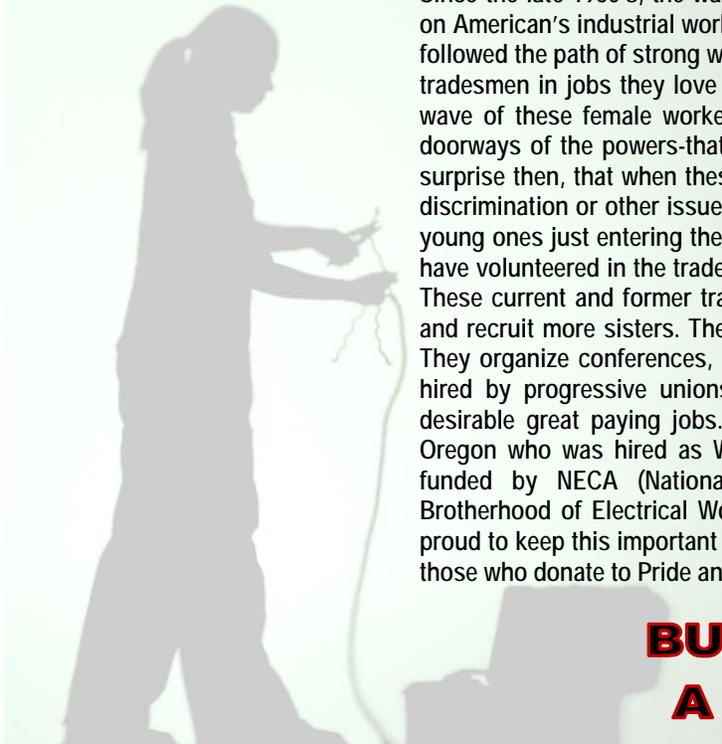


PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK

Women's Guide
to Blue Collar Jobs
Volume 15, # One
WINTER 2013



Since the late 1960's, the wave of women entering blue collar trades has made a unique imprint on American's industrial workforce. They are the sisters of the World War II "Rosies" who in turn followed the path of strong women throughout the ages struggling for the right to work alongside tradesmen in jobs they love and perform with excellence and pride. For forty years, wave after wave of these female workers have pushed open and shoved their steel toed boots into the doorways of the powers-that-be to let in the light that is the Tradeswomen movement! It's no surprise then, that when these smart and tough women retire or lose their jobs through layoffs, discrimination or other issues; they continue to support the sisters who remain as well as those young ones just entering the trades. Hundreds of these women through the country and beyond have volunteered in the tradeswomen organizations initiated by the sisters of the '70's and '80's. These current and former tradeswomen continue to volunteer their time and energy to support and recruit more sisters. They mentor and speak to students at schools and training programs. They organize conferences, workshops and pre-apprenticeship trainings...AND they have been hired by progressive unions and smart companies to recruit even more women into these desirable great paying jobs. One such tradesister is Bridget Quinn, a journey electrician in Oregon who was hired as Workforce Development Coordinator for a Portland training center funded by NECA (National Electrical Contractors Association) and IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers). NECA and IBEW have a nationwide relationship. We are proud to keep this important program supplied with bundles of Pride and the Paycheck thanks to those who donate to Pride and a Paycheck.

BUILDING AND ENGAGING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

By Bridget Quinn

In March of 2010 the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center hired me as the Workforce Development Coordinator. The creation of a full-time position to address membership diversity is a testament to the forward thinking of the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Trust, NECA, and IBEW Local 48.

I am a Journeyman Inside Wireman and have been a proud IBEW Local 48 member since 2003. My path to the electrical apprenticeship was by no means stream-lined. As is the case with most high school students, I thought that my only options after high school were college or low-wage jobs. After spending 4 years in college and accruing the associated debt, I discovered that the job that had me jumping out of bed each morning, eager to get to work, was my part-time job as a bicycle mechanic - mechanical, problem-solving work that had nothing to do with a desk or an office.

