

## GOP GROUPS CELEBRATE GROWTH AT RALLY



KENNY COLSTON/THE OLDHAM ERA

U.S. Senate Rand Paul delivers a speech on reducing federal spending to Republican voters at last Friday's Multi-County GOP Rally, which included Oldham, Henry, Trimble, Carroll and Shelby counties.

BY KENNY COLSTON

REPORTER, THE OLDHAM ERA

For the first time ever, five local Republican groups joined together to celebrate their growing political strength with the state's top GOP officials.

The Republican parties of Henry, Oldham, Trimble, Carroll and Shelby joined together last Friday for the first ever Multi-County GOP Picnic, drawing U.S. Sens. Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul as headliners.

Congressman Thomas Massie and Agriculture Commissioner James Comer joined the state's two U.S. senators at the event, in addition to dozens of local officials from the five counties.

The event took place in a field in Henry County, just off Exit 28 on Interstate 71.

Henry County GOP chairman Jon Park, the event's emcee, said organizers counted more than 400 cars in the event's parking lot, calling the event a success.

"We're very pleased with turnout," Park said.

Elected officials delivered red meat speeches to their GOP constituents, as well as praised the five communities for breaking through with increased and continued wins in local elections.

"When you look at the growth of our party in the last decade, look at these counties," Comer

*See 'Rally,' page A2*

## Pumpkin Derby: Rolling for a reason

BY KENNY COLSTON

REPORTER, THE OLDHAM ERA

Over the past four years, Ellie McDearman has been working on a golden idea.

It involves pumpkins and face painting, games and prizes, crafts and raffles -- everything a 16-year-old girl might want at a party.

But this isn't about Ellie's next birthday bash or about just having a fun time. This is about Ellie's mother, Julie. This golden idea is about her.

Julie has been dealing with multiple sclerosis for almost eight years now, handling what many call an "invisible disease" where stereotypes lead to pictures of helpless people bound to wheelchairs.

Together, Julie and Ellie want to take that stereotype and roll it away with the first ever M.S. Pumpkin Derby at Louisville Slugger Field on Nov. 2.

The basis of the event is multi-faceted. First, it will serve

as the culmination of Ellie's Gold Star Award from the Kentuckiana Girl Scout Council. Second, it will include non-pumpkin games and prizes.

But the two biggest draws are the pumpkin racing and decorating contests and the education of the general public about MS.

Really, it's about that last part.

"When I tell my friends my mom has MS, they don't understand," Ellie said. "If I said she had cancer, they would understand. But with MS, they don't see it."

For Ellie, that's the point.

Julie isn't helpless or wheelchair bound, but because MS affects the central nervous system, she can struggle with simple tasks like picking up a pencil. Problems can last for days, weeks or months and can come and go.

The disease at its worst can leave people paralyzed. For lesser cases, problems still occur with basic motor functions or

make them extremely difficult, but a person can still function. The stigma of the disease leaves those who aren't wheelchair bound in a bind.

"I've had it for more than seven years and I initially did not tell people at work," Julie McDearman said. "I didn't tell them because I didn't want them to think I couldn't do my job. I didn't want them to think I would be a liability, because I'm not."

But as Ellie has solidified the Pumpkin Derby over the last two years, Julie said she realized that hiding her MS encouraged the stereotype and contributed to ignorance of the disease.

"The longer people don't tell others what MS really is, because the stereotype is you're in a wheelchair, the worse the stereotype gets," Julie said. "I realized if I didn't support (Ellie), then we would never get to a point where we could show people what MS really is."

*See 'Derby,' page A2*



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ellie McDearman has organized an event to bring about awareness for multiple sclerosis, a condition from which her mother suffers. Similar to a pinewood derby, Pumpkin Derby participants put wheels on pumpkins, like this Hello Kitty themed one Ellie is holding above.

## Bothur puts her heart into Kidney Walk

BY WESLEY ROBINSON

INTERN/THE OLDHAM ERA

It's been nearly seven years since Donna Bothur donated her kidney but she's still actively working to raise awareness to help those in need.

"If everybody in Oldham County were aware of this that's all the more people that would become a donor," Bothur said. "If they knew about it and how uncomplicated it was to donate when you're alive, maybe more people would do it."

Bothur, 46, of Crestwood is gearing up for the Louisville Kidney Walk at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 29 at Riverfront Park. The 13th annual walk is a 5K and will feature health and wellness tents, food and drink and kid zones to entertain youth.

