

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OTHER VIEWS

# Oregon's veterans continue to serve

Veterans Day is one day to honor the service and sacrifice of all who have raised their right hand, worn the uniform, defended our freedom, and stood guard over our peace.

Across our 70-year history, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has witnessed generations of service members returning home and then using their hard-earned leadership skills and experience to significantly contribute to our communities.

What many citizens may not know is that one out of every 12 Oregonians is a veteran. While our veterans gain great strength from their service, it is not surprising that many can face challenges as they reintegrate home. For those impacted by their service, we must understand their tenacious spirit and resiliency. They deserve nothing less than the best in care, resources and support.

There is never a doubt, though, that our learned resilience, idealistic pride, and unwavering dedication to our families, community and each other is stronger because we served in uniform.

Take the recent examples of young returning veterans from Oregon like Alek Skarlatos and Chris Mintz. Alek captured international headlines for thwarting a terrorist attack while traveling in France after his deployment in Afghanistan with the Oregon Army National Guard.

Similarly, Chris Mintz, an Army veteran, also chose to run toward chaos on the Umpqua Community College campus to help protect fellow students. He was shot multiple times and thankfully continues to recover for his young family and community.

These stories have made the national news, but our local veterans' community is filled with everyday examples of inspiring continued service. Bill Griffith is a former Navy Corpsman who served in Vietnam and is continuing to serve his fellow veterans as an award-winning



**CAMERON SMITH**  
Comment

volunteer Long Term Care Ombudsman. He was recently recognized for his advocacy for our aging veterans at the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles and other skilled nursing facilities, receiving the Governor's Volunteer Award in October.

A recent appointment to ODVA's Advisory Committee, Kim Douthit, is a Coast Guard veteran and continues to serve

student veterans in her role as a veterans' coordinator at Portland Community College. She is a leader for both our fastest growing demographic, women veterans, and for all veterans across Oregon.

While our focus is on our veterans, we also must remember the service and sacrifice of our military and veteran families.

Judi Van Cleave of Portland was elected as the National President of Gold Star Wives of America. Her late husband was a disabled Korean War veteran. Judi's significant service for two decades with Gold Star Wives of America continues to honor our fallen and their families.

Across our team at the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, many of us are veterans and family members, and we continue to be inspired by our current service members, veterans and their families. We are honored and privileged to serve them — not just on Veterans' Day, but throughout the year. It is their individual stories that make up the incredible fabric of our community.

No matter the branch of service, no matter the era, no matter who we are or where we live, we stand proudly together. We are Oregon veterans.

*Cameron Smith served three tours in Iraq as a U.S. Marine captain and is the director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.*

## OTHER VIEWS



# Walla Walla VA Medical Center provides care for all veterans

By **BRIAN WESTFIELD**  
*Walla Walla VA Medical Center*

On Veterans Day, the nation pauses to recognize and honor all men and women who took up arms in defense of America. Our nation owes veterans a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

It's our duty — and not just on Veterans Day — to remember the sacrifices they've made and to ensure our commitments to them and their families are honored. That duty is important to those of us privileged to serve veterans at VA and at the Walla Walla VA Medical Center (VAWW).

There have been many changes at the local Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the last ten years. In 2004, there was a threat that VAWW would discontinue providing care to the area veterans, followed by closure of the inpatient service, urgent/emergent care unit, and long term care beds in 2008. However, it positioned the facility to be more aligned with the transformative delivery model in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 1995, VA saw a transition from a hospital-based to a primary/ambulatory care driven system. Being able to provide access to VA services through multiple community based clinics and programs provided new opportunities for service to veterans. Locally, these opportunities are evident on the site of

the old Fort Walla Walla with construction of new medical care buildings to care for veterans, the renovation of the historic Officers' Quarters by Catholic Charities to create housing for homeless veterans, and construction of an 80-bed State Veterans

Home by WA Department of Veterans Affairs. These community partnerships to serve veterans are now being further perpetuated by recent legislation allowing veterans to receive more care in the local community.

Legislation passed in Congress and signed into law by the President last year, known as "Veteran's

Choice," has allowed many veterans to receive more services closer to their homes in their local community. VAWW staff is working diligently to make this a more efficient and satisfying for the veterans. We hope these community partnerships will continue to grow as we join forces to meet the needs of veterans.

