



# Pride and a Paycheck

Women's Guide To Blue Collar Jobs Vol. 13 September/October 2011  
Find more Tradeswomen information at [www.prideandapaycheck.com](http://www.prideandapaycheck.com)

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE! (Editorial)

Back in the 1970's I was the only female machinist at a 100 year old railroad in the Midwest called the Milwaukee Road. After I had worked there a few years someone told me that there was a female craft worker somewhere in the acres of valley shops which composed the Milwaukee Road yards. They just didn't know *where*. And it wasn't until she got bumped to the wheel shop a couple years before the whole place closed down for good that we finally met.

The first time we saw each other, we hugged right there in between sets of train wheels and axles and an overhead crane traveling up above! Verona Guinn was a Laborer from the "*Rosie the Riveter*" era who fought to keep her job in the late '40's when the men came home from the war.

Verona was on second shift and I worked first but at least we could visit in the cracks of time between shifts! She's in her 80's now and we are still friends and weekly telephone buddies from Milwaukee Wisconsin to Oakland California! She says the last two years at the railroad were the best because she met me, and I'm proud to say the same about her. We were finally not alone!

So this article is about loneliness. The gut sadness tradeswomen can feel when they are the "one and only" in a work place for days and even years. Oh, there were some good male coworkers that became my friends, but for those first eight years I didn't know of any other women in the trades in town. This is not to say they weren't there. It's just that networking back then was non-existent. Then one day I discovered a magazine called *Tradeswomen* at a neighborhood bookstore. I ordered a subscription immediately. Other than my family and journal writing, that California based magazine was my only work support mechanism. Reading articles and poetry written by women like myself...kept me going. It was tangible proof that I was not alone in what I was doing for a living and I no longer had to gaze into a mirror just to see what a tradeswoman looked like! Others like myself were writing about the victories, trials and tribulations of being a "one and only". I could scan the pages of this formidable publication and know that a Tradeswomen Movement had begun.

Although *Tradeswomen Magazine* is no more, the organization that birthed it (**Tradeswomen, Inc.**) is still very alive in Oakland CA and actively working hard to support and help women stay in the trades as well as to recruit women into the lines of work that we honor and respect.

To find out more about **Tradeswomen, Inc.**, and networking activities go to [www.tradeswomen.org](http://www.tradeswomen.org). To get on their email list for announcements about the greater Bay Area (CA) email [meq@tradeswomen.org](mailto:meq@tradeswomen.org).

To find organizations to connect with in your own area, check on the list of resources on **Tradeswomen, Inc.** website as well as **Pride's** site [www.prideandapaycheck.com](http://www.prideandapaycheck.com).

Another important resource to locate national support is Seattle WA area based **Sisters in the Building Trades** website [www.sistersinthebuildingtrades.org](http://www.sistersinthebuildingtrades.org).

**Never feel alone**, even if you are the only woman on your job site, or factory or train terminal or trucking company or warehouse or any other place where men used to be the only humans working.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.** There are thousands of sisters who have your back. There still aren't enough of us and there's a lot of work to do to improve our "numbers", but as someone once said: *Progress is not the same as revolution!*  
**Welcome to the Tradeswomen Movement!**

Sue Doro, Editor



# **FROM PINK SLIP TO PAYCHECK!**

## **JOB SEARCH TIPS FOR THE UNEMPLOYED TRADESWOMAN**

**By Marion Delgado**

### **1. PLAN A FULL JOB SEARCH DAY THE NIGHT BEFORE YOU JOB HUNT**

Job search is now your job. You need planning and structure just like you had when you were working. Plan for an eight hour day with lunch and breaks. Make a daily schedule and stick to it. Fill your day with all types of activities. If you belong to a union, (depending on your craft), you will have to go to your union hall first. If they tell you that there's no hiring (and won't be for a while) go to the EDD and community resource agencies. Try to stay in the general area of your blue collar skill set. Do an internet search for employment resources and use all of them. Try and vary what you do every day so you don't get job search "burn out".

