

**EDITORIALS**

**Play it safe while summer lasts**

It's nearly that time of year again, when students will be heading back to school. Summer is nearly over, with just a few performances left on outdoor stages in Dallas, Independence and Monmouth.

And what a summer it's been, with temperatures consistently in the 90s, and often in triple digits. Rain totals have been about 0.01 for three months. It's enough to make some question if we're still in Oregon.

As you head out to enjoy these last few weeks, be safe about it. This is one of Oregon's driest years on record, and fires seem to start just by looking at the grass in the wrong way.

It may be fun to roast marshmallows by a campfire and sing songs, but preventing a forest fire by skipping it this year is may be a better choice.

The rivers are low and as unpredictable as ever. Remember to always wear a lifejacket if you play in or on the rivers.

With another heat wave coming through the valley this week, it's still important to hydrate, especially for young athletes who are training for fall sports. Get plenty of rest, and see our story on Page 10A for more tips from local coaches on safely training in the heat.

Of course the old-timers will say this isn't abnormal. Oregon has had dry spells just like it has its wet spells. As we all try and do our part to conserve water at home, we may have another dry, warm winter ahead. The National Weather Service is unsure about how this year's El Nino will affect us. It may mean warm and wet, but maybe just warm.

On the bright side, the Old Farmers Almanac is predicting a colder than normal, whiter winter for the Pacific Northwest. Is a white Christmas in store? Depends on who you ask.

**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, AUG. 19**

- **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, AUG. 20**

- **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.

**MONDAY, AUG. 24**

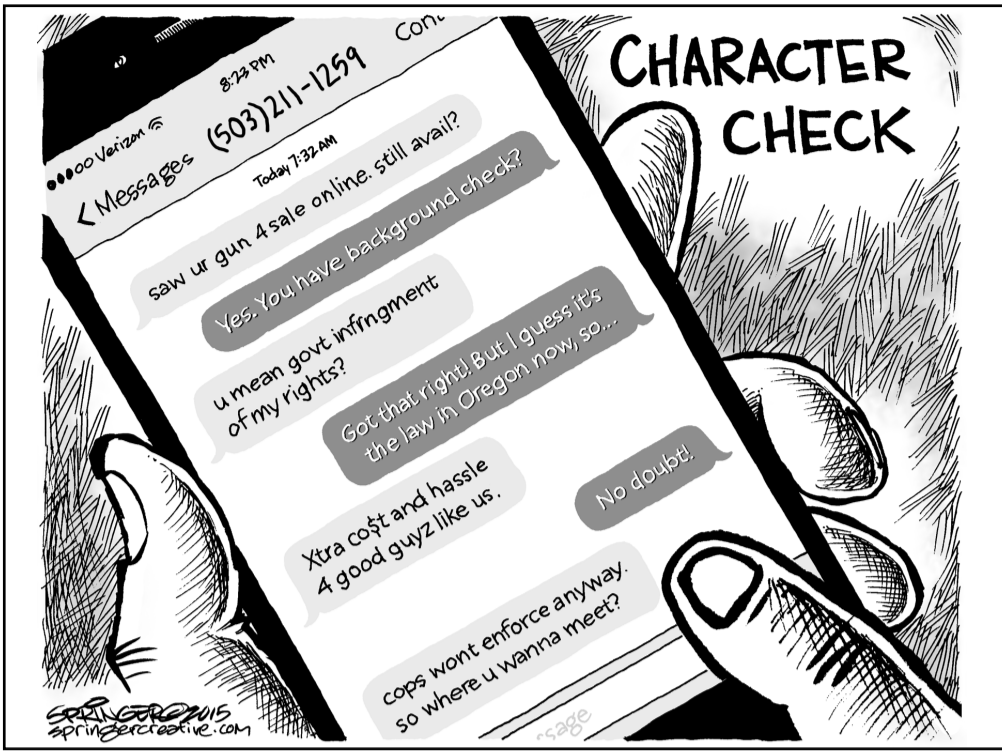
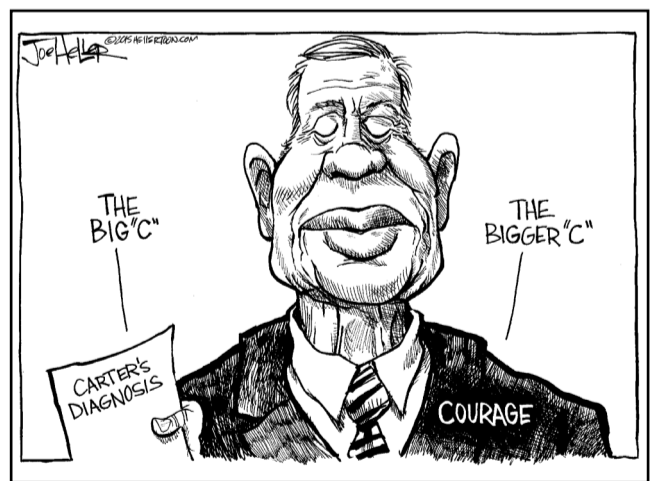
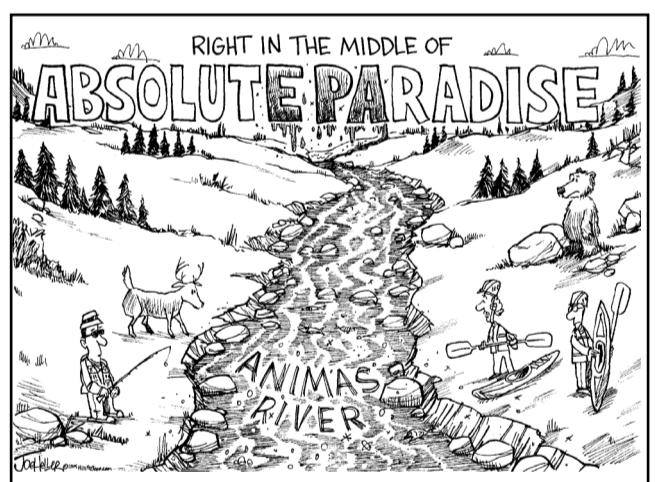
- **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1811.

