

Together, women legislators weigh environmental issues

By ELLEN EMRY
of The Oregonian staff



REP. NANCIE FADELEY

Nancie Fadeley

To Rep. Nancie Fadeley, chairman of the House Environment and Land Use Committee, attention to the liveability of the state stands second only to the issue of tax reform in this session of the Oregon Legislature.

"It's not an immediate assignment, but a question of long-range planning," she declared. "Because of this, I believe we have even more of an obligation to be fair, to hear both sides."

The veteran legislator, first elected to her post from Lane County in 1971, was "hardly the usual freshman" — she had already served 10 years in the Capitol as assistant to her husband, Sen. Edward Fadeley. "It was the perfect apprenticeship. And I think I received good committee assignments as a freshman because it was already known what I could do."

Rep. Fadeley refers to a remark made by former U. S. Sen. Maurice Neuberger that "for a woman, the greatest difficulty is getting elected — she has no trouble doing the job." Male or female, the responsibilities are the same.

"I've never resented being a woman," reasoned the representative, who joined all other female members of her committee in voting for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. "Because I've never had to earn the living, I could spend time learning about my children and plugging into environmental concerns."

As a former teacher Rep. Fadeley contributes to the House Education Committee and also serves on State and Federal Affairs. Health and education are the subjects she feels most knowledgeable about.

That the Environment and Land Use Committee has considered a variety of bills particularly related to women has little bearing on the fact that so many females are members, Rep. Fadeley claims. "I didn't ask for the bills — it was the speaker's decision. But I insist we're getting more of these other bills because we have the superb staff to handle them."

Rep. Fadeley and her husband have brought their children, 16-year-old Charles and 10-year-old Shiraz, into legislative activity. Between sessions the family settles back to normal routine in Eugene, Sen. Fadeley pursuing his law practice and his wife spending spare moments on free lance writing — one of her efforts, on the proposed bicycle bill, will be printed in the June issue of Parents magazine.

Rep. Fadeley and her husband are natives of Missouri, where she will return April 28 to be awarded the title of "distinguished alumna" by her alma mater, Central Methodist College. On her travel itinerary this week is a trip to



Staff Photos by Jim Haines

NEXT WITNESS — Committee hearings attract defensible of both sides of an issue, as at this recent House Environment

Washington, D. C., where Rep. Fadeley will participate in a conference on environmental topics with legislators from other states.

Vera Katz

Assigned the heaviest schedule of any freshman representative, Rep. Vera Katz has still found time to sponsor an impressive stack of bills — over 140, making her one of the most prolific on paper in this session's Legislature.

Two pieces of legislation she introduced, an increase in the state minimum wage and an amendment to the civil rights act barring sex discrimination, are now out of committee. The latter, House Bill 2118, Rep. Katz calls "one of the most far-reaching bills in the area of women's rights."

"It deals with sex discrimination other than in employment, including credit, and in that area Oregon has been behind."

The Democratic representative from northwest Portland stressed the need for such legislation by individual states because "I'm afraid the Equal Rights Amendment is in trouble." With approval of 38 states needed for passage, 30 states have ratified it. Two of them are reconsidering their vote.

Women's rights is only one of the activist's legislative concerns. On environmental issues she thinks, "We're going to have to do something and do something now."

"We've got to consider what we're doing to the shrubs and the fauna, whether we're disrupting the environment. We must provide a legacy for our children."

The new legislator is also a member of the Judiciary, Human Resources and Alcohol and Drugs committees. Her busy schedule leaves few evenings in what she calls a "partly liberated" household with husband Mel, who divides his time between Portland Center for the Visual Arts and Portland State University, and their 10-year-old son.

Rep. Katz came to Oregon with her husband from New York City, where she earned her masters degree in sociology at Brooklyn College.

A former citizens' lobbyist for Oregon Kennedy Action Corps and Demotour, she refuses to wear a liberal label — "Fiscally I'm very conservative," she insisted.

Pat Whiting

Appearances are deceiving when it comes to Rep. Pat Whiting, whose petite good looks hardly reveal the ability to ask intense and pointed questions of committee witnesses.

