

FEATURED MUSIC:

Check out these artists who are down for the cause

I Want Whisky

Atlanta, GA

Honky-tonk folk music founded in the tradition of wobbly and drinking songs.

reverbNation.com/iwantwhisky

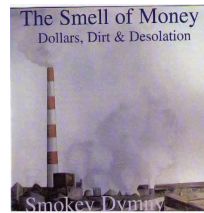
Jerzy Smokey Dymny

Quadra Island, BC

"Smokey's voice is a pork chop with a little bit of road dirt."

— Art Farquharson

<http://radio3.cbc.ca/#/bands/Smokey>



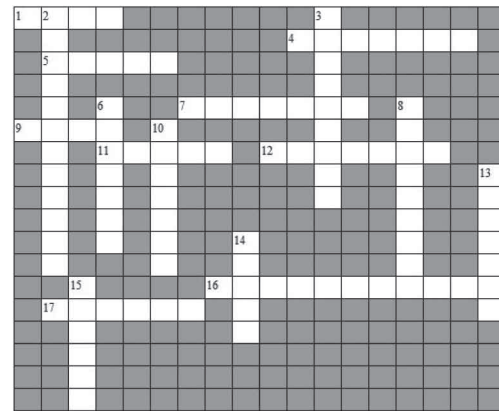
ACROSS

1. Miami _____, but with an S
4. Swimmers wear these
5. Powered Industrial _____
7. A work stoppage, an employer keeps employees from working
9. Law enacted in the 1970s
11. Safest way to keep a blade
12. What a hen does to an egg
16. Wrench type with box end and and open end
17. Step up or down

DOWN

2. Meeting on the same plane
3. A band leader
6. Illegitimate child, or a medium coarse file
8. A list of items to be checked
10. Your lifetime
13. Electrical flow to Answer to 3

CROSSWORD PUZZLE 3



14. No _____, no love
15. A source of danger

Answers will be in the next issue.



HIT THE BRICKS

Building Trades News & Commentary from the Industrial Workers of the World I.U. 330

SAFETY:

A new look at this bosses tool

— x355916

First off, I believe it is without question to those reading this, no matter what industry, that our first priority is coming home safe and sound to our families. In the construction trades we know all too well the high risk of injury, and under extreme circumstances, even death. In the past employers had no legal obligation to follow or institute safety regulations or protocol, and having a competent worker meant that you were able bodied enough to do the task at hand regardless of the dangers. Over the decades hard fought battles against such abuses saw a shift in this dynamic through work safety laws, and of course, the creation of OSHA. Labor unions led the way in instituting job safety practices. Union organized jobs became safe jobs and this, over time, did in fact improve conditions for non-union workers. This generalization is one in which statistics speak for themselves. According to OSHA and N.Y.C department of buildings twenty-nine construction workers were killed in 2010. The Manhattan Director for OSHA cited that it was apparent that the majority of on the job deaths were workers employed by non-union contractors. The major cause of death was by falls.

Safety is still an issue in the construction trades. According to the U.S. government statistics 816 work related fatalities occurred in the construction trades in 2009. Of those deaths, 277 were due to falls. This means that falls are the number one cause of death in the construction trade, while transportation accidents are a close second. In mid-2010 it was reported that fall fatalities for construction workers were down 17%. Bloomberg reported that this is due to the loss of jobs in the down economy, thus placing fewer workers at risk. Besides fatalities, many more preventable injuries occur. Burns, punctures, cuts, and loss of limbs are just a few of many more types of injuries, some of which are severe enough to disable one for life. Of related interest: The US construction industry has 15.2 deaths per

100,000 workers according to N.I. O.S.H. (National Institution for Occupational Safety and Health)

In the trades many of us have heard the expression "fired before you hit the floor," this series on safety is to inform workers of what really goes on in the industry, as well as explore facts and statistics related to workplace safety in North America. We will discuss how employers use liability insurance and workers compensation insurance. We will also examine how the employer uses "Safety" to discriminate and control the workforce. Later on will focus on what you can do to protect yourself and how you can take back the shop floor. This series of articles will look at what has happened on Union and Non-Union job sites from my own as well as others experiences.



