

EDITORIALS

Take a closer look around Polk County

Welcome to “Polk Wonderland,” nestled in the heart of the Willamette Valley, a county filled with more wonders than imagined and plenty of choices and opportunities to explore for a lifetime.

In this edition of the *Itemizer-Observer*, you will discover a special section filled with stories about many of Polk County’s gems — some hidden, some in plain sight.

Take a drive and view the vistas and panoramic views, forests and farmland along byways and back roads of the area. Hike the many trails at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge and the walking trails in our communities. From short, tree-lined strolls with family to longer treks through pristine forests, you will find something for all ages. Biking is another popular mode of transportation in the county including an internationally known mountain biking area just outside of Falls City. Looking for a more quiet, slower pace? Visit the Luckiamute State Natural Area and hike or canoe.

Wines and vineyards abound in the Willamette Valley, and Polk County sits right in the center of many award-winning producers of many of Oregon’s fine wines. There are plenty of wine varieties and selections to please many a palate. The wines produced in our county have found their way to restaurants throughout the world. This is an exciting time in Polk County for growers, wineries and the wine lover because of the high quality of wine being made here.

Craft beers have found a welcoming environment in Polk County. Independence, historically known as the hop capital of world, is the location of Rogue Hop Farm. Their presence has elevated the craft beer industry to new heights, and the community has seen a surge in local establishments featuring a large variety of choice beers and spirits.

Don’t wait for out-of-town visitors to get out and explore our county. Take a look through the special section inside, and put it in your guest room. Pick an outing and head out for an adventure. Send us a letter or post on Facebook and let us know what you think.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the Itemizer-Observer via fax (503-623-2395) or email (ionews@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Chemeketa Community College Board** — 7 p.m., Chemeketa Community College, 4000 Lancaster Drive NE, Salem. A work session will begin at 4:30 p.m., followed by an executive session (ORS 192.660 (2)). Executive sessions are not open to the public.

THURSDAY, MAY 21

- **Polk County Fair Board** — 8 a.m., Polk County Fairgrounds and Event Center, Main Building, Meeting Room No. 2, 520 S. Pacific Highway (99W), Rickreall. 503-623-3048.
- **Dallas Economic Development Committee** — Noon, City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.
- **Independence Parks and Recreation Board** — 6 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth Arts and Culture Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Rickreall Watershed Council** — 1 p.m., Delbert Hunter Arboretum House, Dallas City Park. 503-623-9680.

MONDAY, MAY 25

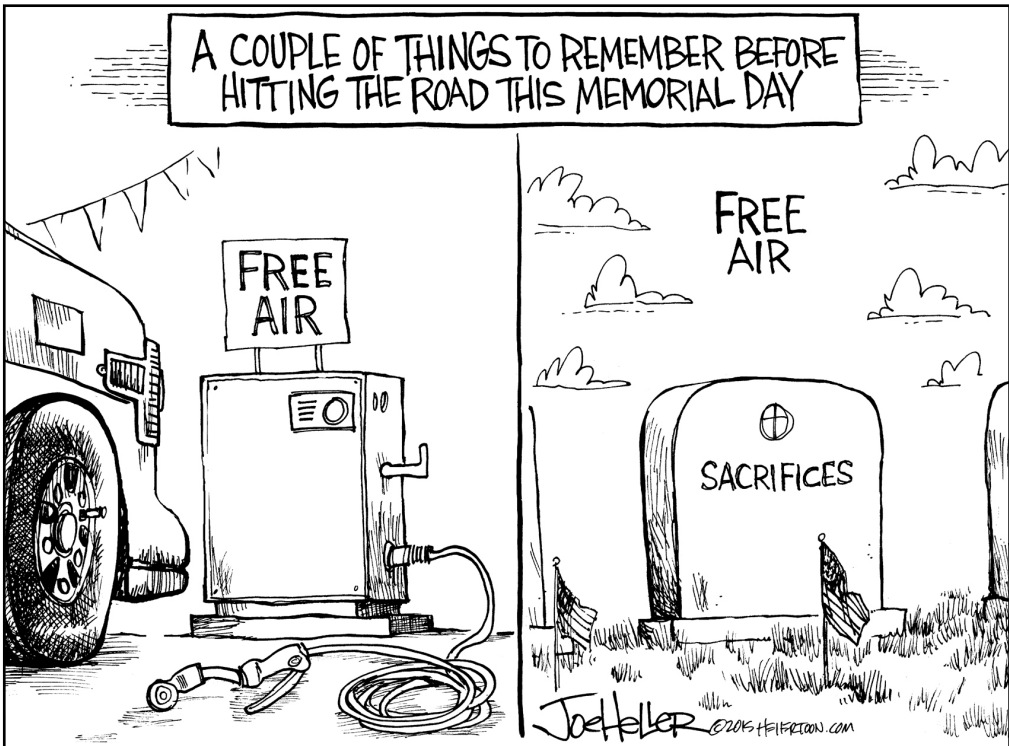
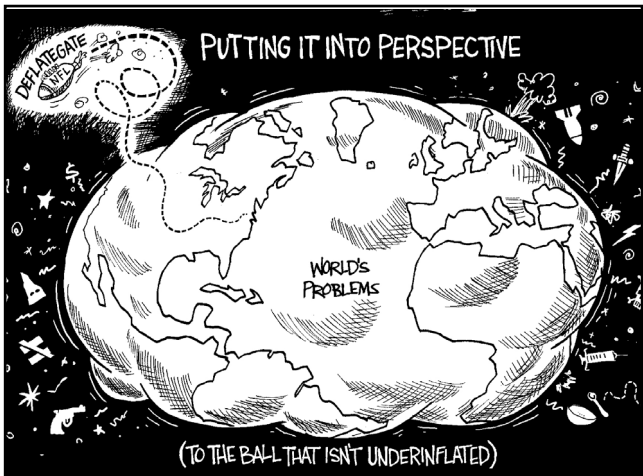
- **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1811.
- **Dallas School District Board of Directors** — 6:30 p.m., Dallas School District office board room, 111 SW Ash St., Dallas. 503-623-9664, ext. 2334

