyson, the disease meant he had cirrhosis of the liver and needed a liver transplant as a baby. He was so sick at the time that he was listed in the No. 1 spot on the donor wait list, his mother said. His father, who was a match, was about to prep for surgery when a donor was found, a 15-year-old girl in Idaho who had died.

Once Rhyson received his new liver, his health improved greatly, but his liver enzymes were never quite normal — always higher than they should have been, Chrystee Houser said. After struggling to find the right medication and dosage, doctors decided that since his body wasn't rejecting the liver, Rhyson's elevated enzymes might just be a new normal for him. He continued to take medications to control the enzyme levels, went to school, enjoyed playing tennis and earned a black belt in taekwondo.

About five years ago, doctors noticed scarring on Rhyson's liver, Chrystee Houser said. He started infusions of medication to help prevent the scarring, but it didn't help. Three years later, she received a call from Rhyson's doctors at Stanford Medical Center in California. His last blood test showed that his body was rejecting the donor liver and the family needed to get Rhyson to Stanford as quickly as possible.

After two weeks, doctors were able to stabilize Rhyson with additional drugs to help fight the rejection process. They sent him home, but the anti-rejection drugs started to take a toll on his kidneys. In late July, Rhyson was rushed to the hospital from a Boy Scout camping trip. His kidneys were failing, and the liver would have to be replaced with a whole liver from a deceased donor. He's too ill

for a piece of a liver from a living donor to work.

Dr. Charles Rosen, director of the transplant center at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and a liver transplant doctor, said it's not unusual for a patient to need a second liver transplant. The need for a second transplant depends on the patient and the donated organ, said Rosen, who has not seen or treated Rhyson. Some people may be able to go through life needing one transplant, others may need a second transplant.

Rosen said the younger and healthier a person is when they get any transplant, whether it's their first or a second, the better their chances of a successful surgery. A transplant surgery can take two to 5 1/2 hours, Rosen said. The surgery for a second transplant can take three to 6 1/2 hours. It then takes about three to four months for a patient to start to feel normal.

Rhyson and his family now are trying to beat the clock by keeping his kidneys as healthy as possible while waiting for a new donor liver, Chrystee Houser said.

He is taking more than a dozen medications and must drink 64 ounces or half a gallon of water daily for his kidneys. The extra water and kidney problems cause Rhyson's body to swell, which leaves him very uncomfortable by the end of the day, his mother said.

Some days are harder than others, Chrystee Houser said. There are times when Rhyson just doesn't feel well enough to do more than lay on the couch. Last week, he had to stay home from school because of a high fever.

"He's a trouper," she said of her son, who knows the risks behind the transplant surgery and what might happen if a liver doesn't become available.

Main Street Baker City businesses receive state award

By Jayson Jacoby and Lisa Britton
WesCom News Service

Carol Phillips didn't pick the most opportune time to buy a historic building in downtown Baker City, but she shrugged off a bit of bad luck to turn the structure into an award winner in less than two years.

Phillips bought the 1895 Haskell Building in January 2017.

Less than a month later, a heavy load of snow collapsed part of the roof of the adjacent Crabill Building, causing minor damage to Phillips' new property.

But Phillips didn't let that derail her plans to restore the Haskell Building's facade and make other improvements to the 123-year-old building on the east side of Main Street between Court and Washington avenues.

Her efforts were acknowledged Wednesday with an award for best facade renovation at Oregon Main Street's Excellence in Downtown Revitalization ceremony in Albany.

Phillips' award was one of three bestowed on Baker City.

Barley Brown's Brewing was honored as business of the year.

And the Baker City Little Big Show, a community art show, won the award for best downtown retail event.

Phillips, who is president of Baker City Downtown, said she was excited about the city's trio of awards.

"It was nice to have Baker receive so many awards," she said.

Phillips said her goal was to make the Haskell Building's facade more closely resemble not only its

original version, but also to fit in with the many other historic buildings that have undergone renovations over the past 30 years.

"I just wanted to restore it back to a more vintage appearance, to get rid of the '70s look," Phillips said. "To me it was not attractive."

The renovation included new paint, replacing metal window frames with wooden ones, and renovating the recessed street-level windows on the portion of the building that houses Delicioso restaurant to make them flush with the rest of the building.

The restoration also uncovered windows on the first floor, and Phillips replaced all the street-level doors.

She didn't limit the restoration to the Main Street side of the building.

Phillips said she also renovated the eastern facade, which faces Resort Street, to complement the work the city did in 2013 along the street between Auburn Avenue and Campbell Street.

The project included burying utility lines, rebuilding the street and sidewalks, installing decorative streetlights and planting trees.

The Haskell Building houses two businesses — Delicioso and Royal Artisan, a framing gallery owned by Phillips' daughter, Kate Reid.

