Tri-Fund
FALL 2011

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Activity Around the State Results in Many Wins
TIME CAPSULE
As a result of the November 2010 elections, we have found our union and the entire labor movement under attack at both state and federal levels. The Republicans are proposing drastic budget cuts to critical programs such as the federal highway infrastructure program, and attacking our basic rights as union members.

We are currently experiencing some of the most significant times in the history of the American union movement. We have all been riveted and uplifted by the scenes of working people, including our fellow LIUNA members, in states like Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio fighting back for good jobs and for the freedom to unite and bargain collectively.

Working people and our unions are facing the worst attacks in decades. Across the country, politicians, swept into power by a flood of corporate cash, are trying to destroy the unions that provide working people with a voice and are the last balance to big business interests.

These attacks target all working people, including the men and women who build America. Lawmakers in Indiana have already attempted to push through so-called “right to work” legislation that would destroy unions, eliminate pensions and take away the voice of working people. They are also intent on eliminating family-supporting project labor agreements and prevailing wage laws — that have historically helped provide good jobs, sustain community businesses and strengthen our economy.

There are similar attacks in Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and, of course, Wisconsin. Make no mistake — this is not a coincidence. It is a coordinated assault on working people and their unions. As Wisconsin proved, it is not about tight state budgets, fiscal discipline or job creation — it is about taking away the power and basic rights of working people. Politicians and their wealthy backers are trying to use the economic crisis, a crisis they created, to punish the working men and women and shift even more of our country’s wealth to the rich.

What they did not count on was the strength of the unions — each one standing up, fighting back and turning defense into offense.

And they did not count on the vast majority of the American people supporting the protection of the right to collectively bargain, as poll after poll has shown.

We have an opportunity to make our union — our collective voice — even stronger. Doing that begins with LIUNA leaders and members. While tens of thousands of members have joined the frontlines of the fight, we need tens of thousands more.

Take your family and fellow members to protests and rallies. Write letters to the editor of your local paper and ask your Local Union about member-to-member phone banking and other activities that will keep your brothers and sisters informed.

This moment will pass. And when the dust settles, we will emerge from this opportunity having defended the basic rights of working people, while making LIUNA a stronger, more activist union.

In Solidarity,

Terence M. O’Sullivan
General President
Laborers’ International Union of North America
MESSAGE FROM
THE LIUNA GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

Closure and Compensation: Hard-Won Victories

Recently, many of us were riveted to our television screens, watching President Obama announce that the mastermind of the World Trade Center 9/11 attacks, Osama Bin Laden, had finally been located and killed in a compound in Pakistan. This action has provided relief and closure for many people who lost loved ones due to that terrible act and a sense that justice had finally been done.

However, the killing of Bin Laden does not erase the grief of those who lost close family members or friends; nor does it relieve the suffering and hardship for the many hundreds of LIUNA members and others who worked in the rescue and clean-up efforts at Ground Zero and who are now ill as a result of this work. These rescue and recovery workers will probably continue to have health problems for many years. Others, even if they’re not ill now, worry about future illnesses that may result from their exposures. Fortunately for them and their families, just before Christmas, Congress passed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010. This legislation provides secure funding for the medical programs that serve these rescue and recovery workers and guarantees free medical care for all WTC-related health conditions. It also reopens the Victim Compensation Fund to help compensate those with WTC-related illnesses for their economic hardships.

It took us several years to pass this legislation. Working with other unions representing Ground Zero workers and with the City of New York and our contractors who worked at the site, LIUNA helped to convince Congress that this legislation was needed. We successfully made our point: that our members and others who responded when needed on 9/11, and thereafter, deserved these medical programs and compensation. We persisted even after Congress rejected the legislation in 2008. With strong leadership from Senators Gillibrand and Schumer and Representatives Maloney and Nadler, we finally succeeded late last year.

While this legislation was being worked on, our members also began rebuilding the World Trade Center. WTC 7 has already been open for five years, and construction of the main towers and the rail and transit station are well underway (see page 6). Work is also progressing on the memorial pools at the site that will help us remember the many people who lost their lives on that terrible day.

