

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A tale of two neighbors

On Dec. 10 during a strong storm, a large oak tree in our front yard fell, prompting contrasting actions from our extended neighbors.

Fortunately, damage was minimal — a small section of sidewalk. We contacted the city and set to work clearing the tree away. For the next two days, in the worst rains in years, our son, Carter, nephew, Lee and Carter's friends, Sterling and Morgan, worked together with neighbor, Floyd, who stopped with his wife to help. Tuesday saw our neighboring lot clear of all large debris and the tree mostly gone.

A good feeling for all. Then we were steered to the Royal Order of Red Sus-penders, a group of volun-teers that gathers and splits fallen trees to distribute to families in need of winter heat. They took all but the large root wad.

The last piece of our Christmas tale fell into place when Micah, from Falls City, stopped to offer help because something told him he should.

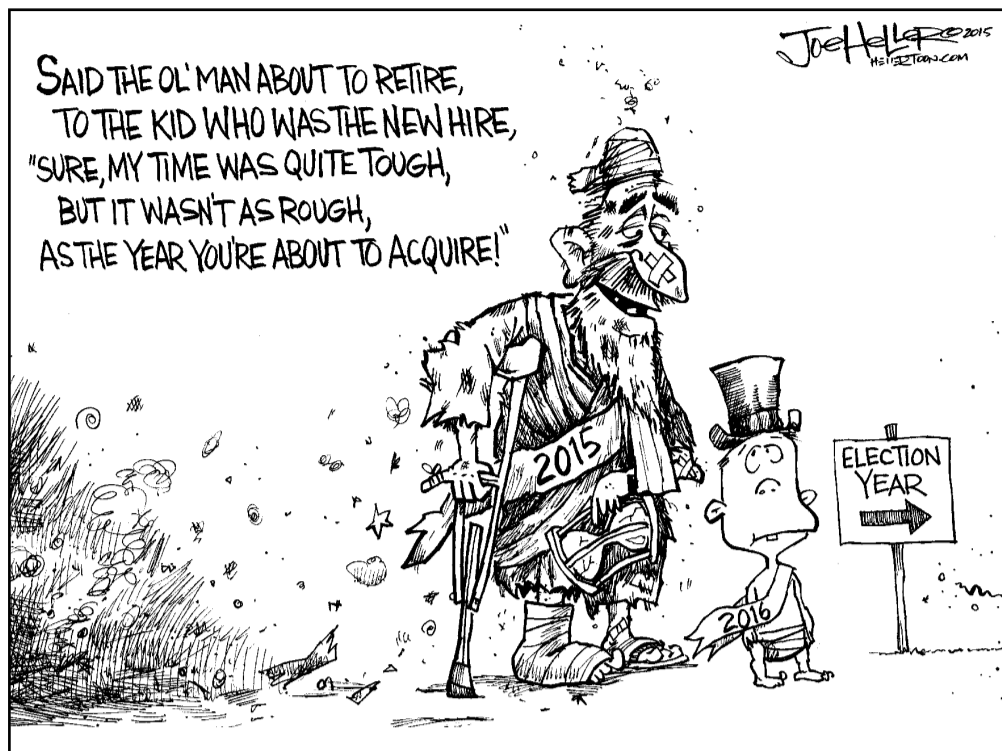
Clearing fallen trees is part of his trade; Micah had all the equipment and know-how to lift that heavy root. That same afternoon, with his friend Harley, Micah removed the root and lowered the undam-aged piece of pavement back into place.

Along with all the good-hearted efforts came a less helpful one. An email was sent to the city to prompt it to investigate our broken sidewalk: surely by someone who believes in Christmas miracles if the expectation was to have the huge mess cleared in a more timely manner. "Yes, Virginia, there is a Grinch!"

Still, nothing spoils the kind acts of the many and the goodwill manifested. Thank you all.

Dallas shines. As a firm believer in what you sow you will reap, I know good things will come your way.

