

Legislator's Life Said Hectic, Harried

By MARIJANE DUNCAN

It was easy for us to swing back into the accelerated routine of the State Legislature in session. In fact, it seemed almost as though we were simply picking up the threads of another very real, very earnest, existence, and, conversely, leaving far behind the easier and admittedly more-normal routine of our life at home in Medford. The transition, as I say, was easy; the new life is not. It is busy, hectic, and sometimes harried—but by the same token, both satisfying and exciting.

Bob arrived in Salem several days before the session began; and I followed soon after. We left the children at home for an extra week of school and to give us time to get our "sea legs" and a chance to get our unfurnished house furnished. It was quickly apparent that this was a wise move all around.

My first, ingenious question to Bob, upon my arrival, was, "What on earth are you doing to keep busy this week?" He gave me a look, and the next morning at eight sharp, I got my answer.

Believe me, such official events as openings of legislative sessions, swearings-in and inaugurations don't just happen—they are brought about by long hours of honest toil. Nearly a full crew was at work in the House when I reported the Friday morning before the Monday morning. There were committees to be worked over, lists to be made, job-seekers to be interviewed, other people coming and going constantly, scripts to be stenciled, mimeographed, and distributed, and a host of other tasks.

Dr. Sly Reports

On Saturday morning, January 10, both houses convened, together with state officials, members of the press, and interested persons from all over the state to hear Dr. John Sly make his report on Oregon's tax structure. Most legislators had read the report already but listened intently as Dr. Sly, a most appealing gentleman with an engaging, wry humor and a vast knowledge of his subject, brought the printed pages to life. From backstage I heard part of the proceedings, but there were still many things to be done in the office, and I missed much of the doctor's talk.

Both Bob and I were privileged to meet the Slys that evening during a dinner party given by Ira Keller, another charming and erudite gentleman who, although an Oregon resident of comparatively short duration, is an enthusiastic booster of our state and its advantages over all others. The party included such notables as then-Governor and Mrs. Holmes and then-Governor-to-be and Mrs. Hatfield. For all the assembled "brass", it proved a most lively and informal evening.

Monday came not a bit too soon. We were ready—just. The Hall of Representatives was to be the scene of the inauguration, as tradition decreed. Another event, important to us, took place there in the morning. The House assembled, its new members taking their places with feelings (I am sure) of excited fulfillment; and the roll was called. The new Speaker of the House was elected.

Oath Administered
It was a proud and happy moment for Bob and for me, one made more meaningful by the presence of many good and loyal friends, among them Bill and Jean McAllister. The Chief Justice, looking very solemn and impressive in his black robe, administered the oath of office to his ex-partner. It was a significant moment for them both, especially when the Justice presented Bob with the gavel he once used as Speaker of the House, admonishing him to use it wisely and well.

Soon after the House had organized and adjourned, preparations began for the inaugural in the afternoon. An organ had been installed the day before (and I will say who worked all day Sunday felt the organist had had plenty of practice, particularly on the passages marked "fortissimo") and now the doormen and sergeants-at-arms moved quickly, setting up chairs and making ready for the anticipated throng of spectators.

People began arriving well before the appointed hour, and by one o'clock the S.R.O. signal went up. We secretaries, however, had our regular seats, as did the Representatives. Places had been reserved, also, for Senators (not, alas, enough, and at least one dignified member of that body found himself sharing a bench with the young House pages).

I am sure most of you read the accounts of the inauguration in the Mail Tribune and other papers, as well as the texts of both the outgoing and incoming Governors' talks. Suffice, then, to say that it

was all truly impressive and an experience I would not have missed. The sequence of events flowed smoothly from start to finish and left one with a feeling of orderly transition, somewhat belied, it is true, by intimate knowledge of the shufflings and change-about that must necessarily take place whenever an administration, under our two-party system, changes hands.

Now, ten days later, the tempo of legislative activity is, they say, at an all-time high for this early in the session. Both House are moving along rapidly to get bills processed and into committees, where they can be considered and worked-over thoroughly before being returned for consideration by the whole memberships. These are first bills, many of them non-controversial; though some of the first bills that came to the floor implemented measures suggested by the outgoing administration. Bob and other Democratic leaders have promised that Governor Hatfield's ideas on taxation and budgetary matters will be given thorough consideration as soon as he presents them.

Wields Heavy Gavel
Every day, promptly at ten, we all brace ourselves for the mighty thump that signals the beginning of each session. Bob wields a heavy gavel and they say, uses it with little compunction on members of the friendly opposition or his own party, alike. I use the expression "they say" because I can give little testimony that is firsthand, being more or less confined to quarters in the rear of the House chamber. There is a lot to do and never enough time, and though it pains me to miss the sessions I rarely feel I can slip away from my "chores" to hear one.

