On September 20, 2013, the New York Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) presented Local 79 Business Manager Mike Prohaska with the 2013 Trailblazers Award. The award, given during the NAACP’s annual Freedom Fund Gala, honors the work of leaders in New York City who work tirelessly to ensure equality and justice and improve the quality of life for workers and their families. In front of a crowd of hundreds of attendees, Prohaska spoke about the importance of the work of the NAACP and the ways in which the Laborers’ Union fights for the rights of all working people.

Excerpt from Mike Prohaska’s acceptance speech below:

“Local 79, the union of 9,000 Laborers I have been blessed with the honor to represent, is among the most racially diverse unions in the nation.

The Laborers’ Union and the NAACP are each filled with over 100 years of rich history, with countless achievements steeped in courage and determination.

So as we gather here tonight let us remember that the battle is not over, the job is not done. We must continue to fight back against those who would seek to take away the right to vote from fellow Americans.

Let us come together, men and women from every walk of life, every race, and every religion and let it be said 100 years from tonight that we were people who helped forge the history of this great nation. We faced adversity and rose to the occasion. We made it possible for working men and women to live, and not just dream the American Dream.”

Left: NAACP New York Branch President Randy Tucker, Jr., Business Manager Mike Prohaska, and GNY LECET Field Representative LaVon Chambers. Below: Business Manager Mike Prohaska and members of Local 79.

On Saturday, September 14, Laborers from Local 79 and Local 77-South Jersey teamed up with H.E.A.R.T. (Healing Emergency Aid Response Team) 9/11 to perform demolition work on a house belonging to Chief Petty Officer Colin Redy, USCG (ret.), a disabled Iraqi War veteran and 9/11 First Responder. H.E.A.R.T. 9/11 is an organization of first responders formed after the attack on the World Trade Center. The foreclosed house, which was donated to Redy and his family by Bayonne Community Bank, will be transformed by volunteer labor into a four-bedroom house for the six members of Redy’s family. H.E.A.R.T. 9/11, joined by Laborers and others, will return in two weeks to frame, sheetrock, insulate, and weatherproof the house.

Local 79 has sent volunteers to work with H.E.A.R.T. 9/11 in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, Hurricane Sandy, and the tornadoes in Oklahoma. Therefore, the work on the Redy house is just one of the many examples of the community spirit of members of Local 79 who, after putting in a week of honest, hard labor, devote a great deal of time to volunteer to assist those in need.
MESSAGE FROM BUSINESS MANAGER MIKE PROHASKA

During the month of August, I attended three conferences, all of which were of great significance to our membership and to the ongoing health of the unionized building trades.

The New York Tri-Fund Conference focused on the new federal health care law known as The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). LiUNA’s leadership did not support enactment of the ACA due to provisions that will result in increased costs for union trust funds and that will provide unfair advantages to non-union contractors who do not offer health care.

In a letter to Obama dated July 18, 2013, an excerpt of which follows, LiUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan summed up a number of the concerns about the costs of the ACA and how the ACA could impact market share: “The ACA imposes substantially higher costs on multi-employer funds and union members, while enabling non-union employers to continue escaping responsibility and shift their employees’ health insurance costs to the taxpayers. The law enables non-union contractors to avoid any cost for their employee health insurance, giving them a grossly unfair competitive edge. ACA does not require them to provide health insurance coverage for their employees. There is a “free rider penalty”; but even that small amount applies only to “large employers” and can be easily evaded by any employer.”

LiUNA remains committed to continuing its efforts to lobby the legislative and executive branch of the federal government regarding the unfair provisions of the ACA.

The Tri-Fund Conference was followed by the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, which held its 35th Annual Constitutional Convention. Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senator Charles Schumer, and NY State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli were among the speakers who addressed the Convention, which gives an indication of the critical role the Council plays in the economy and politics of New York State. President James Cahill, who along with all other officers was reelected to another term, spoke about the success of the Council since the last convention three years ago: “From prevailing wage to public-private partnerships, mandate relief to solar jobs, the State Building Trades has remained at the forefront of all of these issues. We recognize that we cannot win every battle; but as one of the most important players, we can influence most outcomes. Moving forward, we must continue to build our strengths and find ways to improve our weaknesses.” One of the outcomes of the convention was that the Constitution was changed to base representation on the number of members in a local, which will result in Local 79 having more representation in the Council.

