

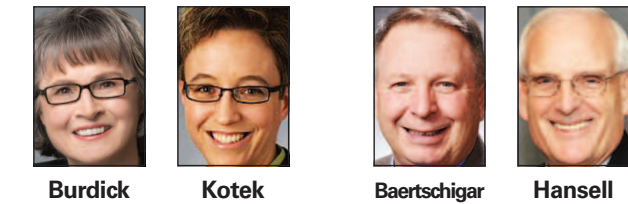
WALKOUTS

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The proposed constitutional amendment, Baessler said, would oust legislators who have at least 10 unexcused absences in a year.

Republican state senators — outnumbered by an 18-12 Democratic majority — staged two walkouts last year to prevent the Senate from going into session. The Oregon Legislature, one of just a few states with strict quorum rules, requires that two-thirds of the members be present to conduct business.

The first walkout failed to stop a new business tax, but Democrats did agree to drop bills dealing with guns and vaccinations to get the Republicans to return. The



second walkout helped deep-six a bill on carbon emissions aimed at combatting climate change.

Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, has introduced a constitutional amendment for the February session that would ask voters to remove the two-thirds quorum rule. But Burdick, Brown and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, all played down the likelihood of moving forward with this proposal.

“It’s always a heavy lift to go for a constitutional amendment,” said Burdick,

but she suggested there could be discussion about “fines or some kinds of consequences.”

Baessler said any legislative action aimed at curbing walkouts just could trigger another absence by GOP lawmakers, who have refused to rule out taking that option again.

A memo from a California polling firm that conducted research for the unions claims about two-thirds of likely general election voters are at least inclined to support a measure that would oust legislators who

had at least 10 unexcused absences. The poll also shows 59% somewhat or strongly opposed to last year’s “repeated walkouts” by Senate Republicans.

Senate Minority Leader Herman Baertschigar, R-Grants Pass, said he didn’t know whether voters would support a ballot measure cracking down on unexcused absences. But he questioned how much it would really accomplish.

Even if such a measure passed, Baertschigar said, “in districts like mine, they’ll (toss out a legislator) and people will just re-elect you again. I think it’s just a usual thing of Democrats figuring out another way to gain more power.”

He also suggested Democrats should be careful what

they do, because they could someday find themselves in the minority.

For Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, the idea of limiting unexcused absences is a sticky one in the aftermath of the two walkouts he participated in last session.

“Those who supported the reason we walked are saying we represented our constituents in what they elected us to do,” he said. “Those who didn’t support it say we neglected our jobs.”

He compared the act of limiting unexcused absences to opening Pandora’s Box, since approval for absences is determined in this case by Democratic leadership.

“If you have a rule like this, all the party in power would have to do is not

approve the absences,” he said. “You open up a possible venue for real abuse.”

Hansell also questioned the seriousness of the unions behind the proposed initiative. He said possible referendums popping up before a session weren’t uncommon.

“I try to do what I believe is best for the citizens of my district and not be intimidated by outside interests’ threats of a possible referendum,” he told the East Oregonian in an email.

Other local lawmakers Greg Smith, R-Heppner; and Greg Barreto, R-Cove, did not respond to a request for comment before publication.

— East Oregonian reporter Jessica Pollard contributed to this report.

WATCH

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He said those involved are the eyes and ears of Elgin and that if they see something and it is an emergency to call the sheriff’s office and wait for law enforcement to arrive.

“If you see critical information or a pattern, communicate that with us,” Rasmussen said. “It will help tie everything together.”

A follow-up meeting will establish block assignments, phone trees and related matters. Until then, members of the new watch can join a Facebook group created by Elgin resident Kristina Sanders.

The “Community Watch Elgin,

Or” Facebook page has more than 530 members as of Tuesday afternoon. Sanders reminded people at the meeting the page is for reporting information only.

“It is not the place for bashing, rumors or accusations,” she said. “We can do good things with this page as long as we stay focused.”

Sanders explained group members can use the page to communicate when something has happened or to help people who may not want to go to the police directly. She said the page serves as a communication tool between the residents of Elgin and law enforcement. Eckstein added that law enforcement could use the page as

a lead in investigating a crime, but she reminded people that posting on Facebook is not the same thing as reporting it to the police. Rasmussen said if a crime occurs, residents should report it, but the sheriff’s office will have eyes on the Facebook page to stay informed about citizens’ observations and concerns.

“I want to make sure our neighborhood watch is doing this to help each other, not just complain about this or that,” resident B.J. Rutherford said.

The city of Elgin contracts with the sheriff’s office to provide law enforcement services. Three deputies cover the 633-acre town for

approximately \$350,000 a year. Duffy said the city recently was approved for a private grant of \$10,000, of which \$5,000 will go toward law enforcement. The city plans to spend the remaining half on neighborhood watch materials, such as signs and stickers.

Duffy after the meeting said he did not know off the top of his head who provided the grant.

