

Gray

High in the 20s
Details on page 2A

Democrat and Chronicle

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Organizer cheers, 'Go Teamsters,' and gets results

By MICHAEL CORDTS

Like the leader of any successful revolution, Teamster organizer Vicki Saporta was flattered when her enemies in Lexington, N.C., sent a funeral wreath to her going-away party.

"I guess I was leaving in the nick of time," she said Saturday. Her smile faded. She paused and tugged at her yellow "GO TEAMSTERS" T-shirt. The smile came back.

"Shoot, nobody would hurt me. I'd make too good of a martyr."

The morbid parting gift was just another indication that the 26-year-old union organizer from Irondequoit is worth every penny of the \$33,250 salary she draws from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the world's largest labor union.

Her stunning success in North Carolina — the least-unionized state in the nation — surprised the Teamsters as much as it shocked the business leaders of Lexington, who watched in disbelief as she unionized the city's four largest industries in 16 months.

But turning anti-union Lexington into a Teamster stronghold is only Ms. Saporta's latest coup.

She was the first graduate in the

33-year history of Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations to sign on with the Teamsters, and she was the first woman to be named to the International's eight-member organizing department.

She organized 1,200 workers at Yosemite National Park when she was fresh out of college. She helped unionize Blue Cross clerical workers in Chicago, which a Teamster publication says is the largest unit of clerical workers ever organized.

Business Week magazine said she "burst upon conservative North Carolina like a Texas cheerleader." Marveling at her ability to surprise management and tap worker unrest, the editor of Lexington's daily newspaper called her "an energetic young woman from upstate New York who would seem as out of place here as the Square's Confederate Soldier would in Rochester."

Friends and foes respect her ability, and a partial list of published adjectives includes highly intelligent, persuasive, attractive, vibrant, articulate, hard-working, charming and unconventional.

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Union organizer Vicki Saporta wears her philosophy

D&C photo by Vicki Valerio

TEAMSTERS

From Page 1B

But it's all a matter of fair play for the woman who lives in California, works out of Washington, D.C., and is headed back to North Carolina.

"We don't want everything the companies have. We don't want the companies to be in the red," she said. "It's simple. The workers deserve a fair share of what they produce. They deserve a grievance procedure and dignity and respect."

She speaks quickly, and her hands race when the subject turns to companies that have raised prices after moving to the South. Sunbelt states offer tax cuts and workers who typically earn half as much in wages and benefits as their counterparts in the North, she said.

"We're talking about husbands and wives and kids who are trying to exist on \$2.90 an hour," she said. "The profit motive — at any cost — of some companies frightens me."

Lexington is still buzzing about the campaign she masterminded, which included cheering, dancing, singing, picnics, parades and a sea of "GO TEAMSTERS" T-shirts. The campaign unionized more than 4,000 workers.

"The town went crazy," she said. "It was the most beautiful grass-roots movement I'd ever seen. The workers became militants overnight, and it was all because for the first time the workers realized they were worth something."

"I love those people down there. It was the best experience of my life."

She's almost oblivious to corruption in the Teamsters, until companies she's attempting to organize bring up the disappearance of former union president Jimmy Hoffa, the murder conviction of New Jersey Teamster leader Anthony Provenzano and the

pension fund scandal.

She was unaware that a close friend of Salvatore "Sammy G" Gingello, Rochester's late Mafia underboss, and current underboss Richard Marino were elected officials of Teamsters Construction Local 398.

"We've got 750 locals, and some of them have problems," she said. "But I'm not affected by what Tony Provenzano did or didn't do. And I just met my first Rochester Teamster two days ago in Washington."

She admits her success has caused some jealousy within the international, "but I've earned my stripes. I was a young female who didn't come through the ranks, but now they (her fellow organizers) know me and trust me."

She also is a new breed of union organizer, said Jean McKelvey of Rochester, one of her professors at Cornell.

