

PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK

Women's Guide
to Blue Collar Jobs
Vol. 15, # Two,
Spring 2013

**HAPPY
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DAY!
MARCH 8th!**

**Tradesisters
Present
and
Past!**



Two Pile Drivers on the new Oakland/San Francisco Bay Bridge work tall against the sky!

The woman on the right is Dee Goble. The other is recorded as "Sister". Trying to find her name has been a continuing journey. We're not finished! Let's not let her name get lost in time! Anyone know her? **Which brings us to the female Mason perched high above the city of Berlin Germany in 1910.** (You can see the brick to the left in the photo.) Coincidentally this was the year that International Women's Day began! Her name along with the female photographer on the next page, is lost. What we do know is that the beginning of the twentieth century ushered in the rise of industrialization causing more women to work outside the home. This usually meant factory work, however in some families (like our Mason sister's) with their male-owned businesses; daughters helped out and learned a trade. The woman suspended practically in midair is a Master Mason's daughter performing renovation work on the Berlin city hall tower according to historical documents. Melina Harris, President of Sisters in the Building Trades in Renton Washington (www.sitbt.org) sent these images through the social media we take for granted these days. SITBT's website is a treasure of tradeswomen photos and information.

The footprints of tradeswomen are planted firmly in the present and past of human development. The more we know of our brave female ancestors, the greater pride and passion we pass to future generations. To that end, there is important work going on to build an archive; both physical and online at the California State University Dominguez Hills in Southern CA, through the efforts of committed sisters like Vivian Price, Pat Williams and the rest of the members of the archive committee. <http://tradeswomenarchives.com> is the place to go to find out more about this important project. Vivian tells us that tradeswomen can upload their own photos, stories and documents to the website. She is also creating a tool kit for organizations to hold archiving workshops. She can be contacted at vprice@csudh.edu. **Celebrate March (Women's Month) and International Women's Day, March 8th, by making sure our tradeswomen Herstory is well documented!**

I AM WHAT I DO. I DO WHAT I AM. I STAND TRUE TO MY TRADE.
I WON'T BACK DOWN. I WON'T TURN AROUND.

© By Laura Lee Hughes, Laborer, Coos Bay OR

I grew up in the '50's; very fortunate to have been born in Montana and raised by a cowboy and a musician. We lived in the country and I rode a horse before I could walk. Daddy always told me the world didn't owe me a living and I had no rich relation.

It was the best thing he ever did for my work ethic.

Of course, the '50's and '60's didn't recognize tough and independent women, so I had some difficult years. My self-esteem was in the tank. I was lucky to have some close men in my life and of course my mother urging me to join the laborers. Telling me I could do the work.

Being raised in the country, I was used to hard work. I wanted the pension and insurance. So I went to the hall and put my name on the "C" list. I was called out by the dispatcher to run an air chisel in the hydro-cracking unit.

When I arrived on the job, the foreman was mad that the hall had sent me. He wanted to put me in the shack cleaning up. I told him I wasn't going to and if he did he should cut me a check right then and there.

That was the beginning of my education and struggle to learn all the tools of my trade and face the challenges that happened daily.

I could tell you a million stories. I've written most of them down so I wouldn't forget as time marches on.

I am what I do. I do what I am. I stand true to my trade. I won't back down. I won't turn around.

(From the Blue Jean Pocket Writers workshop at the 2012 Women Building California and the Nation conference.)



The photo on the left is the photographer responsible for the incredible picture of the Mason on the cover.

There is a light that shines within each tradeswoman and any female whose job had previously been performed by only males.

*It is a light so powerful
nothing can extinguish it!*

Shine on Tradeswomen. Shine on!

