



**Construction & General Building
Laborers' Local 79**
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RETIREE NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2019

LOCAL 79 NEWS

CONSTRUCTION & GENERAL BUILDING LABORERS



GEORGE ZECCA RETIRES AS SECRETARY-TREASURER

AFTER MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO OUR UNION, THE RETIREMENT OF SECRETARY-TREASURER GEORGE ZECCA WAS HONORED AT OUR JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING . WE THANK GEORGE FOR ALL HE HAS DONE.

George began his career thirty-three years ago mixing mortar. He joined our Organizing Department in 1999 and was selected to be a Business Agent one year later. From 2012 to 2015, George was the President of the NYC Building Trades' Manhattan Board of Business Agents. After 10 years serving as an Auditor of our Executive Board, George became our Secretary-Treasurer in 2015. A careful and shrewd steward of the local's treasury, he played a crucial role in our purchase of a new office condominium as our future union hall. "I am grateful to have a long and fulfilling career as a Local 79 member and as a leader of our union," said George before he retired. "If there is one thing I learned, it is that the best way to do well in our industry is to let your work speak for itself. I look forward to the future memories I will share with my fellow retirees and all the members of our great and powerful union."

MEMBERS CAN ACCESS LEGAL SERVICES!

Remember that our local sponsors a dues-financed Legal Services Plan which covers eligible participants for many types of legal matters, including coverage for family and matrimonial matters, residential real estate transactions, personal bankruptcies, disputes with your landlord, the drafting of simple wills, 8 hours per year for immigration matters and consultations on many other legal issues. The Plan's Legal Services Director is Mike Prohaska, who administers the plan as a Trustee along with Kenneth Brancaccio and Toni-Lyn Riccardi as appointed by the Executive Board. We are pleased this important benefit can provide additional security for you and your family. Each of you should have a booklet which describes the eligibility rules, the benefits to which you are entitled, your rights, and other important information about the plan.

LEARN MORE > <http://www.local79.org/member-services/>

UPCOMING EVENTS 2019

Call Melissa Siciliano at
212-465-7976 to RSVP

April 26 at 8am
Atlantic City Casino & Resort
2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ

May 11 at 10am
Day of Fun at Coney Island
W 19th St. & Boardwalk, Brooklyn

May 17 at 12pm
Retiree Spring Luncheon
Marina del Rey, Bronx, NY

May 23 at 1pm
Baseball Outing
Citi Field, Queens, NY

June 26 at 1pm
Baseball Outing
Yankee Stadium, Bronx, NY



LABORERS LOCAL 79 LOOKS FORWARD TO MOVING INTO THE NEW UNION HALL

AFTER PURCHASING A NEW COMMERCIAL CONDOMINIUM ON THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH FLOOR OF 131 W 33RD ST, Local 79 anticipates moving into our new union hall this coming fall. The new space is a short-walk from the Mason Tenders Trust Funds and is in a central transportation hub right next to Penn Station. According to Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth Brancaccio, "Our new union hall was an essential investment to continue to best serve our growing membership. After finalizing our plans, we are excited to move into a top-of-the-line space and cannot wait for everyone to come into our new home, which will of course be built and serviced with 100% union labor."

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 2019.

Consider Before Joining Medicare Prescription Plan

All Local 79 Retirees are reminded that joining the Medicare Prescription Plan will result in you and your family no longer receiving any Welfare Plan benefits, especially watch out for auto-enrollment by your healthcare provider. The choice is up to you, but rest assured our OptumRx prescription plan is considered a creditable coverage.

TRUST FUNDS SUMMARY


Members should feel secure knowing their Pension Fund is currently 107.1% funded and the Medical/Welfare Fund has reserves of over 24 months as of the end of the 2018 calendar year, while trustees continue to focus on improving benefits to the membership.

LOCAL 79 EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Mike Prohaska, Business Manager
- Anthony Vita, President
- John Norbury, Vice President
- Kenneth Brancaccio, Secretary-Treasurer
- Joe Cestaro, Recording Secretary
- Barrie Smith, Sergeant-at-Arms
- Chaz Rynkiewicz, Executive Board member
- Jose Andino, Executive Board member
- Luis Montalvo, Auditor
- Anthony Williamson, Auditor
- Kenneth Robinson Jr., 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 am proud to report that our local worked an all-time record amount of 12.5 million hours this past year. This is a result of the collective hard-work and dedication of our membership.

Local 79 members can now look forward to another year of improved benefits. After assessing our pension’s financial solvency, the trustees and I decided to put the surplus funds into our members’ pockets. Starting January 1st, most journeyworkers are eligible to see an increase in their pension accrual rate from \$12.50 to \$14.00 per credit when they retire. Additionally, we earmarked another 25 cents for each member’s annuity due to surpluses in our training fund.

