

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer
Volume 142, Issue 13 www.Polkio.com March 29, 2017 \$1.00

Sheriff's office looking for suspects

Itemizer-Observer staff report
DALLAS — The Polk County Sheriff's deputies still are searching for suspects — a man and a woman — in a home invasion reported Thursday.

"It's still ongoing," said Sheriff Mark Garton. "We been getting lots of tips. It's allowing us to track those down to see if they are legitimate. There's been lots of help."

So far, though, none of those tips have led an arrest. A woman living on James Howe Road outside Dallas reported that at about 2 p.m. Thursday, an unknown man and woman entered her home and threatened her and her children if she didn't open the safe in the home, according to the sheriff's office.

The female suspect used force to get the woman to comply — grabbing her by the hair and shoving her around the residence. The male suspect didn't use force, but remained in the house during the incident, according to sheriff's reports.

"The unknown female then forced the victim to the lower level of the residence, and bound her hands to a table, and fled the residence," the sheriff's office press release read. "It took about 10 to 15 minutes for the victim to free herself and call 911. The children were unharmed during the incident, but the victim had marks on her wrists, face, and knee."

The female suspect is described as about 35 years old, 190 pounds, about 5-foot-6, with dark hair. At the time of the incident, she was wearing a pink hoodie shirt (not a sweatshirt), black sweats, brown Uggs-style boots, gloves and sunglasses. The man was described as about 35 years old, 6 feet tall, medium build, clean-shaven, and wearing a black hat, jeans, and a dark shirt.

If anyone has any information on the possible identity of the two subjects, contact Detective John Williams at 503-623-9251 or at williams.john@co.polk.or.us or message the sheriff's office on Facebook.



JANET WHEELER /for the Itemizer-Observer
Dallas resident Janet Wheeler poses with a statue of Ernest Hemingway at La Floridita, the author's favorite bar, on a recent trip to Cuba. Wheeler spent almost two weeks in the country, staying in three different cities.

A time-forgotten land

Dallas woman travels to experience the art, the food and the beauty of Cuba

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Of the nearly 100 countries Janet Wheeler has visited in her well-traveled life, Cuba is one of the few places she plans to return to.

That's saying something, considering that she's traveled to all seven continents — yes, including Antarctica.

"Cuba was a place I really wanted to go and it's one of the few places that I say I want to go back because I want to know what's going to happen," said Wheeler, who lives in Dallas. "I want to see the change that is going to happen."

That change may already be taking place. Restrictions on Americans traveling to the island nation have loosened, and millions have already visited this year. With tourists come money, and Cuba's artists, musician and restaurants are benefiting, Wheeler said.

Wheeler's trip was from Feb. 24 to March 8. She booked it with a people-to-people exchange, in which American travelers become ambassadors to Cubans. She stayed in three cities: Havana, Trinidad and Cienfuegos.



JANET WHEELER /for the Itemizer-Observer
If you look closely at some old buildings in Cuba you will see signs of decay — even plants growing on them.

The group she traveled with visited with a basket weaver, a coffee farmer, fishermen, and artists at several dance companies and art institutes.

"The people are lovely," Wheeler said. "They are so kind." At first glance, Cuba looks

like a place stuck in time. The streets are filled with cars made pre-embargo, which started in the early 1960s.

Wheeler said she took photo after photo of the brightly painted cars when she arrived.

"These cars, although they look marvelous, are sometimes painted with house paint. They have Russian engines. They are running on Venezuelan gas, which causes them to backfire," she said. "Any kind of metal or any commodities were so hard to get. The embargo really influenced them."

The colorful buildings, in many cases, are the same way. They are beautifully painted, but oftentimes crumbling.

"It's not what you think it is. You think it's a well-groomed city," Wheeler said. "You see these gorgeous buildings painted these beautiful colors and then you look at them. They don't have windows, and they are falling apart on the inside, and the sea atmosphere has destroyed the wood, so they are rotting. And there are little trees growing out of the tops of the buildings."

See CUBA, Page 7A

Polk BOC approves Sedcor support

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Board of Commissioners approved an economic development grant helping support the Strategic Economic Development Corporation efforts in Polk County for the next three years.

The request was to provide \$35,000 annually, a combination of yearly dues and \$20,000 to partially pay for the Polk and Yamhill



Foscoli
Foscoli and Sedcor President Chad Freeman gave a presentation to the board on March 21.

counties business retention and expansion position currently filled by AJ Foscoli.

Foscoli and Sedcor President Chad Freeman gave a presentation to the board on March 21. "In the last three years, we've had an agreement with Polk County to support

Sedcor for about \$25,000 per year. We are looking to increase that level to \$35,000, which will help us maintain the level of staffing we have," said Chad Freeman, Sedcor's president.

Foscoli has worked with Sedcor since 2014, when the Make it the Willamette Valley initiative began. That program was designed to help manufacturing companies in Polk, Marion and Yamhill counties expand their businesses and bring jobs to the region.

See SEDCOR, Page 5A

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
Friends of the Dallas Library to host a book sale April 7-8.
»Page 5A

FALLS CITY
A plan to build a gym is taking shape.
»Page 14A

INDEPENDENCE
Local markets return Saturday.
»Page 2A

MONMOUTH
Council considers declaring Monmouth an inclusive city.
»Page 3A

SPORTS
Caedmon Blair looks to excel this spring.
»Page 11A

POLK COUNTY
Courthouse child care may become reality.
»Page 3A

Child Abuse Prevention Awareness kicks off Tuesday

Itemizer-Observer staff report
DALLAS — Families, businesses and community members are invited to participate in the Polk County Awareness Walk at noon in support of child abuse prevention.

The gathering will be in front of the steps of the courthouse, 850 Main St, in Dallas. Judge Sally Avera and District Attorney Aaron Felton will kick off the event with a welcome and brief overview of data related to child abuse and crimes in Polk County.

The walk commemorates Child Abuse Prevention Month, and is one of many events in the area to help raise awareness.

Participants will walk around downtown Dallas with signs and pinwheels to raise awareness. Those joining the walk are asked to wear navy blue to show support for child abuse prevention and crime victims.

For more information: polk.midvalleyparenting.org.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
Stop by a local business and help celebrate National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day.
Rain
Hi: 55
Lo: 42

thu
If you can brave our wild weather, take a stroll outside and be a part of National Take a Walk in a Park Day.
Showers
Hi: 54
Lo: 37

fri
The Naomi OES Spring break rummage sale will be on Clay Street today and tomorrow.
9 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.
Partly cloudy
Hi: 58
Lo: 42

sat
Polk County Free Clinic offers medical and mental health services for those who are uninsured or underinsured.
7-11 a.m. Free.
Partly cloudy
Hi: 57
Lo: 40

sun
Help make Easter baskets for those who are homebound at the Evangelical Bible Church in Dallas.
4:30 p.m. Free.
Cloudy
Hi: 55
Lo: 38

mon
Drawing for beginners starts tonight at the Ash Creek Arts Center and goes four weeks.
6-7:30 p.m. \$129.
Partly cloudy
Hi: 56
Lo: 40

tue
The Oregon Mobile Vet will return to Dallas City Hall to give the first 50 licensed dogs free microchips.
4-7 p.m. Free.
Showers
Hi: 60
Lo: 45