**TUESDAY, AUG. 25**

- **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, AUG. 26**

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



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Please return stolen solar lights**

I am not sure how to handle this, but surely people in Dallas need to be aware that there are elements, even here, that prevent those who are new to the area from feeling safe.

My neighbor who lives across the street had several solar lights on either side of the sidewalk to her front porch. These were not just ordinary lights, but some she brought with her from her previous residence.

Someone took them during the night. She was in tears and said she was sorry she ever lived in this town. This was not over reaction; she and her family moved here expecting it to be their permanent residence.

Would you please print this and urge whoever took them to return them. It might have been just a prank, but it gives our town

a black eye. I love living here too and want to keep her as a happy neighbor.

Helen and Bob Murphy  
Dallas

**Top Secret not protected properly**

When I worked in Top Secret Control Office (TSCO) Distribution Center at HQ, VII Corps (U.S. Army), I controlled Secret and Nato Secret documents.

Our TSCO office was in a vault in the basement. Each Secret document had a number. Our documents were hand carried by courier to our Division HQs. We demanded our Receipts to be signed and couriered back to our office. We knew the location of each Secret document.

Confidential and Secret documents had to be kept/stored in vault-like safes in offices. When pulled

out, they had a thin cardboard like cover sheet — SECRET — red lettering, white background.

Fast forward 38 years, I'm annoyed to hear on national TV, news anchors talking about Secret and Top Secret emails.

If federal government agencies don't control classified documents (numbered hard copies only), then we need an investigation by the judicial branch of government.

When I read the "Stars & Stripes" newspaper, I read a sentence or two within the article that was Secret. It was never divulged as Secret and one wouldn't have guessed it was classified at all. Many documents were over-classified.

Classified documents must be strictly controlled and only be numbered hard copies, not emails.

Kenneth Johnson  
Dallas



**WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?**

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

Election-related letters of all types are limited to 100 words. Writers are limited to one election-related letter per election season. Election letters from writers outside of Polk County are not accepted.

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.

The Itemizer-ObsERVER does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the I-O's website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals, not organizations, and must be original submissions 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. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

Reach us at:  
**Mail:** Editor, Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, OR 97338.  
**Fax:** 503-623-2395.  
**Email:** ionews@polkio.com.  
**Office:** 147 SE Court St., Dallas.