In my pursuit for more meaningful and less seasonal hands-on work, I visited the employment office where they suggested that I apply for a job opening as a saw filer. This led me to work for over a year in an environment that any OSHA inspector would love to stumble upon. Although I loved the fast pace, rhythm, and mechanical aspects of the work, sharpening carbide-tooth saw blades with no respiratory protection, and oxy-acetylene welding with no formal safety training, coupled with the not so great wages and lack of benefits had me wondering what else I could do. I remember sending cold letters to sheet metal fabrication companies, offering to start sweeping their floors and cleaning the place up if they would just teach me the trade. I remember reading the job classifieds one day on break and asking a co-worker what a "journeyman" was, as a job description for some sort of a trade had caught my interest. That co-worker did not know, and the mystery was not solved for me until a few years later. There must be so many other people out there who are unaware of the necessary process to get into a skilled trade. With my future still uncertain, the saw shop was sold to a business man who would not even acknowledge my daily "Good Morning" greeting, and I decided to look for brighter prospects.

I discovered the electrical industry when I was hired by chance by a non-union shop at the age of 25. The owner just happened to overhear me talking to a friend about how badly I needed work, and that I was going to go down to the day laborers office the following day. He told me to show up for work the next day. This was the best happenstance of my life, as once I had a glimpse into the industry I decided that I wanted nothing more than to become a journeyman electrician. He encouraged me to apply for the union, rather than the non-union program, and even drove me to the training center to pick up the information. I applied for and was accepted into the union apprenticeship at the age of 28.

(Continued on next page.)

Building and Engaging a Diverse Workforce (con't.)

While I will never regret my college education, I truly wish that I had discovered apprenticeship years earlier than I did. I am really passionate about changing the lack of awareness about apprenticeship opportunities within our young people, and within women who might otherwise overlook a male-dominated career option and minorities who may view construction as an unwelcoming industry.



Someone once told me that if you find a job that you love, you never work a day in your life. I could not agree more. I have had the opportunity to work on some exciting projects. The project that I loved the most was the building of a new patient care facility at OHSU. There is nothing more satisfying than watching a concrete foundation transform day by day over three years into a state-of-the-art healthcare facility. This project had me working on everything from wiring ten different operating rooms and several CAT scan vaults to those motion sensors that flush public toilets for you. Furthermore, I worked a large part of that job on a mostly female crew - my foreman was a woman and is now a good friend of mine.

Working in a male-dominated field has not always been easy. I have certainly had my moments of frustration. There were times when co-workers made the assumption that the only reason I kept my job through lay-offs was because I was a woman. Nothing frustrated me more than knowing my own worth as a hard worker and a meticulous electrician, only to have those merits disregarded because it was easier to see me as a gender rather than as a craftsman. There was one crew I worked on as an apprentice that involved a foreman and a journeyman who were buddies, and they loved to pick on me ceaselessly throughout the day. My stressful home life at the time was made all the worse by having to wake up each morning and go to that job which just the thought of exhausted me. Work could not be a haven from home and home could not be a haven from work. As tough as those incidences were, I am happy that I persevered and continued my apprenticeship to journey level status. The support and acknowledgment of my skills from the countless other foremen and journeymen I worked with was critical to my success. I can't emphasize enough how important it is that every crafts-worker out there, male or female, is acknowledged for their hard work and skill.

My outreach work has several main components. I like to connect with each and every woman and minority who has walked through our door and applied to our program. Every time we accept applications, I contact the women and minority applicants and connect them with support groups - the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus, Women of Local 48, and Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. I offer guidance throughout the entire application process, from portfolio review and aptitude test prep materials to interview tips and mock interviews. Those who do not pass the aptitude test, or who rank poorly in the interview, receive a letter from me with tips on making themselves a better candidate for our program, and I encourage them to take the steps to reapply. I often point them toward pre-apprenticeships such as Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (www.tradeswomen.net) and Constructing Hope (www.constructinghope.com). I also guide them in how to obtain entry-level jobs within the electrical industry so that when they reapply they are more qualified. I think that just being present for those who are interested in the electrical trade, showing that they are supported and that their demographic is a vital part of our industry can encourage and motivate these applicants to persevere in their work to become accepted as an apprentice.

