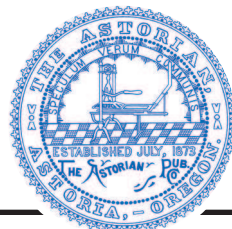


OPINION



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OUR VIEW

KKK is and must always remain toxic

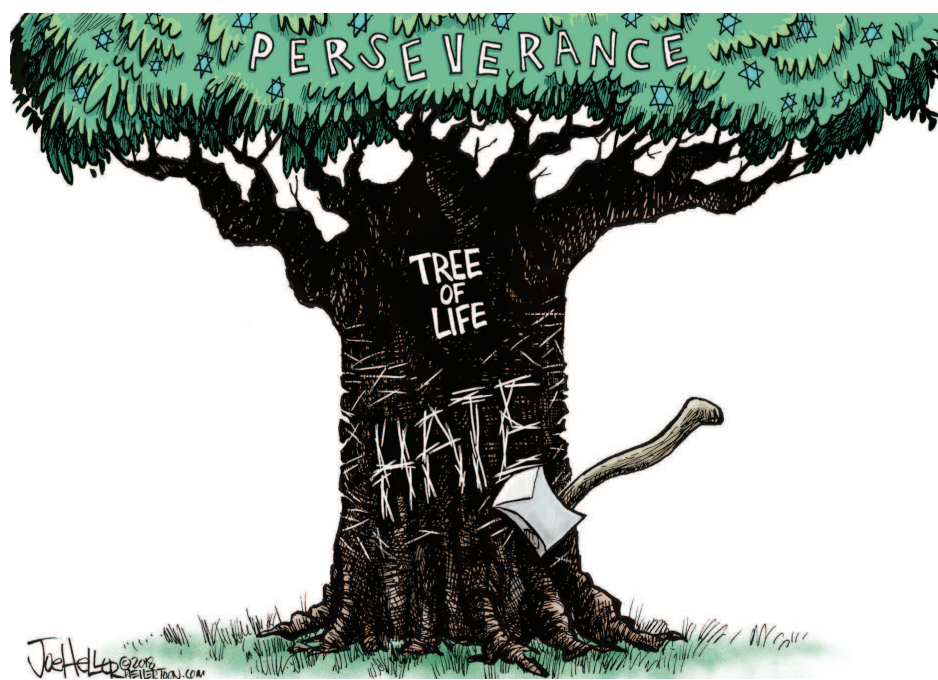
We must remain steadfast in rejecting racist symbols

As Virginia's Democratic governor learned to his regret in recent days, a huge majority of Americans remain disgusted by the toxic bigotry of the Ku Klux Klan and all it stands for.

It is shocking to still have to refer to the KKK in the present tense in 2019. Most people reviled it in 1919 when it had crept back into life after first being crushed in the 1870s. From 1915 into the 1920s, it revived a terrorist campaign of racist lynchings and intimidation in the South. In the Pacific Northwest — including places like Astoria and Bellingham — the KKK gained a foothold with virulent attacks on Asian immigrants and others who competed for blue-collar jobs.

The KKK's notorious white-sheet, pointy-hood costume is as contemptible for mainstream Americans as the Nazi swastika is for modern Germans. Along with "blackface" minstrel shows and Jim Crow laws, KKK garb was a deliberate effort to frighten and marginalize minority groups. The enduring power of these symbols extends far beyond the few thousand "official members" of the KKK as it persists today.

Virginia Gov. Ralph S. Northam



was old enough to know better when he somehow allowed himself to be associated with KKK/blackface activity while in medical school. There is no occasion when such symbology is humorous or acceptable. Northam's entanglement with it recalls the Democratic Party's long and shameful immersion in segregationist politics and messaging. If the facts are as they appear, he must resign.

Locally, it was appalling to see the despicable hood appear on photocopied sheets in Astoria, with the invitation "The KKK Wants You!" Considering our area's racist and xenophobic past, this apparent recruitment campaign was a vicious slap in the face for all who

revere our multicultural and inclusive society.

The Long Beach Peninsula man who stepped up to take responsibility for the fliers is, like Northam, old enough to know better. If his aim was to gain attention by being provocative, he certainly achieved his goal. In an interview with the Chinook Observer, he backpedaled. His misjudgment, if it remains an isolated incident, should not taint his life.

