

Polk County
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Death raises questions

Undermanned sheriff's office criticized for response protocol

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Could he have been saved? That's the question on the minds of law enforcement officials, emergency responders and the public alike following the death of Chris Clothier, 24, at his parents' home outside Dallas on Jan. 19.

For Clothier's parents, the answer is certain. If a deputy had been available and medics had arrived sooner, their son would still be alive. "He had a heart attack," said Tina Clothier, Chris' mother. "People live through heart attacks if they get help soon enough."



Clothier

and son," who wanted to go to nursing school before he was diagnosed with schizophrenia at age 19.

James and Tina Clothier say they hope emergency response protocol will be improved as a result of what happened to their son — so another family doesn't have to go through what they are now. Clothier suffered a "schiz-

ophrenic episode" after Polk County sheriff's deputies, due to reduced patrol hours, were not available to respond. The call quickly escalated to a medical emergency, but given confusion about the nature of the situation, an ambulance crew decided to wait until a police officer could secure the scene. However, by the time a Dallas officer was able to respond, Clothier had stopped breathing.

Tina Clothier said, contrary to what official reports indicate, that Chris still had a pulse when Dallas police got there, but in the few minutes it took medics to arrive, he died.



Wolfe

Polk County Sheriff Bob Wolfe said the medical examiner's autopsy concluded the cause of death was excited delirium and cardiac failure. A toxicology test also found methamphetamine in Clothier's system, something his family said was a way to self-medicate his mental illness.

Wolfe said given how quickly the incident escalated, he wasn't sure the outcome could have been avoided.

See **DEATH**, Page 14A

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS NEWS

Want to trick your brain into thinking that healthy broccoli actually tastes good?

Just put something you like to eat up to your nose and breathe in while chewing your vegetables.

That was just one of the scientific tidbits Dallas elementary school students and their families learned during Family Science Night Thursday at Oakdale Heights Elementary School.

The "taste and smell" experiment was a popular one all night — perhaps because it used candy to teach students, and the occasional parent, how connected our sense of taste is to our sense of smell.

»Page 18A

FALLS CITY NEWS

OK pizza lovers, brace yourselves.

The Bread Board in Falls City is no longer offering its popular and yummy brick oven pizzas — at least on a regular basis.

"We will have pizza on special occasions," said The Bread Board co-owner Keith Zinn.

The decision to scale back operations at the bakery — The Bread Board will also now be closed on Sundays — was about "restoring some balance" in owners Zinn and John Volkmann's life.

"Consequently, we've decided to make some changes to our business ...," read an online update.

»Page 5A

INDEPENDENCE NEWS

Independence will become a hub of importing and exporting goods via train and trucks when White's Hauling expands.

The company hopes to have the new operation on Hoffman Road up and running by June, said Cody White, co-owner.

"Our plan is to connect to the short line there with (Portland & Western Railroad) and bring in a rail siding, or track, to both ship out wheat and bring in grain," White said.

"We'll import-export basically anything the local economy demands and supports: timber, lumber, steel."

»Page 2A

MONMOUTH NEWS

When it comes to people trying to get personal information of any kind, it is not rude to just hang up, close the door or delete an email.

In fact, it's the smartest thing to do, said Ellen Klem, director of consumer outreach and education for the Office of the Attorney General, at a presentation about how to protect against fraud before an audience of about 25 at the Monmouth Senior Center on Monday.

"If Rachel from Card Holder Services calls and asks you to press 1 to be removed from the call list, just hang up," she said.

»Page 2A

POLK COUNTY NEWS

Family Building Blocks, a Salem-based child abuse prevention nonprofit, recently opened a Dallas office, offering play groups and parent education to families in Dallas, Monmouth, Independence and Falls City.

Family Building Blocks (FBB) has an office in West Salem, but saw a need to open a more centrally located facility in Polk County, said Gabriela Maldonado Bell, the program supervisor in Dallas. The organization serves families struggling to care for their young children due to poverty, domestic violence, drug abuse, or mental health or other issues.

»Page 3A



AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-Observer

MaKenzie Fernandez, left, and Derrick Zamudio learn to work as a team to put a fire out as trainer Dell Weston watches.

SURVIVAL TRAINING

Teen CERT members gain experience to deal with disasters

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — If a major snowstorm hit the region or the dreaded "big one" happened, would your teenager know what to do?

The members of a new club at Dallas High School will, as part of Polk County's Teen Community Emergency Response Team (Teen CERT).

Countywide, there are 11 members of the teen program. But with the help of club founder Maurice Dalton, that number could grow to 16, said Kimber Townsend, Polk County CERT's program coordinator.

"That would make us the third largest teen program in the state," she said.

A Dallas High sophomore, Dalton, who is already a CERT and a rare teen trainer,



AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-Observer

CERT trainer Dell Weston leads Polk County CERT's fire safety and hazardous materials modules Monday night. The session concluded with trainees extinguishing fires.

decided to launch the club as part of his Eagle Scout capstone project.

"I decided to try to do something unique and build a CERT team," he said.

Dalton said the club meets once a month to keep Teen CERTs updated on training exercises, make sure first aid kits are up to date at the high school, and address potential

safety hazards. He's recruited four DHS students to join the CERT training session that began Jan. 19 in Dallas.

"I'm actually quite pleased with the turnout," he said of the new club.

Dalton has been involved with CERT since 2013. He said he wanted to go through the training to learn to be prepared. He said the best time to incorporate that mindset is at a young age.

"People our age are more flexible, so it's better to learn this now before it becomes inconvenient," he said.

Townsend has the same goal in mind and was more than happy to help Dalton complete his Eagle Scout project. She said in the end, those in his club will be better able to survive an emergency situation — and help others around them.

See **TRAINING**, Page 14A

<p>THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK</p>	<p>wed</p> <p>It's the final Wednesday of the month, and that means yoga in the hopyard at Rogue Ales Farm near Buena Vista. 6 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Fog and Clouds Hi: 54 Lo: 41</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>James2 Community Kitchen offers meals for everyone in the area every Thursday at Dallas United Methodist Church. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Fog; Mostly Cloudy Hi: 54 Lo: 38</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Bring an instrument or just sit back and listen during the weekly Guthrie Park Community Center acoustic music jam. 7-10 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Fog; Mostly Sunny Hi: 54 Lo: 37</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>It's a showdown for first place in the GNAC as Western Oregon hosts Seattle Pacific in men's basketball action. 7 p.m. \$4-\$6.</p> <p>Fog; Mostly Cloudy Hi: 53 Lo: 40</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>It may be Super Bowl Sunday, but the Polk Flea Market will be open for its usual session at the fairgrounds in Rickreall. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. \$1.</p> <p>Showers Likely Hi: 54 Lo: 44</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Support the Dragons by attending a meeting of the Dallas High School Booster Club in the DHS library. 7 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Rain Likely Hi: 53 Lo: 42</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>There's an American Red Cross blood drive scheduled at Western Oregon University's Werner University Center. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Chance of Showers Hi: 51 Lo: 37</p>
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