I hold Wire-A-Light workshops in partnership with Oregon Tradeswomen and Constructing Hope. Each workshop day, we hold two workshops at Constructing Hope's facility, either in the evening or on the weekend - one for women of color and one for men of color. We provide information about the trade, how to qualify and apply, and then a hands-on bit where they get to try out the tools and wire up a light switch to a light. I try to have women and people of color who are current apprentices come in and talk about their experience in the trade and in the apprenticeship.

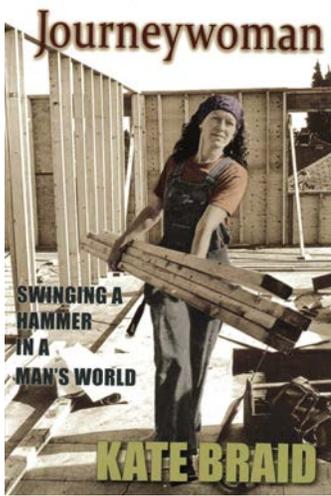
In addition to the off-site workshops, local High Schools, Oregon Tradeswomen, and Constructing Hope bring their classes on field trips to our training center where I talk about the trade and also do the hands-on workshop with them. I think just having a female electrician talk candidly about the trade is much more powerful than if it were a (albeit supportive) male. I sit on the planning committee for Oregon Tradeswomen, Ink's annual Women in Trades Career Fair which is a vital part of the entire construction industry's outreach approach.

Some people have trouble seeing the bigger picture. I hear a lot of arguments against bringing in too many new apprentices, and a lot of arguments against my recruitment efforts. The recent recession has generated a lot of fear and job insecurity within the building trades. While it is difficult to see past the economic slump and the hundreds of unemployed construction workers in recent years, we need to keep our eyes open to the future outlook and the challenges we face as an industry. Hiring is steadily increasing alongside technological advancements that require a skilled workforce. Couple that with the lack of interest or awareness about the building trades within our young people, and the retirements of the baby boomer generation, and we can see that our industry is facing a serious skilled worker shortage. The demographics of our population is roughly fifty-percent female and close to one-quarter minority. Even if we bid and win jobs, those jobs cannot be completed without a trained workforce. Recruiting women and minorities into our industry is critical, as is ensuring a welcoming environment so that those who are recruited are also retained and succeed in becoming Journey Workers.

In June 2012, IBEW Local 48's apprenticeship enrollment was 13% minority and 13.3% female. Compare that with the pen shop apprenticeship with 8.7% minority and 3% female enrollment.* As employees of NECA contractors, IBEW members know that by encouraging and fostering apprentice enrollment across Oregon and Washington's entire population is smart business practice. As an IBEW sister I can be proud of these numbers as a good start, and know that as a union IBEW strives to show that our Constitution's Declaration is a meaningful cause rather than simply a statement. I am proud to be able to serve my industry within the scope of workforce development. I am proud that NECA, IBEW, and the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center Trust see the value in this work and have been supportive in my efforts.

*Open shop data collected from Bureau of Labor & Industries for December 2011

**Find out where the nearest tradeswomen organization is in your area
to volunteer and help bring more sisters under the Tradeswomen umbrella!
Go to www.prideandapaycheck.com for a list organizations.**



Canadian Carpenter and Author Kate Braid's new work memoir: "**Journeywoman....Swinging A Hammer in a Man's World**" should be in every tradeswoman's **tool** library because it's more than a book. It's a favorite hammer and screw driver. It's a pickup truck full the fire, muscle and passion of a woman who not afraid to bare her soul and her private life just as forcefully and true as her hammer strikes. Kate is no visitor to life or construction site. She documents both with brave humor, love, energy and enthusiasm.

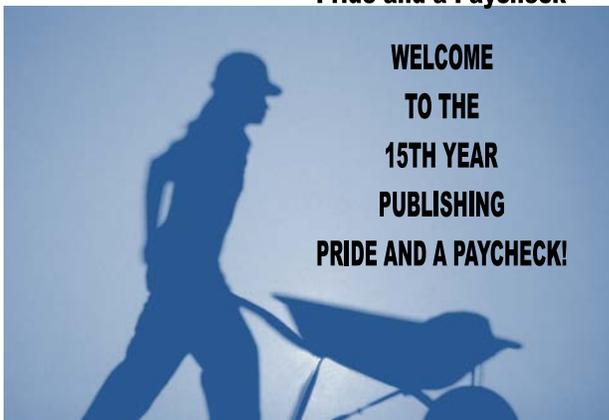
The best accolade I can offer to "Journeywoman" is that I didn't want it to end...I wanted MORE. When you read it I'm sure you'll agree and demand a sequel immediately! Kate is a carpenter of life! I thank her for sharing it with all of us!

