

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

IN THIS ISSUE

MULTNOMAH COUNTY TAKES ON WAGE THEFT
Union reps could help the County enforce the law. | Page 4

SAY THEIR NAMES A list of workers who died on the job in Oregon in 2018. | Page 5

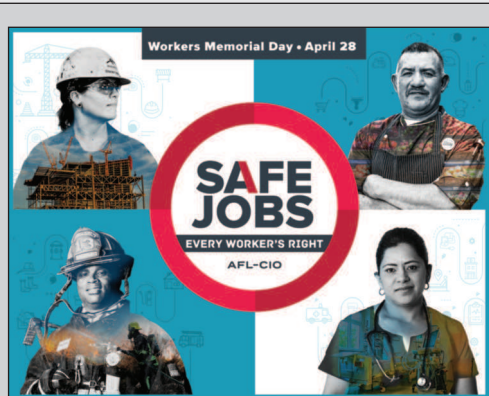
Meeting Notices p.6 UA Local 290 apprentice contest p.9

VOLUME 120, NUMBER 8

PORTLAND, OREGON

APRIL 19, 2019

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY



Workers Memorial Day is observed every year on April 28. It's a day to honor workers who have died on the job, to remember the suffering experienced by families and workers in all trades, and to recommit to the fight for a safe and healthy work environment for all workers.

REMEMBERING OREGON WORKERS WHO DIED ON THE JOB

SALEM — The Oregon AFL-CIO will hold a memorial ceremony at the Fallen Workers Memorial on the Capitol Mall in Salem. The service will feature remarks from elected officials, union leaders, and safety and health advocates, and the reading of the names of the 50 workers who died on the job in Oregon in 2018.

- **When:** Friday, April 26, noon
- **Where:** Labor and Industries Building, 350 Winter St. NE, Salem

PORTLAND — The Northwest Oregon Labor Council will hold a memorial service at its monthly delegates meeting. Delegates will raise an American flag in honor of each Oregon worker who died on the job last year.

- **When:** Monday, April 22, 7 p.m.
- **Where:** IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland

WORKER SAFETY

Two years after a horrifying bridge accident, Abhe & Svoboda still hasn't paid any fine

By Don McIntosh

It still stands out as one of the most spectacular construction accidents of recent memory: Beneath Portland's Ross Island Bridge on the morning of Feb. 8, 2017, bridge painter Marco Dion Lilly tripped near an unsecured ladder opening and plummeted 37 feet, landing on his adopted son Christopher Montiel. Both suffered permanent and severe injuries and were lucky to have survived at all.

The ensuing investigation by Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Oregon OSHA) found that their nonunion employer, Abhe & Svoboda, had done just about everything wrong. No guardrail had been installed around the hole. Workers on the upper platform wore fall protection harnesses but weren't attaching them to anything. The scaffold had been constructed improperly. It had been an accident waiting to happen.



From the underside of the Ross Island Bridge to the platform below, a painter fell 37 feet and landed on his own son.

Yet, two years later, the company has paid no price. Oregon OSHA assessed a \$189,000 fine in June 2017 for knowingly and repeatedly exposing its workers to injury and death, but Abhe & Svoboda appealed, and the case is still open. Meanwhile, the company has continued to bid on other bridge work for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

That aggravates local

painters union leaders like District Council 5 representative Scott Oldham.

"It seems to me at the very least there would be a suspension of their bidding on projects," Oldham said.

Since the accident, Abhe & Svoboda has bid on at least five other ODOT bridge projects, though in each case other bidders won the work. Under

Turn to Page 2

Time to ban a slow-moving killer

The daughter of a union plumber wants to end the occupational disease that claimed her father.

By Don McIntosh

Growing up in Astoria, Oregon, Ann Samuelson remembers her father as a man who worked hard. By day, Stan Grimberg built up his union plumbing business. By night, he took his gillnetting boat out on the Columbia River, earning enough to buy her a horse and provide the family with a good life.

One day when Samuelson was 22, her father was re-piping one of Astoria's grand historic homes and found himself unable to catch his breath. He went straight to a doctor, who sent him to a hospital. They drained fluid from his lungs and found asbestos fibers in the fluid.

Eighteen months later, Grimberg was dead of what the doctor called "Steve McQueen's disease" — mesothelioma, a cancer caused by asbestos. He was 53.



Ann Samuelson says it's past time for America to ban asbestos, the cancer-causing mineral that killed her father.

That was June 6, 1982. Decades later, Samuelson began speaking about what happened to her father.

"I used to not talk about it," Samuelson said. "It used to scare me to think about it. You watch somebody die of that — it's a horrible way to die. You suffocate, basically. You're emaciated, and you

Turn to Page 8

TRADE

Trump's new NAFTA: Is America's trade policy at a crossroads?



NAFTA WORKING AS INTENDED Citing "changes in product demand" Mondelez/Nabisco shut down an Oreo production line at its Portland bakery for two weeks in late March, temporarily laying off at least 30 members of Bakers Local 364. That inspired several members to visit the nearest Fred Meyer grocery, where they found Mexican-made Oreos on shelves.

By Don McIntosh

When Portland Congressman Earl Blumenauer learned he'd be the new chair of a House trade subcommittee, the first call he made was to Oregon AFL-CIO president Tom Chamberlain. Blumenauer has been considered a reliably pro-

labor Democrat, except on one issue: trade. During 22 years in Congress, he voted for seven NAFTA-style trade agreements, supported permanent normal trade relations with China, and voted in favor of

Turn to Page 7