### **2. GET OUT OF THE HOUSE AS YOUR FIRST JOB SEARCH ACTIVITY**

Don't go on the internet at home or read the newspapers as your first activity. These are isolating activities and you can get depressed easily from the lack of contact with people. Successful job search consists of keeping your motivation high and using as many methods as possible to job hunt. Form an early morning networking group that meets at a coffee shop for one hour. Go to any of the resources you find. Put in applications etc. as the first activity of the day. Get out of the house just like you did when you went to work!

### **3. USE THE INTERNET BUT DON'T OVER USE IT AND ..... NETWORK NETWORK NETWORK!**

It's critical to be on Linked in, Face book and Twitter but it's also critical you do other things. Make sure you use these to their maximum capability. Check out free classes at the library and one-stops to up-grade your computer skills. Also remember employers often check on line identities so make sure yours looks job ready and doesn't make you appear like a party animal. Remember face to face meetings with people can often do more than an Internet connection, but Internet connections enable you to reach more people in less time. Join Toastmasters. It will help you network and develop your speaking skills which will be a big help in interviews. Do volunteer work that exposes you to lots of people. Contact organizations such as **Habitat for Humanity** and **Rebuilding Together** [www.rebuildingtogether.org](http://www.rebuildingtogether.org) so that you volunteer your talented blue collar skills. This will keep you from getting "rusty" and at the same time you are helping important community organizations. (**Oakland CA Rebuilding Together** is [www.rtoakland.org](http://www.rtoakland.org) ). Keep going to union meetings. In general, split your Internet time and face to face time evenly. Get in touch with any former co-workers and bosses that treated you with respect when you worked with them. Remember job search success is often based on who you know and not on what you know!

### **4. STAY PHYSICALLY ACTIVE**

Physical activity causes the body to produce endorphins which are one of the chemicals that control mood and emotions. When you get laid off your level of physical activity declines substantially and so does your endorphin production. You become depressed not only psychologically from the job loss but also physically. Figure out how to get as much physical activity every day as possible. Park far away from a job resource and walk to it. Use stairs instead of elevators. Don't walk your dog – run with your dog. You won't be able to sustain a rejection-filled long job search or interview with a lot of energy without paying attention to increasing your endorphin production through exercise.

### **5. LEARN HOW TO JOB HUNT IN TODAY'S LABOR MARKET**

Employers don't hire the most qualified and skilled person. They hire the best job hunter. It's a huge mistake to assume you know all about job search because you got jobs in the past. This is the toughest time to job search since the 1930's. The average length of adult job search is six months! Job search techniques are skills you can learn. Check out [www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org) for the one-stops in your area. One-stops are employment resource centers with job listings, classes, counseling, support groups etc. They are all different and you should go to as many as possible to check them out. Take one-stop classes in interviewing, social networking and resume writing. Go to bookstores, the library and on-line and look at job search techniques. **Become as good at job search as you are at your trade and you will shorten your job search time!**

# MARIA

By Joanna Perry-Kujala, Electrician



There's a woman I used to work with named Maria and I loved to talk with her whenever I had the chance. We didn't speak the same language so communicating was difficult at times but connecting to each other was a piece of cake. She understood English well enough, but reading or choosing the right words to say was more of a challenge. Words like...there, their, and they're, confused her because they sound the same. Other vocabulary hurdles include the word sanguine which can either mean; hopeful, optimistic, or bloody, leaving her perplexed.

During one lunch break, Maria and her husband (who also worked there) related a story to me of how she had tried to adopt a dog. Her children are older and less dependent so she wanted a little puppy to cuddle, carry around, and make a fuss over. A trip to the library offered her volumes of information on purebreds, breeding standards, and other chapters she didn't quite grasp. She bookmarked some pictures she found of the size and fluffiness factor she had in mind. On a weekend she went down to an adoption center and found the person in charge. Thinking she was asking for a female dog, she opened her book, pointed to a photo, and blurted out, "I want a dog bitch". The woman yelled at Maria and she fled in humiliation. Later at home her children informed her of the mistake. She did not know the word "bitch" written in those books over and over, is a term usually only used by serious dog breeders or judges at dog shows.