The killing of Bin Laden, the passage of the James Zadroga legislation and the rebuilding of the World Trade Center will not erase the impact of 9/11 on those who lost loved ones that day, or ease the continued suffering of those who have become ill. However, these events do demonstrate the resolve of our union and our country to see that justice is served, to ensure that those who become ill in service to our country are taken care of and to rebuild what was destroyed on September 11.

Fraternally yours,

Armand E. Sabitoni
General Secretary-Treasurer
Laborers’ International Union of North America

This legislation provides secure funding for the medical programs that serve these rescue and recovery workers and guarantees free medical care for all WTC-related health conditions. It also reopens the Victim Compensation Fund to help compensate those with WTC-related illnesses for their economic hardships.
Laborers have been working at the World Trade Center site since flames and smoke still rose from the debris pile.

So, it’s only fitting that Laborers were present when the two massive memorial fountains were tested. Pausing to watch the spectacle of the nation’s largest man-made waterfalls, they witnessed a solemn and exciting accomplishment.

“We are honored to be a part of this site, but especially honored to be able to help deliver a memorial that is so massive, grand and at the same time peaceful,” said Robert Bonanza, Business Manager Mason Tenders District Council. “We are happy to be able to give all those affected by this tragedy a place to remember,” he added. “We’ve been here since day one, and we will never forget.”

The Laborers local unions working at the site include members of the Cement and Concrete District Council (Local Unions 6A, 18, 20), Local Union 29 (Drillers/Blasters), Local Union 731, Local Union 79, Local Union 1010 and Local Union 79. “Our men are so proud to be working on this project for many reasons,” said Joe D’Amato “But mostly, they are proud to be rebuilding a site that was once full of such destruction to transform our city back to its original form. This reborn site will be the proper tribute to those lost years ago.”

While the overall reconstruction of the World Trade Center is a huge project for New York City’s building trades, the memorial fountains bear a particular significance.

The two fountains are at the heart of the memorial design by Michael Arad, called Reflecting Absence. “These two fountains will be such a significant part of the project. They are massive in size and also will provide such an important component to each visitor’s experience,” said Alex Castaldi, business manager, Cement and Concrete Workers District Council. “You can’t walk by them without thinking of what stood there before.”

Reflecting pools occupy the exact footprints of the original Twin Towers destroyed in the 9/11 attacks of 2001. The names of victims of both the 2001 and 1993 attacks will be etched into a bronze parapet. Backlighting will make those names visible at night.

In the recent test, engineers below the memorial plaza monitored and adjusted the 16 pumps that will circulate 480,000 gallons of recycled water, blasting 26,000 gallons per minute over the edge of each fountain, down 30-foot-high black granite walls. The water will be chemically treated for clarity and cleanliness, like water in a swimming pool; and it will be heated to maintain flow even in winter.

Construction of the memorial remained on schedule for the opening on September 11 — the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks.
Almost 10 years after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, memories of that day still remain terribly vivid in the minds of all Americans. However, few among the general public have fully understood the alarming health impacts on those who have worked at the site since the earliest dark days of rescue and recovery through the clean-up that followed. Laborers have been crucial to these challenging efforts: Hundreds of our members have voluntarily responded to calls in the rescue efforts, working without compensation and almost without rest. So it is only fitting that Laborers then continued to be a constant presence at the site, bringing their professional skills first to cleanup efforts and then to the rebuilding.

Now, we can celebrate another key 9/11-related contribution of the Laborers: our role in passing the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act; passed by the Congress and signed by President Obama late last year.

This success did not come easily, or quickly. As leaders in workplace safety and health, the Laborers have helped fuel efforts to increase understanding of the health issues that the heroic workers who worked at Ground Zero after the attacks now face, and to assert the need for financial support for health services they now need. Many are already ill due to daily exposure to airborne pollutants while working at Ground Zero; inevitably, others will follow.

