



Women's Guide to Blue Collar Jobs  
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## **IT'S NOT EASY TO BE ONE-OF-A-KIND**

To be the first. To be one of those who enter a job site, look around and see no other like her. It takes a special woman. That kind of special woman who doesn't think she's special. A woman who will tell you all the reasons she went into her blue collar job. None of them for glory.

It was for her family. For the money. For the benefits. For the thrill of the unknown. For the challenge. For herself. But if anyone would say it's easy, they'd be lying. If anyone would say it's not frightening some days, they'd be lying. And sometimes the barriers we put up to hide our emotions cave in and we are left with the truth of it all. It is hard work. It is scary work. But we are proud. We're good at it.

And if we had it to do all over, we'd do it again! That's what makes us Tradeswomen!

# DEAR SISTERS ..... by Jeanne Park



**When I met my work buddy's girlfriend for the first time, she admitted to me that she expected me to be a 6-foot tall, blonde lesbian. I don't have any idea what he told her about me other than we've worked together as ironworkers and are good friends. (I probably need to mention here that I'm not a 6-foot tall blonde. I'm 5'3" and Korean!)**

I wonder what image people get when they think of women in the blue-collar fields. When I say I'm going to a conference of tradeswomen, I am asked, half-jokingly by non-trades friends, if it's a gathering of bad-asses. Motorcycle riding, burly women who bend steel with their bare hands, eat nails and drink whiskey by the quart jar. I'll say that a small portion of that is true. But mostly it's an image driven by some ignorance and maybe some fear.

Women who enter a physical field dominated by men are assumed to be stronger and more fearless than most women. They have broken rules of conventional society and entered a world where even most average men don't traverse. Often the media depicts construction workers as loud-mouthed, catcalling, meat-headed brutes that you wouldn't want to have over to eat dinner on your fine china. Again, I'll say that a small portion of that is true.

What is true is that when I go to the Women Building California Conference, I can't think of an easy way to describe the women who attend. I've met college graduates, artists, felons and party-girls. Some of these women are married, some single mothers, some are lesbians, and some aren't sure. The women I've met have traveled the world, or maybe have taken their first plane trip to attend the conference, are immigrants, legal and maybe not so legal. These women have rebuilt their houses with the skills they've learned, or are out on disability, struggling to find work, or have just retired. It's a group of women more visually interesting, openly expressive and of color than any gathering of tradesmen I've seen.

What unites these women? The desire to work with their hands, to work with others to make the structures of modern life grow from the ground up. They use their individual combination of intelligence, strength and political savvy to make their mark in their trade and make a living for themselves.

They could be any woman. They could be you.

Take care. Work safe.

**Jeanne Park (Ironworker Local 377, San Francisco CA)**

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## What the Tradeswomen's Conference means to me....

That I have a place to go and be "Gassed up" (it gets hard sometimes dealing with being the only woman on the crew or more often than not the jobsite...it's nice to know I'm not alone!)

That I can (hopefully) inspire women who are just starting in their trades and continue to be inspired by the women who have been doing it for longer than I have.

That I can reconnect with old acquaintances and meet new ones!

That I can be reminded that **GIRLS ROCK!!!!!!**

**Chantel Lewis, EI, IBEW Local 6**





I recently had the pleasure of co-facilitating the Writers in Work Shirts workshop at the 2011 Women Building California conference.

It was a wonderful experience to be a part of something that I truly feel gives a strong backbone to our history working in the trades. Writing can be a conduit that spreads messages and ideas. Branching out to share feelings with others maybe miles and miles away. Writing makes us feel connected and that we are not alone. **Brick by brick, poem by poem.** Plastering the walls with our pages and reinforcing the cornerstone of our future. Keeping a catalogue of what is happening here and now while documenting the past.

I was so happy to see all the sisters who attended the workshop. Hearing their stories and reading the words they shared filled me with more beautiful feeling than any treasure chest could contain. Aside from journaling our history, writing also has therapeutic value allowing you the satisfaction of expressing yourself and writing down your feelings. I keep many books of poetry throughout my house and enjoy reading them to better enhance my "me time". I also bookmark pages with post-its, drawing happy faces, to highlight special uplifting poems that I read when I feel down.

