

Lafer goes to Washington

LERC professor will be adviser to U.S. House labor panel

Gordon Lafer, assistant professor at the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the University of Oregon, is moving to Washington, D.C., to work as senior labor policy adviser for the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Labor. The job starts Sept. 21; Lafer will take a one-year leave of absence from the UO.

The committee is responsible for laws on labor, health care, job training, and retirement security for workers. Lafer will provide the committee with analysis and advice on labor law legislation, including the Employee Free Choice Act, labor's top priority bill in Congress.

Besides the Employee Free Choice Act, Lafer said he will be working on a bill called the RESPECT Act (Re-Empowerment of Skilled and Professional Employees and Construction Trades Workers), which would undo a Bush-era National Labor Relations Board decision that took away union

rights from charge nurses, construction foremen and other workers who do some limited amount of supervising.

He'll work on the guestworker provisions of the upcoming immigration reform bill — spelling out what rights guest workers should have, and under what conditions companies should be allowed to bring in guest workers. He'll be working on federal legislation aimed at extending union rights to police and firefighters in states where they don't have those rights. He will also work on proposals to attach labor conditions to federal green jobs initiatives and a second round of stimulus spending.

"I feel like if there's ever a time when it should be possible to move legislation that helps workers, this should be it," Lafer told the Labor Press.

Lafer, 49, joined LERC faculty in 1997, two years after earning a PhD in political science from Yale University.

He soon became known in the local and national labor movement as LERC's go-to person for research. He has done work for unions around the country on strategic planning and contract campaigns, including Las Vegas building trades unions, longshore unions in Hawaii and on the East



GORDON LAFER

Coast and Gulf Coast, and Bay Area locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers. He helped Oregon building trades unions with technical questions about prevailing wage calculations, researched nursing shortages for Oregon Nurses Association, conducted a salary survey for an engineering employee association, and co-authored two studies on contracting out school support services — which helped Oregon School Employees As-

sociation resist privatization.

In 2002, he published "Job Training Charade," a book criticizing politicians' promotion of job training as the answer to unemployment and job-killing trade treaties like NAFTA.

In recent years, Lafer researched

and wrote several influential studies of the failings of U.S. labor law for the union-backed group American Rights at Work. That led to invitations to train congressional staffers and testify about the Employee Free Choice Act at hearings in the U.S. House and Senate, including the House Education and Labor Committee, whose general counsel recruited him to the new job.

Joining Lafer in the move to DC are his partner Rachel Kirtner and their three-year-old daughter Merav. Kirtner is a labor attorney and union organizer who was working with the American Federation of Teachers to help UO faculty unionize. Lafer said they've leased a place 12 blocks from the Capitol, and are renting out their home in Eugene with an eye to returning.

"Obviously we will miss Gordon's skills and talents for the year he's gone," said LERC director Bob Busnel. "But this is an opportunity for him to do really good work on major pieces of legislation that will benefit the union movement and working people."

Broadway Floral

for the BEST flowers call
503-288-5537

1638 NE Broadway, Portland

Commissioners in Clatsop County face recall effort for supporting LNG plant

ASTORIA — Three Clatsop County commissioners who support a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal, proposed for a site 20 miles east of Astoria on the Columbia River, are facing a recall effort by opponents of LNG.

The recall targets are commissioners Jeff Hazen, Ann Samuelson, and Patricia Roberts. All three support building the \$650 million LNG terminal, in line with the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, which already has a project labor agreement in place with the developer, NorthernStar.

"This terminal will not only provide hundreds and hundreds of construction jobs for our members and their families, it's also going to ensure a safe, reliable supply of energy for our area, which will result in good jobs in the Pacific Northwest," said John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council.

After it is built, the terminal — which will import, store and process liquefied natural gas — will have an operating budget of \$30 million a year.

Tom Chamberlain, president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, said stabilizing energy costs is crucial for the region's future. "And while we should vigorously pursue renewable energy, natural gas can serve as a bridge to the cleaner energy future we all want," he said.

Some residents are angry because

the three commissioners voted to approve land-use zone changes to allow construction of the terminal at Bradwood Landing, site of a shuttered lumber mill. Last month, some of those LNG opponents filed paperwork with Clatsop County to start collecting signatures to force an election to recall them.

The number of signatures to trigger a recall election is determined by taking 15 percent of the voters who voted for governor in the 2006 election.

A recall petition for Hazen would need 445 valid signatures from voters in District 1. For Samuelson, the number is 447. The deadline to get signatures is Oct. 19. The election would be held Dec. 8.

A petition to oust Roberts was approved Aug. 26. Petitioners need 441 signatures by Nov. 23. That election can be held no later than Jan. 12.

District 2 covers the area south of Warrenton to the center of Seaside and includes the city of Gearhart.

Hazen is county commissioner for District 1, which takes in Warrenton and Hammond and a portion of Astoria.

Samuelson is county commissioner for District 5, which covers portions of Seaside east of U.S. 101, and Cannon Beach, Arch Cape south to the Tillamook County line, east to the Columbia and Washington county lines, including Hamlet and Jewell.

INDEPENDENT RETIREMENT LIVING

Westmoreland's Union Manor
6404 SE 23rd Ave.
Portland 97202
503-233-5671

Kirkland Union Manors
3530 SE 84th Ave.
Portland 97266
503-777-8101

Manors Make the Difference

- Studio and One-Bedroom Apartments
- Affordable Rent includes Utilities (EXCEPT PHONE AND CABLE)
- Planned Events, Clubs, and Activities
- Ideal Locations offer easy access to Bus Lines, Shopping, and Entertainment
- No Costly Buy-In or Application Fees
- Federal Rent Subsidies Available (MUST QUALIFY)




KIRKLAND UNION MANORS I,II,III
Opened in 1980, 1985 & 1995



LABOR LEADERS IN THE PORTLAND BUILDING TRADE MOVEMENT ORGANIZED THE UNION LABOR RETIREMENT

ASSOCIATION IN 1962, WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY.

"We believe that everyone earns the right to retire, free from pressures of earlier years." 

Kirkland Union Plaza 1414 Kauffman Ave. Vancouver 98660 360-694-4314	Marshall Union Manor 2020 NW Northrup Portland 97209 503-225-0677
--	---

WWW.THEUNIONMANORS.ORG
TDD 503-771-0912