Dr. Jim Melius, the New York State Laborers’ Health and Safety Trust Fund administrator, has spoken out often — publicly and strongly for the Laborers working at Ground Zero in his advocacy for their health care in several congressional hearings. He has explained clearly the serious challenges and complications facing those who seek medical attention for health problems related to 9/11, and he’s campaigned passionately for financial support to ensure they receive this attention. He and other laborer leaders, including Mickey Kelly, Executive Director of the Health and Safety Fund, and local members, have visited Washington in this effort many times to bring our case to the leaders making the decisions. They have put the Laborers’ personal stories into context; and they have highlighted the wide variety of difficult working conditions they faced, the diversity of workers on site, and the complex range of health plans that they have depended on for their care.

The results have been impressive, and hard-won.

In 2006, the federal government agreed to support medical treatment for these workers through Centers of Excellence medical facilities that have provided medical monitoring examinations for these workers. This program has continued to develop and expand: It currently treats more than 13,000 Ground Zero workers every year, including hundreds of our members. The program also provides monitoring and treatment for workers living outside the immediate New York City metro area.
The New York State Laborers Health & Safety Trust Fund is maintaining its leadership in health and safety, and in its advocacy for 9/11 workers, by facilitating health care claims access.

If you worked at Ground Zero in rescue, recovery or clean-up and need assistance in obtaining health care, please call 1 (800) 797–5931.

The NYS Laborers Health & Safety Fund also worked with LIUNA staff in Washington — the New York State Laborers’ Political Action Committee — and with other unions to support the passage of legislation that would provide long-term funding for the medical program and compensation for the workers. Officially titled the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, the legislation provides health coverage to workers who helped clear the rubble and search for human remains at the site of the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history. The $4.2 billion legislation also reopens the federal Victim Compensation Fund to provide economic relief to those harmed by the attacks, which killed more than 2,700 people in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. This not only benefits our members but also several of our contractors who are now relieved from liability from thousands of claims. Health care costs will now be compensated for all recovery and clean-up workers who incurred health problems as a result of work at Ground Zero between September 11, 2001 and September 12, 2002, whether their work was paid or voluntary. Claimants do not need to be residents of New York State. Anyone who filed and was denied a toxic exposure claim after the initial two-year interval expired may now file a new claim. Furthermore, even if workers filed claims for injuries, they can now also file new claims for toxic exposure. The claim requires dates and locations of work performed and the name of the employer or the volunteer organization.

After a divisive battle in which some opponents suggested the legislation was creating a new entitlement program, it finally passed during the lame-duck session of Congress in December 2010. New York lawmakers including Representative Carolyn Maloney and Congressman Jerrold Nadler supported the bill in Congress and were among those applauding President Obama as he signed it into law.

This key battle won, the Laborers continue their involvement with rebuilding the World Trade Center at Ground Zero. Like the passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, this has required patience as delays followed delays.

However, progress has accelerated to an impressive pace, despite enormous challenges facing planners and rebuilders. We can all be proud of our members’ contributions to this landmark project that is so important to every American.
Profile of a Business Manager:

Robert Brown – Local Union 435

“FILL IN FIVE”

Tri-Fund magazine asked Robert to fill in the blanks on five questions about himself:

1. People I’ve worked with all these years would be surprised to learn that:
   
   I came from a family where my father couldn’t read or write and my mother only completed the eighth grade; but they encouraged us to get an education and to do our best in life.

2. My first job was:
   
   Grunt labor, just shoveling dirt over pipe.

3. The last movie I saw was:
   
   Death Wish 4

4. My favorite song on the radio is:
   
   Anything on the XM satellite radio groove station

5. My favorite saying or quote is:
   
   I don’t get mad I get even.

When Robert Brown joined Local Union 435 as a laborer, “I didn’t know anything,” the 40-year veteran recalls. “I had never laid a pipe, never laid any asphalt, never ran a drill.” Within four years he was a foreman and ten years later he was a superintendent for one of Rochester’s largest companies, and he was instrumental in completing a five-mile-long Syracuse sewer project. As he rose through the ranks, the Florida transplant — Bob was born in the fruit-belt small town of Arcadia — he recognized the importance of the relationships among unions and elected representatives and became involved in the Laborers Political Action Committee (PAC) board of trustees in 1988. But that’s just one phase of his valued leadership.

