

New seasons and old fears

The sun pushed rays of gold across the blue sky on a Saturday morning not that long ago. There was just enough of a breeze that I was thankful I had grabbed the coat that had been tucked in behind the back seat. I walked from the car to the stands watching the teams warm up with stretches and running drills. Football season had arrived and Mack was about to play in his first tackle football game with a whole bunch of kids he didn’t really know all that well.

I unfolded my Echo bleacher seat, set down the bag of school work I had brought with me, and took a deep breath — which I didn’t manage to exhale for what seemed to be minutes. It’s funny how a new situation, a new season, and even a new environment will lead to deep breaths and overwhelmed feelings. Does everyone experience this or is it just me?

Mack and I had driven an hour down the winding highway, over the hills of wheat stubble and summer fallow, listening to his favorite music, talking about the new school year, his new teacher, and the football team he had just joined. We worked on breathing techniques that seem to help his stammer disappear, and tried starting sentences with words other than the ones that often cause his stutter to happen in the first place. I was thankful for the quiet of the car and our private speech therapy session, and hoped he was grateful for it too.

The bleacher seat fit just right in the

space I had chosen in the stands. Not too close to anyone else, but not too far away either. I spotted a few familiar faces, but no one I really knew all that well. The extrovert side of me seemed to be swallowed whole by the introvert, and for some reason I was OK with it. My focus didn’t need to be on how I was going to fit in, but instead needed to be turned toward how Mack was going to do in his first game.

I knew he was coachable because I’ve coached him through most everything for the past 11 years, but I also knew that his sensitivity toward criticism, even when it was constructive, wasn’t

the best trait he could have inherited from me. I knew he was fast, but I didn’t know if he would remember all of the plays or get to the right spots in time, or even if he knew how to block for a teammate running near him.

I caught my mind swirling with these crazy thoughts and laughed out loud. What was I doing? Why was I worried about anything and everything I thought might go wrong instead of enjoying the fact that he had assured me just an hour before that he knew exactly what to do, that he would listen to his coaches the entire time, and most importantly, that he was ready? How could I have already forgotten what that look of excitement did to his face and how just knowing it was game day made his eyes sparkle?

He ran with his teammates through the field, did jumping jacks, and even ran

a few offensive plays before the game began. It was obvious he knew what he was doing. I glanced at my phone and noted the time. It wasn’t just minutes away from game time, it was seconds away from me becoming a football mom for the second time. A mom who knew without the slightest hesitation that her oldest son was a leader on and off the field, but at the same time, I was a mom who now questioned what her younger son would be able to do. Why, oh why, could I not simply trust in that which was unfolding right in front of my eyes? He was ready, and honestly, so was I.

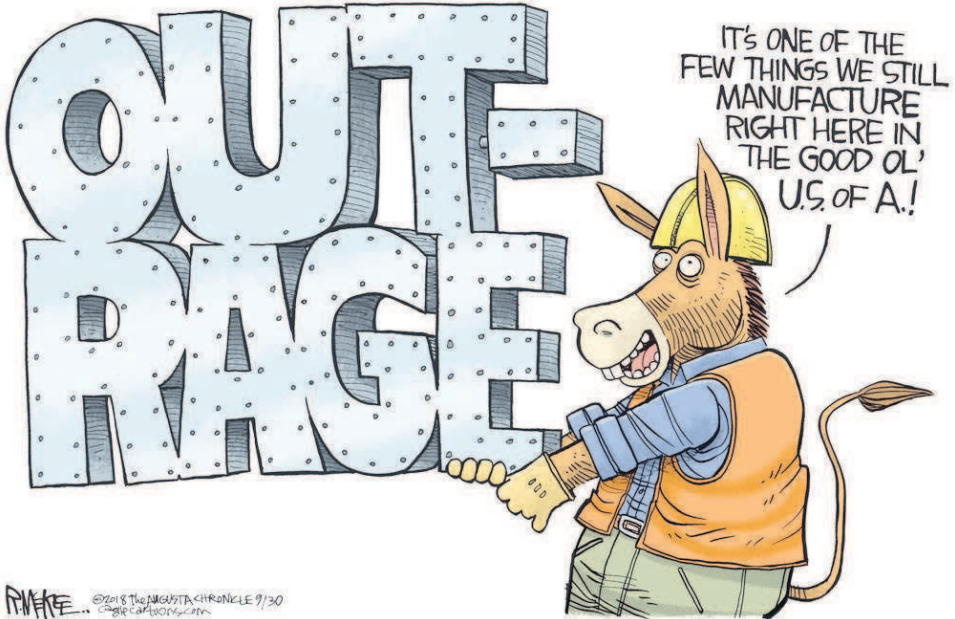
Both Mack and I have started a new season of life, with new groups of peers, with new expectations, and with new coaches. He has made a whole new group of friends, and so have I. Has it been comfortable every step of the way? Absolutely not. But it is just what we both needed — pushing us one step closer to being that person we are meant to be. That person who faces their fears with the hope and faith that Jesus is right beside them. That person who looks anxiety right in the eye and wins the staring contest they’ve found themselves in — hands-down. That person who believes without a doubt that God is for them, not against them. And even when we aren’t exactly sure where we are headed, we are chasing light the best we know how, making the most of every ounce of daylight given to us.

Mack had a really great tackle that morning, ran through the plays he had learned with confidence, and even had an interception. During one of the breaks between games I caught myself wondering



LINDSAY MURDOCK
FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN

who he would hang out with, but stopped myself quickly. I looked at my youngest son sitting in a large group of boys laughing and talking. I am almost positive he wasn’t stammering, and I’m certain he was right where he was meant to be — valued, accepted, and a part of a really great team. He caught me watching him from the bleachers, and with that twinkle in his eye and the grin that melts my heart, his thumbs up was all I needed. He was becoming “that person.” And you know what? So was I.