A Democrat who won her first bid for public office in November and represents residents in Tilamook, Beaverton, Tualatin, Sherwood and Durham, Rep. Whiting was instru-

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LEGAL COUNSEL JANET McLENNAN



REP. MARY BURROWS



REP. NORMA PAULUS

mental in making the House Environment and Land Use Committee the first to ban cigarette smoking at its meetings. She is currently eyeing progress through the House of a bill she sponsored which asks for a ban on smoking at all such public meetings and in state-owned buildings.

"If the general public must sit in an enclosed room, it has the right to breathe clean air," she believes. Her emphasis on the protection and preservation of a quality environment in Oregon "stems from a long-time involvement in civic affairs and active membership in the Oregon Environmental Council. "I'm critical of exploitation of land," she declared.

Rep. Whiting said she had no problem as a woman running for public office, because "I confront people on the issues. I consider myself the people's candidate and walked my district to get elected."

The 22-year-old legislator is also a member of the Local Government and Urban Affairs Committee, where she is concerned with updating the voter's pamphlet, and the Education Committee. Property tax relief and traffic safety are among top priorities, and as a result of her efforts and those of her constituents, the State Highway Department has announced plans for a study of Six Corners in Sherwood with installation of traffic lights by June 1.

Born in Chicago, Rep. Whiting grew up in "polluted urban areas," then was graduated from San Jose State College before she and husband Vincent, a pharmaceutical sales representative, moved to Oregon. She now commutes home or frequently stays in a Salem apartment between her long working hours — sometimes 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. — at the Capitol.

Janet McLennan

Janet McLennan, whose appointment as legal counsel to the Environment and Land Use Committee was made by Rep. Fadeley because "she was the most qualified person in the state for the job," just earned her law degree last June.

But she's no stranger to the world of law or, for that matter, Oregon politics.

Mrs. McLennan is the wife of William McLennan, a Portland attorney recently appointed probate judge for Multnomah County. She herself just completed a 4 1/2 month stint as deputy state treasurer, becoming the first woman appointed chief deputy to one of the state's constitutional offices.

As a member of the Multnomah County In-

While their ranks remain relatively thin on the floor of the Oregon Legislature, women have almost an even break in the House Environment and Land Use Committee. With five out of 11 members female, the committee offers present potential for women's views to be heard and promising signs for the future of women in public office.

Reps. Nancie Fadeley, Vera Katz, Pat Whiting, Mary Burrows and Norma Paulus provide the greatest percentage of representation women have ever enjoyed on a legislative committee. And legal counsel comes from a woman, Janet McLennan, who is the only one of her sex assigned to such a position in the Legislature.

Because the committee's composition is largely a result of the representatives' own requests to House Speaker Richard Eymann, the common concern for environmental affairs is the binding force for both male and female members of the group. According to chairman Nancie Fadeley, who believes her committee's focus must be on "the long-range view of what Oregon should be like," those issues are paramount, and under the group's scrutiny have come proposals which have also attracted widespread public attention — such as the purchase of Cape Kiwanda, the Willamette greenway project, and the ban on snowmobiles.

And yet the committee has not stood still on subjects outside that sphere. Prostitution, euthanasia, and the sale of contraceptive devices are among some 115 bills so far assigned to it for consideration. A proportionally large number of these proposals is directly related to women.

In the opinion of committee vice-chairman Stephen Kafoury, the female contribution within the group is significant — but he quickly qualifies his statement.

"All are very attractive and feminine women, and no one can forget that they are women," he remarked. "But first of all they are regarded as individuals."

Brief sketches on each of them tell something about the representation they provide as females and as legislators.



REP. VERA KATZ



REP. PAT WHITING

Rep. Paulus considers land use planning, with upcoming consideration of Senate Bill 100, the most important task facing the Environment and Land Use committee this session. Its members are all "strongly environmentally oriented," she noted, pointing out the perfect voting record she and Rep. Nancie Fadeley received from the Oregon Environmental Council during the last session.

