

EDITORIALS

Welcome to 2016

Heading into 2016, here are some projects we'd like to see make some progress:

We would like to see the Blue Garden open its doors and be welcomed by the residents of Dallas and visitors alike.

We hope to see the Independence riverfront planned and developed thoughtfully.

We had a number of new businesses and restaurants open in 2015 — we hope people support those businesses and they are able to keep their doors open through 2016.

We would love a bakery in Dallas.

We hope to see more collaboration between Monmouth and Western Oregon University. We are excited about the new leadership at WOU and look forward to seeing what the new board and president bring to campus in 2016.

There's a momentum in the air, one of vision and progress. We hope the residents of Polk County can keep that momentum going.

With an election in November, we hope people can keep a civilized discussion about candidates and will watch with interest to see who steps up to serve in our local governments as well as statewide.

With lingering controversy hovering over Dallas from 2015, we hope for continued respectful conversation that leads to a resolution for all.

Last year had its ups and downs, but let's remember the high points and work to make 2016 packed full of even more great memories.

One way to ensure your community and its wonderful events, from Summerfest to Hops and Heritage Festival to Music in the Park, go smoothly and are fun for all is to volunteer on the boards and committees responsible for making those events happen.

Make getting involved part of your New Year's resolutions.

As for us, we'll continue to try and provide the best local news for you, our readers. We love to hear from you, so feel free to write us a letter to the editor or drop us a note.

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, JAN. 6

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

• **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Dallas Residential Street Task Force** — 4 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

MONDAY, JAN. 11

• **WIMPEG Board of Directors** — 7 p.m., 150 N. Knox St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Southwest Polk Fire Protection District Board** — 7:30 p.m., Rickreall Fire Station, 275 Main St., Rickreall. 503-831-3530.

• **Hops and Heritage Festival Commission** — 6 p.m., Independence Elks Lodge, 289 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Dallas School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Dallas School District office, 111 SW Ash St., Dallas. 503-623-5594.

TUESDAY, JAN. 12

• **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

• **Monmouth Tree Advisory Board** — 7 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Independence City Council** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 13

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

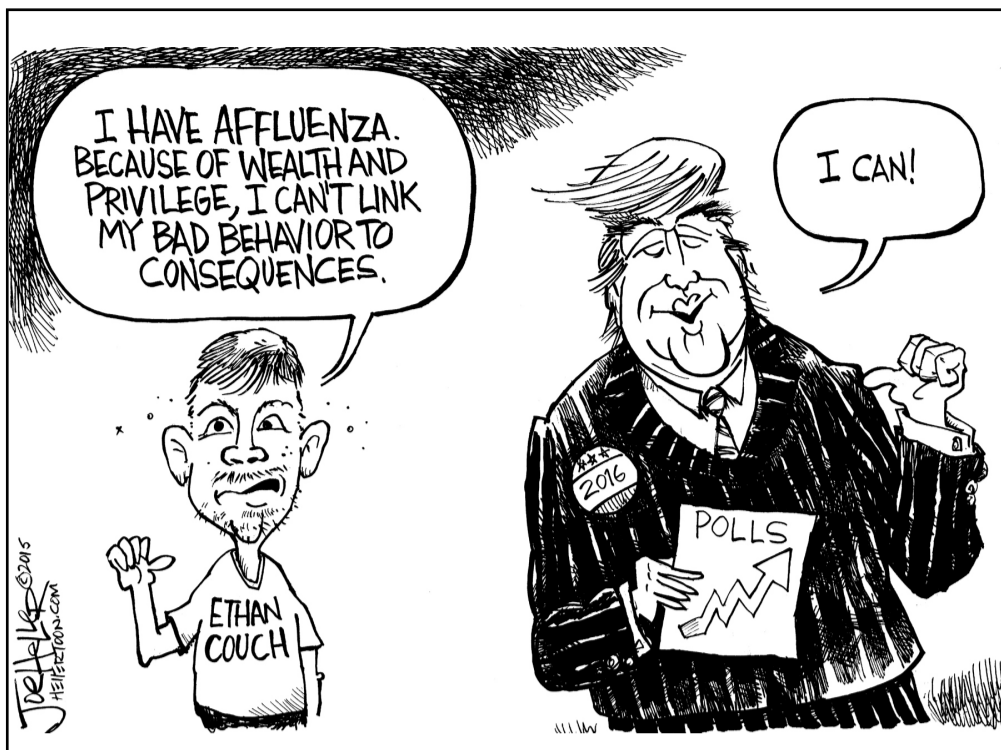
• **Monmouth Parks and Recreation Board** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Independence Heritage Museum Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Heritage Museum, 112 S. Third St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Dallas Residential Street Task Force** — 4 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court Street, Dallas. 503-831-3502.