**Let writing be the window to your soul.** It will put you more in touch with yourself and show the world who you are, how you feel, and what you want. So close your eyes, listen to your heart, and breathe life into those words. What's better than feeling great? Sharing that feeling with someone else.

Joanna Perry-Kujala,  
Concord CA IBEW Local 302

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Thanks to  
Chinese For Affirmation Action  
for this translation.

Ella puede She can do it

**TWO POEMS FROM WRITERS IN WORK SHIRTS  
The Tradeswomen Writers' Workshop at the  
2011 WOMEN BUILDING CA AND THE NATION CONFERENCE  
OAKLAND CA**

Thanks to Electrician/Poets Joanna Perry-Kujala and Chantel Lewis this year's workshop was an incredible success. ALSO thanks go to Pat Williams for photographing the poems that became giant post-it wall "proclamations" in the great hall of the conference center! Here are a few of the poems from the workshop. Watch for more in up coming issues of Pride. **FOR THOSE WHO COULDN'T MAKE IT TO THE CONFERENCE AND/OR THE WORKSHOP AND WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A COPY OF THE BLUE JEAN POCKET WRITER'S MANUAL PLEASE SEND US YOUR ADDRESS AND FOUR FIRST CLASS STAMPS AND WE'LL MAIL YOU A FREE COPY. SEND TO PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK, 484 LAKE PARK AVE. #315, OAKLAND CA 94610.**

**Women Are Making History Every Day**

When the country was young  
No education, only hard work  
Settlement – slavery – colonization

When the country was young  
We labored in the home and factory,  
Sometimes dying on the job  
Shirtwaist Factory 1011

When the country was young  
We fought for the right to speak in public  
And our right to vote  
Susan B. Anthony – Ida May Wells –  
Elizabeth Stanton – Harriet Tubman

When the country was young  
We worked in the shipyards,  
Supporting, always supporting  
Rosie the Riveter 1940's

We are all grown up now  
It's time to tell our stories

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**Again**

Thursday All Trades meeting  
150 eyes on the new and only "girl"  
The proving grounds again

I can do it  
I belong here

Proving it to them and  
To myself  
Again

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**PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK'S PHONE IS (510) 627-0063. Mailing Address is 484 Lake Park Avenue, #315, Oakland CA 94610. Email us at: [tradesis@aol.com](mailto:tradesis@aol.com) . Send your poetry and work stories to this address! **Special thanks to Madeline Mixer for her indispensable production support, funding and proofreading skills as well as topic ideas.** Thanks to my railroad sister, Electrician Penny Artis and railroad brother, Locomotive Engineer Ron Kaminkow for their support. And thanks for special support to Larry Robbin, Joycelyn Robinson-Hughes, Jeanne Park, Raequel Smith, Joanna Perry-Kujala, Chantel Lewis, Joe Mixer, Vicky Hamlin, as well as the WATT Woman Electricians of Houston Texas & their President Pat Burnham. Thank you Pat Williams, (our LA "connection") and Melina Harris & Mercy Haley from Sisters in the Building Trades. Thanks to WINTER for being our fiscal agent. **We also want to thank the Northern CA Drywall Lathing Apprenticeship for their consistent support and donations.** Sue Doro, the Editor of *Pride and a Paycheck* is a retired Railroad Machinist and member of the National Writers Union, Local 1981 (UAW Affiliate). She is also a member of the United Association of Labor Education, Local 189 (Affiliate of CWA), & Working Class Studies Assoc. ([www.wcstudies.org](http://www.wcstudies.org)), Railroad Workers United ([www.railroadworkersunited.org](http://www.railroadworkersunited.org)) as well as NAWIC (National Assoc. of Women in Construction) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and a retired member of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and International Association of Machinists (IAM). Sue is a disabled worker, injured in a previous (white-collar) job and uses voice-activated computer technology to machine the newsletter. *Pride and a Paycheck* is produced by the Editor, with funds from a San Francisco Foundation private grant thanks to Madeline Mixer. The Editor is solely responsible for the content of this newsletter. Thanks to Fastprint, Lakeshore Ave. Oakland for printing & mailing. **Free subs [tradesis@aol.com](mailto:tradesis@aol.com) [www.prideandapaycheck.com](http://www.prideandapaycheck.com)** **DONATION CHECKS CAN BE MADE OUT TO W.I.N.T.E.R. (our fiscal agent) AND MAILED TO OUR ADDRESS.****

