

EDITORIALS

Adams reflects on 42 years

In a blink of an eye, I went from zero to 42 years in a career I have loved, from news reporter to publisher of my hometown newspaper. I am just grasping the idea that I will not be walking through the office doors of the *Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER*



Adams

on a daily basis, as this is the last issue that will carry my name as publisher. The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* is a place I have called home and where my staff has supported me and each other like family. Where the communities of Dallas, Independence and Monmouth

have invited my staff and I into their homes each week because they trust us and believe in newspapers. It is a responsibility I have taken seriously all of my career, from society editor to publisher. Have I made missteps and caused disappointment, yes, but never intentionally. Sadly there are those who will never believe that nor forgive me; I do understand. On the other hand, there have been many others who have been gracious and supportive, and have become some of my best friends and *I-O* newspaper supporters. A very emotional gift to receive.

This newspaper staff always worked to make sure the printed word is correct. We know that this is your hometown newspaper and work at having a level playing field for all. That is why we set parameters for letters and stories so everyone gets an equal chance to share their message. Although we are your strongest advocate in making sure there is freedom of speech — it is important to remember we are a business. There are bills to be paid so we can be in your home on a weekly basis.

It has been an honor and pleasure to have worked on more than 2,184 weekly issues including the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* (29 years) and the *Molalla Pioneer* (13 years) plus numerous special sections, print projects and telephone directories. I have shared the life of our readership from birth to marriage, life milestones, anniversaries, to the final life statement in an obituary. I will miss having these special ties with my communities.

I have enjoyed being able to work on many boards of directors that include: Eagle Newspapers Inc.; Dallas and Monmouth-Independence chamber; president of the Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce (more than once); Monmouth and Independence YMCA; Western Oregon University committees; Dallas Area Visitors Center (past president); West Valley Hospital; Sable House; many committees and commissions including chairing the Dallas Economic Commission for many years; Dallas School Board committees; Polk County Relay for Life and others that have given me the opportunity to give back. These communities have opened their arms wide to me, and there are many who have the same heart in making these communities the best that they can be.

I continue to marvel at how giving we all are when it comes to making our neighbors, friends and newcomers feel safe, secure and wanted as part of our community. We all have the same passion of creating environments that are welcoming, prosperous and giving. This is what makes being part of this newspaper such a blessing. Everyone cares; and so it remains even more important that the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* is at the school board

meetings, the city council meetings, and the commissioners meeting. Being your eyes and ears and sharing with each of you what is going on. Your newspaper is the key to communicating. We are the watcher that keeps the meeting open for all, and that all business is done in public and not behind closed doors. We are fortunate that our schools, councils and commissioners are diligent about being transparent, but it is us who share their message.

A key part of why the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* remains a viable part of the community is due to the ownership of Denny Smith and his family and Eagle Newspapers Inc. They are dedicated to community journalism. I owe a great deal to Denny and the board of directors who selected me in 1981 to serve as the first woman publisher in the company when I was named publisher at the *Molalla Pioneer*. Two former *Itemizer-ObsERVER* publishers also helped me recognize the opportunities available and that I had the ability to be successful in this business. I had a strong mentor in Joe Blaha, who hired me in 1973 as society editor and encouraged me to learn the whole business from top to bottom, which I did. I also was fortunate to work with Dave Weston, who encouraged and supported me in accepting the publisher's position in Molalla, as he said he was only a phone call away.

My greatest thanks and appreciation goes to my staff, both past and especially to my current crew. These people are amazing and have hung with me and the wild ride here at the *I-O*. We have made adjustments in staff numbers and jobs, along with the sadness at losing longtime staff members to economic cuts. The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* is also moving to a new style of business operation with a management team. The two-member team includes Emily Mentzer — she will serve as editor — and Heidi Leppin, who will continue as sales manager. They will be the dynamic duo who will lead their staff into the future of newspapers. This group of dedicated and loyal people are what has made the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* a highly respected and award-winning newspaper across the state. They have made my job easy. They have let me be both silly and serious, and I am sure they have wondered how it is that I am authorized to sign their pay checks.

You will not find a finer group of dedicated people who believe in providing their communities and customers with the best service and newspaper in the state. They will need your support in the days and years to come. There will always be a need for our community newspapers. Communication and the freedom to do so is a powerful and important tool in how we, as communities, will succeed. The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* staff does the research; we ask the questions; and we print the answers and the background and share it both in print and online.