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Sue Doro, Editor Pride and a Paycheck

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**Orgullo y Paga
Pride and a Paycheck**



**WELCOME
TO THE
15TH YEAR
PUBLISHING
PRIDE AND A PAYCHECK!**

Support the tradeswomen organizations that create and sell calendars for fund raising! Here are four of them!

IRONWORKER WOMEN CALENDAR

www.ironworkergear.com

TRADESWOMEN, INC. CALENDAR

www.tradeswomen.org (order through PayPal)

MISSOURI WOMEN IN THE TRADES:

www.missouriwomenintrades.org

ROSIE CALENDAR (Watching Women Soar)

www.wawomenintrades.com

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 Visit our website for tradeswomen resources in the US and beyond: www.prideandapaycheck.com Special thanks to Madeline Mixer, Larry Robbin, Railroad tradesister, Penny Artis, Ron Kaminkow, Joycelyn Robinson-Hughes, Jeanne Park, Joanna Perry-Kujala, Chantel Lewis, Joe Mixer, Melina Harris and Sisters in the Building Trades, Vicky Hamlin, Tradeswomen, Inc., WATT Woman Electricians of Houston Texas, Pat Williams, (our LA "connection"), and Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. We also want to thank the Northern CA Drywall Lathing Apprenticeship for their consistent support and donations through the years. This issue was mailed to schools and other training programs through their most recent donation!

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), Railroad Workers United (www.railroadworkersunited.org) as well as NAWIC (National Assoc. of Women in Construction) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) as well as a 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 San Francisco Foundation private grant thanks to Madeline Mixer. The Editor is solely responsible for the content of this newsletter. Printed by Fastprint, Oakland CA. Women in Non Traditional Employment Roles in Los Angeles CA is our fiscal agent.

PLEASE NOTE:

This is the first issue that relies on distribution primarily through our website and social networking. There will be no more single copy mailings, but schools and training programs will continue to receive bundles thanks to donations. Current and past issues of *Pride* are available on our website. We are determined to keep publishing and sharing tradesister' words of strength and solidarity. Help us by broadening the network! Please pass this on!

First Day On A New Job

My heart is racing I'm so nervous
Hoping that I don't make a mistake
I wonder if the foreman is a jerk
Is he gonna have low expectations
Because I'm a woman?

Are the people on the crew
Gonna be helpful
Or am I alone?

I just have to ask questions
Keep myself safe
As well as those working around me

Be a quick learner
Work smart and
Don't let nervousness take over

Have self-control!

© 2012 Lisa Madros, Laborers Local # 942
Fairbanks Alaska



What My Male Co-workers Think of Me!

I have been a laborer for 25 years, so I have been through generations of workers in the union. I have seen the good and bad. The men have a tendency to second guess you! You have to prove that you are capable to be able to handle the job. They try to intimidate you. Some will support you but they are few.

So I believe that the more they doubt the more I perform. Sometimes it's easier to absorb the knowledge around you (Look, Listen & Pay attention).

At the end of the day I can say I have performed the best that I can do. And usually have received their respect & if I haven't they are not worthy of it!

There isn't much a man can do that women can't other than piss over a car!

© 2012 Donna Laplante, Laborer's union LIUNA # 271
North Providence RI

Time

A day off
A precious time
It runs by so quickly

Why don't *work days* go by **as** fast?

Time is time
They say it waits for no **one**

You can get lost in time
You get moments in time
You can get lost in the moment
When **you're** in your zone

Doing something you enjoy
Can be blissful

Getting in this state of mind
Time can stop
And it can fly

I thought my watch broke
My first day back at work
After a three week vacation
The time dragged by so slowly

Today
This day off
This is my time
It belongs to me
Not the company

© 2012 Donna De Graaf-Smith,
Gary Indiana Steel Mill worker

The First Time I Thought About Being a Tradeswoman.....

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

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