

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tennis a sport you can grow old with

My grandad is 85, and he plays tennis three times each week.

Perhaps that is why I like the sport so much — it is one you can play your entire life.

The annual Dallas youth tennis camp was held as a fundraiser for the Dallas High School tennis teams. If it weren't for Julie Hertel (girls coach) and Mary Christensen (boys assistant coach), the camp would not have happened. Approximately 40 youths participated, and high school players helped instruct.

Often, there are a core set of folks who do a lot of volunteer work that goes unnoticed (shout out also to our "super fan" Petra Cole). I wanted to let them know that I do notice, and I truly appreciate all they do, not only for the high school teams, but for the youth in Dallas as a whole. You are absolutely incredible and, because of you, I will likely be playing tennis when I am 85, too.

Ryan Bibler
Dallas

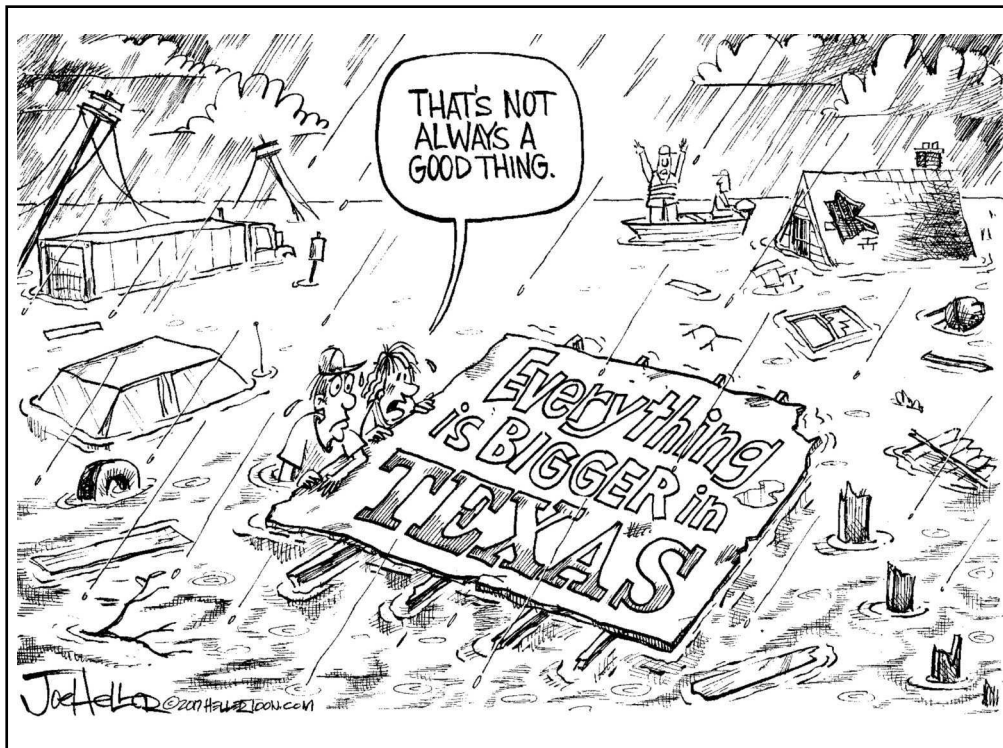
Commissioners not doing jobs

I have read recent letters to the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* and Statesman Journal regarding the lackadaisical attitude of the Polk County commissioners when presented with blatant zoning and land-use violations. This could affect any neighborhood, rural or town, at any time.

Our homes/farms are our most valuable asset, and our property values are negatively impacted when the commissioners fail to uphold the current zoning laws. When this happens, a clear message is sent to all who wish to invade our neighborhoods with illegal land usage. Current homeowners should be treated at least as fairly as the new guy on the block when these violations occur. This does not appear to be the case, and this is neither right nor fair treatment of the invested tax-paying homeowner.

Apparently, there is no state oversight to come to our rescue. The county seems to be an entity of its own, upholding the law as it chooses.