In 1984, Bob became a Business Agent for Local Union 435, mainly handling utility and tunnel contracts in Monroe, Livingston, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming and Ontario counties. As the Local Union grew to more than 5,000 members, it expanded into Yates and Seneca counties.

Today, Bob is also Special International Representative of LIUNA, Vice Chairman of the PAC Trustees, Trustee to the Rochester Laborers’ Welfare and Pension Funds, Executive Board Member of Local Union 435, Executive Committee Member for the LIUNA African American Caucus, Vice President of the Upstate NY District Council, Chairman of the Upstate Training Fund, Chairman of the Rochester Laborers’ Training Program and organizer of its Apprentice Program and a member of Life Span. He also serves as Sergeant-at-Arms for the AFL-CIO Labor Council, and was previously Chairman of UNICON (a consortium of unions and contractors), a member of the Urban League and of the Monroe County Industrial Development Agency.

Bob and Margaret, his wife of 49 years, have four children, 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. While Bob appreciates the technological advances that have improved working conditions since he first joined Local Union 435, this proud union member values most the many people he has worked with and the changes that he has made in the community.
When the Rochester City School District named its new construction school after Local Union 435 Business Manager Robert Brown earlier this year, the District honored a distinguished labor leader for his exceptional advocacy and community spirit.

Opened recently, the Robert Brown High School of Construction and Design replaces the House Building Project that Brown had fostered and which was modeled on other LIUNA training programs, particularly the Local Union 17 Newburgh Free Academy and The New England Laborers’/Cranston Public Schools Construction Career Academy. The new program inherits the facility of the former Edison School of Applied Technology under the District’s restructuring plan.

"With Bob’s support and vision, we created a School that has a laser-like focus on academics, the Construction Industry and careers related to Construction,” said Matt Laniak, Principal of Applied Technology. “Any student that successfully graduates from the Robert Brown High School of Construction and Design will be fortunate enough to choose a viable future for themselves.”

In his 40-plus years of respected labor leadership, Brown has consistently made it a priority to help inner-city students begin their careers in construction trades.

“It is such an honor to be recognized by the Rochester construction and education communities in this way,” said Brown. “When we see these students go through the program and get a job, that is a reward on its own.”

“We are not only helping our industry by getting new students training and involved but we are giving back to the community that they live in,” Brown continued. “This program is developing bright young people, and I’ve always thought it is vital to reach them while they are young with our strong message of the benefits of union labor.”

The 160 students in the first class at the new Robert Brown High School of Construction and Design would certainly agree with that message, and are proud to carry forward the name of Robert Brown.
Laborers of Local Union 17 recently “graduated” from Phase I to Phase II of an $85 million project transforming the State University of New York (SUNY) Orange Newburgh Campus by doubling its capacity to 1,700 students.

Begun in June 2009, Phase I was construction of the 87,000 square-foot, L-shaped Kaplan Hall atop a new 443-space parking garage. Kaplan Hall features a library, centralized student services and facilities for a new nursing program — the seventh on the campus. Phase II is the complete renovation of the existing 85,000 square-foot Tower Building, set to open for the spring 2012 semester.

Dr. William Richards, SUNY Orange president said that the opening of Kaplan Hall is the single biggest achievement at the college since its founding 61 years ago. He went on to note that the campus will not only provide a remarkable learning environment for students and teaching environment for the faculty, but it will also be a significant factor in the revitalization of the city of Newburgh.

Approximately 50 Laborers of Local Union 17 worked on Phase I under the direction of Steward Robert Smith, who began with the project as Steward of Phase II. A PLA governs work on the project, and jurisdictional issues have been easily resolved, such as work on the “green” roof system.

“When you work on a high-profile project in the community, there is always a level of pressure,” said L. Todd Diorio Business Manager of Local Union 17. “We are proud to contribute to this great improvement of the entire community by constructing an educational facility that will help future generations,” said Diorio. “All that makes the project even more satisfying for us.”

