

Clueless about composting?

Expert shares timely tips on creating sustainable system

As leaves fall and yard debris bins fill up, it's a good time to think of a different solution to having all those resources trucked away.

"Compost is good for the environment and for the garden," said Ross Penhallegon, horticulturist with Oregon State University's Extension Service. "You take all these things you don't know what to do with — grass clippings, leaves, garden refuse, anything left over — and throw it into the compost pile. Then it decomposes and you put it back into the soil. It's a sustainable system."

"Plus, compost provides inexpensive, nutrient-rich material," he added. "It's one of the best soil builders there is."

For beginners, Penhallegon teaches the easy "one-third" system of composting. Layer a third manure or carbon material, a third nitrogen material and a third soil. The carbon ingredient, known casually as brown stuff, includes dried leaves, woody plant prunings, straw and sawdust. The nitrogen part, or green stuff, is composed of grass clippings, soft prunings and animal manure.

Other things such as coffee grounds, tea leaves, egg shells and kitchen scraps can be thrown in as well, but Penhallegon warns they can attract unwanted guests like rats, opossums and raccoons. Don't add pet waste, meat, dairy products, fats or diseased or poi-



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

sonous plants.

Getting the right amount of air and water into the pile is key, he noted. You don't want too much water or the microbes and other critters that break down the material can't do their job. On the other hand, a too-dry situation stops the process, too. The idea is to keep the pile moist, but not soggy, especially during the winter months. Too little air can also bring decomposition to a halt. The more you turn the pile, the more air gets introduced, keeping everything on track.

Of course, everything decomposes given time, but following a few steps makes it happen a whole lot faster.

Penhallegon's tips for making compost: Locate the compost pile on well-drained soil in sun or shade. Place on plastic to prevent unwanted insects from moving into the compost pile.

You can build containers out of materials such as wood pallets, concrete blocks or chicken wire, but a large pile works just as well.

Start pile with a layer of twigs or small branches to enhance air circulation and drainage.

Add material — carbon, nitrogen and soil — in three layers of about 2 inches. You



OREGONSTATE.EDU for Itemizer-Observer

Compost is good for the environment and for the garden. It's one of the best soil builders there is.

can repeat the layers, but don't make it much taller than 3 feet.

Sprinkle the pile with water. Check moisture periodically by squeezing a handful of compost ingredients. It should feel like a wrung-out sponge. If it's too wet, add some dry material and turn to mix.

To retain heat and keep rain from saturating pile, cover it if possible with a piece of plywood, plastic, tarp or burlap sacks.

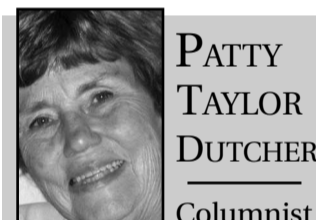
Turn the pile once a week to keep air circulating. Recover the pile after each

turning. Check pile periodically to monitor the amount of heat being generated. If it's heating up, the right balance of ingredients has been added. If it isn't, add green material and turn the pile to mix and aerate. Water if necessary.

After two to three months, the pile should no longer heat up and will smell and look like fresh, crumbly soil. The original material shouldn't be readily recognizable; though small pieces may still be evident.

MI TOWN

Before we celebrate the annual Thanksgiving holiday, when we gather together to think about all that is good in our world, I'd like to take a few moments to express my appreciation for those who won't be relaxing with family and friends on Thursday, but will be working hard to make sure everything goes as well as possible for the rest of us. As we drive over the river and through the woods, our local, county and state police officers and our firefighters and emergency medical technicians will be on the job to do what they can to make sure we arrive at our destinations safely. Those men and women are in uniform 24 hours of every day to help keep our neighborhoods, our communities and our roads and highways safe and secure.



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

Let's be thankful to our utility workers who are out there despite the nasty winter weather to make sure our lights are on, our houses are warm and the Thanksgiving turkey is baking to perfection at the turn of a switch.

