

Interview With Ann Jochems

J. Jane Latour interviewing Ann Jochems on September 20th, 1994, at Wagner Labor Archives. Jane Latour interviewing Ann Jochems on September 20th, 1994 at NYU. So Ann, last time we talked,--which was 1990;--fall of 1990,--you were acting as a supervisor, and you were considering giving the Board Of Education another deadline till October. You had an October deadline before you were going to file a grievance, so that they would be in compliance with what you were supposed to be doing as a supervisor. So what's ... what's been happening with your role as a supervisor at the Board of Ed?

A. Well, I ... did sit as an acting supervisor for that year, and I never did file a grievance. In October of '90, they did finally appoint me. And now I'm appointed Civil Service Carpenter Supervisor, so it wasn't necessary to file a grievance, and I ... I mean,--I did contact the Tradeswoman liaison and--you know--let her know that I wasn't happy being an ... an acting ... in the acting position, when I was sitting on a list to be appointed. And the ... I never know what goes on behind the scenes, so I don't know if I just--you know--my number just came up or, because they knew that there was a liaison and they were being monitored,--that they would have to appoint me, or what. But I was appointed. And I've been in that title now for almost four years.

J. So how many people are you supervising, or attempting to supervise?

A. Um,--all right,--twelve right now.

J. Um-hum.

A. There's a ... I have six teams and thirteen ... and three districts, so it's about seventy-five buildings, I think.

J. And so, how ... how directly do you direct their work? What is ... What's it like?

A. Well, it's pretty direct, although a lot of my time is taken up with administrative detail, and I really am consumed a lot by the paperwork and so, don't get out into the field, as they say, that much to do ... Like, I don't check every single job. But--you know--I go to a couple of jobs a day, anyway.

J. And did you receive training to be a supervisor?

A. Um, no. I don't think so. No. You just take a test and have ... There's a ranked list, and then you get appointed of that. There should be training, though. I wish there was training. For some reason, it's interesting,--sort of ironic that the Board Of Ed wouldn't have very much training .

J. Um-hum. Do you ever get a chance to meet with other supervisors and learn from their experience, and share ideas about common problems or it doesn't happen?

A. In an ideal situation you would, and I do some. But mostly, I feel like I'm adversarial with the other supervisors. Like that's ... It's a problem. Like, the people that work for me, I get along pretty well with;--funny about that. But the people that are my peers are the ones where I fell, like, the greatest conflict, although lately, even that has sort of subsided.

J. What's the source of the conflict, do you think?

A. I think it's just a power struggle,--you know. I don't think they ever forgave me for fighting to have the pornography removed from the carpenter's shop, and--you know--it's just like, fighting for equality,--you know,--like, it's just that same old battle again,--you know,--feeling like that ... I guess I just feel like I often get the short end of the stick;--you know--like, get use of the ... the tools and the resources available there, and I'm just not a full fledged team player;--like, they don't let me be,--you know. Like, I've ... like I've ... There isn't a lot of ... I feel like I have less information than everyone else;--like, I'm working blind a lot.

J. Um-hum.

A. I mean,--I've been blessed with a really good crew. I think ... I actually think I have the best crew, but I feel like the reason that happened is 'cause they didn't know how good those people were when they were assigned to me, or they wouldn't have assigned them to me. But ...

J. So how is your working relationship with the men that you supervised changed over time?

A. Think it's really gotten better.

J. Um-hum.

A. Um,--you know,--I don't ... I don't know ... They probably didn't know what to think at first, when I first came on, but--I mean,--now, Think we're a really good team actually.

J. Are you enjoying it at all?

A. Well,--I mean,--I sort of make a joke of--you know--of finally doing what I want to do, watching other people work, but ... but--I mean,--really that is sort of a joke, though, because--I mean,--it's frustrating, too, 'cause what does a supervisor really do? I mean,--it's sort of a ... an ideological problem that I have

myself, about ... You know,--'cause one of the reasons I was a carpenter is because it was tangible work that you could see the results of your work.

J. Um-hum.

A. Now, being a supervisor, that's no longer true, and so, you're back into that sort of analytical thing or something,--you know,--and it's hard to really tell ... It's hard to see the fruits of your labor, or tell what's yours, and what's their, and all like that,--you know?

J. Um-hum. Um-hum. So what has been happening with--you mentioned the liaison. And is this the same person who we talked about in 1990, who you felt, at the time, was really overwhelmed and didn't really have enough time to do the job right?