"There's a renewed interest in unions, and Vicki was almost a pioneer," Mrs. McKelvey said. "She was a well-motivated student with lots of self-confidence. I thought she would go places, but not this fast. It's amazing."

Curled up in a kitchen chair and sipping milk during a rare visit to her Irondequoit home, the daughter of Abe and Leah Saporta talked about non-union Kodak and Xerox.

"Boy, I bet the whole town would be against Kodak going union," she said, glancing at the ceiling and laughing.

For the time being, she's returning to North Carolina for a series of labor board hearings regarding her latest achievement.

What happened to the funeral wreath, compliments of PPG Industries Inc.?

"I took it to Washington, D.C., and hung it on my boss's door."

The Charlotte Observer

Sunday
April 1, 1979

Local News

From Charlotte and The Carolinas

Section

C

Vicki Is A Driving Force As Teamsters Roll In N.C.

By BOB DROGIN
Observer Staff Writer

SALISBURY — Sporting a yellow "Go Teamsters" T-shirt, Vicki Saporta plays the Fiber Industry workers like an evangelist, her fingers stabbing the air, her voice loud and insistent.

"We don't ask anyone to join us," she shouts. "We're here to offer a product and if you get us you'll be damned lucky ... because we're getting calls from around the state."

Such a claim from a union organizer would have been unlikely a few years ago. But the Teamsters are making inroads in North Carolina, a right-to-work state that the U.S. Labor Department says has, after South Carolina, the second lowest unionization rate and the lowest industrial wages in the country.

Ms. Saporta, a 26-year-old organizer for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, is probably the best — and most unconventional — organizer the Teamsters, or any other union, has in the state.

A self-described "Yankee and carpet-bagger," she sings, dances and leads rallies like old-time religious revivals. She dresses herself and her supporters in bright yellow T-shirts and sticks phosphorescent

"Teamsters Are Beautiful" flowers everywhere. She leads cheers, holds picnics and runs midnight pickup truck parades.

"I'm just a little girl on a white horse leading a crusade," she says with a grin. "I'm out to win."

And she wins. Last summer, Ms. Saporta organized five union affiliates in Davidson County — at Mallory Battery, Binnings Building Products, Coble Dairy, Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG), all in Lexington, and Thomas Manufacturing Co. in Thomasville.

The drive organized about 4,000 workers, a fourth of the Lexington area work force. None of the companies have signed contracts, however, and Thomas workers have been striking since December.

Since arriving in North Carolina in June 1977, Ms. Saporta also helped win union elections for a total of about 1,200 workers at Gulton Electronics in High Point, Modern Metal Products in Greensboro, Miller Brewery in Eden and Liggett and Platt Metal Bed Rail Division in Linwood.

Contracts have been signed at Gulton, Miller and Modern Metal. Bed Rail's seven employees withdrew from the union after a dispute. Ms. Saporta lost elections at Borden Dairy in High Point and Anaconda

A self-described 'Yankee and carpetbagger,' Vicki Saporta dresses herself and her supporters in bright yellow T-shirts and sticks phosphorescent 'Teamsters Are Beautiful' flowers everywhere.



Co. in Eden, but the union is contesting both elections.

Ms. Saporta's successes have not gone unnoticed by employers and industry groups.

She is accused of using mass hypnosis and intimidation. She is attacked in handbills, called a con artist, skunk, communist, member of the Mafia and worse.

"It's almost a compliment," Ms. Sapor-

ta says. "These people have ability above and beyond the normal person."

Whatever the reason, the Teamsters are holding and winning more elections in the Carolinas than any other union. Last year, for example, they won 18 elections with 3,951 workers and lost 22 with 1,026.

The next most active union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, won 2 and lost 7 elections.

The Teamsters have won 4 out of 10 elections so far this year in the Carolinas, and are running a highly publicized campaign to organize police and public employees in Winston-Salem.

"Right now we're really tied up," said Jimmy Wright, secretary-treasurer of Charlotte's Teamsters Local 71. "We've got our hands full."

