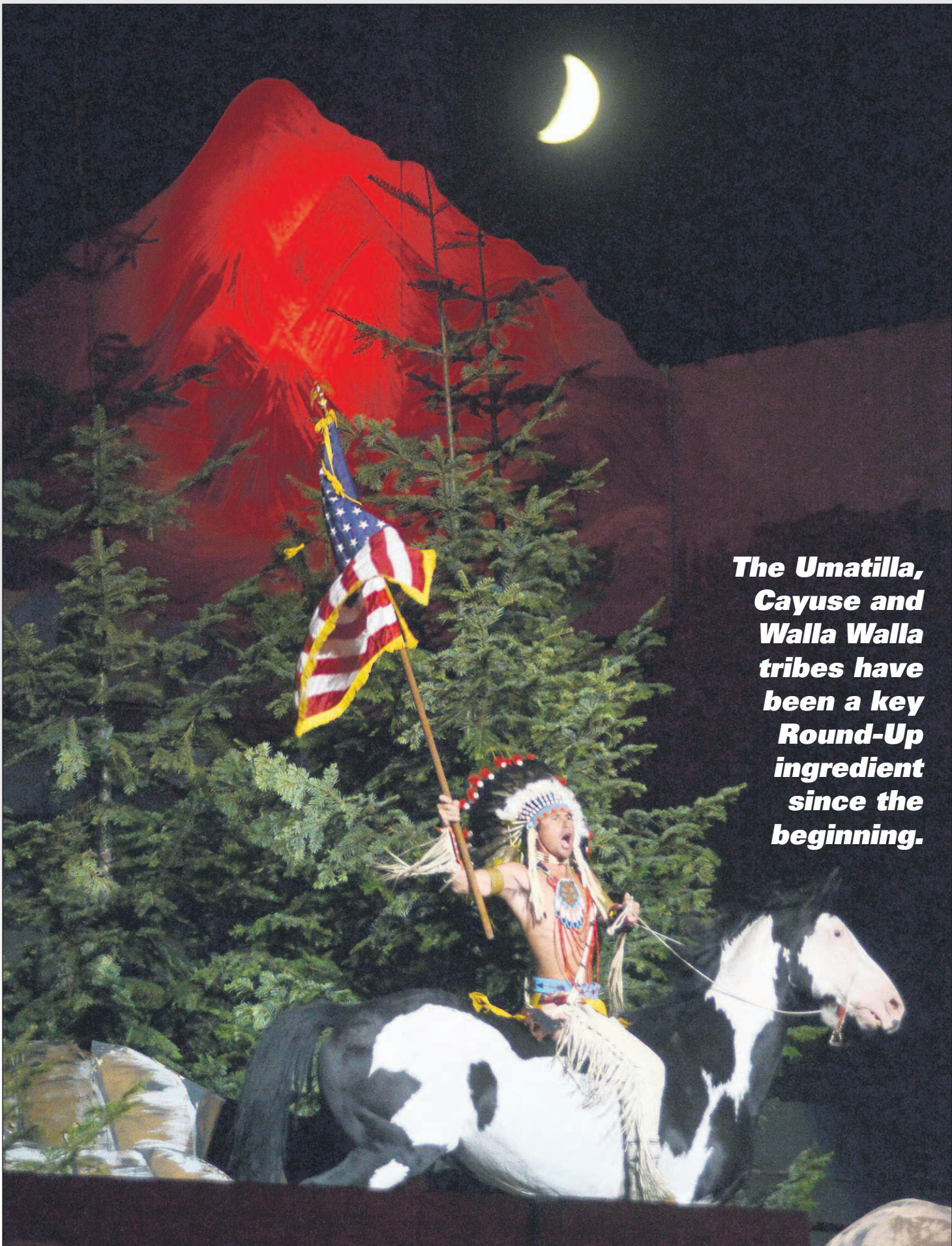


RODEO. INCLUSION. TOLSTOY ON WAR.



