



Kevin McMillan plans to get this 1975 Pontiac Astra in racing shape to raise awareness for multiple sclerosis.

EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

# RACE FOR MS

Monmouth man hopes to raise money and awareness for MS through races

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Kevin McMillan, 44, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2012, but suspects he has had the disease since high school.

"It took a couple years to get diagnosed," he said. "Looking back, it looks like I had my first episode or exacerbation in high school. My freshman year when I was 14, the whole left side of my body went numb."

Multiple sclerosis is a disease that affects the central nervous system, disrupting the smooth flow of nerve impulses, causing the symptoms of MS, according to the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America's website.

Common symptoms include fatigue, numbness, visual disturbances, bladder problems, mobility issues and more.

In the last three years, McMillan has tried three different medications to help with MS, all without success.

"What I want to do is raise awareness and, hopefully, money for MS," he said. "So I'm going to put together this drag car and race it at the Woodburn drag strip and other drag strips in the Pacific Northwest."

## How you can help

**What:** "Race for Multiple Sclerosis" gofundme page.  
**Where:** <https://www.gofundme.com/n4ef7mr8>.  
**Of note:** Kevin McMillan has a car donated, but it lacks an engine and other parts to be ready to drag race. McMillan hopes to put decals on the car and set up booths at races to promote education and awareness of MS, as well as raise money to help those with MS and for research.

McMillan has started a gofundme page, "Race for Multiple Sclerosis," in efforts to raise money or parts to build the racer. So far, he has had a car donated for his efforts and raised \$625.

"We're trying to round up information to hand out and get donations," he said. "We want to have a booth and table with pamphlets and everything."

McMillan and his family have long been into racing. He and his twin brother got started on the drag circuit while going to Central High School.

"The whole family has been into cars," he said. "My dad kind of got us into it. We raced in the high school drags a little bit. Actually, the first time I ever raced in the high school drags, I took second place. I was pumped."

Although MS has affected McMillan's vision, he can still see well enough to

drive — and he prefers to drive fast.

He loves the competition and adrenaline rush of racing, he said.

"I think it's something you're born with," McMillan said. "You either enjoy it, or you could care less."

MS affects one's ability to regulate temperature, McMillan said, so cooling vests are useful, particularly in summertime. Cooling vests and other medical supplies, such as canes and walkers, can be obtained from MS organizations, such as the MS Association of America. But they are back-ordered and it could take weeks to get a patient needed equipment.

McMillan said one of the things he will donate the money to is helping organizations provide needed medical tools to those who suffer from MS.

"It's pretty basic," he said.

"But most people who have MS are in debt up to their eyeballs."

Adam Garcia, owner of Precision Spa Services in Independence, donated a 1975 Pontiac Astra to the cause.

"Both of those McMillan brothers have a long history of being passionate about what they do when it comes to their cars and their hobby with racing cars," he said. "I've been watching them through the years, grow and develop and do really well."

When he heard they were in trouble and needed help, he said he had no problems with stepping in.

"They have some time that I don't, and they have passion and a very serious disease that they're talking about that does need a lot of attention," Garcia said. "I believe there are a lot of illnesses out there that do need attention. This is one that we don't talk about much."

The Astra has a lot of history for Garcia and a lot of sentimental value. For it to be used to promote awareness and earn money for MS is a "perfect situation for the car," Garcia said.

"I'm really looking forward to working closer with these guys and helping them achieve their goal, and see what happens," he said.

# Squatters: Falls City seeks answers

Continued from 1A

"One, I worked directly with the bank to tell them that they had squatters at the property," she said. "I don't think they cared."

City officials say addressing the situation doesn't look like it will be easy given the city's limitations.

"There's got to be things that we as a city can do for these vacant homes," Councilor Jenn Drill said. "Is there a way to find out what our options are?"

Protheroe said, as written, the city's code restricts its power to address the issue. That can be solved, but will take some time with a short-handed staff.

Protheroe noted that revisions in the code would have to take into account the city's financial restrictions and couldn't just be modeled after other cities.

Ungricht noted the banks and the code aren't the only hurdles in the way.

"Most of the cities you are talking about do have a code enforcer," Ungricht said. "We are being double hammered on these properties, not only within our code, but not having an active code enforcer."

Falls City hasn't had a code officer since 2014, and its city court has been inactive for the same length of time.