**How to Contact Officials**

**GOVERNOR**  
**Gov. Kate Brown (Dem.)**  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-378-4582  
Email: via website,  
<http://governor.oregon.gov/>

**STATE LEGISLATORS**  
**Sen. Arnie Roblan**  
(District 5, Democrat)  
5-417 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1705  
[sen.arnieroblan@state.or.us](mailto:sen.arnieroblan@state.or.us)  
[www.oregonlegislature.gov/roblan](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/roblan)

**Sen. Jackie Winters**  
(District 10, Republican)  
5-301 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1710  
[sen.jackiewinters@state.or.us](mailto:sen.jackiewinters@state.or.us)  
[www.oregonlegislature.gov/winters](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/winters)

**Sen. Brian Boquist**  
(District 12, Republican)  
5-305 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1712  
[sen.brianboquist@state.or.us](mailto:sen.brianboquist@state.or.us)  
[www.oregonlegislature.gov/boquist](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/boquist)

**Rep. David Gomberg**  
(District 10, Democrat)  
H-471 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1410  
[rep.davidgomberg@state.or.us](mailto:rep.davidgomberg@state.or.us)  
[www.oregonlegislature.gov/gomberg](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/gomberg)

**Rep. Paul Evans**  
(District 20, Democrat)  
H-281 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1420  
[rep.paul.evans@state.or.us](mailto:rep.paul.evans@state.or.us)  
[www.oregonlegislature.gov/evans](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/evans)

**Rep. Mike Nearman**  
(District 23, Republican)  
H-378 State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1423  
[rep.mikenearman@state.or.us](mailto:rep.mikenearman@state.or.us)  
[www.oregonlegislature.gov/nearman](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/nearman)

**U.S. CONGRESS**  
**Sen. Ron Wyden (Dem.)**  
221 Dirksen SOB  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-5244  
Fax: 202-228-2717  
Salem office: 707 13th St. SE,  
Suite 285, Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: 503-589-4555  
Email: via website,  
[www.wyden.senate.gov](http://www.wyden.senate.gov)

**Sen. Jeff Merkley (Dem.)**  
313 Hart SOB  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-3753  
Fax: 202-228-3997  
Salem office: 495 State St. SE,  
Suite 330, Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: 503-362-8102  
Email: via website,  
[www.merkley.senate.gov](http://www.merkley.senate.gov)

**Rep. Kurt Schrader (Dem.)**  
108 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: 202-225-5711  
Fax: 202-225-5699  
Salem office: 544 Ferry St. SE,  
Suite 2, Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: 503-588-9100  
Fax: 503-588-5517  
Email: via website,  
[www.schrader.house.gov](http://www.schrader.house.gov)

**POLK COUNTY Board of Commissioners**  
850 Main St.  
Dallas, OR 97338  
Phone: 503-623-8173  
[www.co.polk.or.us](http://www.co.polk.or.us)

**CITIES**  
**Dallas**  
187 SE Court St.  
Dallas, OR 97338  
503-623-2338  
[www.ci.dallas.or.us](http://www.ci.dallas.or.us)  
**Falls City**  
299 Mill St.  
Falls City, OR 97344  
503-787-3631  
[www.fallsctyoregon.gov](http://www.fallsctyoregon.gov)  
**Independence**  
555 S. Main St.  
Independence, OR 97351  
503-838-1212  
[www.ci.independence.or.us](http://www.ci.independence.or.us)  
**Monmouth**  
151 W. Main St.  
Monmouth, OR 97361  
503-838-0722  
[www.ci.monmouth.or.us](http://www.ci.monmouth.or.us)

Polk County  
**Itemizer-ObsERVER**

Vol. 140, No. 33 (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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**HOW TO REACH US**

**NEWSROOM**  
Nancy Adams .....Publisher/Editor .....[nadams@polkio.com](mailto:nadams@polkio.com)  
Lukas Eggen.....Sports Editor.....[leggen@polkio.com](mailto:leggen@polkio.com)  
Jolene Guzman.....Dallas/Falls City/Polk County Reporter .....[jguzman@polkio.com](mailto:jguzman@polkio.com)  
Emily Mentzer .....Monmouth/Independence Reporter .....[ementzer@polkio.com](mailto:ementzer@polkio.com)

**DISPLAY ADVERTISING**  
Heidi Leppin .....Display Advertising Manager .....[hleppin@polkio.com](mailto:hleppin@polkio.com)  
Rachel Best .....Display Advertising.....[rbest@polkio.com](mailto:rbest@polkio.com)  
Karen Sanks.....Client Services .....[ksanks@polkio.com](mailto:ksanks@polkio.com)

**CLASSIFIED LINE ADVERTISING**  
Dawn Ohren .....[ioads@polkio.com](mailto:ioads@polkio.com)

**PRODUCTION**  
Kathy Huggins .....[iosales@polkio.com](mailto:iosales@polkio.com)  
Karyn Pressel .....[iosales@polkio.com](mailto:iosales@polkio.com)

**BOOKKEEPING**  
Pat Letsch .....[pletsch@polkio.com](mailto:pletsch@polkio.com)

**Web:** [www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com) **Phone:** 503-623-2373 **Fax:** 503-623-2395