

HERMISTON

Neon Nights run to benefit trainer fighting rare cancer

By WILL DENNER
East Oregonian

Pat Bentz will soon have a new perspective on Club 24's Neon Nights 5K run.

The personal trainer has worked at the club's Hermiston gym for five years, teaching classes and working one-on-one with clients. Bentz is accustomed to helping run the annual event with Club 24, which often donates some of the proceeds to a cancer organization. This year, Bentz will be the beneficiary.

She was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer known as Waldenstrom lymphoma in March. While Bentz was in Mexico receiving treatment, Club 24 decided to donate all proceeds from the Neon Nights 5K to her as a way to support their co-worker and friend.

"So many people wanted to help her, but we didn't know how," said Darla Irwin, manager of Club 24's Hermiston location. "We thought this would be the best option to start off."

The event will take place at its usual location, Hermiston's Oxbow Trail, 1100 SW Elm Ave., at 10 p.m. on Saturday. Tickets cost \$25 for adults, \$15 for children ages 6 to 15 and \$10 for those 5 and under. Entrants will receive glow-in-the-dark accessories with their race packets.

Irwin's inspiration for starting the event came years ago, when a close friend was diagnosed with breast cancer while pregnant with her third child. In 2013, Irwin and her Club 24 staff put on the first-ever Neon Nights run. The gym donated approximately \$2,000 of that year's proceeds to Sisters Influencing Survivorship, a local non-profit organization that raises awareness for and supports people affected by breast cancer.

In 2016, the cause hit Club 24 closer to home.

Bentz had taken time off from work to care for her mother, who was fighting brain cancer. Bentz was starting to get back into a routine after her mother passed away, but it was soon interrupted.

Bentz's doctor noticed she had an unusually high iron count when she went for a routine check-up in March. She then visited an oncologist for blood work and a bone marrow biopsy that



EO file photo
Patricia Bentz, wearing 75 pounds of turnout gear, treads the stairmaster in February 2014 outside the Hermiston Club 24 fitness center during a fundraiser for cancer research. Bentz will be the recipient of funds raised Saturday at the Neon Nights run on the Oxbow Trail.

revealed a positive test for advanced Waldenstrom lymphoma.

"I just buried my mom," Bentz said. "How could this be me?"

At first, Bentz was in denial of the diagnosis. She lived a healthy life and kept in good shape for her job.

After seeing her mom go through chemotherapy and radiation, Bentz knew she didn't want to explore those treatments.

A friend of Bentz's referred her to the documentary series, "A Truth About Cancer," which explores alternative forms of treatment. The documentary mentioned Hope 4 Cancer Institute, a non-toxic cancer treatment center with locations in Tijuana and Cancun.

Bentz ultimately traveled to Mexico, where she received treatment at the institute for four weeks.

When Bentz heard of Club 24's plan to give her the money raised at Neon Nights, she felt honored. Bentz, who is accustomed to motivating and encouraging clients, suddenly found herself receiving the same boost from clients and Club 24 staff members.

"I always want to be the rah-rah and giver for everybody," Bentz said. "It's very humbling to sit back and say, 'My gosh, they're doing this for me.'"

In addition to proceeds from

tickets, Club 24 is taking donations from companies and individuals to put together several raffle drawings, which will be drawn after the 5K run. Club 24 member Tiffany Maddox, who befriended Bentz through the gym four years ago, is part of the committee collecting raffle items and selling tickets.

"She's always encouraging and helping people, making them feel good about themselves," Maddox said.

"I know she would do (the same) for me if I was in her situation."

Raffle items include a tool basket from Pioneer Transmission, a hair product basket, a free session with Hermiston-based photographer Ashley Seibel a growler and gift card to Neighbor Dudes tap house. Raffle tickets can be purchased at Club 24 in Hermiston, Saturday afternoon at Hermiston Funfest on Main Street and at Neon Nights.

Bentz plans to put the money raised from Neon Nights towards her cancer treatment expenses. When she comes out to Neon Nights, Bentz expects it to be an emotional night.

"I'll probably bring out the tissues," she said.

Interested participants can register for Neon Nights at www.club24fit.com.

BRIEFLY

Worker rescued from inside onion hopper

HERMISTON — A Columbia Basin Spreaders employee had to be cut from an onion hopper after getting stuck inside Tuesday morning. Emergency crews responded to the call of a male stuck inside a bin near Hermiston at 9:30 a.m.

According to Jim Davis of Umatilla County Fire District 1, the man had apparently been trying to use a stick to unjam the hopper that drops onions onto a conveyor belt. The exact circumstances were unclear to Davis, but somehow the man ended up in the equipment with onions on top of him.

Seven people from the fire district worked to get the man free. Eventually crews had to cut a hole in the onion bin to loosen the onions around him and release the man. He was then taken by ambulance to Good Shepherd Medical Center, though Davis said the employee was doing OK and had no obvious injuries.

Columbia Basin Spreaders declined to comment.

Grange offers meet-and-greet potluck

LXINGON — Aaron Auer of ROAR Ministries will be the special guest at a meet-and-greet potluck dinner Thursday at the Lexington Grange, 66296 Marquardt Road. The potluck begins at 7 p.m.