In 1865, President Lincoln directed us to care for those "who shall have borne the battle," and for their families and their survivors.

Today — more than 150 years later — our commitment to that most noble mission remains vibrant and palpable at VA. VAWW thanks all veterans for their service and sacrifice — may we never forget that freedom is not free.

*Brian W. Westfield, MSN, is the director of the Walla Walla VA Medical Center*

**It's our duty to ensure our commitments to veterans are honored.**

## OTHER VIEWS

# Hillary in history: What a woman must do to win

It's officially one year until the presidential election. Amazing how time flies, isn't it? Once again we're watching debates featuring what appears to be the entire supporting cast of "Ben-Hur." Once again we're asking ourselves why Iowa always gets to be first. Once again we're wondering whether Hillary Clinton will make history by becoming the first woman president.



**GAIL COLLINS**  
Comment

"It's hard to believe there's another year," Clinton said in a phone interview, taking the glass-half-empty perspective. She was on her way to the airport during a fundraising swing through California, broken up by an appearance on Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show. Her formula for making it through another 12 months, she said cheerfully, was pretty simple: "We're just getting up every morning. Step by step."

"It'll be a long slog," she added with what I believe the entire nation understands is total accuracy. "But it's more fun this time because I feel like we're doing better."

We've all been here before — a Hillary campaign and the first-woman-president possibilities it entails. In a way it's so familiar that it's hard to remember that the whole idea of a major female presidential candidate is new.

Clinton is the only woman who's ever won a presidential primary. The only others who ever featured as even remote factors were the Republican Margaret Chase Smith in 1964, and the Democrat Shirley Chisholm, who got 152 delegates in 1972.

When we look back at our women-running-for-president history, we always have to start with Victoria Woodhull, who was the candidate of the Equal Rights Party in 1872. Woodhull still holds what may be the record for unsuccessful outcomes — she spent Election Day in jail after federal marshals arrested her on charges of publishing an obscene newspaper. This all had to do with Woodhull's attempt to demonstrate the nation's sexual double standard by publicizing an adulterous affair the famous preacher Henry Ward Beecher was allegedly having with a parishioner. She eventually left the country, worn

down by all her battles. Meanwhile, Beecher's parish raised his salary to \$100,000 a year, and he got an endorsement deal with Pears soap. ("If Cleanliness is next to Godliness, Soap must be considered as a Means of Grace.")

Woodhull was followed by a longish list of other women who ran for president as third-party or

protest candidates. Many of them were lovely people, but we're not going down a path that would force us to discuss the fact that the comedian Gracie Allen ran in 1940 on the Surprise Party ticket. Or that Georgiana Doerschuck ran for the Republican nomination in New Hampshire in 1996 on an anti-technology platform, promising that if elected, she would immediately issue an executive order banning all computers. Her campaign was particularly notable given the fact that Doerschuck was a desktop publisher. But really, we're not going there.

We do have to talk about Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to have her name placed in nomination at the convention of a major party. "The first woman in politics I was aware of was Margaret Chase Smith," Clinton recalled. "I can remember opening up Life magazine and reading about this woman who was in the United States Senate. I had no idea there was such a woman."

Well, there certainly weren't a whole lot. Smith, who spent much of the 1950s and 1960s as the only woman in the Senate, was the first senator with enough guts to stand up to Joseph McCarthy and his witch hunt. Her courage made such an impression that some Republicans talked about Smith as a possible vice presidential nominee in 1952. But the party leaders thought a much sounder choice would be Richard Nixon.

Finally, in 1964, Smith tried running for president herself, and she did make it through three primaries. She campaigned only on weekends, a home-state newspaper reported, so "she would not break her record of never missing a Senate roll call since 1955." Imagine living in a world so quaint that a presidential candidate cares

about a perfect attendance record. And speaking of heartbreakingly old-fashioned, the paper also noted that Smith's "whole campaign cost \$355."

Smith made history, but she didn't make any real dent in the election. Most people didn't seem to take her very seriously, and it didn't help that her signature campaign tactic was passing out muffin recipes. The Republicans, in the end, nominated Barry Goldwater.

The Democrats' first big moment came in 1972 when Shirley Chisholm ran for the presidential nomination.

