



**Construction & General Building
Laborers' Local 79**
131 W 33rd Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 212-465-7900 Fax: 212-465-7903

RETIREE NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2022

LOCAL 79 NEWS

CONSTRUCTION & GENERAL BUILDING LABORERS



The Body Shop Bill Passes! After Successful 40-2 Vote in NYC Council

LOCAL 79 CONTINUES TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF ORGANIZING STRATEGIES TO PROTECT WAGES AND benefits in the NYC construction industry. The Body Shop bill creates the tools needed to regulate Body Shop contractors that drive down wages and exploit re-entry workers. "With proper enforcement, this legislation will help remove barriers to workplace organizing on non-union construction sites, enhance public safety for all and empower formerly incarcerated New Yorkers," said Business Manager Mike Prohaska. In addition, our union was successful during the state legislative session in Albany. Our Real Re-Entry bills created protections for workers on parole to participate in labor protests and work overtime. We also passed a wage theft bill that will hold general contractors jointly liable for stolen wages. All together this package of bills greatly strengthens our organizing efforts in the streets and in the boardrooms.

New Prescription Coverage w/Aetna

As part of efforts to continually improve cost efficiency and member services, the Mason Tenders Trustees have elected to change our prescription coverage to Aetna. In renegotiating our package, our fund was able to save approximately \$14.5 million dollars over the three-year contract. In addition, members will now be able to fill their medications at any participating retail pharmacy for both short term medications and long-term maintenance medications.

LEARN MORE > www.aetna.com

UPCOMING EVENTS 2022

Call Melissa Siciliano at
212-465-7976 to RSVP

March 23 at 5pm
March Membership Meeting
Online Zoom Webinar

May 20 at 12pm
Retiree Spring Luncheon
Marina Del Rey, Bronx, NY

June 1 at 1:00 pm
Mets Baseball Outing
Citi Field, Queens, NY

*** Notifications will be mailed
prior to every retiree event to
confirm date and time.
All events will be in accordance
with government regulations.*

www.local79.org



\$1.2 Billion Infrastructure Plan Enacted with Bipartisan Support

LIUNA MEMBERS SUCCESSFULLY MOBILIZED ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO DEMAND OUR GOVERNMENT STOP STALLING and pass the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. "This historic investment in our roads, bridges, public transit, energy efficiency, and, most importantly, good union jobs will bring more than \$20 billion directly to New York and provide 10 years of consistent work for our union," said President John Norbury. On February 4th President Joe Biden strengthened federal contracting policies by making Project Labor Agreements a requirement for the first time.

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.

Members’ Union Book numbers must be written on their checks or money orders when paying dues by mail. Members may also call the Dues Department and provide their book number to pay by credit card.

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

Local 79 will periodically send out timely information via email or text message. Invitations for online membership meetings will be sent out by email with an individualized zoom link. To check or update your contact information, call Melissa at 212-465-7976.

TRUST FUNDS SUMMARY

Members should feel secure knowing that according to last year’s accounting our Pension Fund is 105.5% funded and our Medical/Welfare Fund has approximately two years in reserves. Annuity returns are now calculated on a monthly basis to determine total ending balance. Please login to www.mttf.org for updated returns and you can call 212-452-9700 with any questions.

LOCAL 79 EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Mike Prohaska, Business Manager
- John Norbury, President
- Chaz Rynkiewicz, Vice President
- Anthony Vita, Secretary-Treasurer
- Wendy Webb, Recording Secretary
- Bernard Callegari, Sergeant-at-Arms
- Barrie Smith, Executive Board member
- Luis Montalvo, Executive Board member
- Anthony Williamson, Auditor
- Kenneth Robinson Jr., Auditor
- Steve Andujar, 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**

Our union and the rest of the NYC labor movement have consistently demonstrated our strength and resilience over the last two years. We never needed a pandemic to know that we are essential. While powerful forces nationally still attempt to crack down on labor, I was proud to hear during the LiUNA Convention that not only Local 79, but LiUNA Locals across the country have had record-breaking growth. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters organizing around the country and we are proud to be the largest construction laborers’ Local in the United States.

The out-of-work list as of January was about 400 and we surpassed our goal of 10 million hours worked, over a million more than last year. When the additional unemployment benefits expired a couple months ago, our out-of-work list temporarily rose even though our hours worked also had increased.

