

CANCER from A6

me up with a second mammogram and an ultrasound Dec. 26 and, on Jan. 5, I had a biopsy. I believe it was either last Monday or Tuesday [Oct. 8 or 9] that I got the diagnosis — and the ... it's not just shock that you're having something eating you, but the kindness of the people. The unbelievable kindness.”

[In 2016, PeaceHealth unveiled its new 3D mammography machine. The purchase had been the result of a community fundraising campaign after the previous machine was deemed obsolete. The hospital noted that the 3D technology would allow patients to undergo scans in Cottage Grove, rather than travelling to Eugene. The machine would also be able to detect potential health issues at an early stage. This is the machine Jeppesen had her initial scans on.]

“From the very beginning, you’re not left alone. My own doctor, Dr. Peterson, called me with the diagnosis and that had to be hard, very hard for someone. My surgeon was wonderful, my oncologist was wonderful. The very first time I met him I said, ‘What do I do? What’s the pro-cess?’ And he said, ‘Well, you answer the phone and you show up when you’re supposed

to.’ So, I didn’t have to make my own appointments. Willamette Valley Cancer Institute in Eugene, you check in once and you’re cared for all the way through.

“An MRI is pretty much laying on a bed, in a tube with a jackhammer. It’s just noisy. It doesn’t hurt, it’s just noisy. Clank, clank, clank, clank. You have to have an MRI after the biopsy, to pin-point exactly where you are. So, you’re lying on your stomach with what feels like a 2x4 between your breasts and then they put you in with the jackhammer. But, there was just, you’re just taken care of every inch of the way.

“I’ve never ever been late for my mammogram. My husband passed away almost 10 years ago, so my job — so my children aren’t orphans — is to do whatever I’m supposed to. They caught this so early and it was growing very quickly.”

[According to the National Cancer Institute, breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in America but the number of women who have died from the disease has been steadily declining since 1989 thanks to early detection.]

“There are different types of breast cancer and I have two different types. One is called triple negative because it isn’t this or that or this. Three negatives and there you are. It spreads on

a cellular level and it’s very aggressive and it doesn’t need a tumor to get going. It just needs one little escapee. They did the surgery, which they very seldom do mastectomies anymore, they’ll do partials, everything has improved that much more.

[The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the number of double mastectomies tripled between 2005 and 2013 but have since been on the decline and a larger percentage of mastectomies in the cases of cancer have been requested by the patient.]

“But 20 percent of what I have — had — is HR2, which is hormone related. Estrogen receptor and his handwriting is legible, so much better than mine. A doctor wrote that, isn’t that amaz-ing?”

[On a sheet of paper in the binder Jeppesen keeps full of meal delivery options, all of her diag-nosis paperwork and doctors’ contact information is a sheet of white paper with black ink scribbled over it explaining her diagnosis. The phrasing takes it away from the multi-syllable medical terms and brings it to one, simple conclusion written at the end of a line of explanation: “You are curable.”]

“I started every other week, two different types of chemo so that was eight weeks total and then I switched over to a medication and that was to be 12 weeks and then I had radiation

af-ter that. It makes you very ill. The very first treatment, they have bays of chairs and I was told I’d be in this chair and it was a nurse with her back towards me and on the seat of her britches it said ‘rebel’ so I knew I’d be fine. It is, not everyone gets all the side effects. The only thing I missed was nausea. I had bleeding, finger-nails, skin, shortness of breath — I don’t think I missed much. Sores in your mouth, food didn’t taste good. If it hadn’t been for the VanGorders, I may have starved to death because I literally could not cook.

“I have finished chemo and radiation. I was just starting to get all my energy back when I had to begin the hormone blocker and that has its own side effects.”

[The American Cancer Society reports that some types of breast cancer are affected by hormones in the blood. Some cancer cells have receptors that attach to estrogen, which helps them to grow. Hormone therapy is a way to stop estrogen from attaching to these receptors.]