Local 71 has 3,700 members and contracts with 56 companies, Wright said. The three N.C. Teamsters locals had 14,228 members in 1976, according to the latest figures from the U.S. Labor Department.

The three S.C. locals had 3,742 members the same year. The Teamsters are the

most active union in the Carolinas, he said.

Rhodes Batson, vice president of Lexington's Chamber of Commerce, compares Ms. Saporta's organizing ability to that of Adolf Hitler and the Rev. Jim Jones, head of the ill-fated Peoples Temple.

"It's charisma, the art of persuasion, the use of language and body language, an understanding of human nature," he said.

Teamsters Pick Up Speed In N.C. — And Vicki Is A Driving Force

Continued from Page 1C

nation's largest union, with about 2.2 million members.

About 141,000 N.C. workers were unionized in 1976, 6.8 percent of the total work force, according to the U.S. Labor Department. About 69,000 South Carolina workers, 6.6 percent of the work force, were unionized. The national union rate was 24.8 percent.

Last week, in a lively, four-hour meeting, Ms. Saporta talked about the Teamsters to about 60 employees from Fiber Industries Inc. She has been trying to organize about 2,200 workers at the plant, which is 9 miles west of Salisbury, for a month. Fiber is a partially owned division of Celanese Corp. and produces polyester for clothing, furnishings and tires.

"As a result of your going union at Fiber, everything isn't going to be neat and fine and peachy keen," she explained, leaning back on a table. "We can't work miracles.

"We do more for working people than any other union in the country," she continued. "We get better wages, better working conditions But they're not going to give you anything unless you stand up and demand it."

Shirley Davidson, 31, a drawer frame operator who makes \$6.07 an hour, stood up and faced the smoke-filled room.

"Vicki can show us how to do it but she can't do it," she shouted. "Do you want to go back on welfare, or if not, do you want to be introduced to Mr. Welfare? Then get off your ass and do something." The people in the room burst into cheers.

Ms. Saporta predicted she will petition the NLRB for a union election in two weeks. She refused to say how many workers already have signed applications but said about 200 have joined an in-plant organizing committee, including seven who signed up after the meeting.

Machinist Joe Tugman, 43, said the Teamsters "have the company scared to the devil."

But in a telephone interview, Fiber plant manager Gene LeGrand said he is "very confident" the company would win an election. "I don't know of any burning issues that the people have," he said.

Employers and anti-union groups cite the Teamsters' negative image, telling workers of Teamsters pension fund fraud, corruption and brutality elsewhere.

"It's a problem organized labor has no matter how they try to wash it down the drain," said Andy Anderson, director of management development for the Central Piedmont Employers Association, a group of about 375 employers.

Ms. Saporta gets angry about such charges, angry that PPG accused her of intimidating PPG employees with a toy gun during the election last summer. The union won 698-639.

"We had little toy blue guns that went 'Errrrrr,'" she explained. "We went up and down the line with 'em for 30 seconds and laughed and then some kid ran off with 'em. They (PPG) went out and said Mafia and violence and Teamsters."

An NLRB official at the regional office in Win-

ston-Salem said a hearing officer is investigating the toy-gun complaint.

"People might say, 'My God, that's a threat,'" said the official, who asked not to be identified. "That's not as facetious as it sounds. Certain things that are innocuous to us might not be innocuous to voters in a tense election."

The daughter of a Rochester, N.Y., custom tailor and homemaker, Ms. Saporta joined the Teamsters five years ago after graduating from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

She is the International's only woman organizer and makes \$33,250 a year. She lives in San Francisco but spends most of her time on the road.

"It becomes like a religion," she says of her work. "I feel like a missionary sometimes."

Since joining the Teamsters, Ms. Saporta has organized rent-a-car employees in Florida, Blue Cross-Blue Shield workers in Chicago, flight attendants in Seattle and public employees in Southern California. But she says she "absolutely fell in love with North Carolina."