I am proud that the trustees elected to send a thirteenth check to retirees at the end of the year. All members received raises in collectively-bargained contracts for this year. 2021 was a very successful year and, with many large projects on the horizon, 2022 promises to be an equally if not busier year. Our retirees will always share in our union’s successes.

While we hoped to be in-person by January’s General Meeting, it was not possible. COVID regulations continue to change and it was virtually impossible to reach an agreement with the church under these circumstances. We share your frustration and will monitor the situation on a month-to-month basis. In terms of the Union Hall, we are following the government’s 100% vaccinated policy. Therefore anyone coming to the hall while this mandate is in effect must show proof of vaccination until further notice.

It has come to the attention of the union that some members have engaged in fraudulent activity by allowing non-members to use their book and work for signatory contractors. We have taken proactive steps to stop this practice. Although this is only a relatively small number of members we are taking this issue very seriously. Members caught engaging in this activity can potentially lose their health coverage for an entire year.

In order to address any rumors and misinformation out there, here is the truth concerning the 2021 Local 79 Officer Election. Both the International and Department of Labor investigated all allegations and found no objectionable conduct. Their decision can be read on our website. “The truth is like a lion, it does not need to be protected, just turn it loose and it will protect itself.”

Stay safe, stay strong and may God bless you and yours.

In solidarity,
 **LiUNA!**
Feel the Power



**Historic Approval
for Blood Center**



Our union’s education programs teach members how to be labor activists both on their jobsites and in their local communities. Testifying in front of a community board gives a face to our union and can greatly influence people’s preconceived notions. In a demonstration of our union’s power, our members were leaders in a grassroots campaign to win approval for the NY Blood Center East development. Opposition from Upper East Side residents focused on shadows in a park,

**Local 79 Honors
9/11 Legacy**

As part of the 20th Anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks, our union participated in the September 12th Commemorative March of the 9/11 recovery workers and a Labor Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. We



remembered those who died and the union heroes who rushed to Ground Zero on that fateful day and the months after for rescue and recovery. Inspired by the solidarity demonstrated by union workers during our city’s darkest moment, H.E.A.R.T. 9/11

but we refused to let the petty concerns of the wealthy elite stop the creation of good, union jobs that will beneficially impact our city. Local 79 successfully organized a labor-community coalition over many months to build support for the project, testify at multiple government hearings and engage local leaders. Despite concerted opposition, we were able to make a late push for the NYC Council to take the historic step to approve a project without the local councilmember support for the first time in over a decade, voting 43 to 5 in favor. “The NY Blood Center East facility will help improve the health, economic prospects and career options for local New Yorkers, including great jobs for our members, while making New York City a leader in the life sciences industry. It is truly a win-win for our entire city,” said Local 79 Vice President Chaz Rynkiewicz.

was founded as the “Healing Emergency Aid Response Team 9/11” made up of union members from the building trades, firefighters and police.

Local 79’s spirit of service continues to shine brightly. Just a week before the 20th Anniversary commemoration, massive flooding from Hurricane Ida devastated homes in our city. Our members reached out to local community leaders and partnered with H.E.A.R.T. 9/11 for two weeks to complete emergency demolition and clean-up work of people’s homes in Queens and Staten Island. In recognition of our members’ service, President Joe Biden visited the volunteer site and announced additional federal aid to support families in need. He also promised and



**Rest In Peace
Phil Realmuto**



We remember Phil Realmuto, President of the Retiree Council and Golden Year member, who passed away this December after many years of dedicated service to our union. Phil started his career as a laborer in 1959 and retired in 1998. No matter what, Phil always remained a great man, a committed activist and a true union brother. “Phil’s contributions to our local will forever live on,” said Secretary-Treasurer Anthony Vita.

delivered infrastructure investment to help prevent flooding like this from happening again.

During the Holiday Season, Local 79 members continued to step up. Our members volunteered at a Thanksgiving dinner at the Boy & Girls Club of Queens, holiday food distributions in all 5 boroughs and a toy drive with Mayor-Elect Eric Adams. In the beginning of the year, a high-rise fire in the Bronx, the deadliest in three decades, brought tragedy to many families. In response, Local 79 members joined with other building trades members to help deliver needed supplies and resources. “Local 79 members continue to not only excel on the job sites,” concluded Recording Secretary Wendy Webb, “we also excel in the communities we live in and that’s what makes our union strong.”

