

Ku Klux Klan dreams of rising again 150 years after founding

Leaders feel US politics are going their way

By JAY REEVES
Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Born in the ashes of the smoldering South after the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan died and was reborn before losing the fight against civil rights in the 1960s. Membership dwindled, a unified group fractured, and one-time members went to prison for a string of murderous attacks against blacks. Many assumed the group was dead, a white-robed ghost of hate and violence.

Yet today, the KKK is still alive and dreams of restoring itself to what it once was: an invisible white supremacist empire spreading its tentacles throughout society. As it marks 150 years of existence, the Klan is trying to reshape itself for a new era.

Klan members still gather by the dozens under starry Southern skies to set fire to crosses in the dead of night, and KKK leaflets have shown up in suburban neighborhoods from the Deep South to the Northeast in recent months. Perhaps most unwelcome to opponents, some independent Klan organizations say they are merging with larger groups to build strength.

Going their way

In a series of interviews with The Associated Press, Klan leaders said they feel that U.S. politics are going their way, as a nationalist, us-against-them mentality deepens across the nation. Stopping or limiting immigration — a desire of the Klan dating back to the 1920s — is more of a cause than ever. And leaders say membership has gone up at the twilight of President Barack Obama's second term in office.

Joining the Klan is as easy as filling out an online form — provided you're white and Christian. Members can visit an online store to buy one of the Klan's trademark white cotton robes for \$145, though many splurge on the \$165 satin version.

While the Klan has terrorized minorities during much of the last century, its leaders now present a public front that is more virulent than violent. Leaders from several different



AP Photo/Mike Stewart

Loyal White Knights Grand Dragon Will Quigg of Anaheim, Calif., center, shouts to protestors during a "White Pride" rally in Rome, Ga., April 23. The name "Ku Klux Klan" evokes horror for many, but what is the organization today? The AP is interviewed imperial wizards and grand dragons, a watchdog group and others to develop a portrait of the KKK as it exists in 2016.



AP Photo/John Bazemore

Members of the Ku Klux Klan participate in cross burnings after a "white pride" rally in rural Paulding County near Cedar Town, Ga., April 23. Born in the ashes of the smoldering South after the Civil War, the KKK died and was reborn before losing the fight against civil rights in the 1960s. Membership dwindled, a unified group fractured, and one-time members went to prison for a string of murderous attacks against blacks. Many assumed the group was dead, a white-robed ghost of hate and violence.



AP Photo/Mike Stewart

Protesters listen to members of the KKK speak during a "white pride" rally across the street in Rome, Ga., April 23. The Klan was formed just months after the end of the Civil War by six former Confederate officers.

Klan groups all said they have rules against violence aside from self-defense, and even opponents agree the KKK has toned itself down after a string of members went to prison years after the fact for deadly arson attacks, beatings, bombings and shootings.

"While today's Klan has still been involved in atrocities, there is no way it is as violent as the Klan of the '60s," said Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center, an advocacy group that tracks activity by groups it considers extremist.

"That does not mean it is some benign group that does not engage in political violence," he added.

Most groups are small

Klan leaders told the AP that most of today's groups remain small and operate independently, kept apart by disagreements over such issues

as whether to associate with neo-Nazis, hold public rallies or wear the KKK's trademark robes in colors other than white.

It's impossible to say how many members the Klan counts today since groups don't reveal that information, but leaders claim adherents in the thousands among scores of local groups called Klaverns.

"Most Klan groups I talk to could hold a meeting in the bathroom in McDonald's," said Chris Barker, imperial wizard of the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Eden, North Carolina. As for his Klavern, he said, "Right now, I'm close to 3,800 members in my group alone."

The Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish protection group that monitors Klan activity, describes Barker's Loyal White Knights as the most active group today, but estimates it has no more than

200 members. The ADL puts total Klan membership nationwide at around 3,000.

The Alabama-based SPLC estimates the Klan has about 190 chapters nationally with no more than 6,000 members total, which would be a mere shadow of its estimated 2 million to 5 million members in the 1920s.