Chisholm, an African-American, would have been a double historic first. But her party was in no way ready to make symbolic gestures. They needed a winner! So they nominated George McGovern.

Notice a pattern here? While Carly Fiorina hasn't been doing very well on the Republican side, she is their first serious female presidential candidate since — umm — Michele Bachmann? Let's do the party a favor and say Elizabeth Dole, who ran briefly in 2000. Dole had been a Cabinet official twice and ran the American Red Cross. While she was pretty clearly not going to beat George W. Bush for the nomination, many people did think she'd be picked for the vice presidential slot. Instead, Bush chose Dick Cheney.

Yes, one of the running subtexts in this story is really, they couldn't have done worse. Another is that when it comes to women winning political office, there's a long line of wives in the cast of characters. Dole is married to the former presidential candidate Bob Dole.

The first woman governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross, won a special election in Wyoming to succeed her husband in 1925. The first female senator was Hattie Wyatt Caraway of Arkansas, who was initially appointed to succeed her husband. Debbie Walsh of the Center for American Women and Politics says 25 of the first 60 women to win congressional elections were widows who filled their husbands' seats.

Clinton's historical heroine is Eleanor Roosevelt, the ultimate example of a wife who achieves enormous political power without ever becoming a candidate herself. When the question of whether Hillary would have risen to presidential status if she hadn't been married to Bill comes up, her fans tend to argue that if she hadn't gotten married at all, she'd probably have gotten to the same place quicker on her own.

"I've heard that," Clinton said. "Who knows? Life is so unpredictable."

Another rule for women running for high office is that they have to give the appearance of being very, very qualified. That would seem to be a given, but it doesn't necessarily work the same for both genders. The

pollster Celinda Lake says that voters expect female candidates to prove they're up to the job, while they're more likely to assume the men are qualified just because they're on the ballot.

Maybe that's one of the reasons — besides family responsibilities — that women tend to wait longer before they run for office. Even now, Debbie Walsh of CAWP says, women who get elected to state legislatures tend to be "older than their male counterparts and less likely to have children under 18 at home."

But it gets worse: a study Lake did for the Barbara Lee Family Foundation showed that women also have to demonstrate they're likable. "Voters will vote for a man they think is qualified but don't like. They won't vote for a woman who they think is qualified but don't like," Lake said. "It's another double-bind for women."

You will remember the famous moment in 2008 when Clinton was asked what she would say to the voters of New Hampshire "who see your résumé and like it but are hesitating on the likability issue."

"Well, that hurts my feelings," Clinton responded, adding, "I don't think I'm that bad." Feel free to bring this up the next time someone says that debate moderators treat all Democratic candidates with kid

gloves.

And then, of course, Barack Obama interjected, "You're likable enough, Hillary." It was supposed to be a joke, but it sounded supercilious, and may have helped seal the deal for Clinton in the New Hampshire primary — the first major party presidential primary in history to be won by a woman.

"I don't sense the level of either novelty or resistance that I encountered in '07-08," Clinton said. Although there was a recent event where she took questions from children, and one girl asked what Hillary would do to end gender stereotyping.

"I said, 'Well, I'm going to get elected president,'" she laughed. But so far this time around, no men have gotten up in the middle of a speech to yell "Iron my shirt!" like someone did in New Hampshire eight years ago.

"Not yet," she added. "Who knows what will happen. I still have a year."

Clinton — the wife of a former president, with the longest résumé in the room — is a perfect transitional figure, whether she wins or not. Maybe there had to be a heroic Senator Smith with a muffin recipe, too. Maybe — and this is taking a really huge jump — there also had to be a "Ma" Ferguson, who became the first woman to be elected governor of Texas in 1925 after her husband was convicted of financial corruption.

We definitely needed Jeannette Rankin, the first woman ever elected to Congress, who managed to destroy her political career by voting against World War I, resurrect it, get re-elected to Congress and then destroy it again by voting against World War II.

Good grief, maybe people will look back in 50 years and say we needed a Sarah Palin before there could be President X, who brought peace to the Middle East and reversed climate change after first winning public attention with her astonishing moose-hunting skills.

Try to think positive. The bottom line is that as we move forward, we never quite know what pushes history along.

*Gail Collins joined The New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board.*

**Clinton is the only woman who's ever won a presidential primary.**