

## Union spy finds kidnap ring in second mystery novel

*The Portland of 1902, recreated by a local union attorney, was prime ground for the practice of shanghaiing*

Using the pen name S.L. Stoner, union attorney Susan Stoner has published the second installment in her series of historical mystery novels.

Drawing on meticulously researched local history, the books follow fictional trade union spy Sage Adair as he meets up with actual historic individuals in the Portland of the early 1900s. In the first installment, *Timber Beasts*, Adair uncovered a timber fraud, learned of the savage exploitation of loggers, and pursued a murderer. *Land Sharks*, the second in the series, finds Sage in a search for two disappeared union organizers, which leads him to discover a true-to-life Portland underground where the unwary are shanghai — kidnapped and placed in serv-

ice aboard ocean-going ships bound for whaling regions or China.

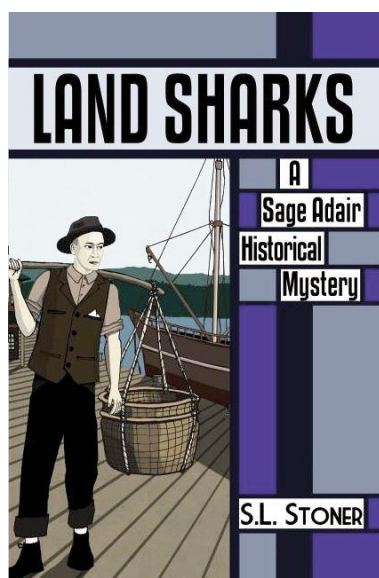
Stoner, who is staff attorney at Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, researched the book by reading period accounts and digging through the archives of the San Francisco Maritime Museum.

“By the end of the book, readers will know more about the history of shanghaiing and the major players involved in it than most historians,” Stoner told the Labor Press. “Shanghaiing is how [business leaders] kept their shipping costs down.”

The book also contains an account of canneries on the Columbia River, and of a real-life massacre of Chinese gold miners in Eastern Oregon.

Stoner will read from *Land Sharks* Thursday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 p. M., at Powell’s Books on Hawthorne, 3723 SE Hawthorne Blvd.

The two books are available at most local bookstores, including Barnes and Noble, Borders, Murder by the Book,



and Annie Bloom’s Books, as well as union-represented Powell’s Books, the Oregon Historical Society, and online at [www.yamhillpress.com](http://www.yamhillpress.com).

Stoner said *Dry Rot*, a third book in the series, is in the final editing stage; it relates true tales of construction fraud in city contracts that led to a bridge collapse. *Black Drop*, a fourth book, deals with the 1903 visit to Portland of then-President Teddy Roosevelt, and is several chapters from completion.

## Gay trade unionists in Oregon to form Pride at Work chapter

Pride at Work, a group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered union members, is forming an Oregon chapter, with a founding meeting 6 p.m. Feb. 22, at the 1125 SE Madison offices of UNITE HERE Local 9.

The group is one of a handful of AFL-CIO-sponsored “constituency” groups, and as such will have a representative on the Oregon AFL-CIO General Board. Pride at Work is open to members and staff of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions as well as partner organizations, such as unions that are part of the Change to Win labor union federation.

The group is intended to be a bridge, to make sure gay civil rights issues are

considered in the labor movement — and that economic and class issues are considered within the gay civil rights movement.

Several dozen people attended the group’s Jan. 27 kickoff meeting. At the founding meeting Feb. 22, Oregon Pride at Work is expected to get official status as an AFL-CIO-chartered organization, and elect officers.

## ...Middle class shrinking fast

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According to a recent study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

When unions were stronger in the middle part of the last century, American workers wages rose as they became increasingly more productive. But today, as union strength has decreased, this link has broken down: even though American workers grow increasingly more productive, their wages have stagnated. At the same time, more and more income has become concentrated at the very top of the income scale.

The fall in unionization rates is not just bleak news for the ranks of the unionized, it’s also bad news for the rest of the middle class.

(Karla Walter is senior policy analyst, and David Madland is director of the American Worker Project at the Center for American Progress Action Fund.)

## ...Union membership

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wage of \$856, or 88.5 percent of the union men’s median of \$967. Nonunion women had a median wage of \$639, or 81 percent of the \$789 median weekly wage for men.

Walker said the BLS data are based on the Current Population Survey of 60,000 households nationwide, a rolling survey conducted over the year. He said it does not include the self-employed or retirees who are still paying dues — or people for whom their unionized job is their secondary job. Those workers are counted as nonunion.

## Willamette Heritage Foundation releases book depicting mid-century millworkers at Crown Z

The Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation has released a limited edition book on the history of millworkers at Crown Zellerbach in West Linn.

“1.09 an Hour and Glad to Have It — Conversations with 17 mid-20th Century Crown Zellerbach millworkers,” was written by Sandra Hickson Carter, and is based on an oral history project conducted by the non-profit Heritage Foundation that tells the story

of paper mill work in the 1930s-’90s through the voices of 17 Crown Zellerbach “career” workers.

It contains many stories of unionism and recollections of strikes at the mill, as well as workers’ descriptions of the hard industrial jobs and workplace conditions prior to safety equipment and safety committees.

One of those interviewed was Harold King, a former union official with the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW) and secretary-treasurer of the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council. King worked for his union’s members through some of the most turbulent times in the industry’s history of labor/management issues and inter-union competition.

King died last June at age 88.

Carter, through a couple of small grants, helped with the oral interviews and produced two documentaries that are occasionally aired on local cable channels. She donated her time editing and publishing the anthology of mill work stories — fulfilling the foundation’s goal of putting mill history into the hands of the communities of Clackamas County.

The 424-page paperback book is available at Clackamas County libraries. It can also be purchased for \$35. You can order a copy by calling the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation at 503-650-9570 and leaving a message, then sending a check to: Book, P.O. Box 635, West Linn, OR 97068.

All proceeds go to support the project, which was grant-funded by the

Clackamas County Cultural Coalition and the Kinsman Foundation.

For more information, go online to [www.willamettefalls.org](http://www.willamettefalls.org).

## Unionists will bowl for MDA on March 13

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 13, and the 22nd Annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).

This year’s event will again be held at Hollywood Bowl, 4030 NE Halsey St., Portland. Registration starts at noon, with bowling under way at 1 p.m.

Money is raised by pledges and a silent auction. The goal this year is to have 18 different unions fill the 18 reserved lanes. Prizes will be awarded to high and low bowlers, to top fundraisers, plus a special prize for the bowler who wears the “funkiest hat.”

Since its inception, Portland-area labor unions have collected \$311,828.75 for MDA. Money goes to buy wheelchairs and braces for children, as well as research and summer camps.

For more information, call Jim Cook, president of Letter Carriers Branch 82, at 503-493-5903. To donate items to the auction, call Debbie Burbank at 971-404-5384.

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