Quilt: Display honoring organ donors and recipients will travel across the state

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"Each block is much more than pieces of fabric," said Aimee Adelmann, director of education and outreach at Donate Life Northwest, which organized the event. "It is a way to continue to tell stories of how many people have been impacted by organ, eye and tissue donation."

Joining Toelle-Jackson on Saturday were two local heart recipients who had also made quilt squares.

Phil Weitz had a heart transplant in 2012 after a massive heart attack. The tall Umatilla resident with glasses and a goatee said he survived with the aid of a left ventricle assist device until the transplant.

Weitz moved temporarily to Spokane to be close in case a heart came available. He said he was grocery shopping one day when he got a call from the medical team.

"Are you ready to come to the hospital for a transplant?" the caller asked, and Weitz felt the ground fall from under him. He looked down at his full cart and said, "What do I do with all this food? I'm getting a heart transplant." An employee told him just to go and some of the shoppers clapped as he left the store.

After his transplant, he felt grateful to the donor, but no guilt.

"They told me I might have sorrow and grief because someone died and I had lived," Weitz said.

"I felt no guilt because I didn't end his life. I felt blessed and gifted because of this man."

Weitz later met his donor's sister and brother, who came to Umatilla to meet him and listen to his heart. He learned the man died after falling off a curb and hitting his head.

"You never know when you get up each morning," Weitz said. "We take our days for granted."

Cindy McIntyre, of Hermiston, spoke after Weitz. McIntyre's odyssey started one day in the car with her husband Steve. Sudden fatigue washed over her and she laid her head back.

"Steve looked over at me and I had a beet-red face, eyes rolled back and I was foaming at the mouth," she said. "He hit me in the chest, which apparently got my heart started again."

He ran red lights to get her to Good Shepherd Medical Center. She learned she was in congestive heart failure from previously undiagnosed hypoplastic left heart syndrome, a congenital defect. She had 56 more episodes in the following months and believes she was only hours from death when a heart came available.

"A couple of hours later I would have been a goner," McIntyre said. "Then my doctor called and asked, 'How would you like a new heart tonight?'"

Five years later, she looks healthy. Both she and Weitz tell their stories as volunteers for Donate Life Northwest to motivate others to mark yes on the organ donation box on their driver's licenses.

Adelmann said representatives from the organization spend time at Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles offices around the Northwest, informing employees about organ donation so they can answer the public's questions or refer them.

"Ninety-nine percent of registrations come from the DMV," she said. "They do a lot of really important work."

The organization also brings the quilt into various DMVs so customers can get a more personal look at organ donation and its aftermath.

The quilt will travel around the state. Toelle-Jackson will host the quilt at this summer's Harney County Fair.

Toelle-Jackson said she doesn't regret the decision to donate Rylee's organs.

"Driving home the three hours without her was the hardest thing we have ever done, but knowing she has given three other families some hope gives some purpose to our loss and pain," she said.

"Being able to donate has helped our family. Even in the darkest hour, there lives hope."

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Heart recipient Phil Weitz, of Umatilla, chats with Autumn Toelle-Jackson, the mother of a little girl who lives on in the three people who received her organs. The pair stands by the Threads of Life quilt unveiled Saturday at the Pendleton Center for the Arts.

Abortion: Rule questioned

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voluntary family planning."

The new rules would have banned abortion referrals by taxpayer-funded clinics. Such a clinic could give a list of health care providers to a pregnant woman, but not say which ones provide abortion procedures, even if the woman was seeking such a procedure.

"This is madness," McShane wrote.

McShane compared the new rules to a novel by Franz Kafka, whose protagonists face bizarre or surrealistic predicaments.

"If a woman seeks to have a legal abortion and requests a referral from her Title X provider, the Final Rule requires a referral for prenatal care," the judge wrote.

The new rules would also have prohibited clinics that receive federal money from sharing office space with abortion providers.

Supporters of the changes say they return Title X's regulations back to their original legislative intent that "none of the funds appropriated under this title shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning."

Sanctuary: Meeting set Wednesday to discuss issue

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the preservation ordinance, sets up civil fines for violators, up to $2,000 for a person and $4,000 for a corporation.

Bonifer said he talked with Commissioner John Shafer and Sheriff Terry Rowan about the new ordinance and met with Commissioner George Murdock. Those conversations led to the commissioners putting the item on the agenda for their Wednesday meeting starting at 9 a.m. at the Umatilla County courthouse Pendleton.

Murdock, the board chairman, said the county is not referring this to the voters.

"Our assessment is we cannot put it on the ballot because it's not constitutional," he said.

That is the recommendation of county counsel Doug Olsen, who explained the law in Oregon requires measures to include the full text, but the proposal does not itemize all it would do.

"So by doing that, you don't know what you're voting for," he said. "It's not sufficient to know what you are adopting."

That is the primary reason the Columbia County Clerk's Office in January rejected an initiative petition to put the sanctuary ordinance on the ballot there.

The petitioner, Chris Brumbles of Deer Island, then filed a request in circuit court for a review of the county's decision. Judge Ted Grove on April 12 ruled the clerk was right to reject the proposal.

The measure would nullify any state or federal laws restricting the use or possession of guns, Grove found, and lacks a full list of the prohibitions it would establish, thus a voter would not know what other laws the measure would curtail. This ambiguity, Grove stated, violates the constitutional requirement.

Bonifer, however, said he is still going to make his case Wednesday morning. He said the county needs to take a stand because the Legislature is considering laws that would erode the gun rights of Oregonians. He also has spread the word about the county meeting and the proposal.

"I'm hoping there's going to be quite a few people show up," Bonifer said. "It should be a very interesting meeting."

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