I'm thankful to live in a community where neighbors and friends reach out to those in need. For caring church members and food banks and civic organizations that make MI Town really special. I appreciate

all our school employees who go the extra mile to be sure that the younger members of our community — and our future leaders — are getting the best education possible. Thank you for the tutoring programs, activities and for all the good athletic events.

Whether we celebrate Thanksgiving this year at home in MI Town or far away, with family members or with good friends, enjoying a sumptuous dinner or a supper of soup and biscuits, let's try to set aside all the doom and gloom of mean-spirited politics, and think about those we love and who share our lives. Are the kids all grown up and far away and won't be home for Thanksgiving dinner? Be thankful — and grateful — they are healthy

and happy and are but a telephone call away. If you're alone and don't have any friends or family to share the day with there are numerous restaurants and social service organizations who would welcome you as either a guest or a volunteer server, or both. Before we launch ourselves headlong into the busyness of Christmas shopping or traveling, let's take time to think of all the good things and special people in our lives, and be thankful for our blessings.

At Thanksgiving — or any season — let us do whatever we can to help others who are bearing so many burdens of war and poverty and medical concerns. May our hearts be grateful and caring and loving this day and always.

PEDEE NEWS

The Pedee Women's Club holiday fair is over and all went well. They had more people than usual, probably because of the relatively nice weather. The women baked 77 pies and made more than 22 kinds of soup for lunch. At the end of the day, they drew the winning ticket for the patriotic quilt they raffled off to benefit the soldiers' fund; Tammy Ames of Silverton was the lucky winner. Pam Burkhalter was the chief promoter and helped sell most of the tickets, being the super salesman she is.

Last week, Nick and Suzanne Cates and their 2-



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

year-old son, Tristan, came down from their home in Bainbridge Island to be with Nick's parents, Kendall and Debbie Cates, as Nick's brother, Sam, had been killed in a logging accident south of Lincoln City on Nov. 13. Nick and Sam both grew up in Pedee and their parents still farm here, although they live in Dallas. Memorial service

for Sam Cates is Dec. 5 at 1:30 p.m. at the Pedee Women's Club.

Dave Burbank spent ten days with Willamina friend, Ron Smith, hunting moose in Canada. He is happy to say they both got one. They did get mighty cold as they drove around 150 miles a day in an openair Jeep tracking them down, the last few days in 20 inches of snow.

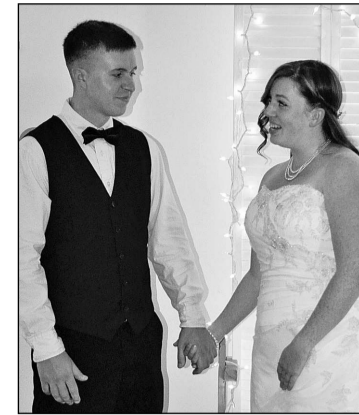
Nic Heller is now the administrative assistant at Pedee Church. Secretary Lyndsey Zarfas was getting overwhelmed juggling secretarial duties, preschooler

Estelle, and baby Derek, so happily turned over some of her duties to Nic.

The kids at the Luckiamute Valley Charter School at Pedee have been selling dilly beans, apple sauce, pear sauce, and pear butter. All the fruits and vegetables were locally grown, and the green beans were picked by the students, who also did the prep work and canning. Email the school at d.shimek@lvcs.k12.or.us to see if there is still some available. They are asking if people could please donate the empty jars back to the school for future canning projects.

WEDDINGS

McGrath-Blocher



Kali McGrath and Jorel Blocher, both of Dallas, were married Oct. 17 at The Buell Grange Hall in Sheridan.

Aaron Hodges officiated the ceremony.

The bride is the daughter of Pam Ball, of Silverton; Rick McGrath, of Keizer; Aaron Hodges, of Dallas, and Monty Ball, of Silverton. The groom is the son of

Wayne and Rose Blocher, of Dallas.