Phillips said she would like to use the building's second floor as well, a 5,000-square-foot space that once was the Baker Elks Lodge.

"I hope to spruce things up there, but to leave it original as much as I can," she said.

OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

Non-native venomous spider found living in Oregon City

OREGON CITY — The types of venomous spiders residing in Oregon have doubled.

State officials confirm that a brown widow spider — usually found in South Africa, Florida and Southern California — has recently been found living in Oregon City, in the northwestern part of the state.

It's not clear how it arrived or if there are more.

Tom Valente of the Oregon Department of Agriculture tells The Oregonian/OregonLive there's no reason to panic, but residents should be cautious.

State officials want residents to search their homes and other areas for brown widows. The spiders are brown and have a distinctive orange hourglass on the underside of their abdomen.

Oregon already has black widow spiders. Bites from either spider can cause fever and muscle spasms.

Valente says brown widows are subtropical and that Oregon's cold weather will likely kill them.

Lawn-poopers free, but must maintain mental health

PORTLAND — A 31-year-old man who authorities say defecated on dozens of lawns in southeastern Portland and broke into a home has been

allowed to go free but must maintain his mental health treatment.

Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Nan Waller on Friday found Moyhijah Widger-Chongo guilty except for insanity in the home burglary.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that she dismissed other criminal counts at the request of the prosecutor's office.

Authorities say Widger-Chongo in 2017 also was suspected of flooding houses in the same neighborhood by turning on garden hose faucets. Police say he also broke into homes where he showered, stole clothes and checked his Facebook page.

Widger-Chongo's spent six months in jail and at the Oregon State Hospital.

Waller cautioned Widger-Chongo to remain on his medication because without it things don't go well.

Medford man admits to fatally beating girlfriend's father

MEDFORD — A 20-year-old Medford man has been sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for fatally beating his teen girlfriend's father to death with a baseball bat.

The Mail-Tribune reports Gavin MacFarlane was sentenced Friday in Jackson County Circuit Court after pleading guilty to murder and murder conspiracy charges.

Prosecutors say MacFarlane beat 50-year-old Aaron Friar with a bat while he

Baker City Little Big Show, best downtown retail event

This was the third year for the Little Big Show, which takes place in August.

"When we started The Little Big Show three years ago the goal was to do something bigger than First Friday and to incorporate all the galleries and shops as well as local charities to promote art," said Brian Vegter of the Baker Art Guild. "Our audience of local and visiting art lovers has grown over the past three years and has also grown the number of participating artists with 2018 involving 67 from around the Northwest."

This year's show budget was \$700. Vegter said there were more sales, an additional gallery, and more than \$1,000 was donated to Baker County charities.

The opening night of the show has people visiting all locations in search of art, as well as through the month of August.

"It's an amazing event to witness and the many volunteers and artists that help to bring it all together each year are what makes this event so special," Vegter said.

Barley Brown's Brewing, business of the year

The business, which includes a microbrewery, restaurant and taproom, in two separate Main Street buildings at the intersection with Church Street, celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.

Barley Brown's beers have won more than 80 awards in national and international beer competitions.

Comedian Katt Williams jailed on assault charges in Portland

■ Kat Williams was in Portland to appear on Nick Cannon's comedy improv show "Wild 'N Out"

By Andrew Selsky

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Comedian Katt Williams has been arrested on suspicion of assaulting a hired driver during an argument about taking him and his dog from the Portland, Oregon, airport to a performance in the city.

Williams, who was in jail Sunday, came to Portland to perform in Nick Cannon's "Wild 'N Out" comedy improv show Friday night.

The town car driver had swelling and cuts on his face and was treated at a hospital, according to Port of Portland police. The comedian, 47, whose real name is Micah Williams, left in another vehicle and was arrested Saturday.

Williams has been

charged with assault in the fourth degree, and an arraignment is scheduled for Monday. He also was arrested for an out-of-state warrant from Georgia.

A publicist for Williams, whose comedy specials have appeared on HBO and Netflix, didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment. A jail official and a spokesman for the district attorney's office said they didn't know if the comedian had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

The incident happened at Atlantic Aviation, which handles private planes at Portland International Airport, police said. An employee who answered the phone Sunday said her boss had told workers not to discuss the

case.

Williams won the Emmy Award last month for guest actor in a comedy series for his appearance in "Atlanta," a TV show about two cousins in Atlanta's rap scene.

His arrest comes more than a year after Williams was sentenced to three years of probation in Los Angeles after pleading no contest to stealing a celebrity photographer's camera. Prosecutors said in April 2017 that he also needed to attend anger management classes.

In 2016, Williams got five years of probation after pleading no contest in Georgia to assault and battery tied to allegations he threatened a bodyguard while an acquaintance beat him with a baseball bat.



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