

EDITORIALS

Focus should be on students

The state legislators are again attacking the future of education, attempting to put a stop to fifth-year programs such as Dallas High School's Extended Campus.

The program gives high school students the chance to earn a certificate, transfer or associate degree through an agreement with Chemeketa Community College — while staying enrolled in high school. Dallas High foots the bill for tuition fees, books and transportation, as well as provides counselors for kids transitioning into the college system.

Legislators and the Oregon School Boards Association are against programs like this — which also are found in Central and Falls City school districts — because "it's not fair to larger school districts."

The idea is if Portland and Eugene school districts began offering the program, it would use too much money from the K-12 state education fund.

Efforts to end the program without discussing alternative ways to pay for it are shortsighted.

If successful, it will begin chipping away at local control, for starters. This program is an agreement between local school boards and local community colleges. One reason it works is because local school boards can set graduation requirements higher than the state mandates.

It would work against the state goal of 40-40-20. This ambitious goal aims to have 40 percent of Oregonians with a bachelor's degree or higher; 40 percent with an associate or two-year degree; and 20 percent with a high school diploma — in the next 10 years.

Fifth- and sixth-year programs send students off into the world already meeting one of those 40 percent goals: with a high school diploma and a two-year degree or certificate.

The program has many other strengths and benefits, including the nearly 80 percent retention rate for college freshmen in the program and the boon to first-generation students — the very students who may make or break the 40-40-20 goal.

What the legislature and OSBA seem to be forgetting is a more educated populace is more likely to make more money, thereby boosting the very economy that keeps the K-12 education — and all other — state funding up.

They are shooting themselves in the foot by trying to end the program out of jealousy or spite, disguised as concern for education funding, rather than finding a way to pay for a program that works.

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, JUNE 17

- **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.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

- **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** — 2 p.m., Delbert Hunter Arboretum House, Dallas City Park.

MONDAY, JUNE 22

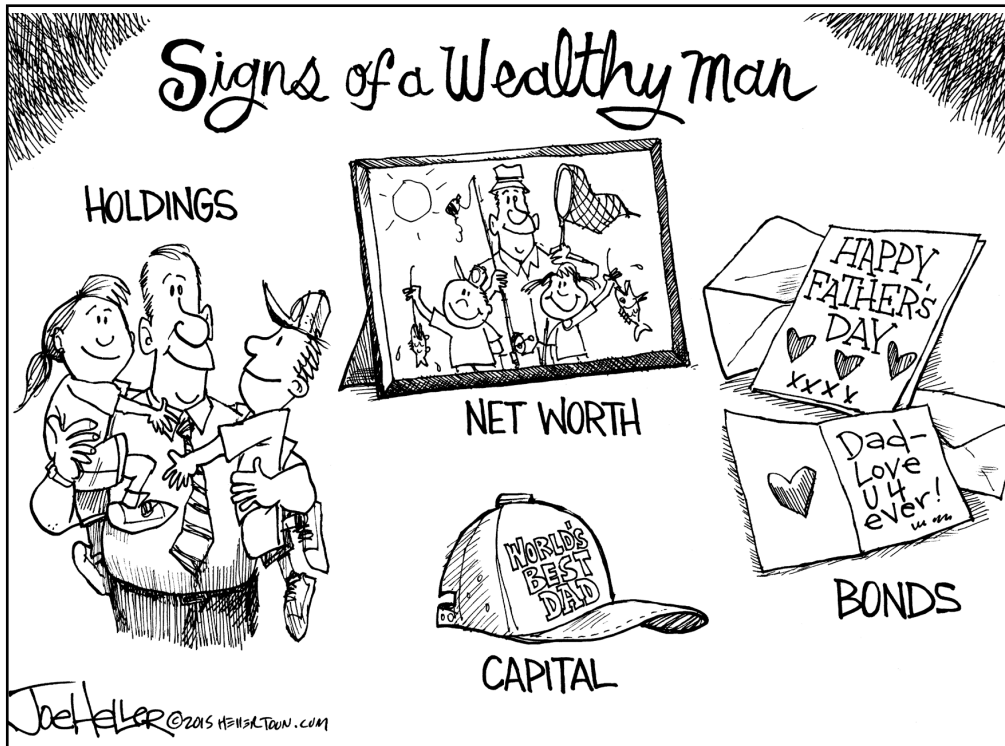
- **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1811.
- **Dallas School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Dallas School District office board room, 111 SW Ash St., Dallas. 503-623-9664, ext. 2334.