The 33-year-old representative, whose particular interest is criminal justice, is vice-chairman of the Judiciary Committee and a member of the Joint Committee on Professional Responsibility. She is also Republican floor leader in the House, charged with making caucus decisions for the minority party.

The Burns native holds a law degree from Willamette University's College of Law — without having ever gone through an undergraduate program. She worked in a law office, then for the chief justice of the Supreme Court, and enrolled at Willamette as a special student while working full time.

Married to fellow lawyer William Paulus, the representative is the mother of two children, 9 and 11. "Free time goes to the family — with very little time for social obligations."

Mary Burrows

Being a woman legislator means "working doubly hard," according to Rep. Mary Burrows, "to make it easier for other women who want to run for public office."

The Eugene Republican, who wants to "give some credibility to government" as a representative, made her entry into party politics as coordinator of the successful campaigns of Sen. Robert Packwood and Gov. Tom McCall. But she feels few partisan issues face the Oregon Legislature; instead geographic distribution is the most decisive factor in voting patterns.

Since Rep. Burrows covers a constituency ranging from the urban-oriented University of Oregon campus to rural Lane County, she puts herself "smack in the middle" in this division. "I just try to weigh each decision on my own judgment," she asserted.

The mother of four, ages 9 to 19, has little time to run a household now but "running for office was a family decision and we're managing, with some role changes." She and husband Chuck, who works for Borden Chemical Co., have been equally involved in schools, church and the UO cooperative campus ministry. Rep. Burrows is a graduate of Northwest Christian College in Eugene.

The freshman legislator generally agrees with dictates of the State Board of Higher Education but sympathizes with student viewpoints — often advised by a son who is enrolled at UO. Currently she and Rep. Stephen Kafoury are co-sponsoring a bill to lower the legal age of majority in all instances to 18, "because the question of responsibility has never been answered."

Rep. Burrows believes Oregon has thus far been progressive on environmental issues and praises the Oregon Environmental Council and Department of Environmental Quality for research efforts which supplement those of the House Environment and Land Use Committee. A stint on the Lane County Boundary Commission provides her with background for participation on the Local Government and Urban Affairs Committee, of which she is also a member.

intermediate Education Commission, Mrs. McLennan spent last weekend at a National School Board Association meeting in Anaheim, Calif. That trip — along with past efforts in the Portland community — reveal her penchant for "things of a volunteer nature, which I've always found interesting and instructive."

The McLennans, both Northwest natives, returned from the East Coast in 1955, and during their first years in Portland Mrs. McLennan focused on raising the couple's three children.

But during 1962 she became actively involved in state politics through her work on two ballot measures. She then served as precinct committeewoman for the Democratic party, made two unsuccessful bids for her party's nomination as state representative, and was elected president of Young Democrats in 1963. She was coordinator of Robert Straub's bid for governor in 1970.

Mrs. McLennan sees her function now as quite apart from party politics, providing information that sheds light on all sides of an issue. "It is within my person, I think, to be pretty damn fair," she stated.

Of the committee, she declared, "These people can jump from recreation trails to nuclear energy to countless other subjects, and because of it I've had some 50 different subjects assigned to them."

Mrs. McLennan thinks the committee's contribution is increased by the number of women members. "Certain points of view not presented in the past are now being heard."

Norma Paulus

Describing herself as "honest and outspoken," Rep. Norma Paulus seldom vacillates when asked about issues. In a recent Environment and Land Use committee hearing, with the room packed by snowmobile enthusiasts, the legislator called for recreational vehicles "an ecological disaster" — then tempered her analysis with the good-humored acknowledgment that hers did not represent the majority opinion of those present.

Rep. Paulus, blonde and attractive, is in her second term as representative, only the second woman ever elected to the Legislature from Marion County. Being female was her "biggest obstacle" in seeking public office, she believes, and women of her own age and socio-economic group were the hardest to convince that she could do the job. But times are changing, she asserts.

"I don't think people realize how the women's movement is taking hold in Oregon. If any man thinks he's going to get elected without paying attention to women, he's crazy."