Before I continue let me illustrate the power structure of a construction company or corporation. This is of course a general outlay based on my experiences others may have varied relationships. The system is ostensibly based upon the idea of "meritocracy", which means that in theory, the smartest and most productive employees will be paid more and have the highest rank.

At the Top:

- Owner/s and Financers
- Superintendent/s
- Project Manager/s
- Safety General
- HR Department



A Word from Us to You

Industrial Workers of the World Department 300
Construction Workers Organizing Committee



Hit the Bricks needs material to be published in this new periodical. Our focus is to help create an environment within the constructions industry that leads to a democratic, bottum up, organized labor movement for all its workers. If you have, or would like to write and opinion or educational piece, share a personal experience, or report neww conerning the construction industry or a jobsite issue, send it our way to : organizer@iu330.org with the word "article" in the subject field. Try to refrains from topics involving inter-union politics and criticism of other trades. We would particularly like to hear from jobsite stewards.

Hit the Bricks is available in digital .PDF format. If you would like a digital copy sent to your email, please let email us at organizer@iu330.org with the word subscription in the subject field.

For more information you can visit our website www.iu330.org.



Industrial Workers of the World
Industrial Department 300
Construction Workers Organizing Commitee

Foreman: Their authority will vary from firm to firm, and is sometimes based on their time with company and their skill at ass kissing techniques. They sometimes have the ability to hire or fire directly, but usually do not, and act to administer the Boss's instructions. Don't get upset by reading this if you are a foreman. There are a lot of good ones that place the interests of the workers ahead of those of the company, but there are many that don't. Foremen manage most aspects of the job on the shop floor, and are considered management, not workforce.

Master: In some trades, for example plumbing and electricity, some workers have become certified by a combination of experience and written tests as Master Craftsmen. They are usually the group that Foremen are promoted from, and are often the highest paid hourly workers not in management.

Journeyman: Used mostly as an official title job classification in the trade unions but still used in the non-union sectors. Journeymen level workers are most numerous, and as a result, most of the production is done with their direct participation.

Apprentice: These workers are considered to be unskilled or semi-skilled. This is the Bosses excuse to pay them the least, even though they work just as hard as everyone else.

*In the next installment, **Bow and Go**, I will give workplace examples of how companies will use safety to discriminate and control the shop floor.*

RECUPERATION & EXPLOITATION

Part I: Safety & Apprentice Ratios

—x361373

The construction industry is a prime example of capital's ability to recover profits through indirect exploitation. Putting new inexperienced apprentices to work in ever growing numbers is one way capital has been able to "compete" in the market. Even within the union strongholds of northern cities, the ability for the boss to place greater amounts of apprentices with fewer journey persons is becoming a trend. Some unions have strict contract language that states the ratio of journey persons to apprentices, but it is not enforced with any zeal. This becomes apparent when trades people come on to the work site, only to find five apprentices and two journey persons. We are all too familiar with the feeling of not being able to speak out about these problems for

fear of employer retaliation. We could speak out about these issues, but the philosophy of business unionism runs our workday and dictates our actions. Having the members defend the contract from the building's (shop) floor is not something the trade unions have ever encouraged.

While we may have an increase in wages we may at the same time have a decrease in job safety. Unfortunately, new apprentices are not as well-versed in safety procedures as the older members and need guidance in dangerous situations. By not having direct contact with the competent person, apprentices endanger themselves and learn unsafe habits. When one journey level trades person has to work with four apprentices there will come a point when an apprentice will be doing something unsafe and that apprentice will be acting through inexperience instead of guidance and training. Having a ratio of more than 1:1 also puts the journey men and women at a greater risk of injury. Teamwork really counts when we work together in hazardous situations. Both people must be in-tune with the consequences of a mistake.

Even worse is the pitiful new tier of construction worker, the "pre-apprentice." This unfortunate soul has the disadvantage of being unprotected by the union and paid low wages in hopes she or he will be selected by the contractor to be put through an apprenticeship. The pre-apprentice puts first-year apprentices on the bench and puts other workers at risk. In my jurisdiction, this classification is not required to go through Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training, which is required for all first year apprentices. Now we have someone who is expected to perform dangerous work, without any safety training. This is completely unacceptable. It is exploitative and increases the chances that this person will end up hurt.