Finally, the central topic of the New York City Building and Construction Trades Council Executive Board and Business Managers Conference was how the building trades can take preventive action now to retain market share when the current economic boom comes to an end. In addition to labor leaders, representatives of major construction firms like Turner and Tishman were present to put forth an 8-point program designed to ensure continued market share for the building and construction trades unions.

I hope all Local 79 members enjoy a prosperous, storm-free fall, surrounded by family, friends, and fellow Laborers!

Fraternally Yours,

Mike Prohaska

DUES NEWS

Monthly dues increased to $32 as of January 1, 2013 as per the LiUNA Constitution. Retiree dues are $8 per month. Dues payments must not go over two months without being paid or the member will be suspended. The readmission fee is $56 for every month that the dues payments are behind, plus $32 for the current month.

REMEMBER: Members’ Union Book numbers must be written on their checks or money orders when paying dues by mail.

LiUNA! feel the power

Like us on facebook: Laborers Local 79 – New York City

* Para leer la información traducida al español, ir a las páginas 6 y 7

OUT-OF-WORK LIST
RE-REGISTRATION NOTICE

All persons on Local 79’s Job Referral List must re-register for the list during the first five business days of each quarter to maintain their position on the list. The next re-registration period will be: January 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8, 2014.

Local 79 News is published regularly by:

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An affiliate of the Mason Tenders District Council of Greater New York and Long Island, LiUNA; the New York City Central Labor Council; the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York; and the New York State AFL-CIO.
Local 79 continues to play a major role in Build Up NYC, the coalition of over 200,000 union men and women who are advocating for a stronger and more vibrant middle-class through safe and responsible development.

On July 24, over 40 elected officials, including the Speaker of the New York City Council, Christine Quinn, and a number of Council members, met at the offices of the Building and Construction Trades to be briefed on the Build Up NYC campaign. Numerous members of the building trades and 32BJ SEIU forcefully made the case that when New York City offers tax incentives, abatements, and/or land to developers, developers should not be allowed to enter into contracts with unscrupulous contractors who pay sub-standard wages and jeopardize the safety of their workers. Among the people who spoke was Loretta Swindell, a member of Local 79. Ms. Swindell spoke about the importance of Local 79 to her life: “Before I got into the union, something as simple as buying a Christmas gift for my children or grandchildren was beyond my means.” The Build Up NYC campaign, with its emphasis on responsible, safe development, wants to see Loretta’s story duplicated over and over again by ensuring that jobs that receive any form of public funding must be jobs that provide a middle-class income and protect the safety of workers and the quality of construction. The next step will be asking the legislature to introduce and pass legislation that will help Build Up NYC reach its goals.

This July 24 meeting was followed on July 31 by a Build Up NYC rally in front of Brooklyn’s Borough Hall, where hundreds of union workers, including a strong showing of Local 79 members, protested the awarding of contracts for the Brooklyn Bridge Park development. Anthony Williamson, an organizer for Local 79, set the tone for the rally by repeatedly asking the crowd whether it was ready to fight for responsible development, to which the crowd resoundingly responded, “Yes!” Local 79’s Director of Organizing, Chaz Rynkiewicz, introduced a number of workers and politicians who spoke about the development, its long-term sustainability due to climate change, and the questionable construction standards and practices that will result in shoddy construction and sub-standard wages. New York State Senator Daniel Squadron, who has aligned himself squarely with the goals of Build Up NYC, made it crystal clear why he was disappointed with the how the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation awarded contracts to unscrupulous developers: “When building in a public space, you need to make sure you are building up New York City, not tearing it down.”

Build UP NYC, with the support of Local 79 and other unions, will continue to organize opposition to the Brooklyn Bridge Park development and will continue to advocate for good, middle class jobs throughout all the boroughs of New York City.

At a dinner on the evening of Saturday, September 21, Local 79 Latino workers honored Local 79 Business Manager Mike Prohaska, Business Agent Louis Montalvo, Membership Coordinator Juan Mazyulman, LEROF Director of Organizing David Johnson, and Local 79 member Luis Murillo for their organizing efforts in the successful demolition campaign of 1996. Hundreds of demolition workers cheered as the honorees received plaques commemorating the leadership role they played in organizing over 1200 formerly unorganized workers and for their ongoing efforts on behalf of Latino workers.
Where did you attend high school?
Samuel Gompers Career and Technical High School, where I was studying Auto-CAD, with the hopes of maybe one day becoming an architect.