Since she donated her kidney in 2006, Bothur has participated in the walk and has raised the most money of all individual fundraisers, tallying between \$1,000 and \$2,000 each year. Bothur said she walks for awareness so people will consider donating kidneys, as well other organs.

"It's priceless," Bothur said of organ donation. "There are 17 people who die every day waiting

*See 'Kidney,' page A2*

## 'Mayor for life' to be honored

BY ZACH OSOWSKI

REPORTER, THE OLDHAM ERA

It can be hard to run anything by yourself, let alone a city, but that is what Crestwood Mayor Dennis Deibel has been doing since 1972. He is the mayor, clerk and accountant of a city that has exploded in population recently. All calls to the city go directly to his cell phone.

"I believe that the smaller the government the better," Deibel said. His government in Crestwood is about as small as it can get.

For Deibel, community service was important to him at a very young age. When he was a teenager, he joined the South Oldham Fire Department as a volunteer. His father and brother were already members and he wanted to join to help people.

While he is no longer fighting fires, Deibel still serves the SOFD as the chairman of their board.

"I'm still with it because I'm proud of what we have accomplished," Deibel said. "We have become one of the best fire departments in the county."

Pride in his city and an interest to serve led him into elected office.



Mayor Dennis Deibel

Deibel credits the citizens of Crestwood for his longevity as the mayor. He was selected as mayor in 1972 just two years after Crestwood became a city. In those 41 years, Deibel said he has received exactly two "belligerent" phone calls from citizens. He has also never been opposed in his bid for mayor.

"They keep voting me in," Deibel said. "So I like to think they're either satisfied with me or smarter than me."

The biggest opposition Deibel has ever received was when he, along with the city commission, decided to install sewers for the city. Because of the construction and new taxes it would bring, many people were initially against it. But Deibel said it has helped Crestwood continue to grow.

"It has promoted growth in the community. We've got the Walgreens, the CVS and the strip center," Deibel said. "Lot of that stuff we wouldn't have if we didn't have sewers."

Because of the small size of the government, Deibel said they are able to hold very informal meetings where citizens can come and just talk about things they have problems with. He said

*See 'Deibel,' page A2*

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# P&Z RETURNS TO OLD PLAN

BY ZACH OSOWSKI  
REPORTER, THE OLDHAM ERA

Oldham County's planning and zoning commission has re-adopted a comprehensive plan previously passed in 2007.

After Fiscal Court turned down the commission's latest comprehensive plan, the county was left without a plan upon which to base decisions. Chairman Kevin Jeffries said the commission will continue to work on the new comprehensive plan but wanted to pass the old one so they could have working guidelines.

The commission adopted the 2007 plan for current use on Sept. 11. State law requires a county to approve a comprehensive plan at least every five years.

The commission unanimously adopted the so-called 2007 plan, which was originally passed back in 2002 when the county first introduced comprehensive plans. Because the commission didn't amend anything in the goals and objectives, it does not have to go to

the city governments or the county for approval.

"This is a temporary measure," Jim Urban, director of the planning and zoning commission, said. "But the Study Review committee felt it was important to adopt our old plan."

Oldham County's first comprehensive plan was passed in 2002. Urban said the same plan was adopted in 2007 because the commission didn't feel any changes needed to be made. The 2013 plan had many new changes including a land use map.

While city governments do not have the authority to approve the comprehensive plan itself, they can reject or accept the commission's goals and objectives. Oldham County Fiscal Court, Pewee Valley, Crestwood and La Grange all get a chance to vote on the goals and objectives.

Fiscal Court's biggest problem came in determining how the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) were addressed. The goals said ADUs are a growing trend and should

be made available for people to zone and construct. Some of the county magistrates disagreed and said the language regarding ADUs needs to be very tightly regulated.

For these reasons, the court did not approve a motion to accept the goals and objectives which means the Study Review committee will have to redo that section, Urban said.

"They will try to make it more appealing," Urban said. "But it could take four or five months."

Because they are creating new goals and objectives, the commission is obligated to hold public meetings on the new language.

The SRC will hold its next meeting on Sept. 26 to discuss possible changes.

All this effort is gearing up for the new zoning ordinance which will be discussed after a comprehensive plan is adopted. Urban said the zoning ordinance, and not the comprehensive plan, is what really has the teeth for regulating buildings like ADUs.

## 'Deibel'

Continued from A1

that often solves the problem.

"One thing I've learned is you have to be a good listener," he said.

In addition to running Crestwood, Deibel also owns and operates his own greenhouse company, growing and selling flowers to local and nationally owned stores. Like the volunteer firefighting, Deibel's green thumb was genetic. He is a third generation greenhouse owner and the business has grown tremendously under the ownership of him and his brother.

