

EDITORIALS

Local events achieve something rare

The Mid-Valley AgFest and Polk County Home and Garden Show proved to be a smashing success last weekend — and perhaps for a bigger reason than you might expect.

The two-day events attracted attendees of all ages — and they didn't leave disappointed.

The kids had plenty to keep them busy. From watching a model train set, to getting their faces painted and taking a seat on a tractor or covered wagon, to receiving a balloon and enjoying tasty treats, this was a truly family-friendly event.

But this wasn't just a kids affair. The AgFest helped urban and rural life connect. Saturday Market vendors and small farms showed off their hand-crafted products and food. Speakers and seminars provided information about the world of agriculture, the challenges it is facing and what is changing.

The AgFest was a unique opportunity for families to connect through one of the county's defining features.

The Home and Garden Show provided inspiration and information to help kickstart people's latest projects. From flooring to furniture, spas to window coverings, the Home and Garden Show gave the community a chance to find what's new in the world of home improvement.

Those green thumbs found plenty at the show as well. Garden treasures like birdhouses and other decorations were on full display, as well as a variety of plants.

Presentations from author Gretchen Anderson and the State of Oregon assistant veterinarian Dr. Ryan Scholtz gave adults important information on raising a flock of chicken and on avian influenza.

The Polk County Museum gave the public a chance to discover the county's history and heritage.

The AgFest and Home and Garden Show was more than a chance to shop, eat and learn. It was a unique opportunity for families to come together, one that truly had things to interest you, no matter what your age.

In a time when families seem to have countless things happening all the time, events that can give everyone in something to look forward to are a rarity. That may be both shows' greatest triumphs.

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, 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.

MONDAY, MARCH 7

- **Central School District Board of Directors** — 6:30 p.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence.
- **Independence Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Dallas City Council work session** — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.
- **Dallas City Council** — 7 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

- **Independence City Council** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

- **Independence Heritage Museum Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Heritage Museum, 112 S. Third St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Monmouth Parks and Recreation Board** — 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.
- **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

More trouble for Oregon retirees

KOIN 6 NEWS reported a story about the 10 worst states for retirees, and guess what, Oregon is in the top 10. Huffington Post listed Oregon eighth worst place for seniors, due to high taxes and low income. Kiplinger Report listed Oregon eighth also for the worst place for seniors to retire due to the cost of living, which is 14.3 percent higher than the national average.

The average household income for seniors in the state of Oregon is 18.1 percent less than the national average, and the state and local tax burden is 10.1 percent, which is above the national average according to the tax foundation.

Bank rate.com lists Oregon as the 10th worst place for seniors.

The state has the seventh highest cost of living in the nation according to retail statistics from the Council for Community and Economic Research.

Now some of our state representatives and our governor are going to raise the minimum wage to \$14.25 per hour by 2022 in Portland.

The current minimum wage is \$9.25. If a person only works 20 hours a week, this gives them an extra \$400 per month, approximately.

Do you honestly feel that your Social Security will rise that fast to meet the cost of living?

Now let's look at the city of Dallas. Dallas City Council is looking at a gas tax; isn't gas higher here in town than in Salem?

So besides you paying more taxes or fees, the store or restaurant you frequent most likely will pass on the cost to you.

We don't care about your shortfall; we have our own cash flow problems.

Kenneth Mayer
Dallas

Raising minimum wage is right thing

There are so many reasons why raising the minimum wage was the right thing to do. It helps the working poor climb out of poverty.

It puts more money into the pockets of working families. It can stimulate the economy. It demonstrates to workers that their service is both valuable and valued.

Corporations and businesses will always say that they can't afford an increase, but the reality is that they can.

Decades of opposition to a minimum wage increase would have resulted in paltry salaries that in no way could keep up with the cost of living.

And what kind of society would that be? Simple — one in which the rich get richer at the expense of, and on the backs of, the working poor. I am glad I voted for Rep. Paul Evans. He promised to help working families, and by supporting the minimum wage increase, he did. Oregon needs more legislators like him.

Amanda Deyerle
West Salem

Vote 'no' to a Clinton dynasty

In Harper's Magazine of

November 2014, I realized that Hillary Clinton's major goal in this election is to become the first female president of our still evolving democratic republic.

Bernie Sanders' goals are to make our government genuinely of, by, and for its many millions of struggling citizens.

Also, as viable life on our planet is threatened by our and natural abuses, it is fortunate that Bernie has the acumen to deal with all national emergencies.

So I say: No way, Hillary and always Bernie.

Walden Joura
Dallas

Think about what candidates say

Why am I not surprised that Chris Christie endorsed Donald Trump in the GOP race? Mostly it's because both of them are bloviating bullies who use insult over logical argument in their dealings. Plus, they both are completely disdainful of any person or group which does not slavishly follow their line of ill-conceived thought. But, I should not be so limited in my thinking. All of the members of the GOP primary clown bus seem to be at an elementary school level of thought.

Dr. (believe it or not) Ben Carson stated that the pyramids were built as grain storage sites, even though the available cubic area within this structure is microscopic.

When my older grandson's age was in the late single digits he was, as all boys are, enormously humored by bodily functions. Sadly, the GOP clown bus passengers

have not gotten over this adolescent fascination. Marco Rubio, supposedly one of the slightly more sane passengers, claims that Donald Trump "... wet his pants ..." during a recent debate.

Those of you who plan to vote for one of these awkward choices sincerely need to stop, take a deep breath and listen to exactly what the candidates are saying out loud. Christians are supposed to be all about love and forgiveness. Do you see any of that, especially as applied to gay people, immigrants, Muslims, refugees and the poor? The real question here is who does the right-wingers not hate. The list is very short.

Fred Brown
Dallas

Council shows leadership

A shout out and salute to the Dallas City Council. As the *I-O* reported on Feb. 24 in words of Councilor Wilson, "This has got to be taken care of."

"This" being decades of underfunded street maintenance.

So thank you to the Dallas City Council for demonstrating community leadership by asking Dallas voters to come forward and support the repair of your deteriorating streets.

It is great to learn that Dallas citizens recognize that good infrastructure promotes civic pride, and that good infrastructure sustains and attracts industry and commerce in your community.

E.M. Easterly
West Salem

WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?

It's that time of year again, with an election around the corner. With the ballot to be final on March 8, we will start our election letter season in the March 9 issue.

Letters regarding anything having to do with the election will be limited to 100 words. Letter writers are allowed one election letter per election season.

The *Itemizer-Observer* sticks strictly to these guidelines in an effort to allow as many people to express their opinions on our opinion page. Election letters from outside Polk County will not be accepted.

Let's try and keep it clean this season. When responding to a

letter writer, please be courteous and address the topics rather than take shots at the writer.

Also, please remember the following about letters:

Non-election letters to the editor are limited to 300 words.

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

Non-election 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, 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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Email: ionews@polkio.com.
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