

EDITORIALS

It's time to teach bullying a lesson

The air has gotten cooler — not much cooler, but cooler all the same — and kids are preparing to go back to school. In Falls City, students have already had two days back. Dallas, Perrydale and Central school districts begin Tuesday.

As you help your child pick out what to wear on his or her first day back, take a moment to talk about behavior. Remind them that words can cut deep, and they can stick around, especially when they are texted or put online for the world to see.

According to a health wellness survey conducted in Polk County schools last spring, 71 percent of high school juniors heard another student spread mean rumors or leave other students out of activities at school or on the bus. In sixth grade, just 57 percent of students reported hearing such things.

Bullying is not just kids being kids. It goes beyond that to repeated, mean-spirited behavior, and it breeds bullying children, teenagers and adults.

This is not a behavior that is unique to K-12, but spreads to all levels of society. People bully each other in the work place. Spouses or significant others may bully each other — leading to domestic violence. Senior citizens are bullied and taken advantage of.

If we teach our children to talk about it, how to solve problems at the root, just maybe we can cause a chain reaction. To teach, we must, ourselves, learn to talk about it.

Maybe if kids stop bullying and learn to be kinder, maybe we'll have less violence and nastiness in the world.

That sounds pretty idealistic, but at its simplest form, it sounds pretty easy, really.

That's not to say that even the most well-behaved, well-reared and taught child won't ever bully. We've all said things and done things that we didn't realize were hurtful.

It was all in good fun when we dumped our friend in the corn field for the night. But our friend may not have thought it was funny at all.

What we need to do is recognize when we've done something hurtful. Instead of saying, "get over it," or "it was just a joke," own up to our words and actions and apologize. Let's just put a stop to it.

Teachers, administrators and county health professionals are doing all they can to put a halt to bullying in our schools, but children will look up to their parents and other trusted adults for an example. Be that example.

Follow new Monmouth Elementary School Principal Kim Seidel's advice when it comes to dealing with a bully — or when it comes to posting something on social media that turn you into a bully — stop. Walk away. Talk to a trusted friend or adult.

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, SEPT. 2

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Park Soil and Water Conservation District** — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Suite A, Dallas. 503-623-9680, ext. 5.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 3

- **Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network executive committee** — 3 p.m., 2965 Ryan Dr. SE, Suite 150, Salem. 503-588-5833.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 8

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Dallas City Council** — 7 p.m., City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

- **Independence City Council** — 7:30 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9

- **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library meeting room, 168 S. Ecols St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Park and Recreation Board** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for balanced disaster coverage

I am glad that the *Itemizer* is printing articles about preparing for earthquakes. I experienced the 9.2 Alaska earthquake in 1964, and I see some things that most people don't think of in preparing for emergencies. Families' preparations for an earthquake can go a long way toward being prepared for other emergencies — an ice storm, a wind storm that takes out power and blocks roads, etc. Panic is not necessary, by any means — and some other publications have been producing that effect in readers. Not "all" refrigerators will "walk," not "all" hillsides will slide, not "all" west of I-5 will be "toast." I like seeing more balanced reporting, along with practical ways people can be less dependent on services that may be in short supply. My advice is to do what you can to prepare to live on the basics, and remember that bridges and communications are often not dependable after an earthquake.

Linda Medsker
Dallas

Neighbor's weeds pose fire risk

I can sympathize with folks concerned about fire danger. My neighbor has over 2-foot weeds and grass on three sides of his building. But my neighbor is Polk County Fire District No. 1 Station 40. Guess it's a case of, do as we say, not as we do. Glad the rain is coming.

Pamela Venegas
Independence

Dallas firefighters put out park blaze

Thank you to our wonderful Dallas volunteer firefighters who extinguished a small grass and shrub fire in Hunter Arboretum on Aug. 24. Without their timely response, the fire could have spread along the creek, into the trees and then who knows. The fire serves as a reminder to us all that, in spite of the recent rain, everything is very dry and waiting for a spark to begin burning. This fire was undoubtedly started by someone who carelessly disposed of a cigarette, as we have seen on a smaller scale in prior years. This is only one of the reasons that smoking is not allowed in Dallas parks. Thanks for your help in reducing the risk of fire in our parks by not smoking and asking those you see who are to stop.

Hermelinda Garcia
Independence

Elected leaders shouldn't be paid

There are 36 elected local governing bodies in Polk County that assess property taxes. Each organization is governed by elected members. Only Polk County commissioners get compensation.

Other elected governing bodies members are volunteers. So why do Polk County commissioners get salaries?

County commissioners pay themselves because of tradition. In the past, county commissioners provided judicial services and administered state and county government services.

In Polk County that is not the case. The true administration and management of most Polk County services rests in the hands of the county administrator and department heads.

The duties of Polk County commissioners are primarily legislative. ORS 203.035 declares "the governing body or the electors of a county may by ordinance exercise authority within the county over matters of county concern. . . ." Details include setting annual budgets, authorizing compensation for county employees, entering into contracts, approving county ordinances, setting fees for services, and providing quasi-judicial review of land use decisions.

These duties mirror those performed by unpaid city councils, which are also "local public bodies."

Polk County commissioners, like city councils, hire a professional administrator to run the operations of the county, leaving for themselves only ordinance and policy decisions.

How do taxpayers benefit from the more than \$70,000 paid to each commissioner to perform the same duties that volunteer mayors and city councils provide for Polk County city residents? Why should Polk County residents continue to compensate county commissioners?

E.M. Easterly
West Salem

Hermelinda's salon closed its doors

Hermelinda's Beauty Salon, which first opened in Independence in August 1973, has closed its doors Aug. 24. Hermelinda had customers who go back to when she first opened in 1973. The children and grandchildren of those first customers later became Hermelinda's customers. I would like to thank all those customers I had during the 42 years as a hairstylist in Independence. I will miss you all greatly. I would also like to thank my business neighbors for always being there for me, Tom Pfaff, Sandy's Jewelry, Dr. Turgeson and his staff. I would also like to thank Central Plaza owners for their outstanding support. In particular, C Cable Realty, you were not just great landlords but great friends. I wish I could have thanked you all in person, but due to medical issues that was not possible.

Hermelinda Garcia
Independence

WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only. Letters must be original submissions to the *I-O*. The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday.

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