

EDITORIALS

Take a chance, run for council

Hopefully people are busy collecting the needed signatures to run for city council positions open in Dallas, Falls City, Independence and Monmouth.

All four cities have local positions up for election or reelection in November. While the Presidential race is perhaps the most interesting, it's the local races that have the most immediate effect on people's lives.

The local governments establish taxes, go out for bonds, decide which new parks to approve, and pass ordinances from chickens to smoking in public parks to dog licensing.

City councils hire the city manager, who hires everyone else and makes decisions such as how many public works employees are on staff to address issues ranging from keeping storm drains clear to patching potholes.

Councilors — along with citizens on the budget committees — decide where the cuts will be made when the budget gets tight, and where improvements can be made when money allows.

Last time we checked, the number of people running for council offices in the four cities was lower than the actual number of vacancies available. We hope that people will gather the necessary paperwork and put themselves up for election for councils.

There's no paycheck for the hours involved in answering concerns from constituents, and reviewing council packets and information. But rewards come in seeing the difference you make in your community.

Fire departments work fast all summer

Summer is nearly at an end — at least as far as the school children are concerned — and we've had our share of fires in Polk County. Many homes that were vacant at the time were devastated by fire.

Field fires also sparked throughout the county.

But no lives were lost, thanks to quick response by Dallas Fire & EM, Southwest Fire and Polk Fire No. 1.

Our fire departments — and especially our volunteer firefighters — deserve a big pat on the back for getting us through another fire year. With temperatures raging in the 100s for three days last week, and plenty of hot, dry days with high winds in July, it made for ideal fire conditions. Our fire departments support each other to keep all of us safe.

We need to do our part, too.

Many of the house fires were started by overloaded outlets — too many things plugged into one place. This is an easy fix.

Take a look at your electrical plugs — are they overloaded? What aren't you using all the time? Unplug whatever is not being used and help reduce the chance of fire.

Another house fire was started by improper disposal of hazardous chemicals.

Walk around your house and take a look to see if you've left those rags you cleaned the grill with are still wadded up on the back patio.

Together, we can help reduce the fire activity and help our firefighters, ourselves and our neighbors.

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 email (ionews@polkio.com).

THURSDAY, AUG. 25

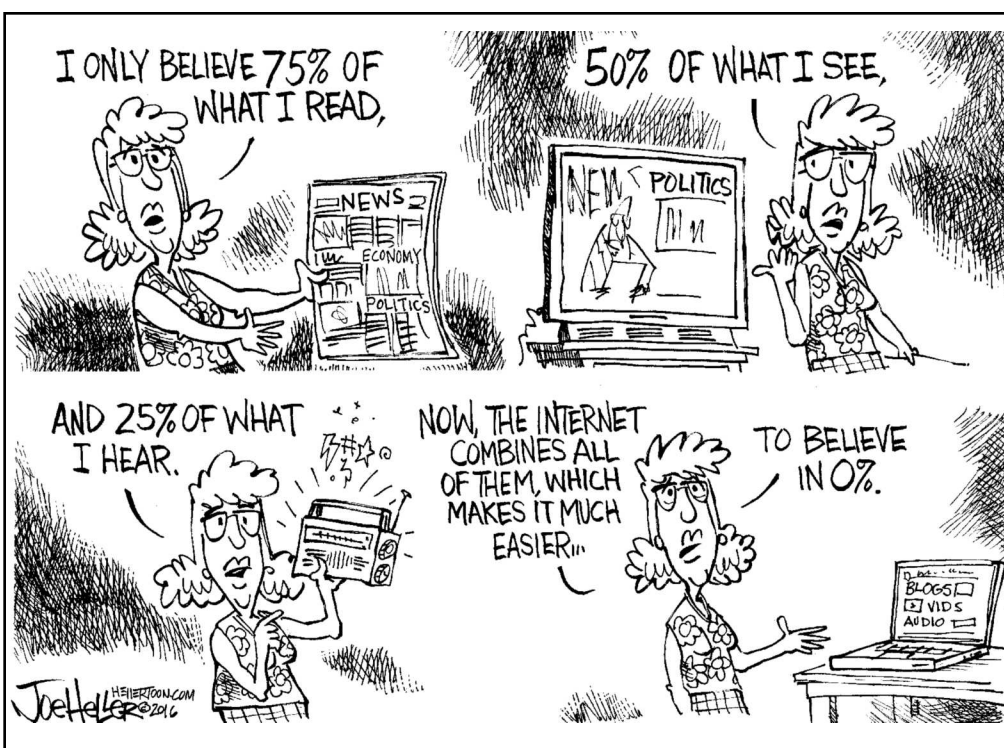
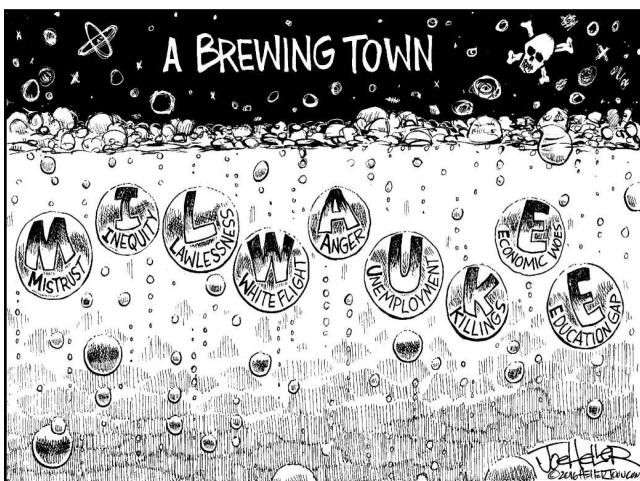
• **Monmouth-Independence Networks Board of Directors** — 7:30 a.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence. 503-837-0700.

TUESDAY, AUG. 30

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

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 31

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



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.

Election letters will be printed beginning Sept. 7.

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 organiza-

tions, 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.

The Itemizer does not accept guest columns. The letters policy is intended to give a voice to as many people as possible.

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