

EDITORIALS

Never too late to keep learning

With the kids back in school, and adults getting ready to start classes at Western Oregon University, it's a good reminder that it's never too late to continue your education.

Polk County has many resources to take a class and learn something new, whether it's a second language or picking up a hobby like knitting or painting or writing.

Chemeketa Community College has a campus right here in Dallas open to all, not just high school students working on their fifth year. It's a great opportunity to go after that college degree you've always thought about or polish your computer skills. At WOU, the gamut is wide open as far as class schedule.

Prices vary at each institution, but a degree could mean higher salary, too.

Classes are available at different times of the day, meaning you can fit them around your work schedule. Some at the colleges are even offered online so you can do them at your own pace and time.

It's great to have so many continuing education options right here in our community. It makes it easy to consider — and follow through — learning something new.

Hops, heritage festival honors Independence

The Hops & Heritage Festival is one-of-a-kind. Its small-town charm and lack of hype turns Riverview Park into a quaint gathering of friends and family — community.

In its 15th year, the festival strives for that “throwback Thursday” feel, with old-fashioned games, music and competitions.

It's a great chance to learn something about Independence and Polk County, visiting a time when the city was known as Hop Capital of the World.

Our favorite thing about the festival is its laid-back, inviting atmosphere. It has an unassuming way of sneaking into your heart while you enjoy a pint or feel the cone of a hop plant for the first time. Kids running in the lawn and playing croquet instead of at home on video games brings a smile to our faces.

Don't forget to grab breakfast at the Independence State Airport and watch the hot air balloons launch. It's a great way to start a Saturday.

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. 16

- **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, SEPT. 17

- **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.
- **Monmouth-Independence Networks Board** — 7:30 a.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-580-8525.

MONDAY, SEPT. 21

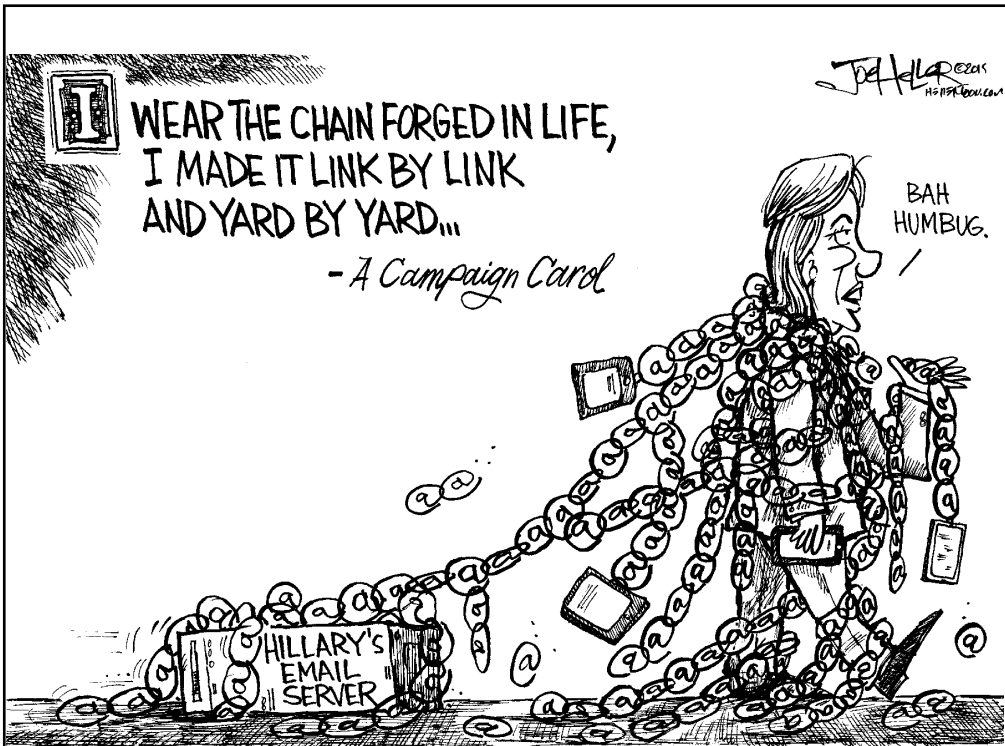
- **Dallas City Council** — 7 p.m., City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 22

- **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, SEPT. 23

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Members of CERT earn recognition

Making a short-time commitment to volunteering is commendable. Making a long-term volunteering commitment is exceptional.