Matron of honor was Tajza Josephson. Bridesmaid was Ashley Zeller. Flower girls were Ralie Padgett and Phoebe Blocher.

Best man was Hero the dog. Ring bearer was Evan Blocher.

The couple honeymooned on the Oregon Coast. They make their home in Dallas.

LIBRARY CALENDAR

DALLAS
950 Main St.
503-623-2633

www.ci.dallas.or.us/library

- Thursday, Nov. 26-Nov. 27 — Library closed for Thanksgiving.
- Tuesday, Dec. 1, 11:15 a.m. — Story time.
- Tuesday, Dec. 1, 3:30 p.m. — Afternoon story time.

INDEPENDENCE
175 Monmouth St.
503-838-1811

www.ci.independence.or.us/library

- Wednesday, Nov. 25, 10:30 a.m. — Family story time.
- Wednesday, Nov. 25, 5:30 p.m. — Cuentos in Español.
- Thursday, Nov. 26-Sunday, Nov. 29 — Library closed for Thanksgiving.
- Wednesday, Dec. 2, 10:30 a.m. — Family story time.
- Wednesday, Dec. 2, 5:30 p.m. — Cuentos in Español.
- Wednesday, Dec. 2, 1 p.m. — Scrabble with Betty (adults).

MONMOUTH
168 S. Ecols St.
503-751-0182

www.ci.monmouth.or.us/library

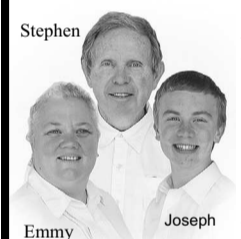
- Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2 p.m. — Movie, "Shaun the Sheep."
- Thursday, Nov. 26-Monday, Nov. 30 — Library closed for Thanksgiving.
- Tuesday, Dec. 1, 10:15 a.m. — Tales for tots (story time for babies and toddlers).
- Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2:30 p.m. — Builders club (K-5)

WAGNER COMMUNITY LIBRARY
111 N. Main St., Falls City
503-787-3521, ext. 319

www.facebook.com/WagnerCommunityLibrary/timeline

- See the library's Facebook page for upcoming events.

Furniture Upholstery



All types: for homes, offices, equipment. Also, repairs, RV cushions, slipcovers, High Quality since 1966

Winters Sewing

503-838-4999 or 503-375-9266

440 E. St • Independence, OR 97351

Serving Polk County 16yrs

www.winterssewing.com

It's not like her.

Mom has always been so patient, but now when I ask her questions she gets angry.

We can help.



1-855-ORE-ADRC
HelpForAlz.org



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM

Visit our website,
www.polkio.com

...for local news, sports
and community events.

Follow us on

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer



Gobble. Gobble. Gobble.

Barb Mylnechuk Ins Agency Inc
Barb Mylnechuk, Agent
1697 Monmouth St
Independence, OR 97351
Bus: 503-606-0066

That's turkey talk for "Dig in." There's no better time to thank you for your continued business. Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there. CALL ME TODAY.

State Farm

0907518.1 State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL

Pencil us in!
www.polkio.com
Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

Wood-Bethausser
Matthew James Wood and Heidi Bethausser were married on August 4, 2015 in Portland. A reception was held at the home of the bride's parents. Heidi is a 2010 graduate of Warner-Pacific College in Portland and is employed as a manufacturing analyst at Precision Cast Parts in Milwaukee. Matt is a 2002 graduate of City Bible College in Portland and is a Sergeant in the Oregon Army National Guard. He is employed as a Black Hawk Crew Chief at the Armory in Salem. Parents are Rob and Elaine Wood of San Marco, CA, and Tim and Fran Oliver of Sand Point, Id. Grandparents are Ron and Glenda Schroyer of Dallas and James and Mildred Caruso of Berlin, MD.