The community is invited to bring a dish to share and hear Auer speak about the history of Oregon and our future. Everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, call Douglas Marquardt at 541-276-1736 or 541-429-1456.

Jubilee Lake hosts kids' fishing day

A pair of fishing events tailored to kids and families will be held Saturday in Eastern Oregon.

The annual kids' fishing day at Jubilee Lake will run from 9 a.m. to noon, sponsored by the Tri-State Steelheaders, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Umatilla National Forest. Jubilee Lake is located off Highway 204, 12 miles northeast of Tollgate on Forest Road 64.

Kids 14 years old and under are invited to participate, and must be accompanied by an adult. Fishing rods will be available to loan, and

volunteers will be on hand to provide instruction to first-time anglers. Activities include a casting contest, with prizes awarded for each age group.

The lake will be stocked with fish, and free hot dogs and soda will be available for everyone who attends. For more information, call Bill Dowdy, fisheries biologist with the Umatilla National Forest, at 509-522-6042.

The second annual Family Fishing Day at Anthony Lake in Baker County will also run Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. That event is sponsored by ODFW, the Powder Basin Watershed council and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Kids over the age of 12 must have a valid fishing license to participate.

For more information, contact Kayla Morinaga at 541-962-8536.

Oldies Night features 1971 hits

MILTON-FREEWATER — Fans of Three Dog Night's "Joy to the World" will want to make tracks to Wesley United Methodist Church Saturday beginning at 7:30 p.m. as BJ the DJ (Bob Jones) spins the hits of 1971.

Other chart toppers that year include Michael Jackson's first solo hit, "Got To Be There," surprise No. 1 artist James Brown, and other newbies including John Denver, Carly Simon, Cat Stevens, Helen Reddy and more.

Jones brings three hours of "cheap, trashy rock 'n' roll" to the church the second Saturday of every month, and it's free to attend. The Frogs supply refreshments, and the music is always family-friendly. Comments, questions and dancing are encouraged.

For more information, contact Jones at 541-938-7028 or dubuquer@charter.net.

Hermiston woman turns 100

HERMISTON — Margaret Thorpe of Hermiston is turning 100. Thorpe's family is holding a birthday open house at the ARC Building, 215 W. Orchard, this Saturday.

The family asks that you not bring gifts, but stop by and visit with the centenarian. People are encouraged to come by between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to help celebrate.

The ARC Building is located at 215 W. Orchard Ave., next to the Hermiston Post Office and McKenzie Park.

PENDLETON

Musician releases ode to Bowie

Song, music video available on YouTube

By GEORGE PLAVEN
East Oregonian

Mandi Miller had just taken a sabbatical in January to write new music with her bandmate, Mark "Android" Wilson, when they heard David Bowie died.

"David Bowie was such a legend," said Miller, who lives in Christchurch, New Zealand, but grew up in Pendleton. "He started almost fantastical imaginations in rock."

The news moved Miller and Wilson to create their own tribute, titled "Starman in the Stars: Ode to Bowie," which was released on June 22. The original song and music video are available on the band's YouTube channel.

The single also features a children's choir made up of Miller's singing students from Christchurch. The video was filmed in studio, with a dash of spacey visual effects. "Starman in the Stars" is a play on Bowie's hit song, "Starman," which gave rise to the alter ego Ziggy Stardust.

"(Bowie) was just as much an actor as he was a musician," Miller said. "He had characters. ... That sort of revolutionized the way people thought of and made music."

Miller graduated from Pendleton High School in 1988 and from Blue Mountain Community College in 1990. She has spent the last 18 years in New Zealand, where she has been a part of two solo acts, a four-piece rock band and now her latest collaboration with Wilson.

Between gigging and teaching local schoolchildren, Miller said music is her sole occupation. She's hoping the Bowie tribute can earn her and Wilson some additional exposure while they work on recording more original music.

"I know my hometown



Contributed photo by Hal Tapley

Pendleton native Mandi Miller and her bandmate, Mark Android, perform their ode to David Bowie, titled "Starman in the Stars."

Miller said. "The full impact is really what you want to experience."

Miller said she and Wilson are already working on a second single, and striving toward a full album. She said fans can keep up with her work by subscribing to her YouTube channel and Facebook page, where they will release new material.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

will get behind me on this. They always have," Miller said.

Writing "Starman in the Stars" came with its own set of unique challenges. Apart from the title, the song makes several references to Bowie's work, which means she had to be careful to avoid copyright infringement.

In some cases, Miller said they had to make tweaks to their lyrics, but they're thrilled with the way the song came out.

"I think it's just as good or better," she said.

Miller describes the music as a cross between soft rock and adult contemporary. She said the choir adds another rich layer to the song, which begs to be listened to on high quality.

"The most important thing is to listen to it on the best sound quality you can,"

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The family of Donald "Donny" Briggs would like to extend our sincere gratitude to friends and family for their support and friendship during our trying time.

Thank You to Ron and Val at Pendleton Pioneer Chapel for their guidance through a very difficult time, and Thank You to John Rehberg for officiating.

A Special Thank You to Jackie and her group at the Eagles for the wonderful dinner they provided after Donny's service.

A Very Special Thank You to the staff at Ashley Manor-Athens for their devotion and care that Donny received while he was there.



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