"The idea of unifying the Klan like it was in the '20s is a persistent dream of the Klan, but it's not happening," Potok said.

Post-Civil War

Formed just months after the end of the Civil War by six former Confederate officers, the Klan originally seemed more like a college fraternity with ceremonial robes and odd titles for its officers. But soon, freed blacks were being terrorized, and the Klan was blamed. Hundreds of people were assaulted or killed

as whites tried to regain control of the defeated Confederacy. Congress effectively outlawed the Klan in 1871, and the group died.

The Klan seemed relegated to history until World War I, but it was resurrected as waves of immigrants arrived from Europe and elsewhere, and grew more as the NAACP challenged the South's Jim Crow laws in the 1920s. Millions joined, including community leaders like bankers and lawyers.

That momentum declined, and best estimates place membership at about 40,000 by the mid-'60s, the height of the civil rights movement. Klan members were convicted of using murder as a weapon against equality in states including Mississippi and Alabama, where one Klansman remains imprisoned for planting the bomb that killed four black girls in a Birmingham

church in 1963.

KKK leader Brent Waller, imperial wizard of the United Dixie White Knights in Mississippi, said stopping immigration — not blocking minority rights — is the Klan's No. 1 issue today.

And other Klan leaders say Donald Trump's ascendancy in the GOP is a sign things are going their way.

"You know, we began 40 years ago saying we need to build a wall," Arkansas-based Klan leader Thomas Robb said.

Despite trying to rebrand itself, the Klan has not stepped away from burning crosses. As the sun set on a warm Saturday in April, Klan members gathered in a huge circle in a northwest Georgia field to set a cross and Nazi swastika afire.

"White power!" they chanted in unison.

"Death to the ungodly! Death to our enemies!"