Note from the Editor: **The New Labor Forum** is a national labor journal published at the City University of New York (CUNY). It's issued 3 times a year. Some of the kinds of articles include the global economy's impact on work and labor; new union organizing; union reform; the role of culture in a new revitalized labor movement AND in the upcoming WINTER 2013 issue: **A Sisterhood Made of Steel!** A Gary Indiana steel mill worker, Donna De Graaf-Smith and I were asked to write articles about working in blue collar labor in the '70's and '80's. When the New Labor Forum Editor noticed that our herstories were similar, she asked to combine the articles. The great thing about the collaboration is that Donna and I have become close sister/worker writers during the process and the result is a deep friendship! It's like finding another woman on your work site that you didn't know existed. Not only finding her...but finding out that you have more in common than the job itself. In fact, Donna will be facilitating a **Blue Jean Pocket Writers Workshop** for steel mill workers in Gary Indiana, using the manual and handouts I've developed for the Women Building CA and the Nation conferences. (You can find Electrician Joanna Perry-Kujala facilitating the workshop at the 2013 conference! And Texan' Pat Burnham, will also join this worker writer workshop network!) For more info about facilitating the workshop in your area, contact me at tradesis@aol.com and write Blue Jean Pocket Writers in the subject line.

To read Donna and my article, CLICK ON THIS LINK. <http://nlf.sagepub.com/content/22/1/82.full#abstract-1>

I CAN DO IT! © Katie Jo Maier, Carpenter/Drywall Finisher, IUPAT Dis. Council 6, Willoughby Ohio

When I first entered the industry I had a foreman tell me I was too short and my hands weren't large enough to manipulate a drywall knife. Every day he would check in on me and critique my work. If he found me doing something wrong he would take the time to correct me BUT all the while saying I would never make. I would cry every day that first month from all his discouragement. I wouldn't let anyone see me cry though. Three years later I graduated my apprenticeship as the first female drywall finisher to be awarded "Apprentice of the Year" and my name is forever engraved on a plaque at the IUPAT District Council 6 Hall (International Union of Painters and Allied Trades). This plaque to me represents that hard work and perseverance can overcome all obstacles. I am currently in my second apprenticeship, now as a carpenter and I plan to continue my "I Can Do It" attitude!

.....THE FIRST TIME I THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A TRADESWOMAN.....

© By Claudia Hernandez, Operating Engineer Apprentice, Ontario California

I was working as a tool crib attendant but being used as clerical staff. I was offered an opportunity to either become an Apprentice Engineer or to become a Project Manager (which meant more desk time). I sat down and made a Pro and Con list and was leaning towards the Apprenticeship. There were two events that made me realize that Engineering was right for me. The first was a member of management who "kindly" explained to me that it was a "man's" job and I was better off at the desk. The second was being able to troubleshoot my own refrigerator and then replace the motor myself!

I love my job and this is what I was meant to do!

DEAR SISTERS.....By Jeanne Park, Ironworker Local 377, San Francisco CA



I love looking at old photos of working women. The older the picture, the better: grainy, black and white or perhaps sepia with age. Her face is usually very serious in the older photos, concentrating on the photographer, or even better, the task she has at hand. I wonder at her clothing, if this is something I could work in. Is what she is wearing dictated by the fashion or the social strictures of the time over the implied safety issues she may not have had in mind? She looks suited to the job, enough that someone went through the considerable effort of taking her photo. She is definitely working a profession not usually performed by women.

Mason, blacksmith, riveter, carpenter...I scan the background around her to check to see if the scene has been set. I look for other people on the job, to see if they are set up much differently than she is. Her hands are often on her tools, her work all around her.

Women in group shots from WWII looking charmingly tough in their bandana headbands. There are group pictures of women. Some of them stiffly posed, but also as often, smiles and some mugging for the camera. I wonder who left these jobs willingly and who regretted and who fought to keep them. The 40s lipstick and hair are intriguing-- how did she keep it looking that great? I hope that she has someone at home who makes her lunch, a parent, a sibling. Her brothers and boyfriend or husband, maybe her father, are far away. Does she think of the men she is building these things for, those at home and those overseas? She is doing her patriotic duty. Though these jobs are not "normal" for the time, because of the war effort, these women are proudly displayed in photos and posters.

And after the war, things become quiet again.

In the 70s Carter's Executive Order opened the trades to women, and a percentage goal was set. I think I've seen even fewer pictures of these women than those from the 40s, despite the advances and more common uses of cameras. I can't remember any group shots. Unions and companies were still hostile. Unlike during the war, there was no federal childcare for them, no studies of ergonomics of machinery, no group publicity shots. Where did these women go? What made them want to do these jobs, to struggle to get and to keep them? Did she find other women in her trade to talk to? Were their experiences the same or radically different? Did she think of herself as a feminist or did others think of her as a radical or was she putting food on the table for herself or for her family? How did she get her hair to stay so big?