A. Yeah. Well, actually now, she's out on maternity leave, and that whole thing has sort of died out, like, ever since Sue got fired.

J. You're referring to Susan D'Alessandro?

A. Right. Right. Ever since Susan got fired, ...

J. By the Board of Ed?

A. Um-hum. And,--you know--it's still being litigated, as we speak. And then,--even though there are a few other women working there now,--I feel like none of them are interested in organizing politically on the job, and I sort of let the ball drop myself, well, when I went to ... I went to school.

J. Um-hum.

A. So then, I didn't have any time to do anything even there, because it took so much energy. But ...

J. Well, first of all, what ... what were you going to school for?

A. I was in law school.

J. Okay. And so that ... that took up your time, so you didn't have time to follow up on your meetings.

A. Right.

J. And now, this liaison person is on maternity leave, and they haven't put somebody else on there?

A. Right. Right.

J. She's just out?

A. Yeah, and it's just sort of died,--you know,--like ...

J. So was momentum ever built up?

A. It was! It was built up, I thought, marvelously, except for the part about Sue being fired. But it was ... it was really good. Like there were some really supportive administrators and--you know--they were giving time off for the job to speak in the schools and to attend tradeswomen related things. And I was even allowed to teach a course one day a week, to--you know--women at New York City Technical College in a pre-apprentice program. It was really going great. But--you know--all that sort of ended. And now ...

J. So, do you have plans for picking it up again when she comes back from maternity leave or ...

A. I ... Well, see, I feel ... I feel like I'm alone. I feel like ... I feel like the other women that work there, they're so few in numbers, and I feel like they're ... I feel like they're not organizers,

J. Um-hum.

A. and they ... and they're not interested in doing it. And I feel like just me doing it

J. Doesn't make sense.

A. Right. Right. Except--you know--that ... unless I wanted time off from the job to speak in the schools, which Think, would be ...

J. Um-hum.

A. would be a really important thing.

J. Um-hum. Um-hum.

A. because there is this other agency,--the School Construction Authority,--that supposedly has this whole program going about this mandate about wanting to get young women in non-traditional jobs, and how--you know--

J. Um-hum.

A. and then, there I am right there,--which would be--you know--the perfect person to go--you know--go from my job to speak in the schools. But I just have-- ... I haven't coordinated it yet, and nobody's approached me. And I don't know if anybody's doing it,

but ...

J. Um-hum. Last time, when we talked, you said that you would have a hard time encouraging young women to go into the field, based on your own experience. But you still feel that it's important to try to get ... You also said that the Board Of Ed doesn't need one less woman. It needs five thousand more,

A. Yeah.

J. So there's like this built in ambivalence,--right?

A. Yeah.

J. And ... But you still feel it would be important to talk to young women, to try to change the ...

A. Well, I think that they ... Think they should have the option.

J. Um-hum.

A. And I ... I just keep thinking of,--I mean,--the whole idea of why ... I mean,--they're just great paying jobs.

J. Um-hum.

A. You know,--these Unionized skilled trade jobs, I still feel like it's the last bastion that women are being kept out of, and that it could be a perfect economic strategy for working class and lower class women. But the personal toll that it's taken on me has ... Just being in such isolation, and ... and dealing with the day to day hostility,--hostile work environment,--and oppression and--you know--it's not ... it's not very lesbian friendly, basically.

J. Um. Um.

A. And ... and I just wish that I was spending more of my life in a women positive, lesbian friendly environment. And I'm trying now to figure out how to do that but ...

J. Um-huh.

A. But then, when I think of the economic reality, that's when I fell like that how important it is to continue to fight for these jobs opening up to women. But there's just been so little gain. In all these ... In all these years,--you know--we haven't hardly there hasn't been any increase, really.

