

EDITORIALS

Words carry responsibility

This past week has been a reflection of what it means to live in the United States of America and to celebrate the freedoms that we treasure.

Our veterans were remembered and honored on Veteran's Day for their love of country and for protecting and fighting for the rights that we so freely exercise on a daily basis. Their sacrifice for our beliefs as a nation were carried by them into battle during war time and continue to present day as they fight terrorism that stealthfully finds its way into our lives both here and across the world.

Freedom of speech and the right to assemble rose to the forefront this past week with a written message on social media by Micky Garus, Dallas city councilman and local business man. He raised concerns about the reach of the Muslims in the United States and shared his concerns about what he sees as their beliefs. This became fuel for a fire of words that cast the whole community under a microscope by media from all over the nation. People gathered to share their beliefs and to ask for tolerance and understanding of both sides. Micky's right to share is protected by our Constitution and one that we all freely take advantage of. As the newspaper that services our communities, we believe in freedom of speech and press, and we will protect it and honor it as a precious right that we all share.

Freedom, though, comes with great responsibility and the repercussions that can come from statements that are made by any of us. Micky's comments unfortunately painted the whole community of Dallas and surrounding area with a broad brush of intolerance. None of us want to be brought into a conversation that we didn't invite or wish to participate in, but it happened.

If we want the conversation to be different, it will be up to the citizens of Dallas and our leaders, along with our neighboring communities, to find a voice that speaks of who we are, and work to live and reflect that feeling. There is room for all at the table of discussion in sharing views and concerns as long as we remember to honor one another and listen with open minds and hearts. The conversation has begun; let us not walk away from it but learn from it and educate us in who our neighbors are.

No country is perfect, but our forefathers worked diligently to provide us with a Constitution that reflected what they believed would provide all the citizens of the United States a place of tolerance and safety. That we would respect one another in our freedoms of speech, to bear arms, religion, and honor life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These are not hollow words for just a few — they are for all us.

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, 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.

THURSDAY, NOV. 19

- **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.
- **Monmouth Independence Networks board of directors** — 7:30 a.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-837-0700.

MONDAY, NOV. 23

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

TUESDAY, NOV. 24

- **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, NOV. 25

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Be considerate, quiet your dog

What's the deal with people who just let their dogs bark?

Yes, any dog is going to bark, some more than others just by their breed; beagles, Chihuahuas, etc. But, to let your dog bark for no reason other than you are too lazy or clueless to train them not to is just wrong. I've had dogs. Did they bark? Yes, occasionally, but not to the point where it disturbed my neighbors. I trained them. It's not that hard. If you can't train them not to bark, there are humane devices that the dog can wear to curb this bad and annoying habit. This seems to be another ongoing problem in our society these days. People are not considerate of others. Whether it be barking dogs or noisy trucks and cars. Please be considerate of others. It's not just about you.

Ali Rion
Dallas

Thanks to support of Veteran's dinner

I can't begin to express my appreciation to the community for their support of the Independence Elks Lodge No. 1950 Veteran's Day dinner. So many pitched in to make the event happen. Thank you to Minet, the Barb Mylnechuk Insurance Agency, Marilyn Morton, the Three Legged Dog, and Arena Bar and Grill for your financial support and to the many volunteers who gave their time and energy to serve our veterans and their families. Thank you to the Polk County community for turning out to honor those who have served. Your support means so much.

Kathy Martin-Willis
Independence

No room for bigotry on council

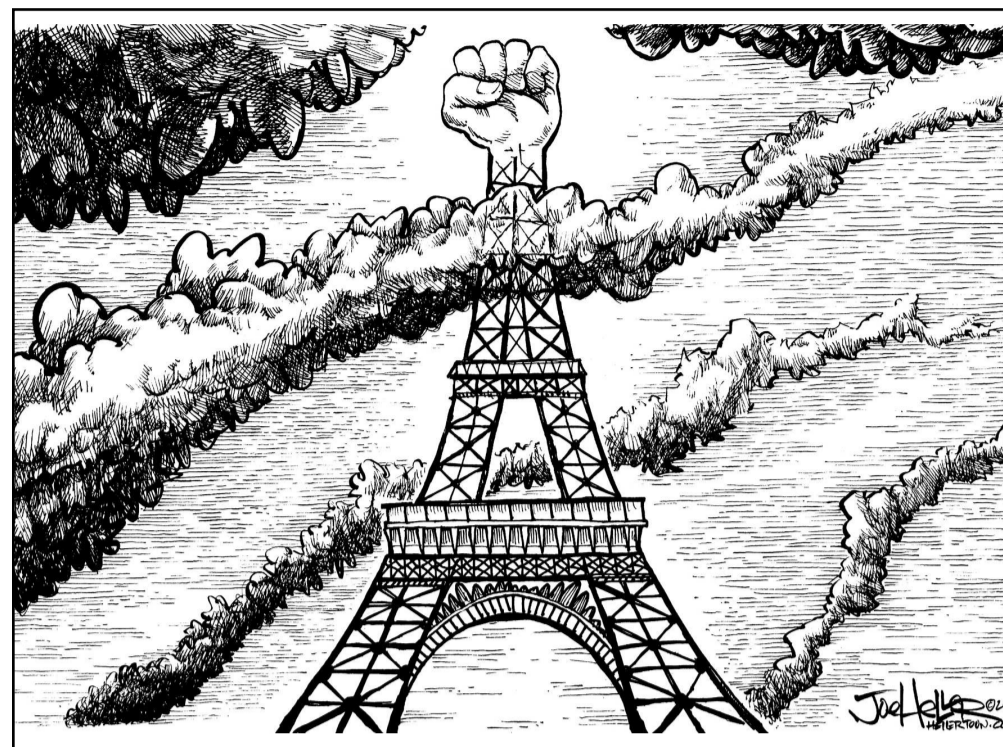
Micky Garus was elected by the voters of Dallas to the Dallas City Council. The Dallas City Council works in the best interests of the people of Dallas. There are many topics to work on: homeless families, hungry children, disabled veterans, personal and public safety, safe roads for travel, and on and on. There is no room for racism or bigotry in that chamber or any part of government.

