

The kid and the cop



PHOTO COURTESY OF POLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S FACEBOOK PAGE
Trinity Markel and Deputy Marty Watson pose for a photo together.

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — Polk County Sheriff's Deputy Marty Watson was at the ATM at Frink's General Store in Falls City in mid-August when he was approached by a nervous 6-year-old girl.

She had short reddish hair, freckles and just enough courage to reach her hand out to shake the deputy's hand.

"Thank you for protecting my community and my life," she said.

Just moments before, the girl, Trinity Markel, expressed fear of police officers, believing they had only one purpose: Arresting people.

"Are they going to arrest me, too?" Trinity asked her mother, Sarah Markel, after seeing Watson's patrol car while riding her bike down North Main Street in Falls City. "Because I'm a brat sometimes?"

Sarah explained police officers arrest people only when they've done something to hurt the community. Officers protect people, she told her daughter.

With this new perspective, Trinity decided to talk to Watson, who was getting cash so he could buy lemonade from another young girl who had set up a stand. Wat-

son was busy looking for a suspect in a stolen-vehicle case and had a pile of work to complete during his shift that day.

His mind was occupied when Trinity offered her thanks.

"I thought, 'What a brave little girl.' You could see she was just scared and nervous," Watson recalled. "It was about the darn cutest thing I had ever seen. It was one of those melt-your-heart kind of moments. It was really busy, and I was kind of stressed about all the stuff that I had to take care of that day. It really was so uplifting."

Watson put his day on hold for a minute to sit down and talk to Trinity.

"I asked her about what school she goes to and little things like that," Watson said. "Her mom was there the whole time. You could tell that her mom, Sarah, is just confident, poised — and after meeting her later, talking with her a little more — a really, really good mom."

Trinity said that her fear stemmed from portrayals of police officers she had seen on television. After her interaction with Watson, she's excited when she sees a Polk County Sheriff's Office car, always asking,

"Is that Marty?"

See KID, Page 5A

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Work resumes at Gala Park after weather and contractor delays.

»Page 8A

INDEPENDENCE

City gets approval to purchase a water right.

»Page 6A

MONMOUTH

Western Oregon's women's soccer team falls in season-opening matches.

»Page 11A

PERRYDALE

Pirates' football team rallies to beat Mapleton.

»Page 11A

SPORTS

Central's football team defeats Bend 35-6 in its season-opener.

»Page 11A

EDUCATION

Meet your new principals at Lyle and Ash Creek schools.

»Page 14A

Air quality alert through Friday

Itemizer-Observer staff report
POLK COUNTY — The Southwest Clean Air Agency and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality issued a smoke air quality alert earlier this week.

As of press time, the alert will remain active until noon on Friday.

Wildfires burning in the region combined with forecast conditions will cause air quality to reach unhealthy levels at times through Friday morning.

The alert stated that for much of the region, conditions are expected to improve through the middle part of the week.

Pollutants in smoke can cause burning eyes, runny nose, aggravate heart and lung diseases, and other serious health problems.

ODEQ recommends limiting outdoor activities and keeping children indoors if smoky.

Conditions caused Dallas High School to cancel soccer matches scheduled for Tuesday after press time.

For more information: www.oregon.gov/DEQ.

Kubista begins year as superintendent

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Students bustled through the halls of Ash Creek Elementary School on Tuesday morning with a certain excitement — it was the first day of the new school year.

Parents carried plastic bags filled with the needed supplies for their kids' classrooms and waited in line to find out what teacher would

be spending the year with their child.

Superintendent Jennifer Kubista started her day at ACES, greeting children and parents as they made their way down the main hallway, complimenting them on their choice of apparel.

"That's a great T-shirt," she said to one student, whose shirt read, "Kindergarten stud."

Silvia Johnson, mother of Kirby Johnson, stopped to

ask Kubista about Tuesday's schedule. With the heat wave in effect until 5 p.m. Tuesday, and smoke filling the air, Silvia wanted to know if school would be let out early.

Kubista assured her that, while morning recess could likely go on as planned, the kids would spend the afternoon inside out of the heat and smoke, but school would not be canceled early — at least that was the plan.

See KUBISTA, Page 5A



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer
Jennifer Kubista talks with Silvia and Kirby Johnson.

Baskett Slough battles water primrose

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge is looking a little drier than normal for this time of year, and it isn't because of the warm summer.

The culprit is a plant with little yellow flowers that doesn't belong here: the invasive water primrose.

"It's fairly common in the main stem of the Willamette River, but it wasn't present in Baskett Slough," said Graham Evans-Peters, the refuge manager for Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge. "It's really aggressive. The fear is that it can create a monoculture. It's considered a noxious weed by Oregon Department of Agriculture."









See BASKETT, Page 5A



STEVE POWERS/for the Itemizer-Observer
A shot of the wetlands at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge from 2016.



STEVE POWERS/for the Itemizer-Observer
The invasive water primrose has caused refuge employees to drain the wetlands at Baskett Slough.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK 	wed Test your word knowledge by joining Scrabble with Betty at the Independence Public Library. 1 p.m. Free.  Showers Hi: 83 Lo: 60	thu September is here, but there's still time to find your latest treasure at the Polk County Bounty Market. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  Mostly cloudy Hi: 77 Lo: 58	fri Come support your local teams! Dallas, Central and Perrydale high schools host home football games this week. 7 p.m.  Mostly cloudy Hi: 76 Lo: 52	sat The Ash Creek Arts Center's Second Saturday family art class will offer a finger-painting class led by Berik Bassline. 2 to 4 p.m. Free.  Mostly sunny Hi: 76 Lo: 55	sun The Buell Grange Breakfast returns to the Buell Grange Hall, 5970 Mill Creek Road. 8 to 11 a.m. \$6.  Mostly sunny Hi: 82 Lo: 55	mon The Itemizer-Observer remembers and honors the victims and heroes from Sept. 11.  Mostly sunny Hi: 91 Lo: 57	tue The Independence Riverview Market offers a chance to grab cool finds and tasty treats at Riverview Park. 2 to 7 p.m.  Mostly sunny Hi: 85 Lo: 53
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