J. Um-hum.

A. And there's just a few dribbling in, and ...

J. Where are the other women in the Board of Ed that you mentioned?

A. Well, like, there's ...

J. You mentioned before an electrician's helper,--a black woman?

A. She's an elec--

J. ??

A. No, she's ... she's white. She's an electrician now. She was ... She got promoted. She's an electrician. And then, I know of one plumber in the Bronx,--one pl-- ... There is another ... a ... a plumber in Brooklyn. And there's a carpenter,--a provisional carpenter,--in Brooklyn, who used to work for me, but now she doesn't any more. So, that's it, as far as I know. But the numbers are--you know--

J. Um-hum.

A. nauseatingly bleak.

J. What's happening with the Carpenters Union and the Women's Committee that you had talked about?

A. Oh yeah. Well, this has been going on for years, but we're continuing now with sort of a new ... new momentum. I'm not even sure where it came from, but to get this Women Carpenters Committee going again. And I'm on the Steering Committee, and we do meet regularly, and we're just trying to get our voice in the Union, now that.... Of course, I'm not very clear of all these changes went on in the Union, but they're under some ... You know better than I do,--they're under some mandate to be ... be more fair and honest in their hiring, and stuff, and so now we feel ... I guess we're encouraged by that. And--you know--just trying to get space there;--like, to get them to acknowledge us more, and to network with ... to network with other groups. Like ... Like, there was a Tradeswomen's summit in Kansas City in April, that was real empowering also. And just yesterday, I got a mailing where the ... the National Tradeswomen Network is trying to start up again, and it had a whole list of--you know--women, and what their vision is, and what they can do to bring this about, and encouraging us all to get in contact with each other and everything. And ...

J. Have they hired a coordinator?

A. No. It's all volunteer still.

J. Um-hum. But they had a coordinator back when we had talked last time.

A. Right. Right. And that whole thing ...

J. And then, that woman had ... They lost their funding,

A. Right. Right.

J. so then the woman was going to leave.

So ...

A. Right. And that whole thing did die out.

J. And then, I know that the Department of ... The Women's Bureau, Department Of Labor in New York City was active on behalf of women in the trades. They were having some meetings, and trying to act as a coordinator. Did you ...

A. Yeah. And they still do. And Florence Faulk-Dickler

J. Um-hum. Dickler ...

A. was a guest speaker at the Women Carpenters' Committee meeting last week. And she encouraged us to get the Regional Council going again. Because other places in New York and on the eastern seaboard have these councils.

J. Um-hum. That's for the Tradeswomen Network, the Regional Council?

A. Right. Right. But we don't ... But in New York, it just sort of died.

J. Um-hum.

A. And then...

J. Now, that Regional Council would just be for New York or would it be, like, New York and other states?

A. I think it's other states also.

J. Um-hum.

A. Yeah, but ??

J. Now, how many women were at the Women's Committee meeting, that was just for the Carpenters, that she spoke.

A. Um, right. That was just Women Carpenters. There was probably about ten.

J. Only ten?

A. Yeah.

J. And how many women are in the Carpenters Union, New York City?

A. Oh, I wish I knew.

J. There must be hundreds,--right?

A. I think it's a few hundred.

J. uh-huh.

A. But I'm not sure. We're trying to get that information now, again, from the Union ... from the Union. And they--you know--seem to not be able to give it to us.

J. So they let you have space, and they let you have a meeting. And how often are these meetings held?

A. Well, over the summer, the Steering Committee met once a month. And now we're having, like, the general membership meeting, and then a Steering Committee meeting. So I guess, the Steering Committee,--you know--once a month, and the general ... so probably two meetings a month, I guess.

J. So you're on the Steering Committee?

A. Right. Right.

J. Now, what seems to be the problem. Why the ... Why the Committee isn't re-- ... striking a chord with women carpenters?

A. I don't know. I mean,--to me, it's just like, they're tried, I guess,--you know? I mean,--they're ... either they're not ... not interested in being activists, or feel like, by aligning with other women ...--you know,--like their own internalized misogyny? Or,--you know,--just figuring out how to sur-- ... how to survive their own way. Not understanding ... Not feeling like, if they bond with other women, that could help them, or something,--you know;--that it might give ... taint their reputation or ... I mean,--I sort of know what they mean, but it's ... I hate that kind of thing. You know,--when ... when there are so few women anyway, and then, they won't even talk to each other or support each other, because--you know--it diminishes them, somehow, to bond.

J. Um-hum. So what are some of the things that the Carpenters Committee is trying to address now, besides trying to get the names and addresses of the women carpenters?

A. Yeah. Good question. I think, being on the Steering Committee...

J. Are women teaching in the apprentice program?

A. Yeah. Yeah, there's a woman teaching in the apprentice program. It's just to increase our numbers:

J. Um-hum.

A. increase our numbers and provide support so that there's a better chance of retention.

J. Um-hum.

A. And just get recognition for our efforts,--you know,--and get ... get them to help us get recognized as a legitimate committee so that they can pay for stuff: mailings and--you know ...

