

# Sisters finally meet after 70 years

Long-lost siblings meet for first time in Astoria

By ERICK BENDEL  
EO Media Group

Tears filled Marti Johnston's eyes when she saw her big sister, Patricia Kibby, among the passengers disembarking from the Norwegian Jewel cruise ship as it unloaded Wednesday morning in Astoria.

It was the first time the women, now 70 and 85, had ever met in person.

Born of the same mother but different fathers, Johnston, of Longview, Washington, spent most of her life completely unaware of her sister, and then many more years not knowing how to connect with her.

All of that changed earlier this year when Johnston's niece — the daughter-in-law of a third half-sister, Dolly Musante — tracked her down. In late winter, Johnston had her very first phone conversations with her two older sisters.

When she and Kibby sat down to begin catching up on two lifetimes' worth of stories, "I cried the first time," she said. "It went really well."

As the cruise ship approached in the Columbia River, Johnston found herself pacing the pier with her husband, Bill — more excited, she said, than a child on Christmas Eve. When the tenders docked, she studied the passengers' faces and held up a sign reading, "Hi sis."

Then the sisters saw each other, and seconds later they were holding each other — momentarily frozen in an embrace that made up for all the hugs they couldn't share during the decades of confusion and separation.

Asked how she felt, Kibby's voice caught on the emotion of the moment: "I'm just excited — nervous, excited, thrilled."

Johnston, Kibby and Musante are the last-known living offspring of a woman named Thelma Faye Darling, whose habit of having children, sending them away, then having more children and sending them away kept many of the siblings from knowing one another while growing up in California.

"Our mother tossed us all out with the bathwater when we were babies, and that was kind of our story," Musante said. "There were six of us, and we were all tossed out."

Kibby — who lives in California and has worked in many professions, including commercial pilot and CEO of a machine shop — was raised by her grandparents, and Musante by an aunt. Two boys were placed in foster homes. A third brother died in infancy.



Marti Johnston, 70, tears up as she hugs her sister, Patricia Kibby, 85, for the first time Wednesday.



Marti Johnston holds a sign while waiting for her sister to disembark from a cruise ship.

"Mother had a way of getting rid of the kids," said Johnston, an insurance broker and former paralegal.

When Johnston was adopted, her new parents changed her birth name to prevent her biological family from finding her.

Family accounts paint Darling as an abusive and unstable mother. Kibby declined to talk about her.

An article in *The Anniston Star* in Alabama from April 1948 describes Darling dropping off the boys — then 10 and 8 — at a San Francisco bus station with a sack of clothes and a quarter and telling them to find the adoption agency.

After the brothers died later in life, Johnston thought she'd seen the last of her siblings. But rumors of two older sisters remained with her until she dug through court records several years ago and confirmed their existence.

"That's how I found out," she said. "Then I didn't know what to do about it."

Johnston put it out of her mind — until Musante's resourceful daugh-



Ship tenders bring passengers, Patricia Kibby among them, to the shore.

ter-in-law brought them all together. "This is something that should have happened a long time ago, for her to get acquainted with her sisters," Bill Johnston said. "They bonded immediately."

Sitting side by side on a bench inside the Columbia River Maritime Museum, the sisters reflected on their day, one of the most important in their long, eventful lives.

"I finally have a big sister I can pick on," Johnston added, putting her arm around Kibby. "And I do, too — it's all I did, all day."

At the Seaside Carousel Mall, they bought each other gifts: Kibby got Johnston a sign that reads, "I smile because you're my sister. I laugh because there's nothing you can do about it." And Johnston

found Kibby a wooden carving of two sisters hugging with the inscription, "Sisters are forever."

"We tried not to tell everybody that we were sisters," Johnston said. "Every store we went in..."

"... We told them, over and over," said Kibby.

The Norwegian Jewel set sail at 5 p.m., but the women said they would meet up again in July in Idaho, where Musante lives, for a family reunion. Some of their own children may be present, giving the family's younger generations a chance to know each other in a way their parents couldn't until late in life.

"The whole family is very, very excited," Johnston said. "You never know when you're going to find out something more about your family."

## Unprecedented number of people register for Oregon primary

By KRISTENA HANSEN  
Associated Press

PORTLAND — A whopping 111,000 Oregonians gave themselves a voice by changing their voter registrations to Democrat and Republican this year ahead of the state's presidential primary.

That figure dwarfs registration change numbers during President Barack Obama's 2008 primary campaign more than three-fold.

The bulk of these voters — who previously weren't registered with either party and wouldn't have been able to cast a presidential ballot this month — made the switch in the weeks before the April 26 primary deadline, when excitement was building over the state's potentially key role in deciding the nominees.

The data, obtained from the Oregon Secretary of State, suggested the May 17 event could have been a record-breaking voter turnout — at least it did until this week.

