

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

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The weather outside is frightful

Out-of-town visitor surprised as tree crashes outside his window Thursday

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Lee Wanner couldn't believe he eyes.

Looking out of his window on the second floor of a home on Southwest Oak Street, he saw the large oak tree in his front yard moving in an unusual way.

Not swaying in the wind, but falling.

"It was weird, kind of surreal," Wanner said Thursday, just minutes after the large and healthy oak crashed to the ground.

The tree falling caused minimal damage, missing the house, owned by Jan and Wayne Rickert — Wanner is their nephew — and the Farmers Insurance building next door. The only casualties beyond the tree, were the sidewalk — a large slab was ripped up — and Jan's flower garden planted around the tree.

If the tree had fallen in the direction of the house, it would have fallen through Wanner's bedroom and may have damaged the living room where Jan and Wayne were sitting.

"If it had to fall, it picked the best place," Jan said staring at the tree, the shock still evident in her voice. "I'm just thinking maybe someone is looking after us."

Jan Rickert guesses the soggy ground from days of soaking rain and the wind that accompanied Thursday's storm combined to bring the tree down.

"I came downstairs and said 'Did you see that?'" Wanner said. "The tree is gone."

Jan said it sounded like a loud thunder clap, not a tree falling in her front yard.

"It never occurred to me that that big guy would go," she said.

Wanner, who recently moved from California, had been looking forward to see-



An old, otherwise healthy oak fell on Southwest Oak Street after drenching rains and strong winds on Thursday.



Lee Wanner was surprised to watch the oak fall.



The trunk, spanning nearly 6 feet, took a large slab of concrete with it when it tipped over, but fell between two buildings, causing minimal damage.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

City Manager Ron Foggins gets a raise for a job well done.

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FALLS CITY

Falls City City Council takes no action on marijuana, medical or recreational.

»Page 14A

INDEPENDENCE

City OKs payment on Minet's behalf for December debt service amount due.

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MONMOUTH

Western Oregon University's men's basketball team scores another win, bringing the team to 10-0.

»Page 12A

Hadley, Schellenberg honored at Farm Bureau meeting

Itemizer-Observer staff report

SUNRIVER — The Oregon Farm Bureau Federation held its 83rd annual meeting at Sunriver Resort Dec. 8 through Thursday.

Four of five resolutions submitted by Polk County Farm Bureau were adopted. Those issues included preventing the cross pollination of crops, requiring grazing of forestland to prevent forest fires, requiring local farm service agencies to enforce noxious weed control on government-owned land, and the establishment of a state Farm Bureau political education advisory committee to the federation's board of directors.

Kathy Hadley, of Rickreall, won the statewide Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet and will compete for the national title at the American Farm Bureau annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in January 2016.

Don Schellenberg, of Dallas, was inducted into the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame in recognition of his 47 years of service to Farm Bureau.

Townsend teaches others to 'pay it forward'

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Thursday evening, Kimber Townsend picked up two Christmas trees, stands and lights to deliver to families who otherwise would not have them.

They were purchased at the Central High School senior class lot and left there with Townsend's name on them. It was just a small token of paying it forward, inspired by a post on Facebook by Townsend.

"One of the families I know is a single mom who has a disability," Townsend, 45, said of the recipients of the trees. "I'm told she's working very hard at that. My thought goes to, a Christmas tree will be nice ... but what makes a differ-



Kimber Townsend takes a rare break at the coffee shop at Western Oregon University's Werner Center. Townsend, 45, of Monmouth, works full-time at WOU.

ence for her, not just today, but in a couple of months." Townsend decided to see if the city of Independence would accept donations toward a stranger's utility ac-



count. They would. She can't wait until the woman gets her first bill with a negative balance. "What a surprise for mom," Townsend said. "I can imagine the fun of her calling city hall and saying, 'there's been an error on my bill.' Oh no, someone made a donation on your account. How cool is that?" See **TOWNSEND**, Page 5A

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
Learn to paint with good friends, food and drinks at the Boondocks in Falls City each Wednesday.
7 p.m. \$30.
Showers
Hi: 45
Lo: 41

thu
Put your favorite "ugly" Christmas sweater to the test at the Dallas Area Seniors holiday music jam.
6:30 p.m. Free.
Rain
Hi: 50
Lo: 45

fri
Calling all teenagers to Dallas Public Library for a Christmas party involving food, cookie decorating and a movie.
5:30 p.m. Free.
Showers
Hi: 48
Lo: 38

sat
New Life Nazarene Church will host its annual clothes giveaway at Jinett's Closet for anyone who needs it.
9 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.
Partly Cloudy
Hi: 45
Lo: 39

sun
A free concert featuring scripture, and adult, bell, children and youth choirs will be at Trinity Lutheran Church.
6:30 p.m. Free.
Rain
Hi: 45
Lo: 38

mon
Join other Star Wars fans at Independence Public Library for a marathon of the films, Episodes IV, V, and VI.
1-8 p.m. Free.
Rain
Hi: 48
Lo: 40

tue
Today marks the shortest day of the year, the Winter Solstice. After today, the days will start getting longer again.
Showers
Hi: 46
Lo: 39