There is a larger problem beyond one man's foray into off-limits bigotry as a means to, in the Astoria Police Department's characterization, "seek politically like-minded people to engage in discussion and discourse." The use of KKK imag-

ery and other dog whistles is percolating through some segments of the American populace, signaling a disturbing normalization of discredited notions of white supremacy and racial purity. Such messages occasionally find a receptive audience among underemployed and directionless youths on the fringe of society.

Some discontent is inevitable in any culture. But while we slap down overtly racist overtures like the local KKK flier, we must at the same time continue striving to provide meaningful living-wage jobs to all who need them. It is dangerous and corrosive to write off anyone. Those who feel marginalized and disrespected are quicker to disrespect others, placing social equilibrium at risk.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Astoria Police Department and the city tread on thin ice when they come off as being deferential to the privacy interests of someone who made use of an infamous symbol of hatred. While we may take them at their word that they are adhering to a standard policy to not identify an individual not charged with a crime, many in our region will not grant this benefit of the doubt. The last thing Astoria and surrounding communities needs is any whiff of association with the revolting behavior of some of our forebears who gave comfort to the KKK.

Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

10 years ago this week — 2009

The last wrinkles have been ironed out of the contract between the Port of Astoria, the city of Newport and SeaPort Airlines.

On Friday, Oregon Department of Aviation Director Dan Clem approved SeaPort's financial records, and the contract was signed by the Port, the city of Newport and SeaPort.

Air service is due to start between the coast Portland March 15.

A 75-acre acquisition by the Columbia Land Trust has nearly quadrupled the protected area at the Twilight Eagle Sanctuary in Burnside.

The trust purchased the tract in December, adding shoreline and tidal wetlands to 27 acres of property already conserved by Clatsop County, the Oregon Eagle Foundation and the North Coast Land Conservancy.

The document vault behind the combination safe door at the Port of Astoria office is filled mostly with boxes of boring old invoices, canceled checks and insurance policies.

But on one of the shelves, Port Commissioner Floyd Holcom has found a dozen bulky, leather-bound minute books that have held him spellbound for weeks. The books, faded red and inscribed with gold lettering, chronicle the Port's history on yellowing, type-set pages dating back to 1911.

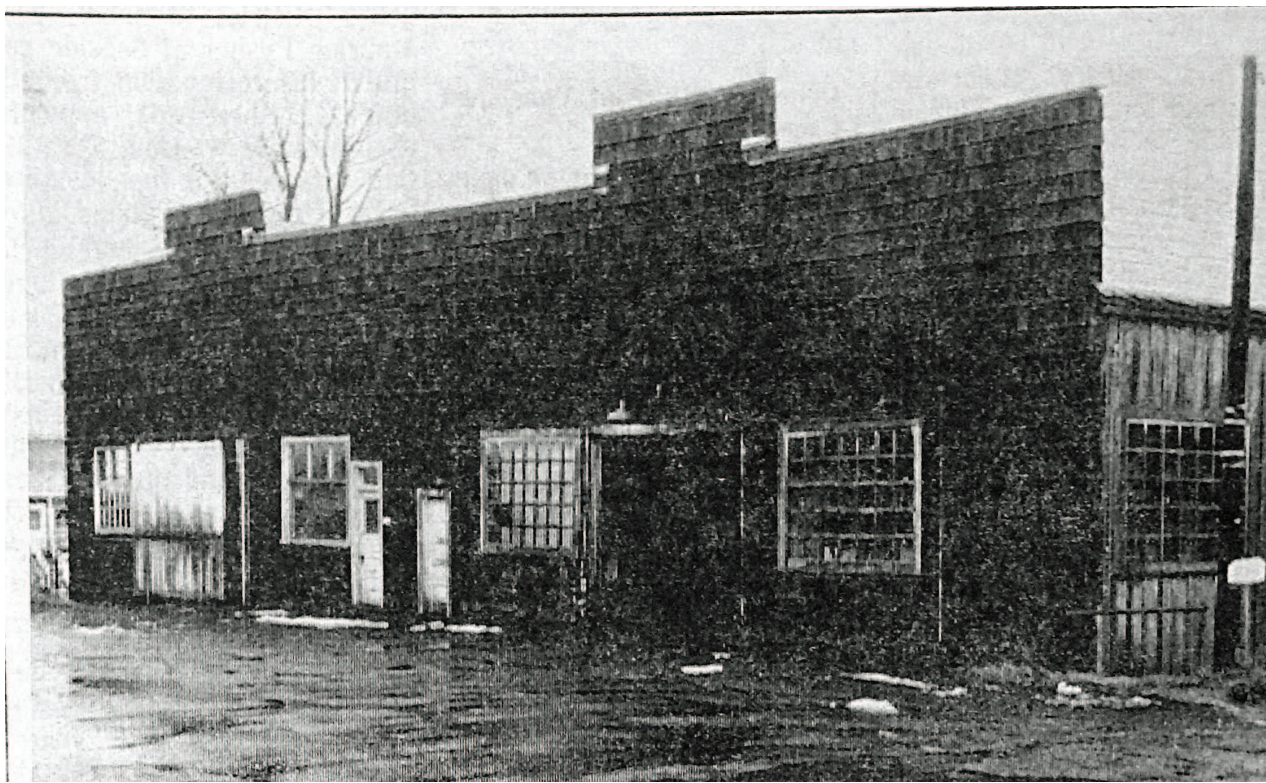
Inside them, Holcom has uncovered forgotten documentation of Port projects and property purchases, of early leadership and ambitious plans.

