

# Local

## Inside the Oregon House

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The Barretos, married 35 years, are the parents to eight children, ages 11 to 33, and grandparents to four—with a fifth bundle of joy due right after session begins in February.

Anticipating a landslide win, the Barretos began preparing for changes even before the election results. “I had to decide if I was going to work in the office with him (Rep. Greg Barreto). This was advised by other east side representatives. Who would know our district better? Who would know my husband better?”

The family has enlisted the help of a college student to tend to their Cove home and “take care of the animals.”

In 1984, the Barretos founded and continue to operate La Grande’s highly successful Barreto Manufacturing, which builds and sells trenchers, log-splitters and tillers of Rep. Barreto’s own patented fully hydraulic design.

So, juggling the responsibilities of home, business and elected office took some planning.

Just three days after the election, Chris Barreto had already begun the task of setting up a second home for the family in Keizer, minutes outside of Salem.

“It’s a good home away from home,” she said, “but I’ll always enjoy coming home to Cove.” Having lived six years in the Keizer area during the early years of their marriage, the Barretos say their support network of good friends on the west side has helped smooth the transition.

Visits from eastern Oregon residents have also helped stave off homesickness. “The president and vice president of EOU just visited,” she said.

As for the professional side of Rep. Barreto’s move, other elected officials and staff at the capitol building make sure that a first-time official doesn’t experience a trial-by-fire, sink-or-swim situation.

Chris says the training programs are inclusive. “How to conduct yourself on the floor, how to read a bill, how to track a measure, how to write a bill ... Once you’re on board, there is training.”

She added, “Everyone on staff has been great. Helpful. Friendly. There when you need them.”

Seasoned State Rep-

resentative Cliff Bentz whose district includes Baker County, was assigned to serve as Rep. Barreto’s mentor. “They assign a mentor for you,” Chris said. “And they let you know right away there are no stupid questions.”

Rep. Barreto was given an office (#384) on the third floor, right between Rep. Gene Wisnett and Rep. Jodi Hack. Hack is the sister of former Baker County Clerk Tami Green, who left her position at the end of 2014. Hack is also a “newbie” state rep and mom, and Chris says having Hack as a next-door neighbor at the Capitol has been helpful when comparing notes about the transition from another mother’s point of view.

Chris, who also serves as State Secretary for the Oregon Republican Party, now has another official title: Legislative Assistant, which means she’ll be in place to return calls and provide information to constituents in their district. “If someone has a problem and aren’t getting what they need from an agency, they can get hold of us,” she said.

Rep. Barreto has also brought on an experienced Chief of Staff with six years of experience in the House to help maneuver through the legislative process. “He sits on the floor with Greg and is the one who physically puts—actually hands the paper copy—of bills into Greg’s hands.”

Chris sounds excited when she speaks. “We now have the communications in place to help those in our district,” she says.

Rep. Greg Barreto took his Oath of Office last Monday the 12th of January.

**Western Oregon.** Radio talkshow host turned State Representative Bill Post was also sworn into office for the first time last Monday.

He says, though, that his situation is “different because I’ve been focusing for years on the radio show so I might have a little more insider knowledge.”

Proudly married for 25 and one-half years, and parents to one son, Kai, Rep. Post and his wife, Colleen have lived nearly 20 years in the Keizer area.

Post cites church and family as high personal priorities. (He posted on his web site, which he maintains exclusively him-



Submitted Photo.

Kai, Bill and Colleen Post with the House floor visible behind them.

self, that Colleen, a special education teacher is, “my treasure and the great love of my life and my rock!”)

That the geography of his district, House District 25, includes the area near his new workplace meant he could dive into his elected position without the stress of a move or frequent travel.

Post says he, along with all other newly elected Republicans and Democrats, “went through a mandatory training day on November 12.”

He added, “These are the kind of organizational days that most state employees have.”

Post was also assigned a mentor: Rep. John Huffman.

Post noted that the next round of training really didn’t happen until January, with two half-day sessions.

Post will occupy last year’s gubernatorial candidate Rep. Dennis Richardson’s former office, #373, and says he’s amazed at “the magnitude of the homework that needs to be done when you’re new.”

Post says he recently completed reading 800 pre-session House Bills.

“These aren’t even session bills,” he said. “They’re pre-session. They aren’t including Senate Bills. I’m told there might be as many as 9,000 bills.”

“I’m going to be the guy who says ‘no,’” Post has decided. “I’ll be ‘No Bills, Bill.’ Why do we need 9,000 new laws?”

After the November election, Democrats have control of the State Senate 18-12, and of the House 35-25.

Post referred to most of those pre-session bills as “nightmares” for his constituents.

Colleen will not assume the Legislative Assistant position in Post’s office; his Legislative Assistant is Garrett Wolfard. Much



Submitted Photo.

Rep. Bill Post’s office, #373, was formerly occupied by Dennis Richardson.

like Rep. Barreto, he has also chosen an experienced Chief of Staff, Betsy Schultz.

Post says he would like the public to be able to look even closer behind the scenes of his new job, and has launched a weekly—every Friday—Youtube video blog, *My Life as a State Representative*, something he doesn’t believe any other representative has done in the past. “It’s not political commentary,” he assures, “The video shows what it’s like to be in this building day-to-day.”

Post is “heavily into social media”—reaching out via nine separate outlets, welcoming viewers from all parts of Oregon.

Alongside Representatives Barreto and Post, seven other newbie Republican and six newbie Democrats will take the floor when session begins.

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