

EDITORIALS

**Service providers
join to help others**

A week from today, organizations from around the county and some from the state will gather for a one-stop shop where people who need help can find it.

For the fifth year, Polk County Service Integration will host the Polk Community Connect event from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Valley Life Center Church, 1795 SE Miller Ave., in Dallas.

The event is for anyone in need, but focuses on helping the county's homeless population, one that is often overlooked. Homelessness is an issue here, particularly when the nearest shelter is in Salem and very little public transportation is available to get from here to there. The Community Connect event serves as Polk County's point in time homeless count.

To help people take advantage of the services offered, Cherriotts or CARTS will bus people to and from the event.

Direct services are available, including dental care, health screenings, pet car, bike repair and haircuts. People will be available to help with employment, housing, veterans, benefits, behavioral health, and resources for children and families. Breakfast and lunch will be served to participants.

Supplies are available, including camping supplies, warm clothing and food. Last year, tents and socks were popular items.

Everything is free and confidential.

The best part about all this is the atmosphere of complete acceptance and lack of judgement from those there to help. Everyone is made to feel welcome at Polk Community Connect, making it a wonderful way to find help — and giving people a great chance to volunteer.

Connections are made, not only between providers of these services — who so often are in silos, rarely communicating with each other — and between the people who need those services.

It's not going to solve the homeless problem in Polk County, but it's a good step toward treating them with dignity.

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. 20

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

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

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

THURSDAY, JAN. 21

• **Independence Parks and Recreation Board** — 6 p.m., Independence Civic Center, third floor, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Dallas Economic Development Commission** — Noon, Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3565.

• **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.

FRIDAY, JAN. 22

• **Polk County Health Advisory Board** — Noon, Academy Building, Room 212, 182 SW Academy St., Dallas. 503-623-8175, ext. 2307.

MONDAY, JAN. 25

• **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth 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. 26

• **Independence City Council** — 7:30 a.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

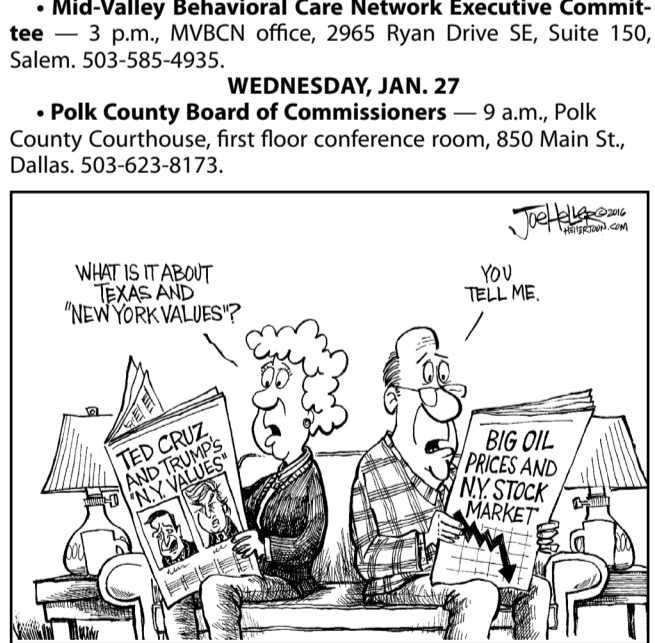
• **Monmouth Senior Advisory Board** — 1 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

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

• **Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network Executive Committee** — 3 p.m., MVBCN office, 2965 Ryan Drive SE, Suite 150, Salem. 503-585-4935.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 27

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



**Parents group
wants privacy for all**

As most of us are aware by now, across this nation is the issue of access, should we allow anatomical males and anatomical females in opposite sex locker rooms or restrooms? Right here in our Dallas schools this situation is taking place.

Parents for Privacy for All is advocating privacy and safety for all students, not just a select few. Our desire is that all students have their right to bodily privacy respected, not violated. Why should anyone have forced upon them the presence or visual of the opposite sex, in a locker room or restroom where people are taking care of personal business? Every student should have the right to feel safe and secure, especially in such a place of vulnerability.

Where is the respect for one's religious or philosophical belief that looking upon another human being naked, or almost naked body is sacred?

Please join us in supporting the privacy rights of every student, and encourage our school board to set policy that achieves this goal.

*Kris Golly
Dallas*

**Bicyclists, drivers
must share the road**

First of all, my sympathies to the family of John Shapely and sympathies to Daniel Major who will be forever haunted by this avoidable tragedy.

Why do we always react and think that we have to throw money at something to protect ourselves from ourselves? Hoffman Road is not the problem. Those who use Hoffman Road — or any road — are the problem.