This is why it's so important to take pictures. Take pictures of yourself; take pictures of other women. The more proof we have of our presence normalizes us to those that come after us. When people question our presence less, when there is less mystery, there is more acceptance. We should show ourselves in our everyday work, our capacity to do the extraordinary as well as the mundane. So much can be assumed and marveled at when looking at the Norman Rockwell portrait of the riveter eating a sandwich. We can take our own portraits—so many of us have cameras on us in our phones at every minute of the day. We can compare job sites and safety gear. We can hang out with our crew and mess around with our friends. We can wonder at a photo of an ironworker balancing herself on the edge of the steel. What makes her do it? How does she do it? Can I do it?

Take care, work safe. Take pictures.....Jeanne

PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK'S mailing Address is 484 Lake Park Avenue, #315, Oakland CA 94610. Email us at: tradesis@aol.com and visit our website for tradeswomen resources in the US and beyond: www.prideandapaycheck.com Special thanks to Madeline Mixer, Jeanne Park and Joanna Parry-Kujala. Thanks also to Sisters in the Building Trades for support and photos. Check out the gallery on their web page. www.siibt.org. Thanks to 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) as well as the United Association of Labor Education, Local 189 (Affiliate of CWA), & Working Class Studies Assoc. (www.wcstudies.org), Railroad Workers United (www.railroadworkersunited.org), NAWIC (National Assoc. of Women in Construction, the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), retired member of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and International Association of Machinists (IAM). *Pride and a Paycheck* is produced by the Editor, with funds from a private grant thanks to Madeline Mixer. The Editor is solely responsible for the content. Printed by Fastprint, Oakland CA. Los Angeles' Women in Non Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER) is our current fiscal agent.

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THANK YOU VIVIAN AND ADAM!

To donate either stamps or cash, for the SUMMER issue of *Pride*, please mail to *Pride and a Paycheck*, 484 Lake Park Ave. #315, Oakland CA 94610. If you are sending a check, please make it out to our fiscal agent WINTER, with a notation that it is for *Pride and a Paycheck*. As most of you know, *Pride* issues are on our website at www.prideandapaycheck.com but we continue to mail bundles to the schools etc.

ATTENTION! *Pride and a Paycheck* is a link on Mike Rowe's website: www.mikeroweworks.com
Go to: <http://www.mikeroweworks.com/job-site/women-in-the-trades/>
Type in *Pride and a Paycheck* in the search spot.



Sue Doro, retired Railroad Machinist points to her Rosie Wall tile. February 5, 2013. Thanks to Pat for taking her to it!

Pat Williams (the idea driver for the Long Beach CA Rosie the Riveter Park Wall Tile Project) and Sue Doro (Editor of *Pride and a Paycheck*) spent a moving herstorical morning visiting the wall and incredible memorial park honoring Veterans and Rosies. Sue's tile is a gift from the tradeswomen community. To find out how you can buy your own wall tile, email Pat at patjwilliams4@aol.com. This wall of tradeswomen tiles is the only one like it in the country. It welcomes tradeswomen living and memorialized from all blue collar trades and all parts of the US. There is a feeling of pride and peace and wonder when you visit the park. Please join those who have already planted their names, crafts and words of wisdom on this wall! To see a video of the project, go to: LB_Rosie_the_Riveter_Park-1.mp4-YouTube

THE WALL CELEBRATES ITS ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY MARCH 2013!!!



Pat Williams retired Operating Engineer at the Rosie Wall points to her own tile! February 5, 2013

Mujeres Constructoras Trabajan Juntas
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For more information: 916-443-3302 • www.sbctc.org

Third Annual
WOMEN BUILDING CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION

April 5-7, 2013
Sheraton Grand Sacramento, CA

Watch for this workshop at the conference!

This year's "Blue Jean Pocket Writers Workshop" Sponsored by *Pride and a Paycheck* will be facilitated by Electrician/Poet Joanna Perry-Kujala IBEW Local 302. No writing experience needed. Share your Herstorical stories!