THE DAILY
ASTORIAN

TV LISTINGS

Evening listings
WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY EVENING													JULY 6		
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30		
2	KATU	2	KATU News		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	The Middle	The Goldbergs	Modern Family	Black-ish	Fresh Off the Boat	The Real O'Neals	KATU News at 11	(35) Jimmy Kimmel	
4	KOMO	4	KOMO 4 News		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	The Middle	The Goldbergs	Modern Family	Black-ish	Fresh Off the Boat	The Real O'Neals	KOMO 4 News	(35) Jimmy Kimmel	
5	KING	5	NBC Nightly News	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	America-Talent	"Best of Auditions" Catch a recap of the best moments so far. (N)	Night Shift	"By Dawns Early Light" (N)	American Gothic	"Nighthawks" (N)	KING 5 News	(35) Tonight Show	
6	KOIN	6	KOIN 6 News at 6	CBS Evening News	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Big Brother		Criminal Minds	"A Badge and a Gun"	American Gothic	"Nighthawks" (N)	KOIN 6 News @ 11	(35) S. Colbert	
7	KIRO	7	KIRO 7 News	CBS Evening News	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Big Brother		Criminal Minds	"A Badge and a Gun"	American Gothic	"Nighthawks" (N)	KIRO News	(35) S. Colbert	
8	KGW	8	KGW News at 6:00 p.m.		Live at Seven	Inside Edition	America-Talent	"Best of Auditions" Catch a recap of the best moments so far. (N)	Night Shift	"By Dawns Early Light" (N)	KGW News at 10	(35) Two 1/2 Men	KGW News at 11	(35) Tonight Show	
9	KRCW	9	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Modern Family	Modern Family	Arrow	"Haunted"	Supernatural	"Our Little World"	9 Months That Ma	"One of a Kind" (N)	KGW News at 10	(35) Two 1/2 Men	
10	KOPB	10	Journeys in Japan	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour		SuperNature	"Masters of the Sky" (N)	Nova	"Making North America: Life"	9 Months That Ma	"One of a Kind" (N)	Sandwiches That You Will Like		
12	KPTV	12	6 O'Clock News		Family Feud	Family Feud	Chef "Gordon Ramsay Masterclass" (N)	Wayward Pines	"Time Will Tell" (N)	10 O'Clock News			11 O'Clock News	Loves Ray	
13	KPDZ	13	Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	FOX 12's 8 O'Clock News on PDX-TV	FOX 12's 9 O'Clock News on PDX-TV	Wayward Pines	"Time Will Tell" (N)	The Closer	"War Zone"	The Closer	"Last Woman Standing"	
14	KCPQ	14	Name Game	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Chef "Gordon Ramsay Masterclass" (N)	Wayward Pines	"Time Will Tell" (N)	Q13 News at 10			Q13 News	Modern Family	
15	TBS	15	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Family Guy	Family Guy	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends	Friends	
16	KZJQ	16	Two and a Half	Two and a Half	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends	Friends	
17	ESPN2	17	MLB Baseball Texas vs Boston (L)		Baseball Tonight (L)		SportsCenter		SportsCenter		SportsCenter		SportsCenter		
18	ESPN2	18	Battlefrog College		Battlefrog College		Battlefrog College		Baseball Tonight (L)		Jalen & Jacoby (N)	Baseball Tonight	Jalen & Jacoby	Jalen & Jacoby	
19	NICK	19	Henry Danger	Henry Danger	Crashletes (N)	The Thundermans	NickyRickyDicky	School of Rock	Full House	Full House	Full House	Full House	Friends	Friends	
20	DISN	20	Liv and Maddie	K.C.Underc.	(15) ★★ Bolt (2008, Animated) Voices of Miley Cyrus, Susie Essman, John Travolta.		Walk the Prank (N)	K.C. Undercover	Friends Whenever	K.C. Undercover	Friends Whenever	K.C. Undercover	Jessie	Liv and Maddie	
21	FAM	21	★★★ Another Cinderella Story (08)	Andrew Seeley, Jane Lynch, Selena Gomez.		YoungHungry (N)	Baby Daddy (N)	Dead of Summer	Patience	Dead of Summer	Barney Rubble Eyes	The 700 Club	The 700 Club		
22	FMC	22	(5:45) ★★ My Boss's Daughter (03)	Ashton Kutcher.	★★★ 13 Going on 30 (04, Com)	Mark Ruffalo, Jennifer Garner.	(20) FXM Presents	★★ The Recruit (2003, Thriller)	Al Pacino, Bridget Moynahan, Colin Farrell.		Dirty Teacher '13, Dra)	Cameron Deane Stewart, Josie Davis.			
23	LIFE	23	★★ Fun With Dick and Jane (2005, Comedy)	Téa Leoni, Alec Baldwin, Jim Carrey.		★★ Friends With Benefits (2011, Comedy)	Justin Timberlake, Patricia Clarkson, Mila Kunis.		Dirty Teacher '13, Dra)	Cameron Deane Stewart, Josie Davis.					
24	ROOT	24	(5:00) MLB Baseball Seattle Mariners at Houston Astros (L)				Post-game	MLB Baseball Seattle Mariners at Houston Astros Site: Minute Maid Park -- Houston, Texas					Post-game		
