

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keep Gentle Woods gentle for kids

Just say, “No.” Gentle Woods Park, in Monmouth, will not be taken away from the families who cherish, respect and enjoy it. Your money creates, improves and maintains municipal parks. City ordinances are clearly written and simple to understand, yet they are poorly enforced. Specifically, Gentle Woods Park has been overtaken by transients. For more than a year, squatters have been given license to deposit unsanitary waste, drug debris and have recently tried to enter a home that borders the grounds. I implore you to immediately call, email, visit or write to Monmouth city officials. Clearly cite the number of children in your guardianship; give our innocents a voice. Please insist upon full enforcement of ordinances which prohibit unauthorized camping plus retention of the existing day-use-only status of Gentle Woods Park. No action by you means that you are in full agreement with the eventuality of rendering all publicly funded parks unsafe.

Kris Dalton
Monmouth

Monmouth should be ‘pot city’

Monmouth should add a green leaf to their city entrance signs. With five pot stores, four of which are on Highway 99W, newcomers’ first impressions might be Monmouth is no place to raise a family. I understand cities sometimes have too many restrictions, but not Monmouth. It seems to have no direction. Every few years, the city manager encourages a survey of its citizens to find out what type of business they should encourage to come. I doubt if pot stores are even on the list. As a Dallas resident, I am glad our council had some foresight and consideration for their citizens. By the way, I am not against having one or two stores.

Debbie Allred
Dallas

Dallas charter helps success

Dallas Community School is a wonderful marriage between home-schooling and the public school system. I have home-schooled four

of my children for different spans of time and independent of the public school system, except for one year when we tried an online local charter school. My youngest is enrolled at DCS for the third year in a row.

He only attended public school for one year in second grade. He was at the top of his class, very intelligent, bright, and observant. However, the structure of a standard public school classroom made him very unhappy, so he chose to come back to home-schooling.

When I heard about DCS, I was trepidatious because of our previous experience with a public online charter school, but I thought the idea of marrying home-schooling with public school support and opportunities for enrichment classes and field trips was a brilliant next step in the evolution of our educational system, so we applied. It has been a very positive experience for us.

If the school board decides to close DCS, our family would return to independent home-schooling, but we would miss the DCS community and opportunities it provides; not only the classes, but the field trips, our guide, with their priceless support, and the other staff members.

Our communities need more educational choices for children who don’t thrive emotionally, academically, or both, in a traditional school setting.

DCS works. If there need to be new rules or laws put in place to help this new brand of schooling opportunity to thrive and succeed, then our lawmakers should get to work on that, because shutting DCS down would be a mistake.

Cyndy Ross
Sheridan

Mass immigration harms poor

On average, illegal immigrants without a high school degree will impose a net cost on taxpayers of \$89,000 over his or her lifetime. They do not pay interest on that money given to them tax-free. More so, some illegal immigrants work under the table.

If illegal immigrants are granted amnesty, one study estimates that it will cost at least \$2.5 trillion in retirement expenditures, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid



and Supplemental Security Income.

Some estimate that illegal immigrants cost taxpayers as much as \$113 billion annually. The worst-case scenario showed federal, state and local governments losing \$296 billion annually. The gainers are usually those with capital that benefit from the influx of workers. The same with those using overseas labor, the wealthy benefit.

Services jobs accounted for more than 80 percent of U.S. private-sector employment. The immigrants are 16.5 percent of labor that reduces the wages of natives by \$493.9 billion annually. If we add net immigration to total immigrant births during the decade, it equals 75.7 percent of population growth.

As a fact, the cost of housing has been sharply rising for decades; the debt increasing and children are living longer with their parents. About 1.56 million people, or about 0.5 percent of the U.S. population, used an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program between Oct. 1, 2008, and Sept. 30, 2009. The current U.S. population is 325 million or 326 million.

Rick Muller
Dallas

Govt. shutdown serves no one

The government shutdown is a joke and a charade. What is a shutdown if it doesn’t save us any money.