## WHAT IS ONE WAY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, UNION OR CONTRACTOR TO SHOW GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO RECRUIT WOMEN?

ONE OF THE WAYS IS TO FOLLOW THE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THE NORTHERN CA DRYWALL/LATHING APPRENTICESHIP. THIS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM HAS DONATED \$400 A YEAR FOR NEARLY AS MANY YEARS AS THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN PUBLISHED (13 YEARS THIS YEAR!), SO THAT FREE ISSUES OF PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK COULD BE MAILED TO EVEN MORE POTENTIAL TRADESWOMEN AT TRAINING CENTERS, SCHOOLS, WELFARE DEPARTMENTS AND COMMUNITY JOB SEARCH AGENCIES. THESE PLACES RECEIVE BUNDLES OF MULTIPLE COPIES TO DISTRIBUTE. THIS EXTRA PRINTING AND POSTAGE EXPENSE IS LESSENED FOR US BECAUSE OF THE ANNUAL DONATION FROM THE NORTHERN CA DRYWALL/LATHING APPRENTICESHIP. (ANOTHER CAME IN THE MAIL RIGHT BEFORE THIS PRINTING!) AND WE WANT TO GIVE THEM SPECIAL THANKS FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT. SUPPORT THAT GOES BEYOND WORDS AND INTO ACTIONS FOR RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN.

IF OTHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS, UNIONS, AND CONTRACTORS WANT TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT GOOD FAITH OUTREACH EFFORTS, THEY TOO WILL PUT WORDS INTO ACTIONS AND DONATE TO PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK AND OTHER TRADESWOMEN ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS TRADEWOMEN INC. AND SISTERS IN THE BUILDING TRADES. FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE NORTHERN CA DRYWALL/LATHING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM! CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRIDE WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE NEWSLETTER WHICH IS NOW SEEN BY MORE THAN 10,000 READERS, AND GROWING...THANKS TO INTERNET DISTRIBUTION AND OUR WEBSITE:

[WWW.PRIDEANDPAYCHECK.COM](http://WWW.PRIDEANDPAYCHECK.COM)

(WINTER IN LONG BEACH CA IS OUR NON-PROFIT FISCAL AGENT FOR THIS TAX DEDUCTABLE DONATION.)

**Pride and a Paycheck**  
**Editor: Sue Doro**  
**484 Lake Park Ave. #315**  
**Oakland CA 94610**

More donation thanks go to Stacey Cohn and Tina Shelton. And Stacey wants to remind us that sending First Class stamps is a great support idea!! We can use all the postage help we can get!!

## Permission Granted To Copy As Needed

For tradeswomen resources go to the following websites:

[www.prideandapaycheck.com](http://www.prideandapaycheck.com)

Tradeswomen Inc. [www.tradeswomen.org](http://www.tradeswomen.org)

Sisters in the Building Trades

[www.sistersinthebuildingtrades.org](http://www.sistersinthebuildingtrades.org)

And be sure to contact Tradeswomen Inc and Sisters to be put on their announcement email lists for current announcements, jobs and training opportunities. To join Sisters email list go on their website and click on "join email list". To get on Tradeswomen email list, email [meg@tradeswomen.org](mailto:meg@tradeswomen.org)

<http://www.womensenews.org/story/labor/110526/isolation-tradeswomen-melts-at-rare-conference> CLICK FOR AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE 2011 TRADESWOMEN CONFERENCE BY BOSTON AUTHOR/ELECTRICIAN SUSAN EISENBERG.