

Ku Klux Klan threatens Astoria paper and comes to Eastern Oregon

Editor's Note: In 2018, EO Media Group published an historical book by author William F. Willingham, "Grit and Ink: An Oregon Family's Adventures in Newspapering, 1908-2018" (<http://books.eomediagroup.com/grit-ink/>) Since its publication, the family-owned media company that owns and operates the East Oregonian has doubled in size, having recently acquired newspapers in La Grande, Baker City, Bend and Redmond. The following story is excerpted from this book and is part four of a seven-part weekly series.

EO Media Group

By the 1920s, the *East Oregonian's* owners looked for opportunities beyond Pendleton. They had the financial resources to buy two other daily newspapers — in Astoria, Oregon and Twin Falls, Idaho. Under the strong leadership of E.B. Aldrich at the *EO* and Merle Chessman at the *Astoria Budget*, those papers thrived financially; the venture with the *Twin Falls Times* did not turn out as well.

The next big cause promoted by the *EO* under Aldrich's editorship was the Pendleton Round-Up. The show the organizers had in mind would showcase horsemanship, cowboy skills, and Native American pageantry and life ways. Participants would be actual working cowboys and Native Americans from reservations throughout the Pacific Northwest. It would have an authenticity that the typical Wild West shows of the era could not muster.

Ironically, the Round-Up organizers were portraying a way of



This Ku Klux Klan meeting took place in front of the stadium at Columbia Field, below J.J. Astor School. The stadium was constructed in 1922.

life no longer typical of Umatilla County in 1910. Bronco-busting tournaments and Native American war dances described a time in the 1870s and 1880s when cattle and cowboys dominated the rangeland of Umatilla County and the Bannock War of 1878 caused turmoil on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Such scenes and events gradually were replaced by wheat farming and sheep raising in northeastern Oregon. On the eve of the 1911 Round-Up, Aldrich admitted as much in an editorial when he wrote, "The show is not intended to depict the life in this country at this time, for the Round-Up is not typical of Pendleton and of eastern Oregon these days."

In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan bedeviled Oregon's political and social life. The largely homogeneous population of Oregon fell prey to the racist and nativist propaganda of the KKK — which purported to be defending traditional Protestant, white patriotic values from what they considered were the un-American beliefs of immigrants, Blacks, Jews, and Catholics. As the KKK developed a sizable following throughout the state, the editors of the *Daily Astorian* and the *East Oregonian* felt compelled to challenge the KKK's discriminatory beliefs and actions in their communities.

Both La Grande and Baker City also became hotbeds of Klan

activity, with La Grande's Klavern boasting over 300 members. On several occasions in 1923 and 1924, hundreds of white-robed and masked Klansmen paraded through downtown La Grande and Baker City and lit fiery crosses on the edge of town.

The meeting records of the La Grande Klavern, published in "Inside the Klavern" (1999), reveal the depth of the Klan's antipathy towards Catholics, Jews, Blacks, and Asians and recount the push-back the Klan received when it attempted to enforce its beliefs on the larger community. The La Grande Klan, for example, met resistance when trying to get the school board to hire only Protes-

tant teachers and employees and when they sought the firing of a local banker who was Catholic. Walter Pierce of La Grande was elected governor of Oregon in 1922 with Klan help.

Amidst this highly charged environment, Chessman made his position clear. While he could accept some of the candidates that had Klan support and the general patriotic values of the organization, he editorially denounced the Klan's political agenda and its blatant falsehoods.

In response to Chessman's editorials, the Klan sought to undermine Chessman by calling for boycotts and bans on the *Budget* and by demanding that Aldrich remove Chessman or sell the paper.

In response, Aldrich made it clear that he supported the editorial independence of Chessman. He wrote: "No true newspaper wants to make any promise of editorial action in advance of an event because it is impossible to foresee what may develop and to make a pledge of that sort would mean to sacrifice a paper's independence. That would not be good journalism and it should not be expected of us. ... We wish to remain free to praise or criticize as conditions may demand and we would not give up that right even for the president of the United States."

The Klan was also active in Pendleton, as the *East Oregonian* reported. "Under the light shed by a fiery cross in the arena at Round-Up park a class of more than 100 candidates were initiated in to the Pendleton branch of the Ku Klux Klan last night in the first public ceremonial ever held here. The grand stand was packed with people who attended to see the ceremony. Preceding the ceremony, klansmen to the number of approximately 275 in costume, paraded from the hall on Main street to the Round-Up grounds. ... Fiery crosses on both the north and south hills burned during the evening for several hours."

Oregon employers to receive \$160 million from SAIF

SAIF declares two dividends, one based on premium and one tied to safety performance

East Oregonian

SALEM — Policyholders with the State Accident Insurance Fund Corp. in Oregon will receive \$160 million in dividends this year, the nonprofit workers compensation insurer announced Wednesday.

The SAIF Board of Directors declared a \$120 million primary dividend to be paid to policyholders based on their premium, and a \$40 million safety performance dividend to be paid based on each policyholder's safety results.

This is the 10th year in a row SAIF has been able to offer dividends, and the 22nd dividend in the past 30 years.