The racist rant Micky Garus posted on Facebook and picked up by the media shows his heretofore hidden agenda. He should resign immediately.

Ann Hurd
Dallas

Don't let outside groups influence

A city councilor from a small Polk County city expressed his opinion about Sharia law on his private Facebook page. He was then publicly attacked by an out-of-state group calling his viewpoint "bigoted," "extremist and un-American," and "Islamophobia." It is unfortunate when an out-



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 must include the author's name, address and telephone number.

Letters are due by 10 a.m. on Monday and must be signed by the writer. For the complete letters policy, go online to www.polkio.com.

side group intrudes on a small community by using misleading and untrue clichés designed to crush free speech.

George Irving
Dallas

Councilor stepped over the line

Micky Garus, your recent post defaming American Muslims and their religious beliefs was ill-advised, inaccurate and serves only to dangerously promote the hate and fear so widely held by many today. To single out any minority as the target of such hate and fear, which your campaign Facebook most outrageously did, was not, we are sure, why the citizens of Dallas elected you. In so doing, you used precisely the same techniques employed by the Nazis you warned your readers about, to wit: propagating lies, and promoting hate against a small minority over and over until fear overcomes reason. You would benefit from a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., to get your facts on Hitler's techniques straight. While there, take some time to visit some of the many monuments on which are inscribed the words of true leaders reflecting the values of this nation.

As a private citizen, you are free to hold whatever beliefs you wish and to express them freely; however, you stepped over the line by doing so as an elected official. You have embarrassed your council colleagues and the community that elected you. You owe them all a deep and sincere apology.

Dallas has an old and, thankfully, largely overcome sordid history in relating with minorities. Many have

worked hard to put this history of fear and hate to rest. Your comments remind us that the work is not over.

So now is the time to lay aside your personal insecurities, step up to the plate with the dignity that God freely instilled in you and recognize the dignity that resides in all people, including those you chose to malign. If you are unable to do this, have the courage and integrity to step aside. The rest of us have work to do.

James H. Beaird-Leeper
Beverly A. Beaird-Leeper
Monmouth

'European method' not good for U.S.

Those on the extreme right are constantly touting "American Exceptionalism" and denigrating ideas and processes as done in Europe.

Well, there is one area where we surely do not need to adapt to the European method. We do not need to import foreign terrorists to shoot, or blow up our schools, theaters and cities. We have plenty of able Americans who are perfectly willing to shoot their fellow Americans to pieces without any foreign help whatsoever.

Fred Brown
Dallas

Councilor Garus unfit to serve

I assume that I would have heard about Micky Garus's views on Islam when he ran for office on the Dallas City Council, so I think it's fair to say that his recent anti-Islamic rant on Facebook was his coming-out-of-the-closet as a Christian extremist. His deeply held fear and loathing of Islam is what one would ex-

pect from Christian fanatics.

What was more troubling to me though was his conspiracy theory about Islam, and his branding of all Muslims as evil. Surely a man who believes this is not rational, and before Politically Correct thinking we would have labeled him for what he is — paranoid. He certainly isn't capable of being a public servant because he cannot serve any of the public he views as evil, this would violate his beliefs. So why did he run for city councilman? Here's an idea.

A few years ago I read an article describing a meeting of the leaders of some of America's major evangelical churches, like the Southern Baptists. The meeting was to plot a strategy to combat "secularists" in the culture wars. Their strategy was simple, run people for small town public offices, like city council positions, or state legislators. That way they could take over local politics and work their way into national politics with the ultimate aim of making the USA an official Christian nation, and supplanting our secular Constitution with Biblical Law. Sound far-fetched, certainly no more lunatic than Mr. Garus's conspiracy theories.

Ted Gaty
West Salem

Comments danger to trans youth

The recent comments by Dallas council member Micky Garus are deeply troubling. Transgender youth are misunderstood and vulnerable. Because of the lack of acceptance, discrimination and violence, 40 percent will attempt suicide. Councilor Garus's comments add to the culture of violence that many transgender youth face.

As a Muslim mom, I am also deeply concerned about Councilor Garus's comments about Muslims. Our country was founded on the principles of religious freedom precisely because of the religious persecution so many people around the world have faced. His statement is an affront to the people of Oregon and our values as Americans.

Nancy Haque
Co-Director
Basic Rights Oregon
Portland

Polk County
Itemizer-ObsERVER

Vol. 140, No. 46

(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

The Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER assumes no financial responsibility for errors in advertisements. It will, however, reprint without charge for the portion of an advertisement which is in error if the Itemizer-ObsERVER is at fault.

HOW TO REACH US

NEWSROOM

- Nancy AdamsPublisher/Editornadams@polkio.com
- Lukas Eggen.....Sports Editor.....leggen@polkio.com
- Jolene Guzman.....Dallas/Falls City/Polk County Reporterjguzman@polkio.com
- Emily MentzerMonmouth/Independence Reporterementzer@polkio.com

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

- Heidi LeppinDisplay Advertising Managerhleppin@polkio.com
- Rachel Best.....Display Advertising.....rbest@polkio.com
- Karen Sanks.....Client Servicesksanks@polkio.com

CLASSIFIED LINE ADVERTISING

- Dawn Ohrenloads@polkio.com

PRODUCTION

- Kathy Hugginsiosales@polkio.com
- Karyn Presseliosales@polkio.com

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