We pay taxes, some of which pay the commissioners' salaries. Maybe it's time we had new commissioners



who are willing to do the job.

Judy Hamel
West Salem

Let's keep 'Polk' in Polk County

This letter is in regards to Mr. Nearman initiating a petition to have the name of Polk removed from Polk County and renamed Reagan County.

I spoke with Mike Nearman about this petition, and he stated that he was embarrassed that the name associated with Polk County, James Polk, our 11th president, was a slave owner. He wants to change the name to Reagan County after our 40th president. His reasoning was that there was nothing negative associated with Reagan.

As I stated to Nearman, I would expect this from our liberal members of government but not our conservative members. Nearman is starting to go down a very slippery slope by initiating this change.

No. 1, anything that has a negative association to it and easily offends people will need to be addressed and changed. Example: How about Dallas High School for starters. At some point, someone will figure out that the Dragons will need to be changed because it brings up negative feelings of referring to the KKK. I realize this isn't the case, but someone will be offended and demand change.

No. 2, we cannot simply change or erase history or our historical figures. When these leaders were in office, it was legal for these individuals to own slaves. Does it make it right, no. But you

can't simply erase these individuals from our history. If you do then you will leave a large hole in our history.

There are better things to worry about in Polk County than changing the name because the individual our county was named after owned slaves. Let's start focusing on the important issues of Polk County and not worry about who owned what.

Jimmy Christensen
Independence

Dallas Family Night Out success

Dallas Family Night Out is in its sixth year of helping families prepare their kids for school with a fun, free afternoon/evening. A free meal, clothing, backpacks and school supplies, access to community resources, games and entertainment are part of the event.

Sheri Beehner, of the Willamette Valley Housing Authority, has been its chair during this time. She's been a strong, driving force to help make this a great event. This year, she came up with the idea to have a 5K Solar Run to help with funding next year's event. Sheri had to suddenly take medical leave about a week and a half before the 5K (and slightly over two weeks before DFNO itself).

Brent DeMoe, director of the Polk County Community and Outreach Department, with his employees Stephanie Gibert (of Early Learning and Family Engagement) and Amber Hoffman (of the Family Navigator program) stepped into the breach to help lead the committee to pulling off the

event. We had 110 participants and were blessed with lovely weather.

The community is fortunate to have the support of businesses and community members to put on this event.

Barb Chrisman
Dallas

Eclipse provides time of reflection

The total eclipse was incredible, cool, even mystical. Anyone who was outside experiencing the totality can attest to that. I felt it was a spiritual event. As such it should not have been hyped and commercialized. It was a brief time for every human being to contemplate their existence on this planet. Such contemplation will lead one to recognize the damage the human race is inflicting on the earth; through its overpopulation, pollution, overconsumption of resources, and the endless striving for growth on a limited planet.

We need to integrate this in our lives and as individuals and, as a whole, take or support all actions necessary to correct and balance our existence with this planet. We must be the wise and caring stewards.

Charles Krogman
Dallas

Rep. wants positive changes

Four weeks ago, on Aug. 2, I wrote a letter outlining the lasting impacts of a nasty fuel spill at E.E. Wilson Refuge.

My statement explained the preventative nature of the spill, the need to establish thoughtful policies crafted to avert similar disasters in the future, as well as a brief description of available, publicly-owned technologies that could and should be used.

On Aug. 9, a reader published a rebuttal, sharing his belief that I was merely trying to "cause panic" in order "to justify the removal of fossil fuels and go to greener alternatives."

Contrary to the reader's belief, I am not interested in fear-mongering — ever. It is true that I support the development of green energy solutions. There are many ways to both protect our air, lands and waterways, and promote a vibrant economy.

My motive is simple: to bring attention to the environmental damage and lingering consequences — in our own backyard — of allowing existing policies to continue. E.E. Wilson Refuge is a cautionary tale for all of us who care about our natural world.

