



**Construction & General Building
Laborers' Local 79**
520 8th Avenue, Suite 679
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Phone: 212-465-7900 Fax: 212-465-7903

RETIREE NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2018

LOCAL 79 NEWS

CONSTRUCTION & GENERAL BUILDING LABORERS



BUILDING TRADES RALLY TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY

THOUSANDS OF BUILDING TRADES MEMBERS UNITED TOGETHER IN NOVEMBER TO SHOW THEIR UNION SOLIDARITY. THE "COUNT ME IN!" MOVEMENT HAS GENERATED A TIDAL WAVE OF ORGANIZING energy throughout the city. Gary LaBarbera, President of the Building Trades, and other Business Managers rallied rank-and-file members against the greed of NYC developers. Business Manager Bobby Bonanza of the Mason Tenders District Council reminded the crowd that the strength of our unions lies in the activism of our membership. Our own Business Manager Mike Prohaska gave the crowd a history lesson on the meaning of solidarity and vowed that the union movement will never stop fighting. All in attendance agreed with the refrain, "Open Shop is a Broken Shop."

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MEDICAL PLAN!

The Mason Tenders Welfare Fund no longer will require copayment for in-network outpatient mental health and substance abuse services. The fund also expanded its coverage to include treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Business Manager Mike Prohaska added, "I am proud that our welfare fund continually strives to improve the services provided to our members. Not only do our individual members have access to these medical benefits, but so do their families." If you seek confidential assistance with substance abuse services, contact Local 79's Membership Assistance Program at 646-265-5674.

LEARN MORE > www.mtdctrustfunds.org

UPCOMING EVENTS 2018

Call Melissa Siciliano at
212-465-7976 to RSVP

March 16 at 8am
Sands Casino & Resort
77 Sands Blvd, Bethlehem, PA

April 20 at 8am
Tropicana Casino & Resort
2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ

May 3 at 11am
Baseball Outing
Citi Field, Queens, NY

May 11 at 12pm
Retiree Spring Luncheon
Marina del Rey, Bronx, NY

May 12 at 11am
Health Fair
Coleman Day Camp, Merrick, NY



LOCAL 79 MEMBERS RESPOND TO THOSE IN NEED ACROSS THE COUNTRY

LOCAL 79 MEMBERS CONTINUED A LONG TRADITION OF OUR UNION GIVING BACK TO COMMUNITIES IN NEED.

In the aftermath of hurricanes wreaking havoc across our country, Local 79 members were first-responders to natural disasters in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico. Through the Heart 9/11 initiative, union members rebuilt homes and revitalized key infrastructure. In Texas, members repaired the home of a LiUNA Local 154 retiree and Purple Heart Veteran. In Puerto Rico, Local 79 and other Eastern Region members provided emergency relief in areas where many of our members have family. Meanwhile, hundreds of Local 79 members and their families walked across the Coney Island Boardwalk in support of St. Mary's Children Hospital, raising \$15,000 for the day and over \$420,000 in total since fundraising began.

www.local79.org

DUES NEWS
Member Dues: **\$37/month**
Retiree Dues: **\$8/month**

REMINDER: Dues payments must not go over two months without being paid or the member will be suspended.

The Local 79 Executive Board received a variance from LiUNA International to freeze dues for the year 2018.

Make Sure Your Address is Up to Date!

All Local 79 Retirees are reminded to check that the Local has your correct address information. Otherwise, you may miss notifications about important updates. If you have any questions about your status, please contact the Dues Department.

TRUST FUNDS SUMMARY

Members should feel secure knowing that their Pension Fund is currently 104.1% funded compared to 102% the year before. The Medical/Welfare Fund also has reserves of over 20 months while still delivering high-quality benefits to the membership.

LOCAL 79 EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Mike Prohaska, Business Manager
- Kenneth Brancaccio, President
- John Norbury, Vice President
- George Zecca, Secretary-Treasurer
- Joe Cestaro, Recording Secretary
- Chaz Rynkiewicz, Sergeant-at-Arms
- Anthony Vita, Executive Board member
- Jose Andino, Executive Board member
- Luis Montalvo, Auditor
- Anthony Williamson, Auditor
- Barrie Smith, Auditor

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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.