The Elgin watch group will use tools and tips from the National Neighborhood Watch Program, including the mantra: “If you see something, say something.” The phrase came up several times during the meeting. Duffy reminded residents they are the eyes and

ears of the town, but safety is important and the goal of the watch is not to personally catch people and leave that to law enforcement.

North Powder also has a neighborhood watch, Rasmussen said, but it is on a smaller scale.

“I’m excited about the program, the citizens being active and helping police the city,” Rasmussen said. “It is always a team effort. We’ve had a lot of things that are brought to fruition based on citizen information.”

The general consensus at the meeting was the hope the neighborhood watch brings crime down in Elgin and leads to locals looking out for one another.

ADELHARDT

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spring and fall until 2008 when they moved full time to Joseph. For 10 years, they inserted themselves in their new community.

She was a docent at the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture and took yoga classes taught by Amy Zahm. The couple also volunteered at local events, such as Mule Days in Enterprise and the Fly-in at the Joseph Airport.

But Fishtrap inspired her to write.

“Fishtrap was instrumental in my connection with the community,” Adelhardt said. “I attended Summer Fishtrap, which launched me into writing my memoir.”

A Fishtrap intern, Katey Shultz, taught a memoir class at Fishtrap where Adelhardt began her transformation from writing government memos to writing something people would find interesting. After the internship, Shultz moved away, but she took on Adelhardt and two other students in a long-distance writing course.

Shannon McNerney, executive director of Fishtrap, is pleased with Adelhardt’s publication.

“Pat’s experience with Fishtrap is what we hope for when we put together our writing workshops. Everyone has a story to tell. Writing workshops are a great way to learn new skills, meet other writers and build confidence as you begin to write your story down.”

As Adelhardt sent her writing to Shultz for review, she belonged to a writers group in Joseph called the Write Women, to whom she expressed her appreciation in the book’s

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— Shannon McNerney, executive director of Fishtrap

acknowledgments:

“It was so helpful to read my stories and get their support and critiques. It was a safe place to discuss what I was writing about. Listening to the writings of women, how they expressed overcoming their struggles, inspired me to find my voice and grow as a writer.

“A writer’s voice is an individual’s writing style ... how they put words together, how they punctuate, how the whole thing flows. It grabs the reader’s attention and helps establish a relationship between the reader and the writer. I

think my style is conversational.”

Throughout her life, Adelhardt contended with periodic bouts of depression. Influenced by her enigmatic father, she felt the sense of a black heavy cloud over her. With the help of mental health professionals, she was able to resolve her personal family history.

“Do not be afraid to ask for help. You are not alone,” she advised anyone living with depression. Adelhardt realized the writing of her story was therapeutic: “A lot of soul-searching went on as I put the words on paper.”

Adelhardt returned to the Maryland farm to take care of family matters and continues to expand her creative life. She has taken a course in voice acting and is marketing herself in that field as well as promoting her book.

“Far from the Tree” is available at the Bookloft in Enterprise, in paperback and ebook at Amazon.com and at local libraries.



The title of Pat Adelhardt’s book, “Far from the Tree,” refers to her struggles to deal with her father’s Mafia ties and other family issues. She was inspired to write her memoir through Fishtrap workshops and a Fishtrap writer’s group.

Courtesy photo

BEEMAN

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helping it raise money for local scholarships, supporting its community sight and hearing programs and more. The Island City Lions Club raises much of its money through the annual Hog Wild Days celebration each June, which the organization puts on. Beeman played a prominent role in helping to run the event.

Beeman was a member of the Island City Lions Club more than 25 years, serving as president for one. Dan Cosner, past president of the club, noted Beeman was the type of person he could turn to when he needed a morale lift.

“She was my booster,” he said.

Beeman’s perpetual commitment to helping others never ceased to amaze Cosner.

“She believed the best possible thing you could do was help the community,” he said.

Beeman participated in the Lions Club with her husband of 56 years, Lowell. He served as a member of the La Grande Rural Fire Department for at least 40 years, during which time she became closely involved in helping the volunteer organization in an auxiliary capacity, extending a hand to firefighters by bringing them meals at fires and much more.

Beeman was raised in Wallowa and graduated from La Grande High School in 1961. Those in her class included Lonnie Myers of Island City.

“She was great to talk with. I will really miss her,” Myers said.

Family friend Jeni Kayøa-Bonäqeraj of La Grande said Beeman represented more

than Island City.

“She was an ambassador for all humanity, a golden and giving individual,” she said.

Kayøa-Bonäqeraj said Beeman was smart and witty and was not one to burden others with the health challenges she confronted later in life.



“She never complained about anything,” Kayøa-Bonäqeraj said.

Howton said one term comes to mind when she thinks of Beeman.

“Her heart,” Howton said. “She wanted the best for everyone. Her heart for serving the community was in everything she did.”

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