“They caught it very early and treatment was aggressive. I had a port, you can still see the scar a little bit. You have this little lump under your skin and they hit it with a thumbtack so they can feed the medication into you without having to find a vein each time. It’s already there, it’s a hole, it’s

ready to go. I ended up with a blood clot in my jugular vein but I went on blood thinner and it took care of it. I got off pretty easy with the blood thinners — I had a few falls. That Feb-ruary we had some black ice and I walk my dog every morning. I think I’ve missed one morning since I’ve been sick but I put my foot down on the metal divider on the bridge and down I went.

“What they tell you when you have your final treatment and what you don’t really believe until you’re there is, ‘Congratulations, this is your last day but it’s going to continue to burn and get a lot worse over the next couple of weeks’ and my goodness, it does.

“We have no family history of cancer and so it’s, you know, ‘oh breast cancer, yeah that’s too bad’ and then suddenly you’re there. But, my sister and all three of my daughters got their mammograms within a month after I was diagnosed. It’s, you just go through the gate and suddenly you’re not the same person you were.”

Editor’s Note: This interview was edited for length and clarity. If you or someone you know would like to share your breast cancer story with The Sentinel, please email cmay@cgsentinel.com.



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Outdoor burning season further delayed until Oct. 20

The fall outdoor burning season will open on Saturday, Oct. 20, for many Lane County residents. The season, originally set to start Oct. 1, was delayed until Oct. 13 then pushed back further due to continued fire danger.

The Lane County Fire Defense Board and Oregon Department of Forestry decided to postpone the opening of the season in Lane County since weather conditions have been too dry.

The small amounts of precipitation the county has seen this week has not been enough to reduce fire risks and allow residential outdoor burning.

Outdoor burning, also known as open or backyard burning, allows some Lane County residents to burn dry woody yard debris that was generated on their own residential property.

Rules concerning outdoor burning differ throughout the county, with some cities banning burning within city limits all together.


Before starting a fire, all residents must check the daily burning advisory, which indicates to the community if burning is prohibited on a given day. The advisory also tells residents when all fires must be extinguished by.

The daily burning advisory can be found by calling Lane Regional Air Protection Agency’s advisory line at 541-726-3976 or by visiting www.lrapa.org.

To prevent any uncontrolled fires, the Fire Defense Board reminds all residents that all outdoor burning must be constantly attended until extinguished with water nearby.

Due to the heavy wildfire smoke intrusions this summer, LRAPA encourages residents to explore alternatives to burning. Residents can dispose of woody yard debris for a minimal charge at one of Lane County’s various collection depots or with Rexius and Lane Forest Products.

Chipping and composting are also alternative options to burning.



In Honor of All Veterans

The Cottage Grove Sentinel is preparing to publish its “Salute to Vets” a special section devoted to all military veterans who are Cottage Grove-area residents or have a connection to this area.

If you are interested in sharing your military story in the annual Veterans Day publication, or in updating information that we have published previously, please complete the form below and submit it to the Cottage Grove Sentinel. Service photographs are also welcome.

Submit forms and photos (preferably) by e-mail to cgnews@cgsentinel.com; or by mail to Cottage Grove Sentinel, Attn: Caitlyn May, PO Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424; or drop forms off at the Cottage Grove Sentinel, 116 N. 6th Street, Cottage Grove.

Please be sure that all materials are carefully labeled with your name and phone number. **ALL FORMS AND PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY OCTOBER 31, 2018.**

Thank you for participating in this project to remember and honor our veterans.

Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Rank Achieved (optional): _____

Dates Served: _____


Where did you serve? _____

Special Information (E.G., POW): _____

Has your veterans information been published previously in the Cottage Grove Sentinel Veterans Publication?
YES NO

Do we have your military photo(s) on file? YES NO

(Note: If you have submitted photos in the past, we will still have them on file.)



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For centuries in towns and cities across North America, local newspapers have served as the voice for the public good and as a powerful connection between citizens and the communities around them.

Oct. 7-13 is National Newspaper Week, a time to salute the dedicated professionals who work hard to bring you the news.

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