In addition to inspiring other commissioners to do some digging of their own, his findings have raised hopes that the Port might regain control of long-lost land acquisitions, or maybe just fill in some of the agency's patchy institutional memory.

50 years ago — 1969

The Port of Astoria Commission has authorized hiring an engineering firm to make a land-use feasibility study of the Skipanon River area to see where future industrial and port terminal facilities should go in relation to the Northwest Aluminum Co. plant.

Clatsop County settled back with a sigh of relief today as warming showers from the southwest continued to melt snowdrifts from all



1969 — The Astoria School District is studying replacement of its bus shed, near Gyro Field. Men working at the facility say the structure, which includes a maintenance area, shakes when equipment is operated inside.

but the highest streets.

Storm-closed schools reopened, garbage collections resumed, buses ran on schedule, streets in downtown Astoria were clear of snow and for the first time in more than a week a commercial aircraft landed at Astoria Airport.

State police, members of the Astoria Rod & Gun club and wildlife conservationists were conducting a rescue mission today to various parts of Clatsop County where deer and elk were known to be hungry.

Cpl. Ken Moore said six four-wheel drive vehicles were to be used to ferry several tons of hay and dry food to Gnat Creek, Saddle Mountain, the Lower Nehalem, Lewis and Clark and Youngs River valleys, where herds of animals were said to be suffering from lack of food.

75 years ago — 1944

"A trip around the world" without gas coupons is one of the features to be offered at the Anchor Bond Carnival for the delight of patrons young and old and the amazement of local OPA officials, according to Mrs. Elsa Lonberg, chairman of the big ABC event set for the USO pavilion Friday night.

Fare for the world tour — as well as for all other events of the carnival — will be war stamps.

Robert Lucas, associate editor of the Astorian-Budget, informally discussed problems of censorship and wartime public relations in the handling of army and navy news before the Clatsop County League of Women Voters at their monthly luncheon in the Presbyterian

church Wednesday.

Lucas reviewed some efforts by the federal office of war information to obtain more prompt and complete coverage of battle campaigns, and cited the extraordinary press cooperation arranged by Admiral Nimitz to cover the Tarawa show as a milestone in the right direction toward developing a war consciousness among the American people.

The Astoria newspapermen said the American press wants to give the people the truth about "their" war.

A WAVE chorus has been added to the stage attractions scheduled to appear in the Anchor Bond Carnival Friday night in the USO pavilion, according to Murray Peck, photographer's mate second class, U.S. Navy, who will be master of ceremonies for the big bond selling affair.

The girls' chorus will be augmented by a trio of WAVES, while another member of the locally stationed WAVE unit is billed as the Dancing WAVE.

One of the most essential things to know about Groundhog Day is that the groundhog makes good eating and requires no ration points. Otherwise, the groundhog doesn't have much to offer, particularly when it comes to weather forecasting.

This being Groundhog Day, Miss Loraine Lloyd, specialist on rodents for the Chicago museum of national history, put the groundhog in his place — which is a hole in the ground.

The groundhog, she said, is no forecaster. He's only a first cousin to a rat.