

**EDITORIALS**

**Veterans need more services**

Happy Veteran's Day to all those who served and are still serving. This day, and for the whole year, consider thanking veterans with more than just a handshake.

There are a few ways you can do more to help veterans. The first is with your vote.

Our vets face challenges as they struggle with the vortex that is life after the military.

Many struggle to get the medical and mental health care they need because they are stuck going through the Veterans Affairs system.

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs is not very helpful. Representatives say all they can do is help file paperwork. They say it is the U.S. VA — a federal program — that is ultimately responsible for getting things taken care of, yet when it comes to appointments with caring doctors, it is the ODVA that continually lets veterans down.

Federal Congressmen say they are helping by providing options for local care, called the Choice program, but ODVA representatives, including the people who are supposed to be veterans advocates, get around this system by refusing to set appointments for veterans.

If an appointment is not available quickly, veterans are not called back at all, not put on a waiting list. This makes the VA look better, as if no one is waiting. In reality, veterans wait in a black hole for vital appointments and help getting medical and mental health care. Disabled veterans wait to be classified as such, not compensated properly and trying to survive on meager incomes.

Consider voting for people who have a real plan for changing the VA system, who will stand up and hold VA officials accountable for veterans who are dying for lack of services.

Secondly, help veterans get their schooling by writing a note to your university board of education. Universities, including Western Oregon University, try to be veteran friendly by offering veteran support groups. However, one way they could truly be veteran friendly is by acknowledging the vet's years of service as education. A retired veteran with 20 years under his or her belt has learned more college credit than a couple of physical education credits, yet many university registrars will not accept military transcripts.

It's lovely to see such an outreach from the community, offering free breakfasts, dinners, coffees and milkshakes to veterans on Veteran's Day, but much more needs to be done before our servicemen and women are really taken care of.

**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).

**THURSDAY, NOV. 12**

- **Polk County Fire District No. 1 Board** — 6 p.m., Central Station 90, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1510.
- **Falls City Council** — 7:30 p.m., Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3631.
- **Luckiamute Watershed Council** — 7 p.m., Luckiamute State Natural Area, 8997 Buena Vista Road, Albany. www.luckiamutelwc.org.

**MONDAY, NOV. 16**

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

**TUESDAY, NOV. 17**

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Independence Historic Preservation Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.

**WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18**

- **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.
- **Polk Soil and Water Conservation Board Meeting** — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St. Suite A, Dallas. 503-623-9680 Ext. 5.



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Present-day politics is grim picture**

"Amid the snarling, the gears of government at all levels continue grinding away with inexorable persistence. Our functionaries keep beavering away at their appointed tasks."

Anti-government sentiment in America is fierce. Yet despite this insurgent clamor, it seems that the proportion of our GNP devoted to federal, state and local expenditures has altered little over the past few decades. Everyone hankers after the grail of reduced government spending and a smaller public sector. That is, until our hypothetical citizen who falls under the "everyone" designation views the possibility of his or her interests being threatened by budgetary cuts. No surprise in this inconsistency. Humankind revels in self-centeredness.

Elite American servicemen were able to rescue 70 Kurdish hostages held by ISIS, but at the price of one of their own number being slain. "Freedom," as they say, "isn't free." Despite the incredible heroism by our service personnel, we know that there are members of Congress from all along the political spectrum who prattle about "debt ceilings" and "threatened government shutdowns" if the two-part duopoly that shapes our destinies cannot agree.

Bizarre indeed is this juxtaposition of fiscal metaphysics and political fending in Congress, on the one hand, with the incredible bravery of our soldiers on the other.

Rome possessed very brave and skillful soldiers as well, and rather after the manner of contemporary America, they managed to blight their defensive efforts by tolerating a governmental structure whose frustrat-

ing inertia was all but guaranteed to destroy what was left of civilization.

A very discouraging picture it is.

Frank W. Goheen  
Camas, Wash.

**Veterans breakfast slated for Saturday**

It's that time of year again. The leaves are falling; the weather is turning cold; and the American Legion Post 20 and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 20 are gearing up for our annual events.

Every year, the American Legion Post 20, assisted by the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 20, in Dallas hosts our annual Veteran's Day breakfast for all the veterans and their families in the community. The breakfast is free to veterans, but donations are accepted from everyone. This year our breakfast will be Saturday from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Dallas United Methodist Church, 565 SE LaCreole Drive.

We will be serving eggs, pancakes, sausage, coffee, and orange juice.

For more information, you can contact Beth Lillibridge at 503-480-6254.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Joe Lillibridge  
Dallas

**LaCreole students help at arboretum**

On Oct. 13 and 20, 23 students from Michelle Schilling's leadership class at La Creole Middle School volunteered to help out at the Delbert Hunter Arboretum. They raked leaves, cleaned benches, planted shrubs, and spread woodchips around various plants.

These young people did an outstanding job in all respects. The arboretum volunteers who supervised the students were unanimous in

praising the work-ethic and positive attitude shown by everyone involved. Ms. Schilling did a great job of preparing her charges to come to the arboretum ready to work.

We often hear about what our schools are doing wrong. The work of the LCMS leadership class is a great example of something that is being done right in the Dallas public schools.

Paul Mannen  
Dallas

**Vet's celebration at MVCA a success**

Mid-Valley Christian Academy would like to thank the Monmouth Dairy Queen for generously partnering with us for a fundraiser which was a fantastic success. Thanks to everyone who came and supported us.

We would also like to thank Sandy Larson, from the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas, who came and captured the hearts of our students with a crayon trick, followed by an informative lecture/speech/talk on how prayer works during one of our weekly chapel service.

Veteran's Day is a time to honor the heroes that sacrificed for our freedom. MVCA had the honor of hosting a special chapel followed by a complimentary pancake breakfast for veterans in the Polk County community. Many came and shared their story of military duty and to receive the gratitude from our students for what they have because of these brave souls. Thank you, service men and women, for the sacrifices you have made for our freedom.

For more information about school events or class schedules, call 503-838-2818.

Miranda Long  
MVCA administrator  
Monmouth

**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.

The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dis-

senters are welcome to respond. Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number, even when submitted online. 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.

For the complete letter to the editor policy: www.polkio.com.

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  
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  
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  
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  
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  
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  
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

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

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

POLK COUNTY  
Board of Commissioners  
850 Main St.  
Dallas, OR 97338  
Phone: 503-623-8173  
www.co.polk.or.us

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

Polk County  
**Itemizer-ObsERVER**

Vol. 140, No. 45 (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
- Lukas Eggen.....Sports Editor.....leggen@polkio.com
- Jolene Guzman.....Dallas/Falls City/Polk County Reporter .....jguzman@polkio.com
- Emily Mentzer.....Monmouth/Independence Reporter .....ementzer@polkio.com

**DISPLAY ADVERTISING**

- Heidi Leppin .....Display Advertising Manager .....hleppin@polkio.com
- Rachel Best.....Display Advertising.....rbest@polkio.com
- Karen Sanks.....Client Services .....ksanks@polkio.com

**CLASSIFIED LINE ADVERTISING**

- Dawn Ohren .....loads@polkio.com

**PRODUCTION**

- Kathy Huggins .....iosales@polkio.com
- Karyn Pressel .....iosales@polkio.com

Web: www.polkio.com Phone: 503-623-2373 Fax: 503-623-2395