"As a not-for-profit with a public mission to make

workers' comp available and affordable, paying dividends is an important part of the value we offer Oregon employers," said Kerry Barnett, president and CEO of SAIF. "SAIF is the only insurance carrier in Oregon that regularly returns dividends to policyholders at this level."

Policyholders in Umatilla County will receive more than \$2.9 million and Union County policyholders will receive more than \$1.1 million. Those figures do not include state agencies or public universities.

"Our vision is to make Oregon the safest and healthiest place to work," Barnett said. "We appreciate our policyholders' efforts to ensure their workers go home safely at the end of each day."

SAIF determines whether a policyholder dividend is appropriate based on capital levels, claim trends, and the overall economic environment. This year SAIF has seen strong

investment returns and favorable trends in injury prevention and claim cost containment.

The safety performance dividend rewards policyholders for their claims experience for policies whose annual term ended in 2018, based on a scale ranging from zero to 10.6% of their standard premium.

More than 48,500 policyholders are eligible for SAIF's primary dividend. Of those, about 93.9% are also eligible to receive all or a portion of the additional safety performance dividend.

"In addition to dividends, we are proud to offer our customers some of the lowest rates, best-in-class service, and the largest network of workplace safety professionals of any insurance carrier in Oregon," said Barnett. "Our goal is to deliver workers' comp that really works."

Checks will be mailed in October to eligible employers.

BRIEFLY

Business workshops offer new tools

PENDLETON — The Small Business Development Center at Blue Mountain Community College is kicking off its fall workshop series with a pair of classes in Pendleton.

Both workshops are led by Michael Mettler of MCM Strategic + Communications. The first is Wednesday, Oct. 9 and will focus on integrating Google Business into your communications arsenal and why the platform is becoming increasingly more important. The other, which is Wednesday, Oct. 23, focuses on promoting and growing your business digitally, including how to create two-way communication channels and calendaring your content.

The workshop sessions run from from 9 a.m. to noon at BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. It includes light refreshments and a follow-up session to evaluate progress several weeks following. Each workshop costs \$39.

For more information or to register, contact Andrea Fowler at 541-278-5833.

Pamplin Media cuts pay, hours

PORTLAND — Pamplin Media, publisher of the *Portland Tribune* and several community papers, notified employees this week that the company is cutting their hours and pay. It's the latest in a series of cutbacks in Oregon media organizations amid an economic crisis in the news industry, but Pamplin said it expects the

cuts will be temporary.

The company is reducing full-time staff to 38 hours per week, according to Publisher Mark Garber. That's a 5% cut in hours, and Pamplin is making a corresponding cut in pay.

In an email to *The Oregonian*, Garber said revenues have been consistently stable since the Great Recession. But he said this year the company has experienced revenue "softness," an issue compounded by rising newsprint prices associated with federal tariffs imposed last year.

"We have committed to reviewing the temporary reduction in hours every three months and communicating with employees about our progress toward restoring the week from 38 hours to 40," Garber wrote.

— EO Media Group and East Oregonian staff

Outdoors RV celebrates production of 20,000th unit



Courtesy photo

Outdoors RV, based in La Grande, celebrates the production of its 20,000th unit with its local Outdoors RV dealer, Thompson RV of Pendleton. Thompson RV was one of the first RV dealers to sign up to be a part of the Outdoors RV family. The focus of Outdoors RV is to design and build recreational vehicles for the customers who enjoy "Mountain Tough Four Seasons Camping."

U.S. hop supply, demand balanced

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — A 2% increase in inventory of U.S. hops since last September shows continued reasonable balance between supply and demand despite a continuing but slowing acreage increase in recent years, a leading producer says.

Crop production in 2018 increased just 1% over 2017, "so a 2% increase in hop stocks 12 months later is relatively in line with the production increase," says Pete Mahony, vice president of supply chain and purchasing for John I. Haas Inc. in Yakima. Haas is a leader in production, processing and research and development of hops.

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service released its Sept. 1 hop stock report on Sept. 18 showing hop inventory by growers, dealers

and brewers at 115 million pounds, up 2% from the 113 million-pound inventory a year earlier.

Stocks held at dealer and grower locations totaled 78 million pounds and brewers held 37 million pounds.

The previous two Sept. 1 hop stock reports showed annual increases of about 15%, which was expected as production in those years increased at nearly the same rate, Mahony said.

In June, USDA NASS estimated 57,339 acres of hops for 2019, up 4% from the record high of 55,035 in 2018. Of that, 72% is in Washington, 15% in Idaho and 13% in Oregon.

For many years, hop growth has been fueled by the rapid increase of craft breweries, but their rate of growth is now slowing.

"While we've certainly seen some slowdown in the U.S. craft indus-

try from the double-digit growth rates of only a few years ago, the industry still continues to grow although at a more moderate and hopefully sustainable rate," Mahony said.

A positive sign is strong growth in the long tail of craft, which are the smaller, more local craft brewers, he said. Long tail growth has pushed the total U.S. brewery count beyond 7,000, he said.

Another positive sign is continued craft growth in overseas markets, which need U.S. hops to replicate popular beer styles of the U.S., Mahony said.

"So as the market conditions have been evolving and changing recently, it is reassuring to see how well the hop industry has been able to keep supply reasonably in balance with demand over the past year, as is evident in a hop stock increase of only 2%," he said.