

KLEPPER: ‘She could live anywhere in the world and she chose to live in Pendleton.’

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awarded her the Diamond Pioneer Award for her contributions to agriculture.

After retirement in 1996, Klepper jumped into numerous civic pursuits. She founded the Stewards of the Umatilla River Environment (SURE), which launched an annual river cleanup. She guided the creation of books on the birds, plants and geology of Pendleton’s river parkway. Oliver said Klepper’s drive to improve the environment might have ignited during her time in the Girl Scouts.

“The Girl Scouts teach that you should leave your campsite better than you found it,” Oliver said. “That’s the way Betty Klepper left the world — better than she found it.”

Ron Rickman, a soil sci-

entist at the Pendleton agricultural station, worked on Klepper’s team deciphering how plants and soil exchange water, concentrating especially on wheat. Klepper, who led the team, encouraged independent thought and collaboration.

“You didn’t work for her, you worked with her,” Rickman said. “When you were around her, you were respected. She stood back and asked pertinent questions.”

In a 2015 interview in the Soil Science Society of America newsletter, Klepper said she strove to “find the good in a fellow worker and then try to help them so that they can display their strengths and are not crippled by their weaknesses.”

Surprisingly, Klepper’s main role model was not a scientist, but rather opera



EO file photo
Betty Klepper poses in 2011 with Jennifer White near the Umatilla River. After 10 years of running the SURE river cleanup program, Klepper was passing the program on to White and the Umatilla Basin Watershed Council.

singer Marian Anderson.

“I read a book about her life when I was 10 and found her to be a model of grace under pressure,” Klepper said in the interview. “She was skilled but also a great human being, and I figured that when I grew up, I

wanted to be really good at something like she was and as successful as a person as she was. She was so solid and sure and so gracious.”

Klepper, Rickman said, wasn’t someone who flew by the seat of her pants. Instead, she thought years ahead and

methodically followed her own map. “Everything she did was pre-planned,” Rickman said. “She planned her career from the time she got out of graduate school until she retired. She dedicated her life to her career.”

After retirement, Klepper faced health challenges, twice surviving cancer. In 2005, her heart, weakened by a chemo treatment for colon cancer, stopped beating.

“She was clinically dead for a period of about three minutes, but was revived,” Rickman said. The experience erased any fear of death she might have had.

“Death is not that big a deal,” Rickman recalls her saying. “I’ve been there. I’m not afraid of it.”

Doctors implanted a pacemaker in Klepper’s chest and she resumed her life. Between her work with

local civic groups and scientific organizations, Klepper loved to travel. June Whitten, a fellow birder in the Pendleton Bird Club, accompanied her on birding trips to South America and Alaska.

“Some of our Alaska trips included national parks where she had me flying in tiny Piper Cubs and float planes to very remote areas,” Whitten said. “I don’t enjoy little planes, but Betty assured me I would live to tell the tale.”

Klepper visited every national park and presidential library in the U.S. and an impressive list of foreign countries. But the Tennessee native always returned to her adopted Oregon home.

“She loved Pendleton,” Oliver said. “She could live anywhere in the world and she chose to live in Pendleton.”

MOCK: Also discussed the trend of older people voting more than younger people

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ferred on the measure, he said, but the conversations revealed they agreed the nation needs immigration reform.

Although, Scanlan added, what shape that takes is the question.

PHS students failed the measure 113-77.

The classes also discussed voter turnout and the trend of older people voting more than younger people.

Turnout in the May primary was a meager 34 percent, according to the Secretary of State’s election data. The office tracked voter registration and participation age in that election. Oregon had more than 718,000 eligible voters 18-34, yet only 13.2 percent voted.

Umatilla County had 12,498 voters in the age group, and 10.8 percent returned ballots. Morrow County had 1,587 eligible voters 18-34, but 11.3 percent — or 179 individuals — participated. Voters 65 and up had the highest statewide turnout — 61 percent of 647,584 returned ballots.

Chen said younger people don’t see the benefit to voting because candidates and measures are not taking on their problems, such as the burden of college debt. Scanlan said young voters need to realize participating now pays off later because large voting groups get the attention of politicians. Attridge said smartphone technology could be one way to get younger people to vote.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Senior Daphny Chen, left, makes air quotes while talking about being a first-time voter as seniors Samuel Attridge, center, and Maggie Scanlan look on Monday at Pendleton High School.

Mock election results	
Pendleton High School 2018 mid-term election results	
* Umatilla County Commissioner, Position 1 Rick Pullen 69 George Murdock 110 * 30-128 Umatilla County Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance Yes 69 No 112 * U.S. Representative, District 2 Greg Walden, R 103 Jamie McLeod-Skinner, D 68 * Governor Kate Brown, D 66 Knute Buehler, R 99 * Measure 102: Allows local bonds for financing affordable housing with nongovernmental entities. Yes 138 No 55	* Measure 103: Prohibits taxes/fees based on transactions for “groceries.” Yes 77 No 121 * Measure 104: Expands application of requirement that three-fifths legislative majority approve bills raising revenue. Yes 88 No 101 * Measure 105: Repeals law limiting state/local law enforcement resources to enforce federal immigration laws. Yes 77 No 113 * Measure 106: Prohibits spending “public funds” directly/indirectly for “abortion”; exceptions. Yes 91 No 100

SECURE: Oregon’s vote by mail more secure because it creates a paper trail

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Experts divide technological risks into two categories: voter registration information and the voting system itself.