I took four years of Spanish in high school but I didn't learn much. The first two years were mostly vocabulary words, verbs, and simple sentence construction. The next two years were a plain waste of time. The intermediate Spanish teacher (who was fluent in French, Spanish, German, and Portuguese) barely spoke any English. Our classes consisted of watching TV shows she taped (if I see *Saba do Gigante* one more time...) and taking group tests where everyone got an A.

My situation is almost opposite from Maria's. I can pick apart written phrases and read some words to eventually figure out a sentence but forget trying to have a conversation. I heard Maria speak to her co-workers and her rapid fire speech was just too overwhelming for my brain to compute. I just sat there and smiled. Occasionally we'd see each other in the hallways and I threw out a *hola* or a *buenos dias*. She taught me a few curse words and I told her she can yell "screw you" (she doesn't like to swear) or "darn" when she's mad. Except she kept saying "barn" and people looked at her funny.

One day I saw her struggling with an awkward load and I offered to open the door. I tried my key but the door wouldn't open. I figured the supply closets must be keyed differently so I reached for the keychain clipped to her belt and said, "Let me see your *juevos por favor*". She burst out laughing and proceeded to drop rolls of toilet paper onto the floor. I bent to retrieve them but I kept kicking them ahead of me accidentally. Then I had the giggles all the while stumbling to chase after runaway bath tissue. It must have been a sight to see but the people listening were not amused. We heard an office door slam shut because of our commotion. Maria quickly opened the door, kicked everything inside, and pushed me through followed by her. Behind a closed door we continued our hysteria in privacy.

I finally caught my breath and asked, "What the heck is so funny?!"

She gasped for air and dangled her keys in my face.

"*Llaves, llaves, keys!* You say *juevos*, you ask to see my balls!" she cried.

My face turned red and I sensed more waves of laughter threatening to emerge. We were surrounded by bathroom products like soap re-fills and seat guards plus the toilet paper we dropped. I felt like we were two little giggling schoolgirls hiding in the bathroom during recess.

She turns to me and says, "Your *juevos por favor*. That is for a man to say to, but maybe no having to say the *please*". Hey, I thought, Maria just kind of made a joke. It's true you probably wouldn't have to ask a man *please*. Anything even remotely sexual you ask of a man does not require manners and definitely does not need asking twice. If only that were true with household chores.

Maria and I may have struggled through a language barrier, but laughter sounds the same through any dialect. A different birthplace and culture does not outweigh what we have in common. My best friend since pre-school who lived five minutes away moved to Seattle so when I became friends with Maria it really did feel like one door closing and one door opening. I didn't have many friends growing up due to shyness so I cherish every friend I have like gold. In my adulthood the more people I meet, the richer I feel. And I'm glad to say that my mother was proud to know that when I asked to see someone's balls at work, at least I remembered to say *please*. © Joanna Perry-Kujala, Concord CA IBEW Local 302

## WOMAN CAN



Written 4-30-11 at the Blue Jean Writers Workshop  
Women Building CA & the Nation Conference

**WORKING JUST AS HARD & STRONG BUT  
OVERCOMING IT ALL**

**MEN STEP ASIDE, BECAUSE WE CAN  
ENDURE THE STRUGGLE AND PAIN!**

**NOTICE WE ARE HERE AND PRESENT!**

**CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE BUT,  
ALWAYS KEEP YOUR HEAD UP AND  
NEVER SAY NEVER!**

By Feria-Fernandez, Copyright 2011

## SAVE THE DATE...MAY 19-20, 2012

Women Building California and the Nation Conference at the Sheraton Grand hotel in Sacramento CA. This will be the 11<sup>th</sup> Statewide and 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference. It is sponsored by State Building and Construction Trades Council of California and the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO. The HOST COMMITTEE: TRADESWOMEN, INC. COME TO CALIFORNIA NEXT MAY!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5TNYw6ELOc>

Check out this video of Marta Schultz, Electrician and Comedian, at the 2011 Women Building CA & and Nation Conference in Oakland CA.