25	F51	25	TUF 23 "Bump in the Road"		TUF 23 "Fight of the Season" (N)		TUF Talk (N)	Garbage Time (N)	TUF Sports (N)	Fox Sports Live	TUF 23 "Fight of the Season"		TUF Talk	Garbage Time	
26	SPIKE	26	(5:30) ★★ Grandpa's Boy (06, Com)	Allen Covert, Shirley Jones, Linda Cardellini.		★★★ The Longest Yard (2005, Comedy)	Chris Rock, Burt Reynolds, Adam Sandler.		★★ My Cousin Vinny (92, Comedy)	Marisa Tomei, Joe Pesci.					
27	COM	27	(20) South Park	(50) South Park	(20) South Park	(50) South Park	(25) South Park	South Park	Another Period (N)	South Park	Another Period (N)	South Park	The Daily Show (N)	Nightly Show (N)	
28	HIST	28	American Pickers	"Big Moe"	American Pickers	"Can't Catch a Break"	American Pickers	"Plymouth Rocks"	American Pickers	"Tick Tock Pick"	Pawn Stars (N)	Pawn Stars (N)	(05) Motors	(35) Motors	
29	A&E	29	First 48 "Southwick/ Devil's Doorway"		Duck Dynasty	"Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty	"RV There Yet?"	Duck Dyn. (SP) (N)	Duck Dynasty (N)	Wahlburgers (N)	Wahlburgers (N)	(05) Wahlburg (N)	(35) Duck Dynasty	
30	TLC	30	My Giant Life		I Am Jazz	"I Am Jazz	My Big Life	"Losing at Love" (N)	Big Fat Fab. ("Fat Girl) Spread Thin" (N)	I Am Jazz	"Confronted With Hate" (N)	Big Fat Fab. ("Fat Girl) Spread Thin"			
31	DISC	31	Dual Survival "Swampandia"		Dual Survival	"Croatian Castaway"	Dual Survival	"Mosquito Coast" (N)	Dual Survival (N)	American "Enter the Jungle" (P) (N)	Dual Survival	Dual Survival			
32	NGeo	32	Trooper "Fearless on the Front Lines"		Russia's Toughest Prisons		World's Toughest Prisons		Life and Death Row "Punishment" (N)	Life and Death Row "Execution"	Life and Death Row "Punishment"	Life and Death Row "Punishment"			
33	TNT	33	Castle "Slice of Death"		Castle "The Dead Pool"		Castle "To Love and Die in L.A."		Castle "Pretty Dead"		Castle "Knockout"		Castle "Rise"		
34	AMC	34	★★ Happy Gilmore (96, Com)	Christopher McDonald, Julie Bowen, Adam Sandler.		★★ Hitch (2005, Comedy)	Eva Mendes, Kevin James, Will Smith.		NCIS "Patience"		Royal Pains "Uninterrupted" (F) (N)	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Fight"			
35	USA	35	NCIS "Love & War"		NCIS "The Artful Dodger"		NCIS "Status Update"		Royal Pains "Uninterrupted" (F) (N)	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Fight"					
36	FOOD	36	Worst Cooks in America "Two-A-Day"		WorstCooks "Eat, Pray, Love"		Worst Cooks in America "Timer's Up"		Cuthroat "Gettin' Judgey With It" (N)	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	Diners, Drive-Ins	
37	HGTV	37	Property Bros. "Stephanie and David"		Property Brothers		Property Brothers		Brother vs. Brother "The Finale" (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Property Brothers			
38	FX	38	(5:00) ★★ The Bourne Legacy (12)	Rachel Weisz, Edward Norton, Jeremy Renner.		★★ Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (14)	Kenneth Branagh, Keira Knightly, Chris Pine.		Tyrant "Spring" (SP) (N)		Tyrant "Spring"				
39	CNN	39	Why They Hate Us		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Newsroom		CNN Newsroom		CNN Newsroom		
40	FNC	40	The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly		Hannity		The O'Reilly Factor		The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly		Hannity		On the Record		
41	CNBC	41	Shark Tank		Leno Garage "Anarchy on Wheels" (N)		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Jay Leno Garage "Anarchy on Wheels"		Paid Program	Paid Program	
42	BRVA	42	The Real Housewives		The Real Housewives		New York City Social (N)		Wives "The Benefits of Friendship" (N)		The Real Housewives		Housewives "The Benefits of Friendship"		
43	TCM	43	Movie	(45) ★★ The Deadly Companions (61)	Brian Keith, Maureen O'Hara.		★★★ The Wild Bunch (1969, Western)	Ernest Borgnine, Robert Ryan, William Holden.					The Ballad of Cable Hogue		
44	SYFY	44	Movie	★★ Tremors 4: The Legend Begins (2004, Thriller)	Sara Botsford, Billy Drago, Michael Gross.		★★ Legion (2010, Action)	Lucas Black, Tyrese Gibson, Paul Bettany.					Constantine (2005, Sci-Fi)	Keanu Reeves.	
45	RFD	45	WesternSport		Noble Outfitters		H/S Rodeo Tour		Equestrian Nation		RW Horsemanship		Rural Eve. News		
									Women's Rodeo		Racer's Edge		WesternSport		
													Noble Outfitters		
															Product Showcase

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