What is a shutdown if you don’t even notice any difference? It’s not a shutdown if everyone retroactively gets paid — it’s a paid holiday, at our expense.

Why don’t government employees just keep working if we all know they will just get paid anyway. What is a shutdown worth if nothing changes, no reflection on deficit spending, no cuts in programs, no elimination of waste, no redirection of purpose, no reduction in BS. It’s a meaningless political tantrum. I say throw the whole bunch out, Congress and the White House, and start over from scratch. That would be a shutdown, and a worthwhile one.

Charles Krogman
Dallas

D.A.’s office lacks ‘customer’ service

I am concerned with the customer service and assistance Polk County citizens receive when dealing with the D.A.’s office, but especially the probation office in Dallas. I unfortunately have to deal with this system and am appalled by the treatment and lack of cooperation I receive in an attempt to complete my requirements set forth from the D.A.’s office. I cannot get anyone to answer my questions.

When I call or physically go where I am told, it is a continual loop of sending me from one office to the next and no one really doing their job.

I continually get transferred back and forth from probation office to the D.A.’s office to no avail without ever being able to talk to anyone, just being sent back to where I just came from.

It is the most unorganized and inefficient system I have ever encountered. The left hand has no idea what the right had is doing. Instead of spending tax dollars on a

new building, money should have been spent on training employees to simply fulfill the requirements of their job and perhaps a course on common courtesy. I have no idea how this system has avoided a lawsuit and continues to function. Thank you. Appalled in Polk County.

Jane Cotnam
Dallas

Kids learn in real world situations

Education doesn’t only happen in a traditional classroom. It happens at the grocery store, the doctor’s office, at the park, in the car, etc.

A parent is constantly providing education for their child. Why shouldn’t we be allowed to help them with their formal schooling?

At Dallas Community School, parents consistently meet individually with an assigned Guide, a licensed teacher with years of experience, where we discuss a standards-based Personal Learning Plan, testing, our strengths and weaknesses, and what we can do to excel before the next meeting. We provide work samples and often have our child with so that the guide is able to observe them working. Our child’s instructional time is being carefully monitored and evaluated on a very individual basis.

Many families, like ours, also sign their child up for the available morning classes onsite at DCS, which include core subjects and enrichment classes, offering families a wide variety of class selections to nourish the interests and subjects that their child has a great desire to explore.

Dallas Community School also offers wonderful opportunities for children to truly explore the world around them.

We visited the Oregon Garden, the Rickreall Dairy, the Willamette Heritage Museum and many others, this school year alone.

What better way is there of educating our children than by taking them into the world that we wish for them to thrive in, and let them see it, feel it and understand it, while at the same time, teaching them about reading, writing and arithmetic.

There is no shortage of interest in the school. The people of this community want this school. Thank you, Dallas School District, for believing in our school and our children and for giving us a chance to prove that we can thrive in our community.

Sarah Lockwood
Independence

Get involved in local issues

Oregon’s U.S. Senator, Ron Wyden, spoke recently in Monmouth (IO article Jan. 17) and, in response to the question, “What can I do?” suggested that citizens communicate to their leaders via phone calls, letters, marches and rallies.

All of these activities make a difference.

I would add other important things that citizens can do. Take an active, regular part in government, especially in local and county government.

For example, join a committee or run for a council or a commissioner position.

If you can’t make time for meetings, make time to learn “how things work.” You can read minutes and resolutions or get copies of budgets — often available online — and ask questions of your leaders.

If you are already in a position to make decisions at any level, then take time before your meeting to read the staff report or the resolution or the budget; don’t look at these the first time when you sit down to meet.

Your presence is appreciated, but your active intellect to genuinely review and problem-solve means that you are not just a willing “warm body.” It means you’re a leader.

Nannette Willis
Monmouth

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, Jan. 24

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

Thursday, Jan. 25

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

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 that quote facts or use quotes from third-party sources must include the original source in the letter. These original sources might not be printed, so might not count against the overall word count (100 for election related letters, 300 for other letters), but will be required so the news room may double check claims made in letters.

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.

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