

Posse Comitatus: 'To protect individual rights'

By TOM ALKIRE
Of the Emerald

Oregon may be the most environmentally progressive state in the nation, but it's also the birthplace of the fastest growing right wing movement in the country—Posse Comitatus.

Mike Beach, a retired laundry salesman from Portland who founded the Posse Comitatus in 1968 claims the organization has 500,000 members in 49 states. The FBI, however, puts the group's number at closer to 10,000.

Posse Comitatus members have been in the news the past year for indicting public officials for treason in Pendleton, assaulting an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) inspector in Wisconsin, refusing to pay income tax in California and sending threatening letters to Oregon legislators in Salem.

Last May, Sen. Ted Hallock, D-Portland, asked authorities to investigate a letter sent to him and other legislators advising them to repeal the Land Conservation Commission of (LCCDC) Act of 1973. The letter was from Herb Breed, chair of the Klamath County Posse Comitatus.

The letter read in part, "if you vote to fund the LCCDC...we will subpoena you before a citizen grand jury. If you are indicted for treason or other charges by the citizen grand jury, you will be tried on the appropriate charge."

Hallock claimed that the letter constituted a threat to his life. He and other legislators cited the concluding paragraph of a Posse Comitatus manual. "In some instances of record," the manual reads, "the law provides for the hanging of public officials who commit criminal acts or who violate their oath of office."

That particular passage has since been deleted from the manual, says Beach. "A few pantywaists felt that was going a little

too strong," he said.

(Although the passage may have been deleted officially, the fifth paragraph of a Posse manual given to an *Emerald* reporter states: "In some instances of record the law provides for the following prosecution of officials of government who commit criminal acts or who violate their Oath of Office.... 'He shall be removed by the Posse to the most populated intersection of streets in the township and at high noon be hanged

by the neck, the body remaining until sundown as an example to those who would subvert the law.'")

James Spindor, Klamath County district attorney later told Hallock that the letter itself was not sufficient grounds for filing a criminal complaint against the Posse.

"Hallock overreacted," Dean Kennedy told the *Emerald*. Kennedy, owner of B & H Stamps and Coins in Eugene, is the founder and chair of the Lane County Posse Comitatus.

Although Kennedy considers the LCCDC an illegal act, he pointed out that the Lane County Posse did not participate in the letter writing campaign. Each

county Posse is independent, he said.

The Lane County Posse was founded in 1973, said Kennedy, to protect individual rights and protect citizens from government harassment.

According to the Posse Manual, the only legal law enforcement officer is the county sheriff. When the sheriff fails to act on a crime (including illegal acts by any elected official), the manual continues, he becomes an accessory to the crime and the people have the right to take action to uphold the law.

"People can form a posse with or without the sheriff's consent," Kennedy said. "Posse Comitatus"

(Continued on Page 12)



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2:00 & 4:00, Documentary Films—"Point of View, Conversation on the Middle East" & "Israel, Story of the Jewish People"—discussion following films

Tuesday Feb. 24

Israel Teach-In, 12:00-4:00, Rm. 167, EMU—Teach-In panel: Avshalom Beni, Kibbutz member; Moti Peri, UO Israeli grad student; UO Prof. Reed Straus; Yitzhak Yitzhaki, Israeli Archeologist; John Rothman, lecturer—plus short film "The History of Israel"

7:30—Lecture: John Rothman on the "History of Israel & Zionism" Documentary: "Israel, A Profile"

All events EMU, Room to be posted
See Friday's ad for additional events

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