What did you do after graduating?
I started to work at a storage facility and, until I couldn’t afford it, went to BMCC. I worked at the storage facility for five years, became a manager, and was making $12.00 an hour at the end. I didn’t see a whole lot of future in that.

How did you get interested in becoming a Laborer?
A guy with a hardhat came into the storage facility and I got to talking with him about what he did. He suggested that I research applying to the Laborers’ apprenticeship program, which I did. It sounded like it would be difficult work, and I liked the idea of the challenge. As to the money, I had no clue when I applied.

And then what?
I applied and then gave up hope because I didn’t hear back for a long time. Almost a year later, I received a letter inviting me for an interview. I went in for the interview with Apprentice Coordinator Timmy Warrington. He came down pretty hard on me, asking me, among many other things, what kind of experience I had in the industry. I had none, and I wasn’t going to lie, so I gave up hope again. But then much to my surprise, I received a call that I had been accepted.

How was the initial three-week training?
I absolutely loved it. The instructors were the best. They prepared us well for the workplace: we learned about the actual work, the physical demands, but also about how to take directions from others and learn. But not earning any money for those three weeks was not so great. Luckily, I had saved enough money from my previous job to get me through that and buy my book.

How do you like being a Laborer? Are there special challenges that face a woman Laborer?
It’s been life changing. I like to joke that I get paid to work out. But really, it’s hard work. As a woman, I have something to prove and I have earned respect from my co-workers and supervisors because I am a hard worker and constantly trying to learn new things. In fact, a lot of my co-workers tell me that I work harder than most men. I really think more women should become Laborers.

Any downside to it?
Well, I get off of work at 3:30, take the train home to the Bronx, and am usually in bed around 5:00. Luckily, I’m not a party animal, but if you are, this job is not for you.

What are your future goals?
I’m well on my way to becoming a journey worker, and I hope to make a good enough impression that a company will bring me on full-time. I want to own a house, not rent, but I know that I am not touching my annuity to do that! And then, after working for a number of years, I want to work for the Local as an organizer or a business agent.

Any advice for fellow apprentices or those who might wish to be apprentices?
Work hard. Respect others. You need the job, the job doesn’t need you!

UNION PLUS: BENEFITS FOR LiUNA MEMBERS

The AFL-CIO created Union Privilege in 1986 to provide union members and their families with a variety of benefits. All members of LiUNA, and in many cases their family members, are eligible for valuable, discounted products and free or discounted services. In addition, Union Plus offers free debt counseling, financial assistance, health information, mortgages, and college scholarships (applications due January 31, 2014) and much more. Members can access the full range of benefits by going to www.unionplus.org and registering on the site as a member of LiUNA. Union Plus materials are also available at the Local 79 office.

RETIREESE SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, October 18, 2013
Foxwoods, CT

Friday, November 15, 2013
Mohegan Sun, CT

Wednesday, December 4, 2013
Retiree Holiday Party, Russo’s on the Bay

Please call Melissa Siciliano at 212-465-7976 to RSVP for any of the above events or to receive further information. Please note that each member can bring only one guest for each of these events.
Please be aware that you will not be dispatched as a shop steward in 2014 unless you have completed the following courses:

- OSHA (4 hours)
- Scaffold User (4 hours)
- Fall Protection (4 hours)
- VOICE (4 hours)
- Shop Steward Certification Course (8 hours)

If you have completed all of these courses in the past, in order to maintain your eligibility as a shop steward, you must keep your certifications current as follows:

- OSHA (refresh every five years)
- Scaffold User (refresh every four years)
- Shop Steward Refresher Course (refresh every two years)

In addition to the above, shop stewards are encouraged to attend monthly membership meetings and any shop steward meetings.