It is time we change course. We can improve the safety of our roadways, reduce the costs associated with hazardous materials transportation through reductions in clean-up fees and fines, and we can protect our increasingly fragile environment.

I ask you to join me in working together in facilitating a new approach for improved safety and stewardship of our natural treasures. Together we can make a difference; together we will.

Paul Evans
Monmouth

Time to build the nation from home

Elitist politicians from both parties and their allies in the Pentagon-Industrial complex have spent the past 16 years failing in the Middle East. We have lost thousands of lives and caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians, yet have achieved almost nothing.

While half of Americans can't handle a \$400 emergency without going into debt, half of the federal income taxes taken out of our paychecks fund over-budget, behind-schedule boondoggles like the Joint Strike Fighter.

Only a small fraction buys the armor and weapons that our soldiers and marines need to survive or the meager paychecks that provide for their families.

The basic truth that we desperately need to accept is that both parties lie to us about the nature of the terrorist threat. War does not make us safer. Every civilian we accidentally shoot or bomb produces another terrorist. Our wars in the Middle East since the 1970s are the reason terrorists target us in the first place. Worse, our actions have succeeded in turning most of the world against us, undermining our economic and diplomatic competitiveness.

Democrats, despite their rhetoric, do little to materially resist a president who openly sympathizes with homegrown Nazis and the KKK.

Republicans have abandoned all pretense of integrity or morality in accepting the devil's bargain they have been offered. Both parties have betrayed America; both will continue to betray America until they are defeated.

We need a non-partisan movement capable of defeating the D.C. elites without falling prey to the partisan traps they use to maintain their stranglehold on our democracy. We must amend the Constitution and delegate most federal powers to a set of regional capitols. Let the Pacific States and the Southern States be free of one another.

Let all Americans, wher-

ever they choose to live, do some nation-building at home.

Andrew Tanner
Independence

Editorial gets it wrong on reform

This is in response to the editorial in the Aug. 23 *Itemizer* (Postal Reform ...). I am a retired letter carrier (with 16 years of service). My husband is a retired letter carrier (with 37 years of service).

When you work for any company, and you are promised "X benefits," most people weigh those benefits when deciding when to retire. Any changes to benefits should not affect those already retired.

HR 756 wants to switch retirees to Medicare, right when politicians want to gut Medicare. Switching active carriers to Medicare is one thing. They can/will factor that into their retirement decision.

Plus, Trump's proposed budget eliminates the COLA for current and future retirees. That could reduce the monthly annuity of many retirees by as much as 33 to 45 percent.

Mr. Paxton mentions the \$57 billion deficiency on the USPS balance sheet, and that Congress caused most of it, but didn't explain that.

USPS is the only organization that is required to pre-pay retirees' health benefits to Congress. So even in years that they make a profit, the balance sheet shows them in the red.

Please don't support HR 756 if you agree that you wouldn't want your promised retirement benefits to be drastically cut, 15, 30, or even more years, after being on a fixed income.

Karen Neagle
Dallas

Gala Park delays concern citizens

I'm writing with my concerns about Gala Park. I've observed that Gala Park, on the corner of Hankle Street and Uglow, has been torn up for right around a year. Today, I stopped in at the parks department and asked a reason for this.

I was informed that it's taken so long because of equipment failure and a subcontractor that did not do what they were hired to. The parks department told me that they were currently seeking a different contractor to do stem walls to hold in the bark dust.

My concern is that the highest population of children in the city live nearest to this park, and every time I drive by, they are just playing in a big dirt hole. In the past year, I've seen the city start and finish other projects — a bridge to the dog park, and this week start on a pickleball court near the aquatic center.

Seems to me Gala Park just isn't a big priority for anyone down at the city. Most certainly, the city has the equipment needed to pour curb-type stem walls and spread bark dust.

Richard Thompson
Dallas

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.

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 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.

Reach us at:
Mail: Editor, *Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER*, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, OR 97338.

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