

# Westward Ho! Parade showcases local history, culture

By **BRYCE DOLE**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The history and culture of Pendleton was on full display at the Westward Ho! Parade on a brisk morning Friday, Sept. 17.

A staple attraction at the Pendleton Round-Up since its inception in 1910, the controlled but chaotic event drew hundreds of people from far and wide to the streets of downtown.

The nonmotorized parade showcased the area's western roots, with animal-drawn covered wagons, cars, buggies, and large groups of horseback riders and marching bands.

It also played homage to the area's indigenous cultures. Tribal participants of all ages wore traditional regalia while riding on horseback, singing, waving, chanting and drumming as they passed through the town.

"It shows people that we're real," said 88-year-old Norman Dumont, who worked for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in environmental health and safety for nearly three decades. "We have our reservation. It shows the cooperation between the tribes and the people of the town."

Sitting beside the parade, smoking a cigarette and watching children donning regalia pass by, Dumont voiced pride for his community.

"I feel very proud of our young people trying to maintain our culture, instead of living in two worlds," Dumont said.

Veterans, politicians, farmers and Round-Up representatives rode on horseback through the town, many hollering "Let 'er Buck." Cheerleaders danced through the streets and marching bands blared music, including "When The Saints Go Marching In."

From the sidewalks, kids scrambled for candy and covered the road with chalk art outside of the Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub. Spectators cheered and laughed from their foldable chairs. They waved to parade participants and shouted back, "Let 'er Buck."

Among them was Tracey Jim, a lifelong Pendleton resident and mother of seven who was back after a 20-year Round-Up hiatus. She stopped coming to Round-Up when



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Dennis Zimmerman sounds the drum as a member of the Pendleton Mounted Band Friday, Sept. 17, 2021 during the annual Westward Ho! Parade.

her mother died, but now she felt that it was finally time for her and her family to get out and about. She said she enjoyed watching the old-fashioned carts and the Indians waltzing through the streets.

"It shows a welcome to the people," she said of the parade. "I hope everyone is having fun."

Tom Melling, of Ventura, California, was back in town for his sixth rodeo and attended the parade. He came to love Round-Up week and all its attractions back in 2015. He said he loves the atmosphere and history of the Round-Up and the people of the town. It draws him back each year.

"I love the people here, they're not pushy," he said. "And every year it gets better."



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Sam and Simon Schnitzer, ages 4 and 5, wave to parade participants during the Westward Ho! Parade on Friday, Sept. 17, 2021, in downtown Pendleton.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
The Happy Canyon Fire Department carts its wagon down Southeast Court Avenue in Pendleton Friday, Sept. 17, 2021, during the Westward Ho! Parade.

Kathy Aney/  
East Oregonian  
A flag bearer rides in the Westward Ho! Parade on Friday, Sept. 17, 2021, in downtown Pendleton.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
Parade-goers watch as the Westward Ho! Parade passes by Main Street in Pendleton Friday, Sept. 17, 2021.

## Show:

Continued from Page A1

Mary Finney, said she probably got involved with the show's lighting in 1993 when her sweetheart brought her into the mix.

Nearly 30 years later, she still clammers up the ladder to the catwalk above the audience and through the narrow wooden walkways behind the scenes to make sure the lights wash the arena in splashes of color and light. Inspecting the roughly 800 lights throughout the set is just a part of the job.

"I was here because of the guy that I fell in love with and it's really hard to leave. I don't know ... I don't know how you

do that," Finney said with a laugh.

Christina Jason and Nathan Garton, sound technicians for Night Show, work hand in hand with Finney to make sure sounds match up with changes in lighting. Between making sure sound levels are right to coordinating and syncing with what's happening on stage, Jason and Garton are wedged into the fabric of the show.

"We're involved in pretty much all the facets," Jason said. "It bleeds through everything."

With horses and carriages flying across the arena, actors diving off set pieces and dozens more rushing around, the staff and volunteers need to be on top of what's happening.

"You kind of go with the pace of the people," Jason said. "It's just one step at a time. You've got to be organized, you've got to have time management."

While Waggoner doesn't act in the show anymore, he remains an integral part, giving cues from the director's booth for all the acts to keep the flow of the show on time. Most of the time, Waggoner is an act or two, or sometimes three, ahead in preparing for the next scene. Paying attention to the details and making sure he doesn't get distracted is key to his success.

"If you get caught up watching what's going on, then you'll start missing things," he said.

The pandemonium of

Happy Canyon, however, is intertwined with a deep love of the show, including for Waggoner. From the moment his father-in-law, Robin Fletcher, threw him a buckskin outfit and asked him to be a part of the show after someone didn't show up, Waggoner has loved it and been involved ever since.

"It's family, it's community, it's tradition, it's culture," he said. "It's just special in all those ways."

"I just love the live action, I love making history happen," Jason said. "I love working with people, I think it's fantastic."

Pendleton High School band teacher Andy Cary conducts the orchestra for the event. After a year of so many

unknowns, he said, "it's heartwarming and affirming" for the show to be back, even if it's not at its best.

"Just knowing that we can all get together and make some music is amazing," Cary said. "It just fills my soul."

When the show is finally over for the night, Waggoner said there's a sense of relief and appreciation for everyone's hard work. When everyone who participates in the show works together, from the smallest roles to the biggest, it creates something special.

"Each time the show ends, there's this personal sense of gratification after being part of something bigger than you are," Waggoner said.

When the final act is over, appreciation runs through

Waggoner and, "and you just take a moment to pause and reflect," he said. "And just appreciate that, wow, you know, this is really cool to be a part of something this special."

Waggoner's appreciation for the support of the community and volunteers is widespread — that hundreds of participants come back year after year to put on such an intricate and involved show is a feat in itself.

"We're just so grateful we're back at it again after a year off," he said. "There's a huge amount of energy, and you can just sense people are just excited to be back, excited to be a part of what we all love and enjoy."