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

- **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, JUNE 24

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some advice for drivers and ODOT

Dear Oregon Department of Transportation:

• We need signal lights where traveled (high usage) roads intersect with highways, e.g. Highway 22; especially where left-hand turns are made.

• Pedestrian crossings near schools — we need flashing yellow light signals — push button. Top 10 Accidents — ODOT places signs along the highways and interstates. Perhaps drivers may glance at the signs and heed their warnings, where drivers/passengers died. Include first name, month/year and type of accident at that location.

• New law — no left turns except at directional light or onto one-way street. Install roundabouts so cars can change direction and make right-hand turns.

• For drivers:
• As soon as we pass the ODL tests we forget the laws. Our self-discipline is lacking. Most drivers are blind to speed limits, like west of West Salem — 50 mph. Add cautionary statements — example: "caution — children and cross traffic." We have reasons for lower speed limits.

• Blind spots — consider adding 1½-inch mirror attached to the drivers/passenger mirrors. Be aware if a vehicle is in your blind spot.

• Before turning into lane, turn head in direction of turn. This is critical.

• Car length gap — if a car shoots in front of your car, be prepared to slow down.

• Be alert to cars changing lanes at fast speeds. Know where vehicles are in all directions from your car.

• Most dangerous turn is a left-hand turn — broad-side of car is in opposing

lane. Some drivers make left-hand turns with a few seconds clearance.

Let's focus on more signal lights at busy intersections, pedestrian flashing signal lights near schools, and cautionary statements below speed limit signs.

Kenneth Johnson
Dallas

Graveside plants hold memories

My letter is addressed to whomever took the plants from my husband's grave between June 3 and June 5. I water his plants every two days, as I want his resting place to be pretty.

I watered June 3 and went on June 6 to get his cross and plants, as I knew all flowers and plants would be removed on June 8, only to discover all four plants were gone. The caretaker assured me they do not remove plants until the deadline posted.

I know plants have been taken before as my grandson's plants have been taken, along with many other people's plants.

Last year an elderly lady was crying because someone had taken her husband's plants. I always ignored the plants being gone as I thought it was young people taking them.

This year, however, I don't believe it was young people taking the plants as they carefully unwound the vines of the clematis and gardenia from the cross.

They left the night lights skewers I used to keep the plants in place to make it appear they were removed on the deadline.

The reason I purchased the gardenia for his grave was it was his favorite flower and he would surprise me with different kinds of gardenia gifts.

I had the perfect place to plant the gardenia so I could open the window, enjoy the fragrance and recall special memories of our time together.

You may not think it's important it's just plants, but I wanted whoever is taking the plants to know the hurt you create.

You are not only taking other people's property (plants) you are taking other people's memories.

Elsie M. Ford
Dallas

Dr. Willey's care will be missed

I bid adieu to Robert Willey, M.D. He is closing his Dallas area practice on June 30. I understand from his staff that his last day will be set aside for informal good-byes at his office from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

I wish him the very best in life beyond his practice, and I am saddened by the loss of his practical approach to my care over many years.

I can't speak for others, but I will miss his availability, directness, diagnostic skills, conversation without the obstruction of a computer screen, and his genuine care for my well-being.

He's a fine doctor. He reflects a standard against which I will measure the efficacy of care under a new primary care physician, which may be a challenge since the expanding bureaucracy in medicine seems to drive patient care as much as, or more than a physician's judgment.

Dr. Willey, enjoy post-practice life, continue to do some good somewhere somehow, and know that for this former patient you are much appreciated — and will be missed. Thank you.

Roger Fletcher
Dallas

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.

Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number, even if submitted online.

Street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals, not organizations, and must be original sub-

missions to the *I-O*, not copies of letters sent to other media.

Letters of thanks to businesses, individuals and organizations are limited to 10 names.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday.

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Polk County
Itemizer-ObsERVER

Vol. 140, No. 24

(USPS) - 437-380

The official newspaper of Polk County • Serving Polk County families since 1875

Winner of 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2014 General Excellence Awards from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association

Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, OR, Independence, OR and Monmouth, OR. Published weekly at 147 SE Court Street Dallas, Oregon 97338 Phone: 503-623-2373 Fax: 503-623-2395

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Polk County — One Year \$27
Other Oregon Counties — One Year \$33
Outside of Oregon — One Year \$38

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to: Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, Oregon 97338

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