Deibel said he grew up wanting to one day take over the family business but that day came sooner than he expected when his father passed away when Deibel was only 17.

"My brother and I took it over and we

only had about 15,000 square feet," he said. "We've got about 130,000 now and we're going to add another 25,000 more. It's been a growing business, in plants and sales."

Because he has been involved in public service for Crestwood and Oldham County for so long, Deibel is being honored by the Oldham County Historical Society. At the society's annual gala next weekend, Deibel will be added to the list of Oldham County Champions of History, which honors Oldham County residents who have made great contributions to the county.

"I am very pleased to be a recipient," Deibel said. "I don't do it for the glory but I'm proud that I've been able to help both Crestwood and Oldham County over the years."

Despite his many years wearing many hats, Deibel has no plans to slow down anytime soon on the mayorship or in his

business.

"I'm going to be here until they have to carry me out," Deibel said, looking around his office at the greenhouse.

As for the city, he is up for re-election in November of next year and said he plans on running again as long as the people are still satisfied with the work he is doing.

"Crestwood is a great city," he said. "And I couldn't have done this for as long as I have without the support of the people."

Deibel will receive his award at the Oldham County Historical Society Gala, the Bit and Bridle Ball which will be held on Sept. 27, at the History Center grounds from 6:30 to 11p.m. Tickets are \$125 each.

For information contact the Oldham County Historical Society at 222-0826.

*Email us about this story at zach@oldhamera.com*



KENNY COLSTON/THE OLDHAM ERA

Members of the Oldham County Republican Party talk with residents at the Multi-County GOP Rally. Oldham was one of five county GOP groups who helped put on the rally.

## 'Rally'

Continued from A1

said.

Massie kicked off the speaking by criticizing Congress, even taking shots at members of his own party in the U.S. House of Representatives. He encouraged the GOP to stay on the attack when it comes to the issues.

"Some people say that the House of Representatives should play defense to Harry Reid and Barack Obama," Massie said

in his speech. "I disagree. You sent me to Washington to be on the offensive."

Both Paul and McConnell criticized the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare, with McConnell calling it the "worst piece of legislation in modern history."

McConnell, who is up for re-election in 2014, also promoted his position as U.S. Senate minority leader as a main reason to re-elect him.

McConnell is facing businessman Matt Bevin in a Republican primary and is likely

to face Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes, a Democrat, in a general election matchup.

Paul also spoke on continuing to reduce federal spending by eliminating useless grants and research to being smart about defense spending.

Park said the goal is to turn the rally into an annual event, which he said is likely to happen after such high turnout.

Park also said he got commitments from many of the elected officials in attendance to return again.

## 'Kidney'

Continued from A1

for an organ."

Her kidney donation saved the life of her husband's cousin John Mark Stepanowski, 45, of Bridgeport, Conn. Stepanowski said he has been on dialysis for 15 months and the stress of diabetes and treatment was taking a toll on him. He had been on dialysis for three years for several hours four times a week.

"I can honestly say I saw people die in front of me on the dialysis machine," Stepanowski said. "After a certain point, you think you're the next one."

When Bothur's husband told her about Stepanowski, she said she asked what she could do to help. After tests and tissue matching, Bothur said doctors found out she was a perfect match. Stepanowski's blood relatives fared better than Bothur on the tests, which matches up to 10 points. Stepanowski's father was only an 8-point match, but had health issues of his own and could not donate.

"I thought somebody had to do something," Bothur said. "If I could do something about it,

I would like to have (helped in some way). I just thought it would be neat to help somebody. His family was going through hell and I didn't know if I could live with myself if I didn't do anything."

Stepanowski said the doctors were astounded that Bothur's organs were a perfect match considering the lack of blood relation. Nonetheless, he and his family were happy to have a chance at a healthy life.

"It was like getting a death sentence revoked," Stepanowski said, adding that he was probably on his "last leg" of living.

Bothur said donating was a fairly easy process. Other than the tests she took to determine whether she was a match, she was only off work for a month on short-term disability. Her only restriction was no heavy lifting and after surgery she said she opted for Tylenol for pain. Small scars from the surgery incisions are the only visible sign of her donation.

In addition to the selfless act of donating, Bothur remains dedicated to the annual walk and fundraiser, the Louisville Kidney Walk.

April Enix, development director with the National Kidney

Foundation, said the goal is to raise \$145,000 at this event to spread awareness.

"There's so many people in Kentucky who could be at risk and don't know it until they're educated," Enix said. "People who have kidney disease may not know it. Symptoms aren't [always] evident ... it's not as evident as some other issues but it's still a killer."