“We are proud to be on budget and on schedule with this ambitious and valuable project,” said Steward Robert Smith. “It’s exciting to contribute our skills to such a large and transforming effort.”
Most of Kaplan Hall’s general-purpose classrooms are on the second floor, above a “one-stop” student services center on the first floor. All classrooms have Smartboards and projectors. The third floor houses laboratories for biology, chemistry, laboratory technology, anatomy and physiology classes, plus a nursing wing. SUNY Orange was the first community college in the nation to offer a two-year nursing degree, and the expansion will strengthen the college’s leadership position.

SUNY Orange is one of 30 community colleges in the SUNY system, the nation’s largest. Its comprehensive campus-expansion project is being funded by state, federal and county funds, along with a large philanthropic donation by Newburgh businessman Bill Kaplan through the Kaplan Family Foundation.

Because of the success of this project, Local Union 17 recently signed a PLA agreement to begin the next phase of the school’s SUNY Orange Middletown Campus scheduled to start in the middle of August 2011.

“We are proud to be on budget and on schedule with this ambitious and valuable project,” said Steward Robert Smith. “It’s exciting to contribute our skills to such a large and transforming effort.”
Our members are the keepers of tradition in the Laborers Union. The fact that many members have maintained loyal affiliation in this organization for more than 50 years attests to the satisfaction of the life and work we share. The LIUNA constitution offers a two-fold award to honor these members: a gold membership card and exemption from further payment of dues.

Honoring 50-Year Members

**Local Union 186** Left to right: John Donoghue, Jr., Business Manager; 50-year member Richard Ouellette; his brother 50-year member Roland Ouellette; Donald Anslow, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer and Field Representative

**Local Union 186** Left to right: John Donoghue, Jr., Business Manager; 50-year member Kermit J. Honsinger, Jr.

**Local Union 186** Left to right: John Donoghue, Jr., Business Manager; 50-year member William Christian; Donald Anslow Jr., Secretary-Treasurer and Field Representative

**Local Union 186** Left to right: 50-year member Victor Laclair, Sr; 50-year member Dale Lashway

**Local Union 60** Left to right: Carlos Ascencio, Business Manager, and 50-year member Richard Berardo, Secretary-Treasurer
Local Union 35  Retiree lunch held at Local 35. Sitting left to right: Carmen Talarico - 58 years; Nick Spagnuolo - 51 years; George Sweet, Jr.; Albert Astalfa - 62 years; Everett Reynolds - 51 years. Standing left to right: Robert Grande - 55 years; John Karpouicz - 59 years; Mariano Durso - 53 years; Carmen J. Nicotera, Jr., Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer.

Local Union 633  Left to right: Joseph Solazzo, Recording Secretary; Gold Card recipient Joe Trenca; Gabe Rosetti, Business Manager.

Local Union 35  Left to right: Nick Vedder, President; Salvatore Marchese - 50 years; Carmen J. Nicotera, Jr., Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer.

Local Union 621  Left to right: Paul B. Gordon with Local 621 Business Manager Don Giardini presenting him with his 50 year status/gold card receipt.

Local Union 35  Left to right: President Nick Vedder; Silvio Mornelli - 50 years; Carmen J. Nicotera, Jr. Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer.
In March of last year, Local Union 731 lost Fred Walthour, Jr., a respected member and a friend to many. Fred first joined the Laborers union in Atlanta, Georgia, and he stayed with the Laborers when he moved to New York. In 1987 he joined local 1298, and in 1990 he transferred to local 731. He was a well liked member and dealt with many contractors during his years on various job-sites.

“Fred was just a great man,” said Joseph D’Amato, Local Union 731 Business Manager. “Fred was a quick learner and you could always depend on him to get a job done,” D’Amato continued. “He was always ready to try something new and teach others how to do the job correctly.”