"When you organize Davidson County overnight, you have an impact," she said. "We could be a major political force there. We could elect people When you organize 200 workers in California or New York, who cares?"

Batson, of the Lexington Chamber of Commerce, agreed the Teamsters had an impact there, saying he is "certain" the union will scare other companies from locating in the area.

Experts differ on the reasons for the Teamsters' and Ms. Saporta's apparent success.

"I think the ground is ripe," said Daniel Pollitt, law professor and labor expert at UNC. "If the ground isn't ripe, it doesn't matter how good you are. People want to join unions."

Pollitt said the work force has more women, more blacks and younger people than in the past. "They've got rising expectations, they've been exposed to television, they're smarter and have had more education."

Thomas Kaniesner, a UNC labor economics professor, says the Teamsters have succeeded by organizing skilled workers of large companies that have union plants elsewhere.

"As you see more of the labor force involved in skilled industry, you'll see more union organization," he said. "Traditionally, North Carolina is full of workers that never needed unions."

Ms. Saporta attributes her success to worker involvement and education.

"I come armed with facts," says Ms. Saporta. "I live with my people 24 hours a day. I care. I make them care. And I make them work."

She looked at papers in her briefcase, trying to plan the next phase of the Fiber campaign. She had been working 11 hours and an evening meeting was due to start in 10 minutes.

"I don't know if I'll start them singing yet," she mused. "It's too early for that."

The Teamsters are attempting to organize public employees in Winston-Salem. Story in Monday's Observer.

'Girl on white horse' winning Teamsters' crusade



GNS photo-graphics

Vicki Saporta leads Teamsters' cheers

SALISBURY, N.C. (GNS) — Sporting a yellow "Go Teamsters" T-shirt, Vicki Saporta exhorts the 60 polyester plant workers like an evangelist, her fingers stabbing the air, her voice loud and insistent.

"We don't ask anyone to join us," she shouted. "We're here to offer a product and if you get us you'll be damned lucky . . . because we're getting calls from around the state."

Such a claim from a union organizer seems unlikely in North Carolina, a right-to-work state that has the second lowest unionization rate and the lowest manufacturing wages in the country. But the Teamsters are making surprising inroads here.

And Saporta, a 26-year-old organizer for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, is probably the best — and most unconventional — organizer the Teamsters, or any other union, has in the state.

"Carpetbagger"

A self-described "Yankee and Carpetbagger" from Rochester, N.Y., she sings, dances and leads rallies like old-time religious revivals. She dresses herself and her supporters in the bright yellow T-shirts and sticks phosphorescent "Teamsters are Beautiful" plastic daisies everywhere. She leads cheers, holds picnics and organizes midnight pickup truck parades.

"I'm just a little girl on a white horse leading a crusade," she said with a grin. "And I'm out to win."

And win she does. Last summer, Saporta organized five union affiliates with about 3,500 workers, a fourth of the local work force around Lexington, in the central part of the state. The victories ranged from a Coble Dairy to a fiberglass plant owned by PPG Industries here.

She also helped win four other Piedmont-area elections, including a large Miller Brewery in Eden, taking on about 1,200 new workers in a 16-month period. She has lost only two elections.

Her stunning success in the state surprised the Teamsters as much as it shocked the business leaders. She is accused of using mass hypnosis and intimidation. She is attacked in handbills, called a con artist, skunk, communist, member of the Mafia and worse.

"It's almost a compliment," Saporta said. "If they didn't think I was being effective, they wouldn't bother."

Rhodes Batson, vice president of Lexington's Chamber of Commerce, compared Saporta's organizing ability to that of Adolf Hitler and the Rev. Jim Jones, head of the ill-fated Peoples Temple.

"It's charisma, the art of persuasion, the use of language and body language, an understanding of human nature," he said. "These people have the ability above and beyond the normal person."

Whatever the reason, the Teamsters are holding and winning more elections in the state than any other

union. Last year, for example, they won 14 elections and lost 18. The next most active union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, won two and lost five elections last year.