J. How long does that take? That's been going on forever. In fact,

A. For years. Yeah, I know.

J. I remember when they had the hearings in New York City, Charles Fanning sitting there and saying that it would be no problem to have a Women's Committee. But they ...

A. Right. Now, they let us do stuff, but it's not really recognized. You know,--now they say, "Okay, you can use the copying machine, and here's the coffee pot. And you can have this room," and all like that, but it's still not exactly equitable.

J. Um-hum.

A. You know. I mean,--I don't know. It's ... It's hard. And I think that the reason ... It's 'cause there's so few. It's 'cause there's so few.

J. So what ... What's the plan for the fall?

A. Well, to increase our numbers, and--you know--approach more women;--like ... like have women, like, lobby other women they see coming into the school and trying to get them involved. And then, just guest speakers and--you know--to inform the women that are already members, to have it be like a support group for them. And continuing our efforts to--you know--lobby with other ... I mean,--network with

other groups.

J. When this women from the Women's Bureau, Florence Faulk-Dickler spoke, what did ... what did she have to ... what was her perspective, having done this for around four years? And what did she see for women in the trades?

A. Well, she was great. But she ... she comes at it from a different point of view, 'cause she's an administrator.

J. Um-hum.

A. But she was, like, all encouraged, and she just feels like out time is now and ... I mean,--she's been at the Women's Bureau a really long time, and gave a little run down of the whole history of the Women's Bureau and everything and ... You know,--but she ... she goes all over the place, like, talking to ... Like, she's going to go to Beijing next year,--which I would like to do that, too, for some ... some Women In Labor Conference,--and feels like that--I don't know. Clinton just appointed somebody in Washington that's supposedly really supportive of this,--and she's really, really interested in getting young women,--like, before they've decided what they want to be,--like, early--like in grade school.

J. Um-hum.

A. Like, that's her thing, 'cause I think she used to be a school teacher,--and ... and that's what--you know--she ... she feels like that's where the focus should be;--like, getting into the schools, and--you know--being role models, and showing the young women what they can be, and ...

J. Um-hum. Well, was she able to tell you about any projects in New York City where that's taking place ??

A. Yeah. The ... The project,--I think it's called Project Connect, with the School Construction Authority. That's the one where I said,

J. Yeah. Yeah.

A. You know,--where I should get release time on my job to do it and ...

J. Yeah. Um-hum.

A. But I don't know if any women are doing it;--

J. Um-hum.

A. you know--any tradeswomen are doing it. I don't know.

'Cause if they're working, how could they do it? And--you know--we just need to get more organized, I guess. And, Oh yeah!--and she wants to get a roster of--you know--that,--and this was an old idea, too,--that the original council, when it was active wanted to do,--of tradeswomen, so that--you know--we all know who there is, and we can call on each other, 'cause instead of ...--you know--like even a computer data bank thing of--you know,--how many women carpenters are there, and how many women steam fitters are there,--and like that,--and have a ... have it accessible. And ... And then, just federal money for ... for jobs. And how ... She ... she said so many things, I'm not going to ... I'm ... I'm forgetting ... I'm getting it mixed up now. But ...

J. But ... So, what did you connect with in ... in her talk, that seemed to make sense from where ... from ... from your point of view,--that ... that you thought would be something to tape into for ... You ... You liked the idea of ... of talking to younger women to ...

A. Yeah. And the thing about how ... just feeling like that there is support for this mandated on,--you know--the highest level, only that's what seems to never really filter down,--you know. But hearing her talk reinforced that there is. Like, there's federal money for projects and--you know--that 6.9 for that--you now--percent

J. Um-hum.

A. that we're supposed to have, that we haven't reached yet,--and--you know--and ice tea money,--getting that for New York and, Oh, like that. That's an acronym who ...

J. What is that?

A. It's ... I'm trying to think,--you know: it's the Inter--I should know this, too;--the Inter Surface Transportation something. Anyway, it's ... its bridges and tunnels, but not roads or something. We want to include roads, too, and I don't know how much ...

J. So, for building.

A. Yeah. Yeah, it's construction.

J. Um-hum.

But, um ...

J. So, well, what about, in terms of the work that you were doing as a shop steward. And now that you're a supervisor, you're not a shop steward, but do you see any change in the way that the people that you work with,--the people that work for you,--relate to the idea of steward. Does that seem such a foreign concept to them lately?