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bending to federal influence not right

It comes as no surprise that federal influence is felt in local government.

After all, he who pays the piper calls the tune.

The simple threat of lost federal funding can buy a lot of compliance.

This influence has most recently reared its head in the Dallas School District.

The most disturbing aspect of the latest episode is that our elected representatives and their administrators seem to be too easily disposed to yield to the fancies of federal bureaucracy.

The Office of Civil Rights the Department of Education have filed amicus briefs in support of transgender youth.

Yet, no court of law had ruled in their favor.

Our school board fails to distinguish between an amicus brief and a judicial ruling.

Superintendent Michelle Johnstone has referred to "the law" in her communication.

The fact is, there is no law that requires access to single-sex facilities based on perceived gender.

It is concerning to me that our school board and their administration fail to comprehend, or at least concede, this very consequential distinction in the law.

Surely, reasonable accommodation of transgender youth and privacy for all is an achievable goal.

However ill-informed deference to federal overlords is not acceptable at all, ever.

Jim Cross
Dallas

Try Monmouth's Hadley's Bakery

Hadley's Radio Bakery in Monmouth is my new go-to restaurant. There's nowhere else like it for fresh, unique, traditional home cooking. My pastry was warm from the oven because Hadley bakes small batches throughout the day. And his special cold-brewed coffee is excellent.

You may find a pot of bone broth soup simmering on the stove or a plate of fresh biscuits and gravy, and so much more. I've been there three times this week.

Rene Grier
Monmouth

Disagreement isn't persecution, hatred

The author of the Dec. 23 letter to the editor "Choose love over differences" seems to imply that a difference of opinion means that you are unwelcoming and persecuting.

He claims to be welcoming and making people feel safe, yet his rhetoric ramps up negative feelings toward those whose opinion differs.

Disagreeing does not mean there is hatred or safety issues or that one side plays the victim.

Progressives talk about coming to the table to compromise, but they never mean it.

What they really want is exactly their way.

Referencing the transgender issue at the high school, a compromise here is the transgender having their own space.

People went out of their way to accommodate the

transgender's choice of lifestyle, but that was not good enough. Instead the individual is insisting on foisting a choice of lifestyle on other students and their parents, grandparents, whose responsibility it is to protect the values of their children.

All citizens deserve to have their rights respected equally and to be protected.

The people who spoke out to protect their children would be the first to step up to protect the transgender. Too bad the transgender can't respond in kind.

How is it that hundreds of voices are unable to be heard over the voices of a few? I personally would not trust the author of the aforementioned (letter to the editor) to protect and respect my safety and right to privacy because of his one-sided view.

Terri Parsons
Dallas

Thanks for 'warm, fuzzy' donations

We would like to send a huge thanks to all the generous people who donated warm clothing, blankets, and other articles of warmth for our "Warm and Fuzzy" clothing drive 2015.

What a difference these things made to those who needed them.

We would also like to add a big, big thank you for the staff at Starlite Lanes, Dallas, for acting as a drop-off point for us and their cheery attitude.

It made a big difference. The articles collected surpassed the 2014 totals. God bless.

Deb Darr
Falls City

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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