Things shifted after Tuesday, when Donald Trump became the presumptive GOP nominee: He won Indiana's Republican primary and his two opponents dropped out of the race. Bernie Sanders won



In this 2014 file photo, a driver drops off their ballot outside Multnomah County election headquarters in Portland.

the Democratic primary in Indiana, although Hillary Clinton's lead in delegates is seen as almost insurmountable.

So for most of the dozen remaining primaries through June — especially in small states like Oregon, where 102 delegates are up for grabs — political observers say their impact is now more symbolic than actual.

Oregon's primary, one of four in the next two weeks, could serve as a "petri dish for a national conversation" about the changing dynamics of the two parties heading into the general election, said Jim Moore, professor and director of the Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation at Pacific University.

"Does the Republican party begin to gather around

Donald Trump ... or are we going to see an electorate that's still pretty cranky and fractured over the Trump candidacy?" Moore said. "The Oregon primary on the Democratic side is going to continue to be that conversation about where the party needs to go, but not really with the hope that Bernie will be the nominee."

How that'll dig into the psyche of voters, and possibly change the record-breaking turnout many were anticipating in Oregon, is unclear, especially for the GOP.

Of the 111,000 voters

who joined the two major parties this year — more than three-quarters of whom were previously nonaffiliated — the biggest chunk, about 84,800, went to Democrats.

Moore said they likely lean toward Oregon's "Bernie-mania" electorate, although it's less clear who they support on the Republican side. The only GOP poll, released last week, showed Trump with a double-digit lead in Oregon.

Additionally, 100,900 new Oregon voters were added to the rolls this year through April — up 42 percent from the same time in 2008, when primary turnout was the highest since then 1970s — and nearly half registered with the two major parties, but mostly Democrats.

Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins estimates a new "motor voter" law — which automatically signs up drivers to vote when they get a new or renewed license — resulted in half of those new registrations. But she doubts the law had an effect on the party affiliation

changes, which means this year's election is drawing attention and interest "like never before," she said.

Even after Tuesday's damper on Oregon's primary, Moore said it's still possible voter turnout could come out strong, at least for Sanders.

"The Republicans are another thing because all of a sudden the drama is gone," he said. "And in fact, if you go in and vote for somebody other than Trump it's simply a protest vote ... so we don't have a sense as to what that does to Republican turnout."

Campaigning in Oregon is continuing, despite the changes this week.

Bill Clinton was making his second Oregon visit on Thursday — Hillary Clinton herself has yet to do so. There was no word from Sanders about a fourth visit.

Trump is reportedly paying his first visit Friday evening in Eugene, which his local campaign manager, Jacob Daniels, confirmed with the Associated Press. The rally hasn't been officially announced by the national campaign.

### BRIEFLY

#### Bill Clinton makes second Portland stop for Hillary

PORTLAND (AP) — Former President Bill Clinton was in Portland after visiting Bend to campaign for his wife and Democratic presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton.

His Thursday afternoon Portland visit drew hundreds of people near downtown, marking his second Oregon campaign stop ahead of the state's May 17 primary.

Hillary Clinton so far hasn't made a campaign stop in Oregon, where she's clinched several of the state's 13 superdelegates, although support for her opponent Bernie Sanders is strong in Oregon. Sanders came to the state for a third time last week.

Bill Clinton's Thursday visit comes the day before presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump's rally in Eugene, which will be his first campaign appearance in Oregon.

#### Refuge occupier apologizes for video rants

PORTLAND (AP) — One of the defendants in the armed occupation of a national wildlife refuge in Oregon earlier this year has apologized for video rants he made that were widely seen during the standoff.

Sean Anderson, 47, told a federal judge Wednesday he was "embarrassed" and "ashamed" by the videos from the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. In one Anderson told supporters if police stopped them on their way to the refuge they should "kill them."

*The Oregonian/OregonLive* reported Anderson spoke at the urging of U.S. District Judge Robert E. Jones, who said he wanted to hear directly from the defendant before reviewing a magistrate judge's order calling for Anderson's release before trial.

The judge ruled that Anderson could return to Riggins, Idaho. Jones urged Idaho County Sheriff Doug Giddings, who wrote a letter to the court in support of Anderson, to monitor Anderson's release.

The armed occupiers took over the refuge on Jan. 2, demanding that the government turn over the land to locals. Twenty-six were indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to impede employees at the wildlife refuge from performing their duties.

#### Pot shops to sell recreational edibles, extracts in June

EUGENE (AP) — Recreational marijuana users will be able to purchase more than just flowers next month.

*The Register-Guard* reports that starting June 2, medical marijuana dispensaries will be able to sell low-dose edibles and extracts to recreational customers.

The edible products are already available to medical marijuana cardholders in varying dosages. For recreational users, edibles will have to contain no more than 15 milligrams of THC and extracts can have up to 1,000 milligrams of the psychoactive chemical in marijuana.

Dispensary operators say 15 milligrams for a single brownie or cookie is a very low dose. Currently most stores sell edible products with 100 to 200 milligrams of THC.

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