

Polk County  
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**RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Author shares story of hope**

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — When Jeri Miller Houle was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in August, 2012, it was as if she fell into a black pit of despair.

After seeing her mother fight the same cancer for 10 years before dying from it, Houle said she was ready to give up on life.

"I was done," she said. "I didn't want to do this. I was literally cutting my husband's hair and my son's hair and I said, 'You guys are going to have to find another hair dresser.' They said, 'Stop it. You've got to fight.'"

It was a turning point for her.

"I've got to figure out how to fight," she said. Houle, who graduated from Dallas High School in 1980, started treatment with a 10-second injection in her stomach.

Compared to the hours-long, intravenous chemotherapy her mother endured, she said treatment had come a long way.

Part of the reason for advances in research are fundraisers such as Relay For Life, through the American Cancer Society.

Relay participants raise money for research to help find a cure while raising awareness about cancer, including how to prevent the disease and how to spot it.

The annual, 24-hour event takes place on Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Independence Riverview Park, 50 C St.

Houle's blood cancer was discovered after a Grand Canyon white-water rafting excursion for her 50th birthday.

She said her husband had such bad kidney stones while there, they nearly had to evacuate him via air ambulance.

When she got home, her back was in great pain.

Not wanting to risk anything, Houle promptly went to the doctor.

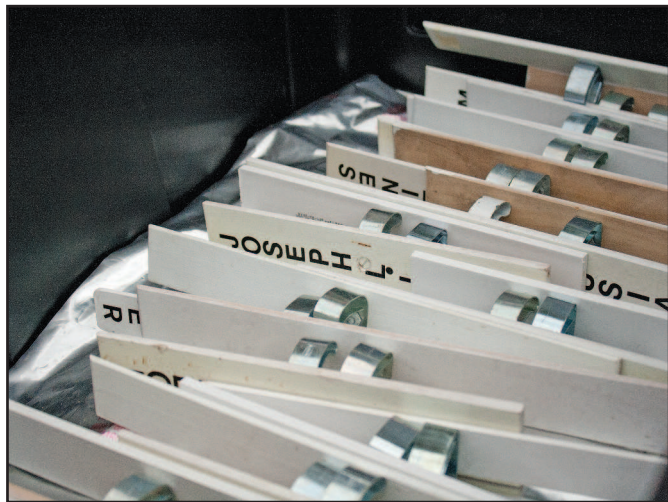
"I thought, 'I am not going through what I saw (my husband) go through,'" Houle said.

The doctor found some blood in her urine, and, though it could have been kidney stones, didn't take any chances.

Houle went for blood tests.

See **CANCER**, Page 5A

**Remember the fallen**



**Top:** Oregon Army National Guard soldiers helped put up the Avenue of Flags display in Dallas Cemetery Thursday. Monday, the American Legion held the hour-long ceremony honoring those who served our country. Other events marking Memorial Day were held in Independence, Grand Ronde and at Western Oregon University. **Center:** Names of the fallen are displayed on the nearly 700 flags lining the roads through Dallas Cemetery. **Right:** The first flag of the display has a patriotic sign affixed to it. The second flag honors POWs.

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

**Lack of communication leads to confusion over lotto money**

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Commissioners have changed how the county distributes its share of video lottery proceeds for economic development.

That is within the board's right.

The only problem is the county had told the long-term recipients, the cities of Dallas, Independence and Monmouth, to expect an estimated amount for this fiscal year, ending June 30.

As was practice, the cities budgeted the money and expected it when the county

**Inside**

•The Polk County Budget Committee approved the 2016-17 budget on May 25. See Page 5A.

received its distribution.

They didn't, and weren't officially told until March or April they should not expect the money.

Dallas already began spending its share on its "Take a Closer Look" marketing campaign.

The amounts going to the cities aren't huge — less than \$20,000 for each

city — but the lack of communication has left the cities "perplexed" as one city official described it.

County Administrator Greg Hansen said he sent a letter to Monmouth in October, informing City Manager Scott McClure that the county was considering changes in economic development money distribution and other programs.

Commissioner Craig Pope said the board decided to create a grant program that was open to private business and government bodies.

He said that process would provide more infor-

mation beforehand about how the money would be used and reporting on how the money helped the business or city after the grant is received.

Hansen said making that change had been a long-term goal of the board.

"Not that the cities were doing anything wrong with the money, the board just wanted a better feel for where the monies were going," Hansen said.

Hansen took responsibility for the poor communication with the cities, saying he should have informed them earlier that the change was coming.

See **LOTTO**, Page 5A

**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS**

Learn about what the city council is doing about the Dallas Aquatic Center.

»Page 2A

**FALLS CITY**

Meet Kyle Smith, a senior graduating from Falls City High School on Thursday.

»Page 14A

**INDEPENDENCE**

Polk Fire No. 1 burns a manufactured home in Buena Vista last week to help train firefighters.

»Page 6A

**MONMOUTH**

The peafowl who make their home near Monmouth Elementary School are looking for more territory.

»Page 3A

**PERRYDALE**

Perrydale presents "Seussical the Musical."

»Page 2A

**SPORTS**

Dallas' baseball team eliminated in the first round of the 5A state playoffs.

»Page 11A

**Substance abuse training offered**

**Itemizer-Observer staff report**  
DALLAS — Polk County Family and Community Outreach will offer substance abuse awareness training Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

There is no cost to attend the training at Bollman Auditorium at Dallas High School.

The training is titled "Vaping, edibles, drinkables and more. What legalization and novel products mean to our youth."

The training will help attendees understand youth marketing messages, identify new and common drug delivery products, understand support systems available for youth and to have a basic understanding of laws and local statistical trends.

The training is not appropriate for minors.

For more information: www.co.polk.or.us/fco/prevention/tobacco-prevention-and-education-0.

**THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK**



**wed**  
Join Betty and others for a friendly game of Scrabble at the Independence Public Library. Refreshments served. 1 p.m. Free.



Mostly sunny  
Hi: 79  
Lo: 54

**thu**  
Author Colleen Houck will talk about her New York Times bestsellers at the Dallas Public Library. 6:30 p.m. Free.



Partly sunny  
Hi: 76  
Lo: 53

**fri**  
Listen to the stylings of Sean Jones at Western Oregon University, the finale for the Smith Fine Arts Series 2016-17. 7:30 p.m. \$25-\$28.



Sunny  
Hi: 83  
Lo: 57

**sat**  
Relay for Life, a 24-hour American Cancer Society fundraising event, kicks off at Riverview Park. 10 a.m. Free.



Sunny  
Hi: 92  
Lo: 60

**sun**  
Dallas Alliance Church hosts Bach, Beethoven and Beyond, an evening of music and refreshments. 7 p.m. Free.



Sunny  
Hi: 88  
Lo: 56

**mon**  
It's never too late to start learning an instrument with the New Horizons Orchestra, which meets at CHS. 6:30 p.m. \$25/mo.



Mostly sunny  
Hi: 81  
Lo: 52

**tue**  
Court Street will close for Dallas' Department Expo, a chance for the public to see and learn about city services. 4-7 p.m. Free.



Sunny  
Hi: 77  
Lo: 50