A. No. It does seem to have been a big change, and I'm not sure what brought that about. But since ... being a Civil Service carpenter,--and everybody's secure in their jobs,--or so they thought,--they didn't really see any need for any Union involvement, or having shop stewards, or anything,--you know,--or--you know--being active, or organizing in any way. And now, there's a new representative,--Mike Power's,--who is a Civil Service carpenter, only now he's the Civil Service representative to the Union. And he's very well versed on Civil Service law, and he's done a great job of going around talking to different agencies and getting a whole bunch of different carpenters interested in their jobs;--I guess, just 'cause he knows so much,--and so he signed up a whole bunch of people in the Union, who weren't ever in the Union,--and--you know--wants elections for shop stewards,--which there are going to be in a couple of weeks at my mob, which I've ... I've been there nine years, and I've never voted for a shop steward, although every once in a while, you're hear "Oh, that one's the shop steward,"--but you don't know how they got that or anything.

J. Um-hum.

A. And that's how I got to be the shop steward, 'cause I never ... 'cause I was starting to study labor studies, and didn't know how you got to be a shop steward, so I just asked Charley Fanny, and he just said, "Oh, you can be one." But--you know,--so now this is like a more legitimate kind of thing, I guess, so this election, so ... I mean,--Think it'll be good, and everyone seems to be, like, paying more attention. 'Cause it seems to be ... Everyone's sort of under a lot of pressure now. Well, the Board of Ed,--you know--there's--you know--been a new boss, so that always does it, I guess.

J. Um-hum.

A. But people are just more ... not taking their jobs for granted as much, and with the threat of privatization, and all that,--you know?

J. Um-hum. So, is the threat of privatization being talked about in the Board of Ed?

A. Oh, yeah.

J. Does that seem like they're moving in that direction?

A. Yeah. Well, hopefully not. But--you know--I mean,--the custodians,--a lot of the custodial work is now being done by contracts.

J. Um-hum.

A. So--you know,--there's always that threat. And,--I mean,--it's more now than every since I worked there,

J. Um-hum.

A. 'cause some agency had gone that way. Think General Services decided to do that, instead of Civil Service carpenters. So we're ...

J. What about the Kansas City conference and what came out of that? Any ... You ... You got energy from that but ??

A. Yeah. That was ... That was really great. Well, the biggest thing that came out of it, I guess, was this ... this list of possible participants in the national ... a new National Tradeswomen Network, 'cause the other one died out. I mean,--they lost their funding, or something happened to that one.

J. Um-hum.

A. And I just got that this week, and--you know--it's just get-- ... It's just getting started now, and they're just trying to find out,--you know--how ... how much energy everybody has, and how to best go about getting it established and ...

J. Um-hum. Yeah.

A. But--I mean,--I'm very ... really encouraged by it, because--you know--it seems like this is what I'm doing, so ...

J. How many women attended Kansas City?

A. You know,--I don't know. It was a couple of hundred. A couple of hundred, I think.

J. About? Yeah. Um-hum. And that ... It wasn't ... wasn't a national conference. It was a ...

Q. Yeah! Yeah, it was.

J. Oh, it was.

A. They called it the Tradeswomen Summit, which I loved, but it was sort of sponsored ...

J. Um-hum.

A. It was sponsored by the Department Of Labor, and it was really ... I really liked it quite a bit.

J. What about Tradeswomen, the magazine from California? Is that still published?

A. Yeah, it is. I don't know what else to say about it, except that--you know--I mean--I still love it, and

J. Um-hum. You had visited California a few years ago.

A. Yeah. Yeah, that was great.

J. And have you kept up with any of the women out there? ...

A. No, I haven't. I sort of lost track of them. But, yeah, I was very energized by that. Well, just that whole magazine. And that's where, to me,--like that's sort of where the movement got started.

J. Um-hum.

A. And ... well, the magazine came out of there then. Then, while I was working in isolation, that's the support that I got, just from the magazine, and different newsletters and stuff.

J. Um-hum.

A. But that was the main one.

J. So you haven't seen any organizing going on, outside of the Carpenters around here, like United Tradeswomen were. Do you think that there's going to be people who are going to pick up on this idea of a regional movement for a Network?