The kind of people who make a lifetime volunteer commitment to being on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without any expectation of when, where or under what circumstances they'll be called to duty, are, well, hard to describe.

We have a few of these indescribable people on our Polk County CERT Team who are recipients of the President's Volunteer Service Award for outstanding support of our program in 2014. Please join me in thanking them.

Gold Standard Award: Cody Watson (Teen) Independence and Logan Townsend (Teen) Monmouth. Silver Standard Award: David Weston (Adult) Monmouth and Dell Weston (Adult) Dallas. Bronze Standard Award: Colin Howard (Teen) Rickreall, James Krehmke (Adult) Dallas and Maurice Dalton (Teen) Dallas.

Overall, the Polk County CERT program earned a National Gold Standard Award, and our Teen CERT program a National Silver Standard Award in the Disaster Services focus area. These awards were made possible through the contributions of each and every one of our 80 members.

Thank you all; I am honored to work beside you.

Kimber Townsend
Monmouth

Don't let country dogs roam free

I'm trying to make sense of the death of one of my friends. He was gentle, friendly and a companion to his brother. My wife and I live in rural Polk County

and have allowed William and his brother, Henry, to live on our property after they became homeless.

Several nights ago we were awakened around midnight by dogs barking in our yard. We went out to help our friends. I saw a pit bull and screamed “get out of here.”

He disappeared into the night. Then a white dog looked around the corner of the building. I called to him, and we were able to leash him. The barking dogs were from a parcel of land occupied by a woman and her husband who said they were homeless.

As for our goats, William had his esophagus ripped out and Henry is traumatized. The vet was called and William was relieved of his pain.

The sheriff was called and told us they would be out at noon the next day. Around 3 a.m., a pickup came up our drive and the woman wanted to get her dog. We told her we would turn the dog over to the sheriff the next day.

We asked about the pit bull but she said, “he didn't come back.”

How did she know to come to our home? After nearly \$300 for the vet, we are told by the sheriff that they cannot do anything about the pit.

The owners moved to the country to “let their dogs wander.” The pit bull has killed, and next time it could be a human death. After all, William weighed over 150 pounds and was attacked while he slept.

Marty Maxfield
Monmouth

All should be free to follow religion

This country was founded on religious freedom. Our ancestors forsook all they had to escape persecution so they could freely worship according to their con-

science. We are now losing that freedom. Those who, according to the religious beliefs and conscience, believe that participating in the marriage of homosexuals is wrong should be allowed to follow their conscience.

During World War II, conscientious objector status was granted to those who believed that killing in war was wrong, even though our nation was attacked and in danger of being conquered by very ruthless and dangerous enemies. They were permitted instead to follow their religious beliefs. This same status should be granted to Christians, Muslims and others whose religious beliefs forbid them to participate or enable gay weddings.

George Irving
Dallas

Library impresses with its service

Frankly, I don't think I could sleep nights if I did not tell you of the outstanding help I received from Janice Ames and the volunteers who work for you and your readers at your library. Just yesterday my, “plea for genealogical help” phone call was graciously answered by Miss Janice.

She suggested I email her the elements of my requests (two obits in the *J-O* of past Dallas residents). In no time, she emailed back that the obits had been found by Pete, a volunteer, and that they were on their way.

Her courtesy and the promptness of her service would put many so-called fast food restaurants to shame.

If true, as it is often said, “birds of a feather flock together,” I suspect your entire library team is one of which y'all are very proud. Thank you Janice Ames and thank you Dallas!

John E. Brown
Greensboro, N.C.

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 must include the au-

thor's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the *J-O*'s website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are for verification purposes only.

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. Let-

ters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline. For the complete letters policy, see polkio.com.

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