But turning an anti-union state into a Teamster stronghold is only Saporta's latest coup.

She was the first graduate in the 33-year history of Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations to sign on with the Teamsters, and she was the first woman to be named to the International's eight-member organizing department, at a salary of \$33,250 a year.

She organized 1,200 workers at Yosemite National Park when she was fresh out of college. She helped unionize Blue Cross clerical workers in Chicago, which a Teamster publication says is the largest unit of clerical workers ever organized.

Friends and foes respect her ability, and a partial list of published adjectives includes highly intelligent, persuasive, attractive, vibrant, articulate, hard-working, charming and unconventional.

The Teamsters March

Led by an energetic young woman from upstate New York who would seem as out of place here as the Square's Confederate Soldier would in Rochester, the Teamsters Union has plowed into Lexington this summer, catching management off guard and industrial workers obviously dissatisfied with their lot in life.

With victories at Binning's and Coble Dairy in May and an important win at PPG last week, the union leads 3 to 0.

For better or worse, change is coming more quickly than ever to this quiet Southern city that prides itself on taking progress slowly. Many people across the country are watching what is happening here, because the unionization of the South is supposed to be the Movement of the 80's. If what is happening here is any indication of its potential, it will be successful.

While organized labor has both its good points and bad ones, we believe it would be most advantageous if industry throughout the region, and especially those companies here, realized the bleak prospects — from their standpoint — and made every effort to improve conditions so that unions would have no valuable purpose. There is enough evidence to show that workers are made happy not by the means to an end but by the results themselves. They want better working conditions and bigger paychecks, and they do not care how they get them.

Unions are helping to bring about those improvements. On the other hand, we believe

that the employee and the manager can work together far better without a middle man. The question, obviously, is whether the manager is willing to listen to the employee and treat him with respect and decency. In the South, the question is whether management will prove that Southern workers are no less worthy of decency than their counterparts elsewhere in the country.

The days of cheap labor in the South are over. Davidson County, the Piedmont, North Carolina, the South — we will not continue to grow on cheap labor, and if industry still has that notion, it had better change its long-term projections.

There are some indications, however weak, that several companies in town, even a big furniture manufacturer, have decided to try to improve conditions so that unions will have trouble winning the support of their workers.

From a philosophical point of view, it would be better if those changes were the result of a genuine concern for the workers and not from a fear of Vicki Saporta and her Teamsters organizers. But if Miss Saporta is scaring them into change, she is doing the town a valuable service and we should welcome the improvements, regardless of the motivation.

As shocking as industry here must find labor's inroads, as stinging as industry's defeats must be, there still is opportunity for the big employers in Lexington — Burlington House, Dixie, Dacotah, Parkdale to name the largest — to respond to the very long cries of their workers. To continue to turn a deaf ear is the worst possible reaction.

Showers

Showers are likely today with highs in the middle 80s (29C). Low tonight around 70 (21C). Rain chance is 80 percent through tonight. Details on Page 18C.

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Foremost Newspaper Of The Carolinas

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Grant

Teamsters Outraged By Recording Sent To Workers

By **BOB DENNIS**
Observer Staff Writer

SALISBURY — A brick hits a car's windshield, shattering the glass, and a woman screams:

"I'm cut, Charlie, I'm cut. Get me out of here."

The voice of a radio newsman:

"Hit men move in on men who have refused to sign union cards. One is shotgunned; another's house is burned."

The voice of Gene LeGrand, manager of the Fiber Industries Salisbury plant:

"I can't get to work because Teamsters are blocking the gates. ... Law enforcement is so outnum-

bered by the mob that the threat of physical harm — even death — is very real."

The voices and sound effects, including the roar of a mob and the chatter of machine guns, are from a phonograph record sent last week by Fiber Industries to more than 2,000 of its workers who will be voting today on whether they want union representation by Teamsters Local 71 of Charlotte.