Enix said she Bothur has been the top individual fundraiser the past few years and is on pace to meet that goal this year. Bothur said she is hopeful the kidney walk can reach the scale of the local cancer walk, so that people will become more aware of kidney issues.

Bothur, a registered organ donor, said she gives blood regularly and would like to donate bone marrow as well. She said she would donate another kidney if she could.

"It was a very enriching experience for me to see the good that it did for the whole family," Bothur said. "It was the most rewarding thing that I've ever done."

*For more information about the Louisville Kidney Walk, contact April Enix at 502.585.5433 ext. 105 or [april.enix@kidney.org](mailto:april.enix@kidney.org).*

## 'Derby'

Continued from A1

### Earning Her Gold Award

Ellie McDearman is a 16-year-old student at North Oldham High School. She and her family live in Goshen. She's been an active Girl Scout in the region for the last 11 years.

Now, Ellie is about to go for one of the last and most important achievements a Girl Scout can earn: the Gold Award.

Part of the requirements is the impact must be lasting -- enter the Pumpkin Derby. To meet the requirements, Ellie and Julie have set up a non-profit corporation to continue the derby annually.

Julie will serve as the organization's president for two reasons: first, because the McDearmans were unsure of putting then 15-year-old Ellie in charge of a non-profit,

and second, so that Julie can make sure the annual event continues to run smoothly when Ellie leaves for college in a few years.

In addition to her mother, Ellie is also relying on an adviser and a committee formed to help both her Gold Star Award candidacy and the event.

One of those additional helpers is Lorie Marcum, a close friend of the McDearmans' and a former employee of the regional Girl Scout organization.

For Marcum, her role in the derby started 11 years ago, when she met Julie, who signed her 5-year-old daughter up for Girl Scouts.

"And I just remember Julie saying 'I don't know what I'm going to do if Ellie isn't a Girl Scout because I love Girl Scouts,'" Marcum said.

Julie is a former Girl Scout herself and the current troop leader in the Goshen area. She has always

been a strong influence on Ellie, Marcum said, and bases her strengths off her experience as a Girl Scout.

When things hit a snag with organizing the Derby or when it comes to needing more supplies, Marcum has been the one the McDearmans called.

"I have said, 'tell me what you need and I will do what I can to find it,'" Marcum said.

This often includes finding more pumpkins or helping put together games. The event is personal for Marcum too, beyond her friendship with Julie.

"I have a sister-in-law and a step-sister with MS," Marcum said. "So it's personal to me to learn more about this disease. (This event) is about awareness. It's about her mother who has MS. It's about educating the public."

Ellie's project is larger than most Gold Star Award projects. Marcum, who has

decades of experience with Girl Scouts, said most projects are similar to park beautification. Setting up a large, annual event supported by a non-profit organization is "above and beyond" what most projects include, Marcum said.

"The scope, the largeness of this and the amount of people it will reach is what makes this above and beyond," Marcum said. "Once people are aware of what a MS patient goes through they will be more likely to support the MS community and research."

### Off To The Races

The focus has always been to educate the public about MS. But the Pumpkin Derby is to draw people in.

During the derby, racers will outfit their pumpkins with wheels and roll them down a track. The inspiration came from a well-known California race

and the orange color of the pumpkin is often used to symbolize the disease, Ellie said.

Ellie has never participated in a pumpkin derby before. But she has made a handful of pumpkin racers for practice.

Julie said pumpkin racing is sort of like pinewood derby racing, but the MS derby plans to be less "intense" than those matches. Most racers insert metal rods into the base of the pumpkin and then attach wheels to make a racer.

In order to race in the derby, hopefuls must register at [mspumpkinderby.com](http://mspumpkinderby.com) by October 21. Each racer is charged a \$25 fee. For those less competitive, a pumpkin decorating contest will also be held.

The event is free of charge to attend. A KidsZone pass for one turn on all the rides costs \$5.

The McDearman's hope the general pub-

lic will become more aware of what MS really is, while creating a fun event currently unavailable in Louisville.

"If you know a little about it, hopefully you'll be a better family member, a better friend and a better employer or employee," Julie said.

And for Lorie Marcum, the event will be the culmination seeing a 5-year-old Ellie turn into an amazing leader.

"I think she'll make a huge impact on this community and I don't just mean Goshen" she said.

*To learn more about the MS Pumpkin Derby, including how to register to race in the derby, go to [mspumpkinderby.com](http://mspumpkinderby.com).*

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