A. Yeah. Yes, I hope so. I hope it really catches on.

J. Are you going to be involved in it at all, you think?

A. Yeah. Yeah, I would like to be.

J. How ... How will you make yourself be involved? How will you work outside ...

A. Well ... Oh, I wouldn't mind being like the Tradeswomen Committee designated person to sit on that committee;--

J. Um-hum.

A. I mean,--to sit on that caucus. And--you know--you know--just ... But yeah, in that capacity, and more committee work, I guess.

J. But would you see yourself working in a coordinating role, or what would your role be? What would you ... You'd be like delegate to it?

A. Right. Right. So just be like a--how do you say,--just networking,--you know;--trying to make connections with other groups, and other women, and building ... building a movement,--you know?

J. At the Board of Ed, when Susan D'Alessandro was fired, was ... did that create any kind of a ... a wake? Was there some kind of response to that or was it sort of ...

A. There really was, and people are still talking about it. But not directly to me, of course, because I'm so adversarial with so many people there. But--you know--somebody was saying today that--a plumbing supervisor was saying to me today that--you know--he ... he was thinking that, if she gets her job back, it'll have--you know--far reaching ramifications for that whole Plant Manager title,--which is ... which isn't a Civil Service title. It was just sort of a created job that she got fired from, and she didn't have any protection, and that's how she got fired. But--you know--if she came back,--you know,--that it would prob-- ... it might ... she might try and get it created as a title,--where you have to take a test to have that job and stuff. And yeah,--I mean,--everybody's ta-- ...--you know,--you know. I mean,--Think the whole ... because she was a woman and because that's why she's suing,--because she thinks it's a gender bias issue,--and that put them all on their toes. But for me,--I mean,--it made everything ... To me, it made everything worse, because she wasn't there any more, and everybody just ... Even though, on the one hand, they didn't want any other gender bias issues created,--because they're already fighting this one in court,--on the other hand, it was just ... it's just difficult with them, because they're ... so hostile. I mean,--I really feel like they're just so hostile to a woman in the work place. You know,--like there was a plumber's helper, and I feel like they just chased her out,--you know,--and she quit. I mean,--who quits a \$35,000.00 a year job ??

J. When you say they, you mean sort of unilaterally "them."

Q. Yeah.

J. the owners, the workers, the bosses, the ...

A. Yeah! Yeah!

J. even ... What about the top management in your ...

A. I just think they don't know what goes on, except for, of course, ... Then, there's that memo I showed you today, thanking all the men in Brooklyn for the marvelous job they did. So it's like ... I mean,--I think that ... I mean,--ultimately, if you follow it up, I guess you do have to blame the people at the top, because they're the ones that ...

J. They ... They know something. They ... They have this

liaison person,

A. Right.

J. who they ... has been out for how long?

A. Well, I think she just went out recently.

J. Oh.

A. But I lost contact with her 'cause I was in school and didn't have the energy to keep it going.

J. Yeah. Yeah.

A. And it's like I had to keep everything going, like they're not going to do it on their own. IN this ... In this department, if you mention something, they'll say, "Oh, okay," but they're not going to, like, offer to ...

J. But, so she wasn't able to translate what she'd learned from that into policy;--into ...

A. Right. Right. Right. Like there's ... Exactly.

J. I know that you had mentioned, back in 1990, that they were going to do a survey of ... Anything come out of that?

A. No, nothing came out of it. Everything's just dropped,--

J. Um-hum.

A. you know. And,--I mean,--the pornography thing, that was a big issue with me. And it's not blatantly there any more, but you still do find pickets of it,--which I'm horrified by when I do. But in some of the shops, like in the back and stuff and on the calendars,--which I can't believe there's any of it. But--you now--the most flagrant displays of it are gone now. And I guess that's a small victory. But I feel like the backlash is as bad--you know ... There's tons of them that just know you as--you know--the ogre that didn't want that.

J. Right.

A. And--you know. And it's ... And it's hard to have--you know--affable relationships with them when that's how they are, or something,--you know?

J. Yeah. So what ... what ... coming up on the next ... Looking out over the horizon, where do you see your energies going for trying to make some organizing gains, in terms of your work? Where do you

want to put your energy?

A. Well, I'm excited about the project we're collaborating on. And I'm excited about the Women Carpenters' Committee;--that--and I'm excited about the National Tradeswomen Network. But my job, in particular, I don't know what to do. I mean,--part of me feels like that I should organize on the job, too. But since I'm the only one doing it, I feel really stymied in that effort, for some reason. I feel like it would be easier to just sort of like, do it everywhere else but there. But then, that creates ... sets up some sort of in-- ... internal conflict with me, too, if I'm not persistent. So ??