Bryson Bronson holds the U.S. flag while riding Chinook under a crescent moon during the opening ceremony of the Pendleton PBR Classic at the Happy Canyon Arena in 2013. Pendleton Round-Up Board of Directors added a second woman and the first Native American to their ranks last week.

E.J. Harris/EO Media Group

In late 19th century America, if the railroad came through your town, you knew it would prosper.

In the 20th century, air service led to prosperity.

In the 21st century, something a bit more elusive drives the prosperity of Western towns. At the dawn of the Internet, it became possible for a class of professionals to work virtually anywhere. That allowed talented men and women to live in places that formerly were inaccessible. Astoria, for instance.

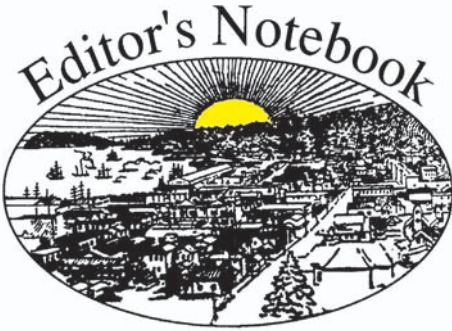
The game right now is to lure young professionals. Because the usual urban magnets — such as Portland, Seattle and San Francisco — are increasingly congested and cost-prohibitive for housing, small rural towns have become a good option.

There are other nuances to luring new people to our small towns. Joe Cortright, the Portland economist, mentioned one of those during his November talk to Columbia Forum. What Cortright calls “permeability” seems to be a key factor for talented people. Thus towns with more open political and social culture seem to do better than ones with a reputation for exclusion.

I thought about this recently during a trip to two of our company’s newspapers in Eastern Oregon: in Hermiston and Pendleton. With a diverse and sometimes explosive economy, Hermiston has become the growth engine of Umatilla County. It has surpassed Pendleton in population.



Steve Forrester



As we approached Hermiston, our chief operating officer told me an anecdote about a woman who chose to leave Pendleton for Hermiston: She found Hermiston to be more welcoming.

There is no bigger institution in Pendleton than the Pendleton Round-Up. The Round-Up grandstands are of a magnitude you won’t find in more than a few small towns in the West. As the 20th century drew to a close, it became painfully obvious that the Round-Up’s governing board had not adapted to changing times. It was the preserve of white men. Women were missing, and so were Native Americans. The Indian tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla) have been a major ingredient of the Round-Up since its 1910 beginning.

Last weekend was a landmark in the Round-Up’s history. The board added a second woman and a Native American. In the words of Cortright, the Round-Up became a bit more permeable.

Pendleton is where Astoria was some 20 years ago, in that it is attracting professionals who can be anywhere. Like here, there is new blood. The next step is to involve the new blood.

In War and Peace, Tolstoy offers a discourse on what goes wrong in warfare.

Barely a day passes that someone on the presidential campaign trail offers a new, simple solution to ISIS and its terrorism. Especially daunting are the suggestions that U.S. troops be dropped into Syria. Too many armchair generals lack an appreciation for what can go wrong and what already has been tried.

In *War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy offers a wonderful digression on how mistakes are magnified during warfare. It comes just as Napoleon prepares to invade Moscow.

“A good player who loses at chess is genuinely convinced that he lost because he made a mistake, and he goes back to the opening gambits to find what the mistake was, forgetting that his every move throughout the whole game involved similar errors, no move being perfect. The mistake that he concentrates on attracts his attention only because it was exploited by his opponent. How much more complex than this is the game of war, which has to be played out within specific time-limits and where there is no question of one man’s will directing events through his control of soulless machinery, because everything develops from the interplay of infinitely varied and arbitrary twists and turns!”

— S.A.F.



Published in “The Life of Tolstoy” by Paul Biriukov
Leo Tolstoy in 1895.



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