Nationally, voter registration systems “could be manipulated in an attempt to block voters, cause disruption and undermine confidence when citizens vote,” according to a report last year by the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University Law School.

And voting machines “could be hacked to cast doubt on the integrity of vote tallies or to even change them,” that report said.

Last year, the federal Department of Homeland Security notified Oregon that hackers from Russia had attempted but failed to breach a state computer network during the 2016 general election.

According to Trout, elections in 2016, 2017 and this year have been administered “without incident.”

“On average, our security tools block 24 million malicious attempts daily from both domestic and international actors,” Trout said. “Our multi-layered systems have successfully protected our election systems from these attempts for years. This targeting activity was not new in 2016. We have been thwarting these attacks for decades and continue to build our defenses to deal with new threats.”

Oregon has had a security blip regarding data it maintains on registered voters.

Earlier this month, a California cyber security company, Anomali Labs, discovered that voter registration information for 19 states, including Oregon, was for sale on the “dark web,” which isn’t indexed by search engines and requires a special browser to access.

The databases contain information, such as names, birth dates,

addresses and party affiliation, and is publicly available. Anomali Labs said that public access is a risk because hackers could change registration information.

That data can also be combined with other breached personal information, the report said.

“When these lists are combined with other breached data containing sensitive information, e.g., social security number and driver’s license, on underground forums it provides malicious actors with key data points for creating a target profile of the U.S. electorate,” Anomali Labs wrote in a report on their findings.

Oregon sells voter information for \$500 but state law prohibits using that information for commercial purposes. The Oregon Secretary of State’s office referred the matter to the Oregon Department of Justice and the FBI.

Trout said the state backs up the electronic voter registration files daily, and the state can detect illegal changes.

And when it comes to the voting system itself, elections officials say that Oregon’s vote by mail system is more secure because it creates a paper trail.

Officials can double-check the paper ballots by hand to ensure machine tallies are accurate. Those machines, furthermore, aren’t connected to the internet, which officials say makes them less susceptible to hacking.

Oregon’s ballot counting machines are certified by a federally accredited testing lab, according to Trout.

After the lab tests, the state does its own analysis of the machines’ security.

State law requires that elections officials test voting systems. Workers scan test ballots through tally machines to make sure that the results match the markings on the ballots. The same test occurs after the election to confirm the pro-

gram wasn’t changed.

Each county is required to have a security plan approved by the state.

The counties are required to provide security for ballots in transit and for vote tally systems.

In Marion County, the tabulators are kept in a locked room and under camera surveillance.

In a demonstration test at the Marion County Clerk’s office last week, two workers checked test ballots for the system’s ability to read them accurately.

Marion County Clerk Bill Burgess said every effort is made to prevent tampering and hacking.

“Is it impossible? No. But it’s improbable,” Burgess said.

The county takes elaborate precautions to verify and secure ballots.

Marion County election workers and a security service pick up ballots left in drop boxes, Burgess said.

Envelopes containing the sealed ballots are fed into a machine that scans the signature and physically sorts the ballot envelopes by precinct.

Voters have to sign the back of their ballot envelope. Each signature on the envelope is scanned in. Then workers review that scanned image against a scan of a signature on file.

If the match isn’t good, a second worker reviews it. If there is still doubt, a letter is sent to the voter notifying them that the ballot hasn’t been counted and that they may take additional steps to verify the signature.

Approved envelopes then go to workers serving on the county’s Election Board for a two-step process to take the ballots out of the envelopes and to check that they can be read by the scanning machines.

Those workers swear to “diligently endeavor to prevent the violation of any provision of law” in conducting their duties, and that they’re not related to any candidate on the ballot.

Working in two-person teams knowing as “opening boards,” workers take ballots out of the envelopes and optional secrecy sleeves.

Then another team checks the quality of the ballot. Machines can read most of the ballots without problems, but sometimes voters don’t use the right ink or the ballot is torn or the barcode used to scan the ballot is marked out. Workers take extra steps to check those ballots.

Once a batch of ballots has been cleared for counting, it is taken into a special “tally room” to be scanned. The individual votes are transferred by thumb drive to another computer for the actual counting. Only county elections employees, typically supervisors, have access to that computer.

The room is also under

video surveillance and an internal audit log tracks computer keystrokes.

The official count is transferred by yet another thumb drive for loading to the Marion County clerk’s website and made public. The results are also sent to the state.

Federal authorities are also taking precautions on Election Day, according to Billy Williams, Oregon’s top federal prosecutor.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Adrian Brown will serve as Oregon’s district elections officer, part of a long-standing national program though the U.S. Department of Justice to monitor complaints of election fraud and voting rights abuses.

Under federal law, it’s a crime to intimidate, bribe, or impersonate voters, buy and sell votes, alter vote tallies or mark bal-

lots for voters against their wishes or without their say. Harassing or challenging voters by questioning them at ballot drop boxes may also violate federal law.

Voters have the right to mark their own ballot or choose someone to help them if they have a disability or cannot read.

“Every citizen must be able to vote without interference or discrimination and to have that vote counted without being stolen because of fraud,” Williams said in a statement.

“The Department of Justice will act promptly and aggressively to protect the integrity of the election process. Ensuring free and fair elections depends in large part on the cooperation of the American electorate.”

The public can call Brown at 503-727-1003 or the FBI at 503-224-4181.

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