Lastly I have been supported by my amazing family and friends through the highs and lows of these 42 years. The successes and the not-so-successes. I have enjoyed every minute of my work and the opportunities to share in making this a better place. I look forward to being able to do my part in remaining in service to these communities.

I look to what awaits me as one door closes and a new one opens. In the words of my father, Curt Lamb, who wrote a column for the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* for 45 years, "I will see you 'round town."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dallas's streets are in need of fixing

Anyone taking a hard look at Dallas' streets will find that they are deteriorating.

We all have a stake in keeping our infrastructure in good working order. Business depends on streets to deliver and receive goods as well as provide access. Whether we drive a vehicle, take a bus, ride bikes, or walk, our streets need to be safe and well maintained.

To save current and future taxpayers from more expense, we must act now to contain and reverse the ballooning street maintenance costs. Help stop more streets falling into poor condition. Vote yes on the street bond.

*Willaim Harrod
Dallas*

Street repairs in Dallas necessary

Since 1998, our house has needed repainting outside and inside, three water leaks repaired, annual gutter cleaning and a roof repair — typical repairs. My car needs

repairs, too: lube and filter every 6,000 miles, replacing engine and air filters, transmission and radiator fluids, and timing belt every 80,000 miles. Everything deteriorates over time and needs to be repaired or replaced. Drive around Dallas. There are many streets that need extensive repair or reconstruction. Your street will need small to major repair in a few years.

Vote yes on the May streets bond issue. Let's fix our streets.

*Linda Christensen
Dallas*

Fix streets now or pay more later

Our streets are badly in need of repair. The longer we wait to make these necessary repairs, the more it will cost us — in fact, the cost can increase up to five-fold. So what would cost us \$100 now will increase to \$500 if we wait.

That is just one reason why a group of Dallas residents, after studying the issue and possible alternatives, recommended that the most serious street re-

pairs be addressed through the approval of a street repair bond. Please join me in voting yes on the street bond — it just makes good (dollars) and sense.

*Kelly Gabliks
Dallas*

Re-elect Commish Jennifer Wheeler

My name is Bill J. Kluting, longtime Polk County citizen. I have been involved for decades in Oregon politics and especially rural counties. We need more commissioners like Jennifer Wheeler.

She has, along with the other two commissioners, worked tirelessly to move Polk County through hard times forward for the benefit of all people living in Polk County, including the newborn, K-12 school kids, young adults, working families and seniors.

Polk County, like almost all rural counties, face many problems ahead. This is why I'm voting for Jennifer, as we need the experience to continue to move Polk County forward.

*Bill J. Kluting
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. 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.

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.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

Reach us at:
Mail: Editor, *Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER*, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, OR 97338.
Fax: 503-623-2395.
Email: ionews@polkio.com.
Office: 147 SE Court St., Dallas.

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, APRIL 6

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

MONDAY, APRIL 11

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

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

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

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

Dallas Planning Commission — 7 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3565.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

It's hard to believe, but spring is here. It's great to see all the flowers blooming and hear the birds chirping. It feels like new beginnings every year at this time.

Celebrations since my last letter include naming two distinguished educators: Deanne Harms, media specialist at Whitworth, and Stephanie Hofferber, first-grade teacher at Lyle.

Both are outstanding educators.

We are currently waiting to see if we are successful in receiving a \$1.4 million grant for seismic upgrades to Whitworth.

We are working with the architect on the multipurpose rooms for Lyle and Oakdale. Both of these projects have been slow down as the Superintendent Facilities Committee looking



Johnstone

at our restrooms and locker rooms makes recommendations to support privacy for students.

Draft plans may need to be adjusted to include rec-

ommendations from this committee. Thank you for approving bond dollars

We are beginning work with advancing our Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes and Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) classes.

We have had several people, including our city manager, city council leaders, school board, administrators, and teachers, visit the CTE Center in Salem-Keizer School District and the Chemeketa campus in Salem to begin gathering ideas.

Our board, city council, and administrators recently met to share ideas that included welding, plumbing, health services, electrical, problem solving, and creating business partnerships.

We will continue to gather feedback through our Dallas Chamber of Commerce, staff, students, and families.

We welcome your feedback at CTE.feedback@dtd2.org.

*Michelle Johnstone
Dallas Schools
Superintendent*

HOW TO REACH US

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