We have our family well settled in a comfortable house in the south of town. We are just across from McKinley grade school, and David finds he can make it safely to his class in about two minutes flat. Angus has a somewhat longer trek to Leslie Junior high than he did to Hedrick and is given to complaining a little, especially on rainy mornings (few are not). Nancy is still down there in Medford (I think—we have had no sort of reassuring communication, however) where she will be staying with our good friends, the Dan Hulls, till around February 17th. If I may be excused for using this public medium to say so...we miss you, Nancy, and will be happy to see (or hear from) you soon!

Guests Attend Chapter Session
Mrs. Carlos Sanders and Mrs. Donald Thumler were guests of Alpha Lambda chapter, Epsilon Sigma Alpha International sorority, for a recent meeting at the home of Mrs. C. C. Peterson. Everyone dressed as their "suppressed desire." Those with the most outstanding costumes were Mrs. B. H. Gilbert, Mrs. Richard Harrison, Mrs. Thomas Makris and Mrs. John Reed. Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Robert Shangle were cohostesses and also planned the games. Chapter members will prepare Easter seal letters February 9. A King of Hearts ball and a baked food sale are also planned for February 14.

Teas Given
The ladies of the Legislature have been feted at teas given by Mrs. Hatfield and by the Town and Gown Society here in Salem. Mrs. Hatfield's tea was held in the beautiful Oregon Room at Meier and Frank's, and the theme was fittingly Centennial. A particularly intriguing feature of the tea table was a small, highly realistic covered wagon with real-fur-bearing oxen! Antoinette Hatfield—

young, bright-eyed, and obviously enjoying her new role of First Lady—is a very charming hostess. The ladies of the Town and Gown entertained us in Doney hall on the Willamette campus.

Both Dorothea Pearson, wife of the Senate President, and I, who stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the receiving lines on succeeding days, agreed that it is a wonderful way to meet and greet people, but just a bit hard on the feet, what with these new pointed-toe shoes.

Looking ahead to many such busy and interesting days and evenings, I realize once again that it is the people—the personalities—that one encounters while working in state government that add color and vigor to all that happens... the sessions themselves, and the committee meetings and hearings... the lunch hours and coffee-breaks down in the Capitol restaurant... the planned functions and the unplanned encounters.

All the stacks of bills and papers are the work of many sorts of people, and some of them are the dreams and plans of these people; and when one of them is finally come to fruition, and something is done, something is changed, it is because many people have thought and talked and worked together—not only here in the capitol building, or here in Salem, but all over this state of ours.

All of you at home have a hand and a say in all this, if you want it; and we hope you do. Be interested—let us know you are interested—and if enough people do this here in Oregon, we will all be rewarded by having better government and more efficient government and, what is even more important—more REPRESENTATIVE government.

Presbyterians Organize Group

Women of Westminster United Presbyterian church have organized a work group. Mrs. K. G. Denman is president, Mrs. John R. Dellenbeck, vice president, Mrs. S. B. Milne, secretary, and Mrs. E. L. Lenox, treasurer. Mrs. S. V. McQueen was appointed spiritual life chairman, and Mrs. L. R. Moyer and Mrs. J. P. Rowan co-chairmen of the ways and means committee. The next meeting of the group will be held on Tuesday, February 17 at 10 a.m., at the home of Mrs. Dellenbeck.

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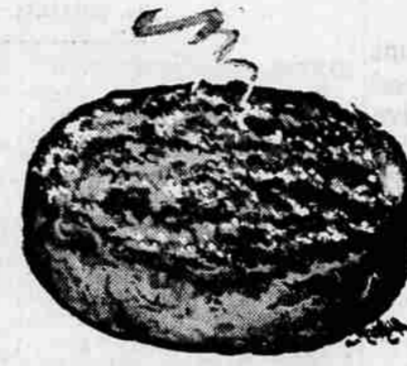


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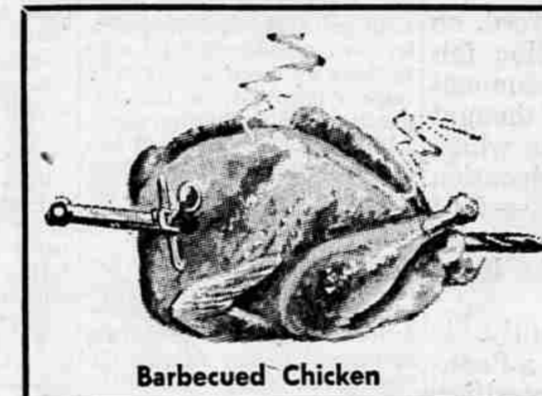


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