We also have taken steps to protect the well-being of retiree health benefits. Most recently, we instituted a new rule beginning April 1st that a new retiree is eligible for health benefits only if they have 20 plus years of credited service and were an active member for 7 of the last 10 years. This new rule has no direct impact on active retirees, except for the assurance that our funds will continue to provide quality health coverage to our membership.

It brought me pride and sorrow to announce George Zecca’s retirement at our last membership meeting. George is a true friend to many of us and is widely known as a dedicated and true leader. He leaves our union well prepared for continued prosperity and I am confident all in new Executive Board positions are up to the task.

Despite the strength of unions in New York, there is trouble brewing in our nation’s federal courts with new anti-union justices appointed by President Trump. For a long time powerful corporate interests have been waging political warfare against us and have turned their focus to the judicial branch. Reversing previous precedent, the National Labor Relations Board ruled in January that SuperShuttle drivers were independent contractors and not able to organize a union. These rulings pose a direct threat to workers’ ability to exercise their 1st amendment rights and organize through collective action. Remember, elections have consequences.

This is a pivotal time in our country, but I am not afraid, because we control our own destiny. “Count Me In” and other worker-led movements throughout the country are sending a strong message that when we unite together in solidarity we can overcome any foe that stands in our way. Thanks to members like you, Local 79 continues to be the greatest local in the greatest city in the world.

In solidarity,


Mike Prohaska



DEMOCRATS CONTROL STATE, PUBLIC WORKS BILL EXPECTED

In a resounding victory, Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York Democrats took control of the State Senate in the November elections for the first time since 2010. Thanks to the efforts of Local 79 members, we now have many pro-labor elected officials with proven track-records of fighting for worker rights in the highest offices of our state.

One of the most current important pieces of legislation introduced is the Public Works bill. This legislation was not passed in the last Republican-controlled Senate but is now a clear priority for the legislature with many sponsors in both the Senate and Assembly.

On January 9th, the opening day of the state capitol, hundreds of rank-and-file “Count Me In” Building Trades activists took over the building and demanded public responsibility for public money. Our members know that the expansion of prevailing wage will deliver justice to thousands of working-class construction workers that build projects tied to taxpayer money. We expect to see legislation passed by the state budget deadline on April 1st.

In the weeks before the last election, Business Manager Mike Prohaska reminded the membership, “Everyone must decide what is most important. When I was sworn in as a Business Manager, I made an oath to grow and strengthen this union. My personal feelings about any issue take a backseat to my union book. We need to do what we have to do for our union so that we can put food on our tables.”



MAJOR CONTRACTOR SIGNED, APPRENTICES AID ORGANIZING

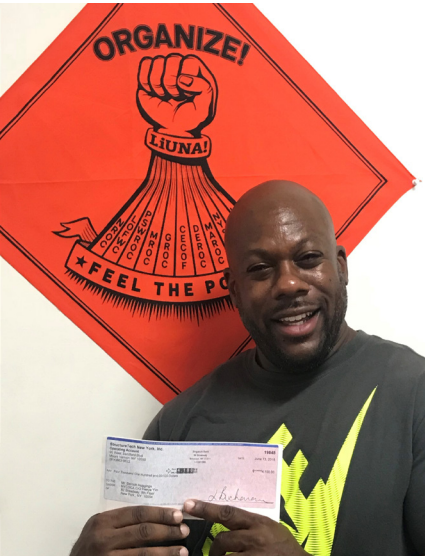
The construction market is reaching astronomical levels. “Still,” commented President Anthony Vita, “we know that boom markets do not last forever. That is why our organizers and business agents are hitting the streets all over the city and protecting our jurisdictional work.”

In a major victory, we reached an agreement with Suffolk Construction, a major non-union general contractor, to become part of the Building Contractors Association of New York.

Over the years, Local 79 has been instrumental in putting millions of dollars of stolen wages in workers’ pockets. Our worker outreach efforts counteract exploitation and educates the larger workforce about the power of the union in improving conditions.

One recent initiative started by Local 79’s Organizing Department is to work with new apprentices that have recent non-union construction experience. After talking to an Eastern Region organizer, apprentice Derrick Huggins decided to file a complaint and eventually received a check for \$4,100 for violations of the NYC Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law by his former non-union employer.

If you know anyone experiencing exploitation as a non-union laborer, educate them about our apprenticeship program and tell them to reach out to our Organizing Department at 212-465-7912.



LiUNA!
Feel the Power