Pendleton’s women of World War I

By BRIGIT FARLEY
For the East Oregonian

One hundred years ago, U.S. forces geared up with their British and French allies for a big push to end the first World War. Some 1,000 men represented Pendleton and Umatilla County in their ranks. Meanwhile, their friends and neighbors did what they could to support the troops, both at home and abroad. The civilians’ story represents a key chapter in the history of the first global conflict in Pendleton.

As the man with the biggest megaphone in the pre-modern media age, *East Oregonian* editor E.B. Aldrich took the lead in organizing Pendleton’s war effort. When President Woodrow Wilson took the nation into the conflict, Aldrich knew what to do. He immediately began teaching readers how to think about the conflict, motivating potential volunteers by casting it as a black and white struggle between the democratic Allies and the evil cabal of the German Kaiser and his minions. Aldrich lauded the men headed overseas, both volunteers and draftees. He chronicled Pendleton’s war-related efforts, from Home Guard members to Red Cross volunteers, and exhorted everyone to donate to war relief funds and purchase his quota of Liberty Bonds to help finance the war. Aldrich eventually became the scourge of “slackers,” those who balked at doing or paying their fair share. Prominent rancher Hans Pahl had failed to take his share of Liberty Bonds. Aldrich punished him with bold print, front-page publicity on October 2, 1918: “Hans Pahl made \$18,000 in little over a year, refuses to take \$2500 loan quota.” Fearful of community reaction, Pahl declared the whole thing a misunderstanding and met his obligation promptly.

Apart from Aldrich, two Pendletonians stood out in service on the home front. Virginia Todd, a recent graduate of Pendleton High School,



Contributed photo
Virginia Todd tapped a hidden talent for organization by founding and directing chapters of the Girls’ National Honor Guard all over Umatilla County during World War I.

refused to be sidelined as the men her age marched off to war. She tapped a hidden talent for organization by founding and directing chapters of the Girls’ National Honor Guard all over Umatilla County. Honor Guard girls met troop trains with food and good cheer, helped arrange patriotic sendoffs for draftees and escorted dignitaries like Vice President Thomas Marshall to their Pendleton appearances. Under Todd’s leadership, they also raised funds madly, once staging a county fair in Helix that netted hundreds of dollars for the Red Cross. Beyond her Honor Guard activities, Todd somehow found time to serve in the leadership of Umatilla County’s Patriotic Service League, which coordinated and policed compliance with war fund drives. In addition, she helped recruit student nurses

in to replace those in overseas service and “adopted” a young French girl who had lost her father in the war.

Meanwhile, orphaned Native American teenager Winnie Kanine made an outstanding financial contribution. Having inherited some valuable land from her parents, Kanine astounded the community by taking nearly \$7,000 in Liberty Bonds, easily besting the totals of most county residents. Some people wondered how Pendleton’s Native Americans would respond to the “World War.” No one’s answer was clearer than Kanine’s.

Pendleton sent at least two women overseas. A native of Ireland, Stacia Walsh had made her way to Pendleton in her early 20s and was working as a nurse at St. Anthony hospital when the U.S. entered the war. Walsh volunteered for duty in France



Contributed photo
Eglantine Moussu was raised in an immigrant family and became one of just over 200 women nationwide selected to serve as bilingual telephone operators during World War I.

and was assigned to Base Hospital 46 in Bazoilles-sur-Meuse. En route, she served at a Petersburg, Virginia, military hospital, where she entertained patients with tales of derring-do at the Pendleton Round-Up. “Almost every one of them declared an intention to go to the Round-Up as soon as the war is over,” Walsh wrote to a friend. She returned to Pendleton briefly in July 1919 but afterward accepted assignments with the Red Cross that took her to Poland and Yugoslavia.

Eglantine Moussu put her native proficiency in French to work for the war effort. Raised in an immigrant family, Moussu became one of just over 200 women nationwide selected to serve as bilingual telephone operators for American Expeditionary Force commander General John J. Pershing. French operators had repeatedly frustrated Pershing and his staff with their poor knowledge of English, so the general drummed up his own all-American operator corps. Cheerful and brave in the face of extreme danger, Moussu won praise for remaining at her post when German artillery sent shells crashing down on Paris streets in March 1918.

Prominent Pendletonians

J.M. “Jimmy” Cornelison and Roy Ritner joined Moussu and Walsh in non-combat roles in France. Cornelison took a leave of absence from ministering to the Tutuilla Presbyterian congregation to work for the YMCA, which provided respite and entertainment to weary troops at the front and in Paris. Like Stacia Walsh, Cornelison brought the spirit of Pendleton with him. He performed the usual YMCA duties — operating a canteen, stocking books and magazines — while arranging for a showing of a film about the Round-Up for troops in his sector.

Before sailing for home in 1919, Cornelison sent Sheriff and Round-Up President Til Taylor to “use as he wishes” some Round-Up pennants that had gone over the Hindenburg line with American troops. Ritner temporarily gave up Round Up director duties to work with the Red Cross. Where the YMCA served soldiers off the line for rest, the Red Cross tended to the sick and wounded. Ritner drove Ford motorcars back and forth to Paris to fetch medicine and supplies for local field hospitals and did his best to cheer sick and wounded soldiers. He took somber note of the toll the war had taken on France, reporting that “not one in ten” women wore anything but the black of mourning at church services. And yet, he concluded, they never failed to show appreciation for American soldiers and aid workers.

The first World War ended too quickly for a mass civilian mobilization. Rosie the Riveter would make her debut only in the second global conflagration, after 1941. But Pendleton men and women characteristically rose to the occasion quickly, giving generously of their time, effort and money during the 18 months of their town’s first national emergency.

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