  Follow us on Facebook & Twitter

Contact information, events calendar, news, and general information can be found at www.local79.org

**MESSAGE FROM
BUSINESS MANAGER
MIKE PROHASKA**

I always look forward to celebrating the many accomplishments of our great local and remembering our many successes.

Our membership worked 11.7 million hours in 2017. Every member in Local 79 always does their part and that is why we continue to be the powerhouse that we are.

On a sadder note, I regret to inform you that Dr. James Melius, best known as Dr. Jim, passed away on January 10th. A true working-class hero, Dr. Jim was a medical expert that supervised the medical care of first responders after the World Trade Center attacks. I am proud to have been appointed to serve as a trustee by LiUNA General Secretary-Treasurer Armand Sabitoni on the New York State Laborers Tri-Funds while Dr. Jim was an administrator there. He was a true friend to both me and the labor movement, and his legacy will surely live on.

In an important development, the executive board and I are proud to announce that we will soon be closing on the purchase of a commercial condominium, which will ultimately become the new home of Local 79. The new office space will better serve our growing membership with easy access to all public transportation and up-to-date technology systems.

I am also happy to report about a recent letter I received from the Secretary-Treasury Department of LiUNA that praised Local 79 for an excellent financial audit.

Over the last few months, I have been greatly inspired by the activism of our members in fighting against the broken shop model. It reminds me of an inspirational story of how the Solidarity movement began in Poland. In a cold dreary Polish shipyard in 1980, a young woman named Anna was fired for illegally belonging to a union. It was five months before she could retire. The workers in that shipyard laid their tools down and walked out in support of Anna. One month later, a union called SOLIDARITY was formed. In a year, the union had over 10 million members. It all started because workers in the shipyard stuck together over the mistreatment of their co-worker.

Solidarity is the lifeblood of the New York City Building Trades. It starts on the jobsite where we trust our brother or sister to work safe and smart. We know that our lives are at risk everyday, and our best insurance is knowing that our union has got our backs.

I assure you that the top priority continues to be fighting for our future prosperity, and with the most active membership of any Building Trades local, we are sure that we will succeed.

In solidarity,



**LABORERS EMERGE VICTORIOUS
IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS**

Union voices were heard this election cycle. Membership mobilization against the Constitutional Convention defeated a measure that threatened to erase many of the protections for union members in New York.

In a sign of true solidarity, unionists of all types came together to knock on doors and explain what was at risk. The final vote was an overwhelming success with 83% of voters in New York voting no to Proposition 1.

In another huge success, Intro 1447 was passed unanimously by the City Council providing needed safety training for every NYC construction worker. Our last newsletter told about how Local 79 members joined with others in the Building Trades to organize civil disobedience, vigils and mass rallies in memory of lives lost too early. Due to their activism, the eyes of New York City were opened to the epidemic of construction deaths.

Finally, in another important victory, Governor Cuomo announced that union dues will be tax deductible for all state workers. Thanks to Governor Cuomo, New York maintains a stronghold for good union jobs.



**LOCAL 79 CONCLUDES
SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS**

After several months of negotiations, Local 79 agreed with the Contractors Association of Greater New York (CAGNY) to a new three-year contract. As a result, Local 79 became the only union in the city signed with CAGNY.

Business Manager Mike Prohaska stated that “our agreement is a fair deal that allows us to continue our productive relationship with CAGNY and gives us a great opportunity to expand our residential market share.” He added that with many projects starting in 2018, the contract will keep our local well positioned in the commercial and public sectors.

Additionally, all contractors signed to independent agreements remained signatories. One contractor attempted to not re-sign and,

in response, over 50 organizers and business agents, as well as E-Board members and retirees, were in the street calling for a fair contract all over the city. After eight days of aggressive street actions, union solidarity won the day and a new contract was signed.

Director of Organizing & Sergeant-at-Arms Chaz Rynkiewicz concluded, “Wrapping up another successful year of contract negotiations is further testament to the power of Local 79. Our membership continually proves itself to be the best out there.”



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM
THE RETIREE HOLIDAY PARTY**