**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) PRIDE DONATIONS CAN BE MADE OUT TO W.I.N.T.E.R. (our fiscal agent) AND MAILED TO OUR ADDRESS. ("Picture Worth 1000 Words" at the bottom of this page is by tradeswoman/artist/photographer Vicky Hamlin. See her website at [www.victoriahamlin.com](http://www.victoriahamlin.com))

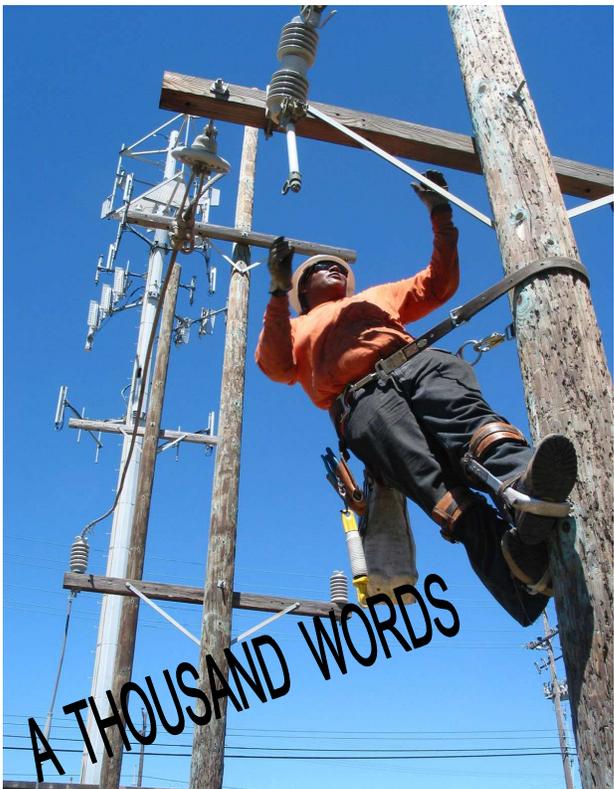
**EQUAL RIGHTS ADVOCATES San Francisco CA (Equal Rights and Economic Opportunities for Women and Girls)**

➔ For questions about your legal rights call the Advice and Counseling Line: 1-800-839-4372. ➔  
 You may leave a message at ANY time and a counselor will call you back. [www.equalrights.org](http://www.equalrights.org) for more info.

**Membership Mobilization Through Art.** Wed and Thurs Sept. 14 and 15, 2011. Two day workshop for union activists with **Labor Cartoonist Mike Konopacki** (Internationally syndicated labor cartoonist). Event held in Madison WI at the Pyle Center located at 702 Langdon Street (School for Workers). Lodging is available. Fee is \$375. Explore ways to tap the artistic talent within and among union members. Learn how to utilize the power of art. Email for more information. [schoolforworkers@uwex.edu](mailto:schoolforworkers@uwex.edu) (*Pride and a Paycheck* and *Blue Jean Pocket Writers Manuals* available at workshop!!)

**Tradeswomen Inc. Reception.**  
**Friday October 14, 2011.**  
 6:00 to 8:30 pm. UPTOWN BODY & FENDER,  
 401 26th St. Oakland, CA. (between Broadway  
 and Webster St.) Contact them for tickets and  
 sponsorship at  
[Celebration@tradeswomen.org](mailto:Celebration@tradeswomen.org) **SAVE THE DATE**

**From:** *Pride and a Paycheck*, Editor: Sue Doro  
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**A THOUSAND WORDS**

她可以做到

Thanks to  
 Chinese For Affirmation Action  
 for this translation.

**ELLA PUEDE**

**SHE CAN DO IT**