The election is considered an important test of Teamster strength in the Carolinas.

Teamster organizers and officials are so outraged by the recording that they say they will file unfair

labor practice charges against Fiber Industries.

Teamsters international representative Bill Grant called the recording "scurrilous."

"I've run into a lot of things in organizing," he said, "but never anything like this."

Teamster organizer Vicki Saporta said the recording will help the union drive, which began nine months ago.

The recording, she predicted Wednesday, "will backfire ... The employees don't like it. We've even got people who weren't for the union saying they're gonna vote yes because of it."

James Allen, a spokesman for Celanese Corp., a part owner of Fiber, said the company felt the recording, characterized as a dramatization of a 1965 labor dispute in Tennessee involving the Murray Ohio Corp., "was a meaningful part of its informational program."

Allen wouldn't discuss the company's purpose in using the recording, which contains depictions of explosions, dynamiting, mob scenes and violence.

"I wouldn't want to get into strategy and tactics at this late hour," he said.

The voting begins today and is scheduled to end by 9 a.m. Friday.

Fiber Industries, which makes high-tenacity polyester filament yarns for tire cord and polyester staple fiber for apparel in its Salisbury plant, is jointly owned by Celanese (62.5 percent) and by Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. of England

See **TEAMSTERS** Page 26A, Col. 1

A dissident Teamster group has asked the Labor Department to order a special election to remove Frank Fitzsimmons from the presidency. The story is on Page 21A.

Teamsters Are Outraged By Recording

Continued from Page 1A

(37.5 percent.)

The union drive at the Salisbury plant, which employs about 2,800, isn't "a real hot issue" in Salisbury, according to K.V. Epting, who heads the Salisbury-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce.

"But if Fiber is organized," Epting said, "it will have a big impact here. If the Teamsters get in, they will go from plant to plant like they did in Davidson County.

Last year organizers for Teamsters Local 391 in Greensboro, led by Ms. Saporta, organized five plants in Davidson County — Binnings Building Products, Coble Dairy, Mallory Battery and Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG), all in Lexington, and Thomas Manufacturing Co. in Thomasville.

None of the companies have signed a contract with the Teamsters, who pulled out of

Coble after workers asked the National Labor Relations Board to hold another election to decertify the union as their bargaining agent.

In North Carolina, the least unionized state in the nation, about 6.9 percent of the workers belong to unions. South Carolina is 49th in the nation, with about 8 percent of workers in unions.

Fiber workers who organized to oppose the Teamsters have been getting financial support from some nonunion industries and local businesses, Epting said, to help with cards and brochures. Individuals have held yard sales, he said, with the proceeds going to the anti-union workers.

Wednesday afternoon at the Fiber plant, about 10 miles west of Salisbury on U.S. 70, between 50 and 100 pro-Teamster workers and family members lined up along the

road leading into the plant urging other workers to "Go Teamsters."

Ned Davis, a 54-year-old be-whiskered maintenance mechanic, has worked for Fiber for 11 years. In his spare time he is studying to be a minister.

He is for the union, Davis said, "because the way it stands now, there's no grievance procedure. And the pay, we need to bring the

pay up to an equal basis to meet the cost of living."

Davis said he makes \$7.16 an hour, one of the highest scales in the plant. The plant average is about \$6.10.

Since the organizing drive began, Davis has become a fervent believer in the Teamsters.

"I'm just all fired up for God and the Teamsters," he said. "Both of them."

The Unsung Heroes of America's

By WILLIAM SERRIN

Labor Movement

FIFTY years ago, the hot summer of 1933, was an exhilarating time for American labor.

On June 16, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act, which gave workers "the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing."

Almost immediately, aggressive labor leaders — John L. Lewis of the miners, David Dubinsky of the garment workers and Sidney Hillman of the textile workers — dispatched their best organizers across America. Tens of thousands of workers in industry after industry were enrolled in unions. "I organized nine locals Tuesday," Garfield Lewis, a miners' organizer, wrote from Kentucky. Successes in rubber, autos, steel and other industries followed.

