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BOOKMONGER

## Historic heroines provide inspiration to women today

By BARBARA LLOYD MCMICHAEL

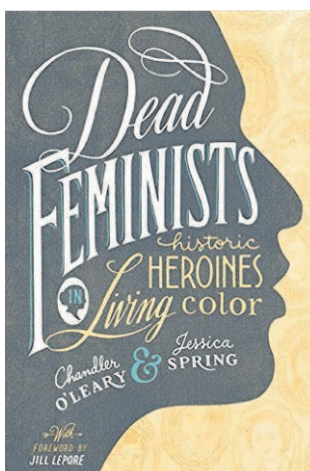
We're already halfway through Women's History Month — and as a way of marking the occasion you could read inspiring books by or about any number of women who have worked to break down barriers.

But this column would particularly like to direct your attention to a book that, published late last year, has quickly become a bestseller — and deservedly so. "Dead Feminists" is an exhilarating excursion up and down the timeline of what, since the 1970s, is sometimes called herstory.

The "Dead Feminists" project began in 2008. When two Tacoma-based artists discovered that they lived "right up the street" from one another — Jessica Spring is a letterpress printer and Chandler O'Leary is an illustrator — synapses started sparking and creative juices started flowing.

The presidential election that year was a first. The contest between Republican and Democratic nominees ensured that no matter which side won, the winning team would, for the first time ever, have one member who was not a white male.

To mark this pivotal moment, and with a subtle poke at what they felt was an undue amount of press attention paid to vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin's appearance, in particular her fashionista eyewear, Spring and O'Leary joined forces to create a



**"Dead Feminists – Chandler O'Leary and Jessica Spring" Sasquatch Books – 192 pp - \$24.95**

limited edition broadside. It featured 19th century suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton and one of her pithy exhortations: "Come, come my conservative friend, wipe the dew off your spectacles and see the world is moving."

The project was so well received that from that time to this, the duo has continued in this vein.

They have focused on representing women from different continents, different eras, and different walks of life. From sharp-shooter Annie Oakley to scientist Marie Curie, from lyric poet Sappho of ancient Greece to nationalist Indian poet Sarojini Naidu in the 20th century, and from former slave Harriet Tubman to deposed queen Lili'uokalani, these works explore themes that were important to the

women in the time they lived, and still have resonance now.

"Dead Feminists" shares all 24 of these images to date, which on its own would be enough to warrant an enthusiastic recommendation.

But it also shares the collaborators' creative process as they selected each subject, researched her life, discussed design elements and colors, and picked the quotation that not only reflected that woman's work but also serves as a call to action to could-be heroines today. Spring and O'Leary even explain the significance behind the number of prints they decide to create of each design.

Since 2010, they have donated a portion of their proceeds from each broadside to nonprofits that have values that align with the subject of that artwork. In this book, the artists tell us which organizations have received these donations, and why.

"Dead Feminists" shines a light on women, including some interesting Northwest gals, who have shaped the trajectory of women's progress. It encourages everyone to take part in making incremental change for the good. Reading this book is a great way to celebrate Women's History Month!

*The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at [bkmonger@nwlinc.com](mailto:bkmonger@nwlinc.com)*

## Corvallis author pens book on Oregon liquor

Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Scott Stursa came across some forgotten gems while researching his book on the history of liquor in the Beaver State, such as the Umatilla County jury who, during Prohibition, drank the seized alcohol and then acquitted the suspect for lack of evidence.

Or the tale of the ex-Confederate soldier in southern Oregon who made what was described as a world-acclaimed tomato brandy — though it might have been one of few such spirits ever crafted on the planet.

"You can't make this stuff up," Stursa said.

Stursa authored "Distilled in Oregon: A History & Guide with Cocktail Recipes."

The Corvallis resident grew up in Tallahassee, Florida. "I was raised on Kentucky bourbon, and that's

mostly what I still drink," he said.

After college, however, he began broadening his tastes to include Scottish malts, cognac, fine wine, good beer and other beverages.

Stursa found a career in cyber security in the Sunshine State, moved from Florida to the Willamette Valley in 2007 and became aware of the craft distilling boom in Oregon.

He's always wanted to be a writer and thought of doing a book, but the recession led to closures of some distilleries, and he reconsidered.

But a few years later, he began work on "Distilled in Oregon," which was published last month.

"It was very slow progress. It took almost four years from the time I started. Last spring, I retired and I was really able to devote attention to it," Stursa said.

Since Stursa was working much of the time, he had to

use vacation to visit historical archives throughout the Northwest.

"Distilled in Oregon" traces the history of liquor from the "blue ruin" made by fur traders and sold to Native Americans through the rise of small farm distilleries in the late 1800s and the state's early sunset on legal liquor production in 1916, four years before national Prohibition.

George Baker, the mayor of Portland during Prohibition, is one of the featured characters. "This guy basically became rich by turning the city government into a bootlegging organization," Stursa said.

The book also chronicles the post-Prohibition industry in Oregon and Hood River Distillers, which started making brandy in 1934 because farmers wanted to get profit out of cosmetically inferior fruit that couldn't be sold in stores.

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