

EDITORIALS

It's time to start talking about it

It's a sticky subject, suicide is. It's uncomfortable to talk about, someone taking his or her own life. A slew of "what ifs" that can never be answered. A laundry list of "whys" follows. The act itself can swallow survivors whole with guilt, sorrow, anger, and more questions than answers.

The stigma attached to suicide is strong. In fact, journalists are discouraged from reporting on suicides except for three specific circumstances. The fear is if killing oneself is glorified, it may encourage others to seek their "15 minutes of fame" in a similar fashion. The old adage of doing no harm is in play, and most suicides go unreported in the press.

A movement has been afoot in Polk County for a couple of years to stop the stigma, instead encouraging people to seek help. Rather than simply posting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) and expecting anyone who may be contemplating ending his or her own life, the Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition reached out to youths to communicate that you are not alone.

Students at Central High School put together a video showing that everyone needs to talk — even the jock and popular girl. Everyone has insecurities, problems at home, stress and pressures. It's OK to get counseling or reach out for help. When you see someone in distress, it's OK to ask (#OK2Ask) about it and be that person who listens.

The Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition offers suicide prevention training to students and adults. Some programs are free; other, more in-depth seminars cost a nominal fee. Right now, leadership classes at Central have taken these suicide prevention trainings. Students see an issue and have taken steps to help their peers through the tough, high-school years.

But it doesn't stop there. Thoughts of suicide don't necessarily become a thing of the past like proms, Friday Night Lights, school plays and raging hormones. We must remain diligent as a society, keeping our eyes out for each other, lifting each other up when we see friends (or strangers) slipping into despair.

For those who are considering suicide, know that there is help. You may feel alone, that there is no light at the end of the tunnel, but you aren't alone. There is a light. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline now. Make an appointment with your school counselor.

Grasp on to hope.

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).

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 18

- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 Warren St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

THURSDAY, OCT. 19

- **Monmouth Arts and Culture Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 Warren St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
- **Independence Parks and Recreation Board** — 6 p.m., Independence Civic Center, third floor, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

MONDAY, OCT. 23

- **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Dallas School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Dallas School District office, 111 SW Ash St., Dallas. 503-623-5594.

TUESDAY, OCT. 24

- **Independence City Council** — 6:30 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth Senior Advisory Board** — 1 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 Warren St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

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

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 25

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Making America great takes work

Immigrants make America great if:

- They love America.
- They respect the laws of the land.

They learn the language and don't feel entitled to have everything presented to them in a language other than English.

They pay their own way. They don't rape the system by entitlements.

Yes, we are all immigrants, but America didn't achieve its greatness by expecting special services and

privileges. America became great by everyone doing their fair share and paying their own way by hard work and integrity.

Help make America great. Be true Americans.

June Stout
Independence

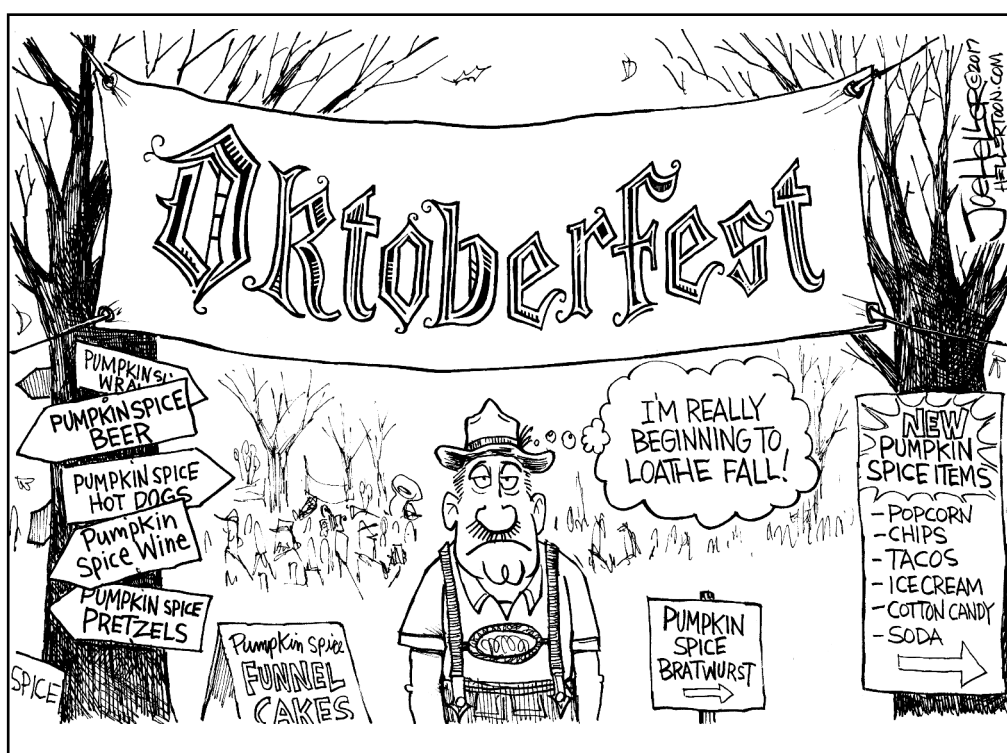
End of life made easier by services

The family of Juanita Baker would like to thank Tonya Smith and the staff at Blue Haven Residential and Memory Care Facility in Dallas, and also Serenity

Hospice for the wonderful care shown to Juanita during her final journey. Everyone was so kind, caring, compassionate and professional to her and her family. It gave us great peace of mind.

We appreciate all that they did to keep her comfortable, and we will be eternally grateful for their guidance at this difficult time. And our thanks also to Mike Bollman, of Bollman Funeral Home, and his staff for their kindnesses and professionalism.

Randy and Linda Baker
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:
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What's YOUR neighbor up to?

You may find your neighbor, your boss, your friend or yourself in the pages of the *Itemizer-Observer*. Local stories on local people—that's our specialty.

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

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