Jan Rickert
Dallas



All students' privacy matters

Let us honor every student because we realize all persons are image bearers of the holy and sacred, and let us conduct ourselves with kindness as the Dallas School District (DSD) and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) seek new school policies which respect the right to privacy for all students.

Article 16 in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states children have a right to privacy. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx)

If children do not wish to see nor be seen by a child/student of the opposite anatomical gender as they dress or undress, that is within their rights.

Columbia Law in Privacy for Children attests:

"... Children need physical privacy in order to develop their individuality, their independence and their self reliance ... and other attributes important to personal development.

The fact that children need privacy from individuals and entities external to the family is well recognized, both in law and academic literature. There is a wide recognition that children

need privacy to protect them" (Benjamin Shmueli and Ayelet Blecher-Prigat, PRIVACY FOR CHILDREN, Columbia Law School, http://www3.law.columbia.edu/hrlr/hrlr_journal/42.3/Shmueli_Blecher.pdf)

Public school policy must protect the needs of the many, never just the one, while yet including the one. School policies have completely different needs than municipal policies. Children aren't consenting adults, and some school districts are currently making policies which violate the rights of the children entrusted to them.

The community, DSD, and ODE face a challenging task, but we must find a solution for all. We need educated and kind citizens, DSD leaders, and students to create a peaceful resolution. In our modern era, we face questions never before asked of us. It's time to find compassionate solutions for all, which violate the rights of none.

Kim Conolly
Dallas

Christmas angel helps fill wish list

My husband had tried Salem department and nearby stores desperately searching for a Portland Timbers sweatshirt for me

for Christmas with no success.

On Christmas Eve, he was doing some last-minute shopping at Wal-Mart in Dallas. There, he saw a woman shopping with her kids wearing a Timbers hoodie. He introduced himself and asked where she had gotten it and where he might get one, telling her of his search.

He thanked her for the information and said, "Good-bye, Merry Christmas."

Later, as he was waiting at the checkout, the woman's son approached him, said, "Merry Christmas," and handed him the folded hoodie he had admired earlier.

My husband asked the boy where his mother was. The son pointed her out and he went over. They talked; she would not accept payment for the hoodie, saying that sweatshirt obviously meant more to my husband than it did for her, and Merry Christmas. She smiled and walked away.

The smile my husband had on his face when he got back from shopping was priceless. He said he had a story to tell, but could not tell it until Christmas morning.

On Christmas morning, while opening presents, he told the story of the woman giving him the shirt off her back to make a stranger's

day a little brighter.

Everyone who heard the story got a tear in their eye and a lump in their throat.

To the mysterious woman in Wal-Mart: Thank you. Your gift of listening to a stranger, understanding frustration, having a sense of humor while dealing with holiday crowds, and giving with love was the greatest Christmas present we could have received. And then to top it off, you wrapped it all up with a sweatshirt on my wish list.

Ami Braden
Dallas

Dallas officers find missing bicycle

Thank you Dallas Police Department. They found my bike. I had mine since December 1964, so I have been riding my old Schwinn for 51 years.

Last year, the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* told my story of my 50-year-old bike on the front page.

Tuesday, Dec. 22, I needed to go to the doctor for a blood draw. It was not raining, so I decided to walk down to Dallas Family Medicine. I left my bike under the carport padlocked to my house. My son's bike is on racks in the rafters, also padlocked to the wall. When I got home a little past 10 a.m., my bike was gone. My son's bike was hanging on one wheel on a hook, still locked to the wall. They broke my padlock on my bike.

My bike was gone. I started to cry. I grabbed my phone, called 911, told them what happened. They took down the information.

At 11:11 a.m., I got a call from the Dallas police. He said he was at Wal-Mart. He was driving through Wal-Mart's parking lot.

He saw a bike parked there and already two men were off to jail on other charges. He said he would call me back to make sure it was mine. Then the policeman put my bike in his police car. He drove to my house. Thank you for finding my bike.

Alice Down
Dallas

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 to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper,

are edited for length, grammar and content.

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

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.

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Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER

Vol. 140, No. 52

(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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