Councilor Tony Meier said even cities with code officers have had difficulties dealing with abandoned properties and the people who choose to live in them.

"A lot of big cities are having the same problem that the banks just won't take care of it, and they are in the same situation we are," Meier said. "There's not much they can do except condemn it and bulldoze it."

Ungricht said he wants to work for something better. After talking with the Polk Community Development Corporation and Falls City's Service Integration Team, he believes the plan to have ownership transferred could work.

"We could get some properties, and there are people willing to build on them," he said.

## Man arrested on firearms charges

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — An Independence man was arrested on Monday after officers and deputies attempted to contact him for roughly six hours.

On Monday at about 3:18 a.m., Independence Police officers responded to the area of Kbel Yliniemi and Stryker roads in Independence on multiple calls of shots fired.

Independence officers and a Monmouth officer on scene heard additional shots fired and determined they were coming from the backyard of one residence, said Independence Sgt. Timo Banuelos.

There was no indication that the shots were being directed at anyone specifically, he said.

With the assistance of officers and deputies from Dallas Police and the Polk County Sheriff's Office, a perimeter was set while attempts were made to contact the suspect without exposing anyone involved to unnecessary peril, Banuelos said.

An armored vehicle from the sheriff's office was used to facilitate the contact attempts. Stryker Road was

closed and neighborhood residents were alerted to the incident and directed to stay in their homes.

After several hours of unsuccessful attempts to contact the suspect directly, most of the involved officers cleared the area, leaving behind a monitoring unit while other officers continued to attempt contact with friends and relatives of the suspect, Banuelos said.

At about 9:15 a.m., Robert Christiansen, 57, was contacted by police at his residence and later taken into custody without incident for unlawful use of a weapon, reckless endangering, and disorderly conduct. The involved firearms were seized from the residence. Banuelos said alcohol may have been involved in the incident.

"We would like to thank the Monmouth Police ..., the ... Sheriff's Office and the Dallas Police ... for all of their assistance," Banuelos said. "We would also like to thank the residents of the Kbel Yliniemi neighborhood ... (and) ... the friends of Mr. Christiansen who helped resolve the situation without incident."

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

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**Friday - Saturday Jan 29 - Jan 30**

THE 5TH WAVE (Digital) (PG13)	(1:45 4:25) 7:05 9:35
THE REVENANT (Digital) (R)	(12:00 3:05) 6:10 9:15
FINEST HOURS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(1:45) 7:15
FINEST HOURS (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG13)	(4:35) 9:40
KUNG FU PANDA 3 (Digital 2D) (PG)	(12:10 4:50) 7:10 9:25
KUNG FU PANDA 3 (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG)	(2:35)
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(12:20 3:25) 6:30 9:30
13 HOURS (Digital) (R)	(12:05 3:15) 6:25 9:25
NORM OF THE NORTH (Digital) (PG)	(12:30)
THE BOY (Digital) (PG13)	(2:45 5:00) 7:20 9:25
DIRTY GRANDPA (Digital) (R)	(12:15 2:40 5:05) 7:30 9:55

**Sunday January 31**

THE 5TH WAVE (Digital) (PG13)	(1:45 4:25) 7:05 9:35
THE REVENANT (Digital) (R)	(12:00 3:05) 6:10 9:15
FINEST HOURS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(1:45) 7:15
FINEST HOURS (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG13)	(4:35)
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THE BOY (Digital) (PG13)	(2:45 5:00) 7:20 9:25
DIRTY GRANDPA (Digital) (R)	(12:15 2:40 5:05) 7:30 9:55

**Monday - Thursday Feb 1 - Feb 4**

THE 5TH WAVE (Digital) (PG13)	(1:45 4:25) 7:05 9:35
THE REVENANT (Digital) (R)	(3:05) 6:10
FINEST HOURS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(1:45) 7:15
FINEST HOURS (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG13)	(4:35)
KUNG FU PANDA 3 (Digital 2D) (PG)	(4:50) 7:10
KUNG FU PANDA 3 (NEC Dolby 3D) (PG)	(2:35)
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS (Digital 2D) (PG13)	(3:25) 6:30
13 HOURS (Digital) (R)	(3:15) 6:25
THE BOY (Digital) (PG13)	(2:45 5:00) 7:20 9:25
DIRTY GRANDPA (Digital) (R)	(2:40 5:05) 7:30