Fred moved up in the Local Union 731 ranks as his qualities and potential were recognized; as a great worker and an exceptional man. He started organizing for Local Union 731 in 2002, and he became recording secretary in 2004. In 2006, he became a Field Representative for the Bronx, making him the first African American to hold that position. Among his many projects, Fred was closely involved with the new water filtration system, hidden deep under Van Cortland Park in the Bronx.

“Fred accomplished more than work during his lifetime. He made family first” his motto and leaves behind his loving wife Stephanie and daughters Tori Shaqwan and Nicole Dior. He loved hosting family and friends and will be remembered for his barbecues, seafood feasts and good-natured pina colada mixing contests with sister-in-law Mia. Fred was also very involved with his church, the Christ Pentecostal Temple, Inc. He was a youth treasurer and youth leader for more than 10 years and in 2008 became the Deacon of the Board.

“He will be missed, and it is hard to put into words the impact of our loss,” said D’Amato.

Memorial: Fred Walthour, Jr. – Local 731

“He will be missed, and it is hard to put into words the impact of our loss,” said D’Amato.
As we report on the activities of our union around the state, it’s clear that during one of the worst economic climates in our history the Laborers will prevail both in creating new work opportunities and in honoring our local communities and giving back our time and service.

Our political action committee worked tirelessly to pass legislation that ensures healthcare assistance for our members that worked on the World Trade Center site in the aftermath of 9-11. We lost members and fellow New Yorkers that day; that tragic past cannot be undone, however we took this step to insure any Laborer on that site would be honored as a patriot of this nation. The members of our Laborers Locals that served our nation in those horrific days after the terrorist attack will have a healthier future because the federal government yielded to our demands to care for our members as the patriots they are for our country.

Now that we focus on the new vision for the World Trade Center, we have a unique sense of pride rebuilding that hallowed ground by returning it to active service and vitality. What was once a site of such sadness; is now the scene of progress and hope as new buildings rise there, along with touching memorials that remind us of heroism, as well as heartbreak.

In addition in the last issue of the Tri-Fund, we learned about the constant generosity of the Laborers of Local Union 79. After the catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti, our workers took their skills and hearts and on their own time volunteered to rebuild homes in Haiti. A group of committed 79 members traveled to Haiti, joined with volunteers and the local government to: survey the damage, clean the local community and rebuild countless homes. I am so proud of these members and salute their public service.

With this continued focus on the victims of the World Trade Center attack, the upheaval of the Haiti earthquake; we remain vigilantly focused more than ever on rebuilding our own New York City and Long Island economy. In Albany this year we successfully lobbied Governor Cuomo and the legislature to restore full funding of school construction. This effort maintained a multi-billion commitment to a massive amount of man hours for our locals. In addition, we created a strategy for the Cuomo administration to enter into the first ever regional Project Labor Agreement for the New York Dormitory Authority in New York City. We are in the last phase of negotiating that agreement, which will result in more than $5 billion worth of work for the trades in the next ten years.

In addition we worked with the Environmental Protection Agency and the City of New York to remove dangerous PCB’s from our school, an effort that will potentially provide more than 2 million man hours of work for Local 78. At one point this summer, 700 out of work Laborers went to work on removing PCB’s from New York City schools. This project will prove to be a pathway project, which other regions will emulate as accomplishing good for our community and provide desperately needed jobs in this time of economic crisis.

I remain as proud and committed to our membership than ever before. The Laborers show their fortitude time and again whether during times of human crisis, like at the World Trade Center, in Haiti, or during the current economic crisis when the laborers of the Eastern Region proudly create new and innovative paths to garnering work. In this environment, we must be relentless.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Raymond M. Pocino
Vice President and Eastern Regional Manager
Laborers’ International Union of North America
Since receiving their charter in 1938, the Laborers of Local Union 1298 have worked to provide transportation infrastructure on Long Island, facilitating commuter travel between New York City and expanding suburban communities. In addition to the Long Island Expressway, the Local Union’s largest construction project was the $600 million Southwest Sewer District project, which employed 2,000 of its 5,000 members from the mid-1980s through the early 1980s.