Please note the following: Starting January 1, 2014, you will not be dispatched as a shop steward until you have fulfilled your mandatory member participation day for 2013.
En una cena que tuvo lugar el 21 de septiembre, trabajadores latinos del Local 79 rindieron homenaje a Mike Prohaska, Gerente Comercial del Local 79, Louis Montalvo, Agente Comercial, Juan Mazylmian, Coordinador de Membría, David Johnson, Director de Organización de LEROF, y Luis Murillo, miembro del Local 79, por sus esfuerzos de organización durante la exitosa campaña de demolición de 1996. Cientos de trabajadores de demolición aplaudieron cuando los homenajeados recibieron placas conmemorativas de la función de liderazgo que han desempeñado en la organización de más de 1,200 trabajadores que antes no estaban organizados y por sus esfuerzos a favor de los trabajadores latinos.

El Cónsul General del Ecuador Jorge López con el Gerente Comercial Mike Prohaska.

El 20 de septiembre de 2013, la sucursal neoyorquina de la Asociación Nacional para el Avance de las Personas de Color (NAACP) otorgó al gerente comercial del Local 79, Mike Prohaska, el premio Pioneros/Trailblazers Award 2013. Esta distinción, otorgada durante la cena de gala anual para el Fondo Libertad de la NAACP, reconoce la labor de los líderes de la ciudad de Nueva York que trabajan incansablemente para garantizar la igualdad y la justicia y mejorar la calidad de la vida de los trabajadores y de sus familias. Frente una multitud de centenares de asistentes, Prohaska habló de la importancia de la labor de la NAACP y de las maneras en que el Sindicato de Trabajadores lucha en pos de los derechos de todos los trabajadores.

Estos son algunos ejemplos del discurso de aceptación de Mike Prohaska: "El Local 79, el sindicato de 9,000 Trabajadores que tengo la bendición y el honor de representar, es uno de los sindicatos con mayor diversidad racial de toda la nación. Hemos hecho posible que hombres y mujeres trabajen para vivir, y no sólo sueñen el sueño americano".

INFORMACIÓN Y ALERTA PARA DELEGADOS SINDICALES

Tenga en cuenta que no se lo enviará como delegado sindical en el 2014 a menos que haya completado los cursos siguientes:

- OSHA (4 horas)
- Scaffold User - Usuario de andamios (4 horas)
- Fall Protection - Protección contra caídas (4 horas)
- VOICE (4 horas)
- Curso de Certificación de Delegado Sindical (Shop Steward) (8 horas)

Si ha completado todos estos cursos en el pasado, a fin de mantener su elegibilidad como delegado sindical, debe mantener sus certificaciones al día como sigue:

- OSHA (se renueva cada cinco años)
- Scaffold User - Usuario de andamios (se renueva cada cuatro años)
- Curso de Certificación de Delegado Sindical (Shop Steward) (se renueva cada dos años)

Además de lo anterior, se alienta a los delegados sindicales a asistir tanto a las reuniones mensuales de miembros como a las de delegados sindicales.

Tenga en cuenta lo siguiente: A partir del 1 de enero de 2014, no se lo despachará como delegado sindical hasta que haya cumplido con su día de participación obligatoria como miembro en el 2013.
Durante el mes de agosto asistí a tres conferencias, todas ellas de gran importancia para nuestra membresía y para mantener la salud de los oficios de la construcción sindicalizados.

La New York Tri-Fund Conference se dedicó a la nueva ley federal de atención de salud conocida como la Ley de Cuidado de Salud a Bajo Precio (“ACA” por sus siglas en inglés). El liderazgo de LiUNA no apoyó la promulgación de la ACA debido a las disposiciones que darían lugar a incrementos de costos para los fondos fiduciarios del sindicato y que darán ventajas injustas a los contratistas no sindicalizados que no ofrecen atención de salud.

En una carta dirigida al Presidente Obama con fecha del 18 de julio de 2013, de la cual transcribimos un pasaje, el Presidente General de LiUNA Terry O’Sullivan resumió una serie de preocupaciones relacionadas con los costos de la ACA y la manera en que esta podría afectar la participación en el mercado: “La ACA impone costos considerablemente más elevados a los fondos destinados para varios empleadores y a los miembros del sindicato, al mismo tiempo que permite que los empleadores no sindicalizados sigan evadiendo la responsabilidad y deriven los costos del seguro médico de sus empleados a los contribuyentes. La ley permite que los contratistas no sindicalizados eviten todo costo relacionado con el seguro médico de sus empleados, dándoles así una ventaja competitiva totalmente injusta. La ACA no les exige proveer cobertura de seguro médico para sus empleados. Hay una “multa de polizón”, pero incluso esa pequeña suma se aplica solamente a “empleadores grandes” y puede ser evadida fácilmente por cualquier empleador”.

