

EDITORIALS

Honoring excellence

Friday night Dallas showcased the individuals and businesses who worked to make the city a better place to live, work and play over the last year.

The 59th annual Community Awards — with the theme of honoring courage — left those in the audience inspired. If it didn't, it should have.

Award presenters told stories about the winners, showing how they display courage and leadership in their personal and professional lives.

There was the story of two police officers scrambling to pull a colleague from a burning patrol car.

Or the police and fire chaplains who comfort those suffering from tragedy.

City Manager Ron Fogglin spoke of the difficulties a new business experienced trying to get its doors open, including hitting a gas main and dealing with a building flood.

Honored at the ceremony was an art teacher who has been an inspiration to a generation of students, a young professional who in a short time has encouraged others in his age group to strive for success, and a popular small business that began with literally nothing.

The community honored the achievements of its late friend, Ron Lines, a man who "got it done" and with a smile.

Dallas' First Citizen, Bob Brannigan in six years has paved a path toward access to better health care and has served on more committees than most people do in a lifetime.

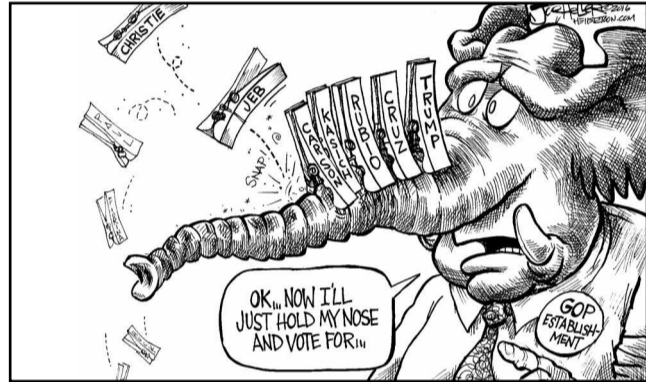
All stories of courage. But there were other themes Friday evening: humility and gratefulness.

The chaplains said it is their privilege to serve others in what could be their greatest moment of need. Officers Jim Rodriguez and Colby Hamilton say they thank God for being in the right place at the right time.

The businesses thanked their customers and the community for their success.

Brannigan offered more leadership to conclude the night, calling others to serve. It's that kind of courage that builds communities — and makes them better.

Congratulations winners, you deserve the recognition.



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, FEB. 24

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

THURSDAY, FEB. 25

• **Rickreall Watershed Council** — 1 p.m., Delbert Hunter Arboretum House, Dallas City Park. 623-9680, Ext. 104.
• **Monmouth-Independence Networks Board of Directors** — 7:30 a.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence. 503-837-0700.

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

• **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
• **Dallas Urban Renewal Advisory Committee** — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3565.
• **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WOU faculty still wait for contract

I am a faculty member at Western Oregon University, but this university means more to me than just being my employer.

I grew up nearby and learned quickly how special WOU is. Many of my friends' parents were faculty here, and most of the teachers in my classes were graduates.

I came to campus for events or to study regularly. Through those experiences, I learned that the individuals here genuinely care about the feeling of community at WOU and made people, regardless of status, a priority.

I am proud to be a part of the WOU community, but recent salary negotiations have saddened me.

Our defining sense of community is threatened by inequitable offers that are, seemingly, geared to drive WOU's faculty apart.

Despite an independent board and state funding model rewarding WOU for doing what we do best — serving students who may not have otherwise been able to attend a university — our lowest paid faculty are being offered a smaller percentage increase than other faculty, and this is, simply, not fair.

The leadership of this university needs to remember that people are key to keeping this gem of the Willamette Valley special and treat them accordingly.

Camila Gabaldon
Monmouth

Grant to help raise suicide awareness

On behalf of the Polk County Family and Community Outreach Department, and the Polk County

Suicide Prevention Coalition, we would like to express our gratitude to The Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund and to Salem Health Community Benefit for their recent funding of Polk County's suicide prevention efforts.

The Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund awarded Polk County \$7,500 in November to help provide suicide prevention training in Polk County.

This represents a huge boost to the suicide prevention efforts that the Suicide Prevention Coalition has been trying to make since May of 2015.

In January 2016, Polk County received more great news when Salem Health announced that they had awarded Polk County \$50,000 to promote suicide prevention and training in our communities.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, suicide is currently the second leading cause of death for individuals ages 10 to 34 in Oregon and represents the eighth leading cause of death for Oregonians overall. The generosity of the Siletz Tribe and Salem Health will go a long way in helping us to address this important issue. The influence and impact of their gifts will be felt in our communities for years to come. We look forward to working with many of you in Polk County as we strive to provide resources, training, and support to prevent suicide.

Doug Gouge
Dallas

Use of clause is abuse of power

Remember the phrase, "absolute power corrupts absolutely"?

Well I never thought I would see this in my lifetime. I mean, after all, we

live in a democracy governed by the people and for the people, don't we? This week our state representatives and governor voted with an emergency clause to raise the minimum wage.

Whether I agree with the minimum wage increase is not the point, it's that they used the emergency clause to approve it.

The emergency clause is just what it sounds like, for emergencies. But by using it for this purpose they have taken the power of petition out of the hands of the people.

A few years ago our state representatives enacted a similar law but did not use the emergency clause; this allowed the people to get enough signatures and place it on a ballot which the people subsequently voted down.

Again, whether you agree or disagree to raising the minimum wage isn't the point.

The point is this is a blatant misuse of power. Our only recourse now it is election time is to vote them politicians out of office.

Oh your representative will use the reason that sometimes we have to vote against a certain block of people because they just don't understand or they don't have enough information.

Since I am a past city councilor and mayor, I agree that sometimes misinformation or lack of information can make it seem as though you are voting for or against a certain block of people, but never should there be a push to eliminate the rights of the people or their opportunity to challenge your decision.

This in my opinion was done by this group of people.

Larry Dalton
Monmouth

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. Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period.

Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste 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. 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. For the complete policy: polkio.com. For more information: email ionews@polkio.com, call 503-623-2373, or come visit us at our office: 147 SE Court St., Dallas.

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Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

Vol. 141, No. 8

(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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