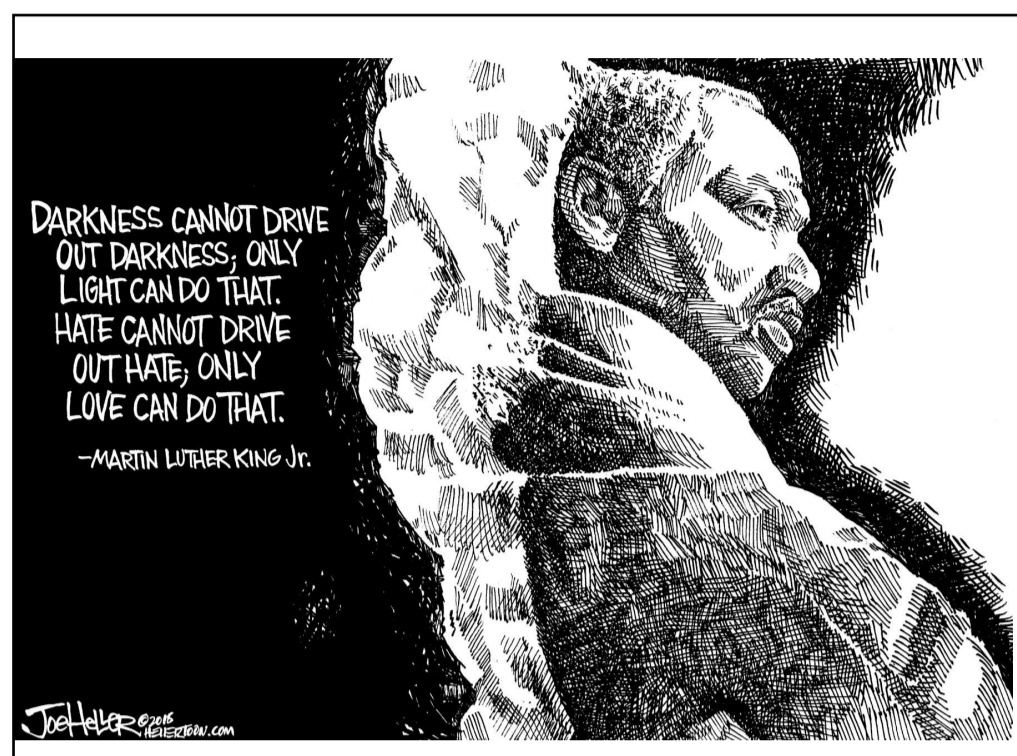
Everyone just needs to remember to share, pay attention and be safe.

As for bicycle safety: Not wearing a helmet? Not very smart. Wearing dark clothing on a dark night? Hmmm ... cars barely see bicyclists in broad daylight. No mention was made of

lights and reflectors on the bicycle so I'm going to guess not. So, bicyclists — and pedestrians — be visible. Drivers, pay attention and drive safe.

*Julianna Burke
Independence*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I agree with the writer that Congress has failed us by simply refusing to govern and forcing the president to take some actions that they should have dealt with. Please check your facts and question everything you read.

*Michael Cairns
Independence*

**Fact check letters
before you believe**

A letter to the editor in the Jan. 13 *I-O* by a Richard Evans repeatedly calls President Obama a dictator, evidenced by his uncontrolled use of executive orders. Fortunately my computer has Google, so I was able to fact-check the accusation.

If one clicks on <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/orders.php>, you will see that President Obama has, in truth, issued fewer executive orders per year (33) than any president since the first term of Grover Cleveland (1885-1889).

My fact-checking finds Mr. Evans' accusation to be in the "pants-on-fire" category. By comparison, FDR issued 307 executive orders per year. If readers want to understand the constitutional basis for executive orders, their history and use, Wikipedia is a good source to start: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_order.

*Dale Derouin
Dallas*

**Bright clothing can
make a difference**

A couple years ago while driving along a road near my home in the predawn darkness, I rounded a curve and almost ran over a jogger.

The thing I remember most vividly was that he was wearing brown sweat pants and a black sweatshirt. Luckily, I was able to swerve in time.

I cannot understand why so many people cannot make the connection between their dark clothing and getting run over in the darkness.

Additionally, the advent of LED lighting technology has made it possible and economical for people to light themselves up pretty brightly so as to be noticed from a long distance.

I am not making judgements about the poor soul who was hit while riding his bicycle on Hoffman Road, but I sure wish he would have had some awareness about the hazards of dark clothing and dark skies while riding on the roadways.

Please folks, light yourselves up. Give us drivers a break and perhaps a chance to save your life.

*Fred Brown
Dallas*

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Dear Dallas Community, January is School Board Recognition Month, and the Dallas School District, on behalf of its staff and students, would like to express its deep gratitude to our school board members Lu Ann Meyer, Jon Woods, Michael Blanchard, Mike Bollman, and Matt Posey. School board members are volunteers who spend countless hours serving our district. They have a tough job to

do that requires a delicate balance of valuable skills. They are skilled listeners, decision makers, advocates for children and policy makers.

They set and monitor goals, establish budgets, guide collective bargaining, and establish and maintain policy to positively lead our district forward.

They work diligently together to focus on the key question, "Is it good for kids?" The following words from

a few of our staff members and students express the sentiments of us all:

• The key to our success rests in people like you who embody the spirit of greatness by saying, "Yes I can, and you can, too!"

• Just a small reminder, so that you'll always know, we surely do appreciate how you help children grow. Thank you!

• Thank you for all the hours you spend, attention you give, needs that you

tend, knowledge you pass on. Your special touch, offering guidance, and undaunted by much.

• Thank you for being approachable and hosting board meetings in our buildings.

• Thank you for visionary leadership that puts children at the center of all you think, say, and do.

Thank you, school board, for your devoted service to our district.

*Michelle Johnstone
Superintendent*

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.

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

cludes 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.

For our complete letters policy: www.polkio.com.

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