LiUNA mantiene su compromiso de continuar sus esfuerzos para presionar al poder legislativo y ejecutivo del gobierno federal con respecto a las cláusulas injustas de la ACA.

La Conferencia Tri-Funds fue seguida por el Consejo de Oficios de la Construcción y Edificación del Estado de Nueva York, que celebró su 35ta Convención Constitucional Anual. El gobernador Andrew Cuomo, el senador Charles Schumer y el contralor del estado de NY Thomas DiNapoli fueron algunos de los oradores que se dirigieron a la Convención, lo que da una idea del papel fundamental que desempeña el Consejo en la economía y la política del Estado de Nueva York. El presidente James Cahill, que fue reelegido a otro mandato junto con otros funcionarios, habló del éxito del Consejo desde la última convención que tuvo lugar hace tres años: “Desde el salario vigente a las asociaciones público-privadas, el mandato de participar en actividades de socorro hasta los empleos relacionados con la energía solar, el Consejo de Oficios de la Construcción del Estado se ha mantenido a la vanguardia de todas estas cuestiones. Somos conscientes de que no podemos ganar todas las batallas; pero por ser uno de los actores más importantes, podemos influenciar la mayoría de los resultados.

Con miras al futuro, debemos seguir apuntalando nuestras fortalezas y encontrar maneras de mejorar nuestras debilidades”. Uno de los resultados de la convención es que se ha modificado la Constitución a fin de basar la representación en el número de miembros de un local, lo cual significa que el Local 79 aumentará su representación en el Consejo.

Por último, el tema central de la Conferencia de la Junta Ejecutiva y los Gerentes Comerciales del Consejo de Oficios de la Construcción y Edificación del Estado de Nueva York fue cómo dichos oficios pueden ahora adoptar medidas preventivas para conservar su participación en el mercado cuando llegue a su término el auge económico actual. Además de los dirigentes sindicales, se contó con la presencia de representantes de las principales firmas de construcción como Turner y Tishman a fin de establecer un programa de 8 puntos destinado a garantizar la participación continua en el mercado para los sindicatos de edificación y construcción. “¡Espero que todos los miembros del Local 79 disfruten de una temporada de otoño próspera y sin tormentas, rodeados de sus familias, amigos y compañeros sindicales!”

Los saluda fraternalmente,

Mike Prohaska

MIEMBROS DEL LOCAL 79 SE PRESENTAN PARA CONSTRUIR LA CASA DE UN VETERANO

El sábado 14 de septiembre, trabajadores del Local 79 y del Local 77-South Jersey formaron equipo con H.E.A.R.T. (equipo de respuesta de ayuda en casos de emergencia) 9/11 para realizar trabajos de demolición de una casa que pertenece al Suboficial Colin Redy, USCG (ret.), un veterano discapacitado de la Guerra de Irak y voluntario de primera respuesta en 9/11. H.E.A.R.T. 9/11 es una organización de voluntarios de primera respuesta que se formó después del ataque al World Trade Center. La casa que se perdió en un juicio hipotecario, que había sido donada a Redy y su familia por el Bayonne Community Bank, será transformada por trabajo de voluntarios en una casa de cuatro habitaciones para los seis miembros de la familia Redy. H.E.A.R.T. 9/11, integrada por Trabajadores del sindicato y otras personas, regresará en dos semanas para instalar el armazón, el sheetrock, el aislante y la impermeabilización de la casa.
ON EQUAL TERMS CELEBRATES WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

On Equal Terms is a multi-media exhibition that celebrates tradeswomen and the experience of being a woman who works in construction and the skilled trades. The exhibition, which coincides with the 35th anniversary of federal affirmative action policies that opened apprenticeships and construction jobs to women, includes audio, poetry, personal witness, artifacts, and 3-D mixed media. It was created by Susan Eisenberg, who was one of the first women in the country to achieve journey-level status as a union electrician.

Where: Clemente Soto Velez Cultural & Educational Center, Abazo Interno Gallery
107 Suffolk Street, NYC, NY 212-260-4080
When: Open daily through November 1, 3:30-7:00 pm.

Note: Gallery on 2nd floor, accessible only by stairs.