



# COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

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May 2011

## The Face of Kennewick Man



The May meeting will feature Benton City sculptor Tom McClelland, who sculpted the head of Kennewick Man based on the skull. Tom is an accomplished artist with a Master of Fine Arts degree from WSU in Pullman. In his 40-year professional career he taught art at CBC, was the sculptor-in-residence at Mt. Rushmore, and directed the Esvelt Gallery at CBC. Many of his works decorate public areas in the Tri Cities, including *Bodie* on the Richland Parkway, *Balancing the Wine* in downtown Kennewick, *Sacajawea* at the Lewis & Clark Overlook on Columbia Park Drive, and the bust of the early aviator Walter Varney, who had the first airmail contract out of Pasco Airport.

At the meeting, Tom will discuss how he worked with anthropologist James Chatters to create the life-like sculpture of the Kennewick Man.

We are returning to one of the best restaurants in the Tri Cities, the Meadow Springs Country Club. The cost is a bit higher than usual; many members expressed a desire for one meeting a year at a more expensive

venue. This one is well worth the price. Please have your reservations to Paul by noon, Thursday, May 12.

## Hq MOAA reports . . .

### COLA in 2012?

Inflation rose to 1.1% for the third month in a row and now stands at 2.1%. At this rate retirees are almost certain to see at least a modest COLA increase in 2012.

### As I See It — Saving TRICARE from the Budget Crash

By Col. Steve Strobbridge, USAF-Ret, Director of MOAA's Government Relations Department (edited to fit)

MOAA had been preparing for a major campaign against Pentagon proposals to hike TRICARE fees by \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year for retirees and survivors under age 65 and their family members. MOAA has never taken the position that TRICARE fees should never go up, we don't think it's reasonable that fees will never rise.

DoD leaders backtracked from their previous stance, recommending much more moderate changes.

One thing that was retained was indexing future TRICARE Prime fee increases to some undetermined index of medical inflation, which DoD estimates would be about 6.2 percent year.

That is a bad idea, over time it would cause ever-more-dramatic growth in fees compared to the percentage growth in military retired pay.

In MOAA's assessment, there are three overriding considerations in determining how we can best protect the interests of TRICARE beneficiaries for the long run.

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One is to defuse the argument “TRICARE fees haven’t been raised since 1995.” No matter how good our other rationale is, that argument is a potential killer, and it gets stronger with each passing year.

The second consideration is that the nation’s budget and deficit problems are worsening dramatically. Nothing the government spends money on will be invulnerable from the most severe budget scrutiny.

The third consideration is that we currently have almost no statutory leg to stand on in addressing the size of TRICARE fees. Current law

leaves fee adjustments to the discretion of the secretary of defense.

Accepting a modest increase this year offers an opportunity to establish ground rules for fee adjustments that could protect military families in the future budgets.

Military retired pay has increased nearly 50% since 1995, so it’s difficult to argue that a \$5 a month TRICARE Prime fee increase after 16 years is unaffordable.

MOAA has taken the position that the new proposal for relatively modest increases is acceptable if we

can get the following principles put in law:

First, the military retirement and health care package is the primary offset for the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a multi-decade military career.

Second, those decades of service and sacrifice constitute a very large, pre-paid premium for their health care in retirement.

Finally, that extraordinary, up-front premium should limit the percentage growth in TRICARE fees in any year to the percentage growth in military retired pay.

Lewis and Clark Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America  
106 Hills West Way  
Richland WA 99352-9446

Meadow Springs Country Club  
Richland

Social hour at 6:30  
Dinner at 7:00  
\$33 per person

***A reservation made  
is a reservation paid.***

## ***May Meeting***

**Tuesday, May 17**

Reservations by  
**Noon Thurs, May 12**

Paul Seipt  
375-5112  
Pama227@frontier.com

### ***Menu***

Chicken saltimbocca, prosciutto wrapped with sage lemon mushroom beurre blanc or Grilled vegetable fettuccini with garlic cream and Parmigiano-Reggiano

House salad  
Chef’s choice vegetable and starch  
Rolls, butter  
Coffee  
Oregon mixed berry shortcake