The contradictions are compounded when safety directors talk about the need for a "safety culture" on the job site. Bogus safety meetings and long-winded talks about OSHA inspectors cannot replace long-term experience and training. We soon find out that safety is a double-edged sword that can and will be used for the employer's purposes. The purpose is to shift the blame onto the worker when he or she has an injury.

There is often a maze of safety paperwork that is required for bids on large public construction projects and getting those bids means more than not filling out near miss reports. It is about cultivating a work place of intimidation through low-level job threats and creating a facade of a safe workplace. We are told in many implicit ways that if we get hurt the company will find ways to

get rid of us. What does safety really mean in the face of profit? It means that when you get hurt, there is only one reason for your injury. We are told that the reason why we get injured is not the rate of exploitation, nor the demand for speed, but our own incompetence. All contractors are looking for that ephemeral profit and they are using safety as a marketing tool to achieve it.

We see this as a symptom of the AFL-CIO's inability to organize and create empowerment effectively. The last thing the IBEW or the UA are capable of is real solidarity that can cut across craft lines and form strong bonds that can be utilized in an organizing drive or solidarity action. If our union density were higher we might be able to better enforce our own contracts, but as it stands today acts of solidarity will be met with stiff employer retaliation.

ATTENTION! **IMPORTANT DUES RETENTION NOTICE FOR ALL MEMBERS WITHIN THE 300 DEPARTMENT:**

In February of 2011, the General Executive Board granted the 300 Industrial Organizing Committee voluntary dues retention of all its members falling on the jurisdiction of the 300 IOC. This means that all members within the 300 department may opt to pay their dues to their IOC to further the organizing of their Industry.

How will this work for 300 members that currently belong to a GMB?

For the time being, 300 members will have to decide whether they want to continue being a part of their general membership branch, or if they want to be a part of their Industrial Organizing Committee. If you wish to pay your dues to your IOC, simply tell whatever delegate that you are paying dues to that you wish to have your dues go to the 300 IOC. However, we are working with the GHQ to make it possible for individuals to belong to both of them in the near future.

How will this work for 300 members that do not belong to a branch?

This is your chance to belong and participate in a body of the IWW. If you currently pay dues through an at-large delegate, you can continue to do so. You must tell the delegate that you want your dues to go to the 300 IOC (More information for delegates can be found below). If you are paying online, you will need to stop and begin paying your dues to either a nearby delegate or to a 300

delegate. You can use the information below to contact the IOC for more information on how to do this.

I'm a delegate. How do I collect dues for the 300 IOC?

Clearly earmark the dues that are collected for 300 on your delegate sheet. Make sure to record what member(s) on your sheet are paying to 300. It is of the utmost importance that if a member belonging to the 300 department is paying dues to you that you inform the FW of their right to pay dues to their IOC. If the FW chooses to do so, you must be very clear in your recording of the destination of those dues.

I'm a branch secretary, what do I do?

GHQ has put together a new Branch secretary report for dues collected for IOC's. When you take in the delegates sheets every month, you will check to see if there are any earmarked dues for the 300 IOC. If so, you will record this on a separate report that you will receive from GHQ. (If you do not have this report form contact GHQ for instructions.) The dues will not be split with the branch. The full dues will be sent to GHQ, and headquarters will split the dues there between the IOC and GHQ.

This is a great step in the march to Industrial democracy within the construction Industry. Our dues retention will provide us with the ability to provide our members with new member packets, hardhat stickers, and trainings. Also it will provide us with sustainable funds to insure that we have the ability to take on organizing drives.

We thank everyone in the entire union for your work and support as we move forward in building the construction union in the IWW.

To our fellow 300 members, this is the time to make the 300 IUs strong once again. There is a lot of work to be done and a lot of different seats to be filled. If we are going to create a union that will better our jobs and our lives, all members must stand up and contribute no matter how small or large the task. Get in touch with a committee member to find out how you can help the work along.