TUESDAY, MAY 26

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Independence City Council** — 7:30 a.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sale of public lands not answer

On March 26, the U.S. Senate passed Senate Amendment 838, a budget amendment enabling the sale and transfer of federal public lands, in a 51-49 vote.

The reasoning behind this effort is that the land is mismanaged by the Feds, that some land is “excess,” and that the sale could be used to pay off the national debt.

With an outdoor industry that generates \$6 billion annually and supports 6.1 million jobs, this is an absurd way to reduce the debt, as any business owner can tell you that you don’t sell off the tools of your trade in order to pay your rent. Not if you want to stay in business.

As an outdoorsman, I’d hope that the unique American legacy of protecting wild places for the enjoyment and education of its citizens would continue in perpetuity, and I am simply horrified at this narrow and short-sighted proposal.

In a society where very little is available for free, access to public land remains a birthright and refuge that anyone can enjoy, regardless of income level. It isn’t difficult to imagine who would benefit the most from such sales and transfers (sponsors include folks with close ties to oil and mining interests), but it is clear to me that once enacted, we will never get those lands back.

The problems that are mentioned in the proposals have a basis in reality, but the principle of land being held for the benefit of all is not the problem, and selling it out from under the public is clearly not the solution.

Please let your representative know that you oppose such irreversible measures to alleviate temporary problems.

Matthew Grady
Dallas

Honor veterans at Avenue of Flags

The Avenue of Flags was started in 1991 by our Dallas veteran organizations.

It turned out to be a tremendous project and one with great emotional impact.

We started with about 70

flags, each with the name of a deceased veteran on a small plaque. It kept growing until last year, 2014, when we put up well over 600 flags.

On Memorial Day, they flew proudly in the breeze on the hill of our Dallas Cemetery.

Veterans and their families volunteer their time to work at setting up the display.

It took some physical doing and planning by a group of men and women who gave the community a gift that expresses the feelings of the whole community toward those who have given so much.

So if you know any of the men and women who work hard to put up the flags, tell them how much you appreciate their efforts.

They include members of the American Legion Post 20, American Legion Auxiliary unit 20, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3203, as well as some citizens who have stepped forward and volunteered.

Please come out and join us in remembering the Dallas veterans who are no longer with us on Monday at 11 a.m. at the Dallas Cemetery.

Beth A. Lillibridge
Dallas

A walk down memory lane

I worked at the Blue Garden for Keith and Laverne Sanders for many years during its heyday. I have so many memories of it.

I remember the big table out front with all of the Main Street businessmen drinking coffee and solving the world’s problems every morning.

One night the electricity went out — it was darker than a cave in the bar.

We got a lot of candles, pushed the piano out on the dance floor, and Jerry Mason played and sang for hours. We served cold sandwiches, free poured drinks, and everyone had a great time.

The band Cascade Sweethearts, with Joe and Judy Keener, and brother Dean on the drums, played every weekend, and the place was packed.

How about James Gardenier’s movie, “The Promise,” which had several scenes, in front of and in the bar.

I first met my husband

there (he was one of the customers), and several years later I met him for coffee in front of the Blue Garden and the rest is history. Could I come in and serve coffee during the grand opening?

I know where everything is.

Billie Labonte
Willamina

Support for troops appreciated

I am writing this letter to thank the people of Polk County, specifically Upsilon Master, for their great support to Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan during the last year of deployment.

The ladies of Upsilon Master provided wonderful reminders of home during Thanksgiving and Christmas, including nearly a hundred stockings that were stuffed with donations from individuals and businesses in Polk County.

There were also several individuals, Karen Humelbaugh, Jen Vonderahe, Jacque Ford and Karen Horner, who sent packages and mail to the team here.

This support is yet another reason that I am proud to be from Monmouth, as the support for personnel deployed was amazing.

Many of the soldiers,

sailors, airmen, and marines

were the beneficiaries of dona-

tations from people who they don't know and likely

will never meet.

However, I am truly blessed to know these people, and the communities they represent, and wanted to thank them and the entire Polk County community for its support.

Greg Ford
Kapolei, Hawaii

Want to write a letter?

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period. Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed.

Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

For more information: ionews@polkio.com, or 503-623-2373.

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