

# ...Norm Malbin retires

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sell Stover to support himself. He later went to work as a researcher for Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries. There, he was responsible for determining state prevailing wage rates on publicly funded construction projects, and he got to know the building trades. At night, he attended Lewis and Clark Law School. When he passed the bar exam in 1986, then-IBEW Local 48 business manager Ed Barnes suggested he talk to labor attorney Don Richardson about a job. Malbin worked for Richardson, and two years later, formed a private practice, doing legal work for unions, including Local 48.

The work was steady. Building trades unions need a lot of legal aid in large part because they find themselves having to police their industries, Malbin says — going after low-road nonunion contractors by helping workers file claims.

"I sued nonunion contractors who cheated workers out of wages," Malbin says. "Union organizers would identify workers, and say, 'Why don't you go talk to Norm.' And I would explain to them what the law is and how they're being cheated and what they're owed. And if they wanted me to pursue it on their behalf, I'd be able to do it."

Larger unions sometimes have in-house legal counsel, but Malbin doesn't know of any other in-house attorney who provides direct legal services to members. How it came about was a bit of a fluke. When Malbin was still in pri-

vate practice, he was doing a lot of work for Local 48. Malbin made a deal with then-business manager Jerry Bruce in 1993 to set up regular hours every Friday: He'd come into Local 48 and meet with union reps, and then be available to provide free legal advice and assistance to members. Members seemed to like it, so when Malbin became full-time, he continued the legal clinics.

In Malbin's Friday afternoon legal clinics, he advised Local 48 members on wills and divorces, helped them cope with drunk driving arrests, or get records expunged. And especially during bad times, he represented workers in unemployment hearings.

Malbin also strived to demystify the law, and to educate workers about their rights, not just to represent them. A guide to workers' rights that he wrote is available on the web site of the Portland chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

"I always tell people, as a lawyer, I'm not smarter than anybody else. I went to school and I learned three things: I learned a language called legalese; I learned a set of rules in the courtroom so you know when to stand, when to sit, and when to speak; and I learned how to go into a library and do research. That's really all you learn in law school."

In retirement, Malbin says he'd like to teach high school students about their rights in the workplace. He'll also spend time with family: He and his wife Wendy have been married 34 years, and have two sons: Zak, a Boeing engineer and member of SPEEA; and Ben, a



teacher. They also have two grandsons.

To replace Malbin, Local 48 has hired Diana Winther, a recent graduate of Lewis & Clark Law School, as a legal assistant. She'll assist John Bishop of the McKanna Bishop Joffe law firm representing Local 48, and she'll become in-house general counsel when she passes the bar exam.

Malbin is handing the labor law conference off to Bishop and the Labor Education Research Center at the University of Oregon.

If he has a parting message for labor, it's this: "Too often we're our own worst enemy. Witness the jurisdictional disputes we get into, because it's easier to try to take work away from another union than to go into a nonunion world and try to organize. But all we're doing is losing work."

And one other thing: "We need people to stand up for their rights. Most people don't know how to stand up for their rights. Unions help give them the support."

# ...Scott Lucy

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wages; then to keep their health insurance. "Now workers strike to keep what they have," he said.

Lucy believes Boeing and other large corporations have found a loophole that has unfairly tilted the playing field in their favor. That loophole is to coerce states to bid against each other for the largest corporate subsidies, and pitting workers against each other, he said.

"In reality, when corporations get big tax breaks, it comes at our (the taxpayers') expense," he said. "To me, that's unpatriotic behavior."

Lucy, who lives in Northeast Portland, said he's still getting used to retirement. "It's definitely a life change," he said.

Divorced with two adult children, he enjoys woodworking, vintage cars and photography. He recently finished making a 9-foot dining room table out of refurbished wood from an old barn. The lumber had been sitting in his basement for 20 years.

"There are no immediate plans," he said. "Though I would like to find something that helps people."

Whether that means running for elected office or volunteering for a community group, he's still undecided.

"I haven't ruled out anything," he said.

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