J. What's this Sex Equity thing that Susan D'Alessandro was trying to talk you into doing?

A. Oh, yeah, The Chancellor's Task Force On Sex Equity,--which I sat on, before I went to law school.

J. Um-hum.

A. Gee. Gee, I went to law school, but now I'm not in law school any more because it was too hard to do while I was working this job.

J. Working full time.

A. So this ... I was sitting on The Chancellor's Force On Sex Equity,--which she wants me to get back on,--because she feels like it would be helpful to her to ...

J. Um-hum. But in terms of women, are they making any headway? Are they doing anything with it? What's ... What's their plan? What are they ...

A. I think that they're geared towards not the women that work at the Division Of School Facilities at the Board Of Education, but rather all young women in New York City schools--public schools in gender equity,--you know? Like, they did this study, and it's incredible! I mean,--they just found it that--I mean,--you know--the horrors of gender inequity. Like, if the peers ... like how badly girls are treated by their peers in the schools, basically, from--you know--like, the beginning.

J. ?? We're in the classroom,

Q. Right!

J. and math skills and ... So that seems like a good thing.

A. And just harassment,--sexual harassment.

J. Yeah, really.

A. like, in grade school, but in grade school. So they're just like even intimidated to be a human being and be present,--and how that would impede learning.

J. So, are you thinking that you might go back onto the Sex Equity Committee or don't have the energy for it, or ...

A. I don't think ... Yeah, I don't think so. I mean,--I wouldn't say absolutely not, but, like, right now I'm sort of branching out in these other areas.

J. Um-hum. So, well, in ... What do you see as the structures of support that you get from the Management at the Board Of ED? Is there any support for equity? Or it's just absent?

A. I don't really feel it. I mean,--right now, I saw that they're advertising for a new Equal Employment Opportunity head, and--you know--I guess it'll depend on who gets that job, or something,--you know. At least, I feel like a lot of it might branched out from that office. And there is a new administrator,--top administrator,--and who knows how he'll be. But I don't really think ... You know,--and they ... and they did go through ... Like, they did sexual harassment training, but--you know--nobody took that seriously and,--I mean,--they have tried to go through the motions of putting forth a good faith effort to make the place equitable. But it just doesn't feel like that it's worked very well. It still feels like that it's sort of like trapped in ... in a time warp where--you now--it's ... it's just a male environment. And there hasn't--you know--been any change in ... in it being very positive. Or if there has, it's been slow and hardly worth mentioning.

J. What about the hearings that New York City held back in 1991. They put out a big report on their findings, and

A. Right. I don't think ... No!

J. Is there anything translated into policy for the City which is ...

J. No. That's ...

J. where you would think that's the logical place for them to start.

A. No, I think ... Yeah. No, I think nothing's changed. I know. I think it would be the logical place for them to start, but no. I feel like they're just dragging their feet;--that they don't want to do it,--you know,--and that there's not enough ... I think the ... the low numbers of women in non-traditional jobs,--which is the very reason why they need to do it,--is the reason why they don't

do it,--

J. Um-hum.

A. you know,--because it's like, Oh,--you know,--easy to ignore,

J. Um-hum.

A. instead of ...

J. Yeah. So ... And they still have the five year experience requirement

A. Right.

J. that precludes getting women in there?

A. Um-hum. Although now there's talk about, with this Project Connect the School Construction Authority is doing, about filtering them straight from Vocational Technical ... Vo Tech schools right into apprenticeship programs. And I don't know how that's going,

J. Um-hum.

A. 'cause I just heard about that from Florence

J. Yeah.

A. at the meeting. But ...

J. 'Cause they are planning to build a lot of schools in New York?

A. Yeah, I think they are. Yeah.

J. or some. They're building one in my neighborhood.

A. Really? That's great.

J. Guys.

A. Really?

J. I haven't seen any women on the job.

A. Yeah.

J. They've been building the school for, like, four years.

A. Oh.

J. They stopped for a while, but ...

A. Oh, shit.

J. And then, they have their problems with corruption ??

A. Right. Right.

J. So anything to add on the organizing front?

A. I mean,--I can't think of anything, Jane. It's ...

J. You're still hanging in there.

A. Yeah. I'm still hanging in there.

J. And well paid, while you're hanging in there.

A. Right.

J. Okay, cheers! Here's to women who are well paid and able to hang in there.