Today, much seems changed in the movement. It has been seriously weakened by membership losses that have accompanied erosion in industries like autos, steel and rubber. Failure to organize in such growth sectors as high technology, banking and insurance has compounded the problem. Unions now represent only about 20 percent of American workers, down from as much as 35 percent right after World War II, and their leaders have been criticized by many younger union people for seeming out of touch, overfed, unzealous and lacking in commitment.

But in many cases, aggressive labor people, often operating out of the limelight, are working to keep the union movement alive. These people exist at all levels — shop steward, grievance chairman, union officer — but the ones who seem to best typify unionism are the organizers. They are considered the key people attempting today — although not always successfully — to stem the decline in union membership in traditional industries, says Charles



The New York Times/LESLIE WICKARBY

Teamsters

Washington, D.C.
Members: 1.1 million, down 10 percent from 1980
Major industries: Trucking, public employees (emphasizing organization of industrial and public workers)
Key States: N.Y., CA., Ill.
1982 Work Stoppages: N.A.
Organizing Gains: 55,000 new members since January

Vicki Saporta



Craypo, a professor of labor affairs at Cornell University.
Here's a look at three of them.

VICKI SAPORTA lists her place of residence as Foster City, Calif., but mostly she lives out of suitcases and motel rooms. As an organizer on the West Coast with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, she spends more than 200 days a year on the road.

She organizes throughout much of the West. In small towns and large, and often must set off with little notice when the union calls. She says she has almost no social life, with almost no ability to plan to go to a concert or a play. The union can call anytime, Miss Saporta says, and she must be on the road again, to another motel.

But she does the work, she says, because she fiercely believes in trade unionism. Without unions, she says, workers often get a raw deal. "Unless there are unions, unless there is contract pressure to keep employers on their toes," she says, "the profit motive gets the better of employers and workers get it in the neck."

The 30-year-old Miss Saporta, like some other union organizers or staff members, has more academic training than factory experience. Such credentials sometimes are rare in the labor movement, but they are a throwback to many organizers of the 30's, who went first to college and then into factories and mines. Intelligent and hard-working, contemporary union staff members have chosen what, in a way, are jobs in which it is generally impossible to

rise to top positions because those go to professional union politicians. But people like Miss Saporta chose union careers anyway, because they are devoted to unionism.

Raised in Rochester, N.Y., the daughter of a tailor and his wife, she studied at the London School of Economics for a semester after earning a bachelor of science degree in industrial relations from Cornell University. She had originally intended to be an attorney, but Cornell's labor and industrial relations school so impressed her that she enrolled. At Cornell, she worked one semester for the teamsters, and by graduation, she says, "the only thing I wanted to do was work with the teamsters."

In nine and a half years, Miss Saporta, a bubbling, spunky woman with black hair, says she has probably brought tens of thousands of workers into the union. She organized workers in North Carolina and Florida before moving West and recently has been organizing at a hospital in Livermore, Calif. In four days, she says, enough cards were signed for the union to request an election.

The teamsters union, she says, organizes vigorously, puts money behind its efforts, and is, in her view, "the best union in the country." In it, she says, "you find hard working people who are at their jobs day and night, not at the golf course and not on the take. You don't see mobsters in the hall."

Federal prosecutors have not been so flattering. Three of the predecessors of Jackie Presser, the current union president — David Beck, James R. Hoffa and Roy L. Williams — were convicted of crimes and ordered to prison. Mr. Hoffa disappeared in 1975, and is presumed to have been murdered. Numerous other local union officers have been sent to jail over the years. Mr. Presser remains under investigation by the Government on charges of payroll padding, although he vigorously denies wrongdoing.

"I wasn't born with a teamster spoon in my mouth, and people can understand how I can be so enthusiastic and zealous without that being my background," she says. "I developed my enthusiasm in the field, solving problems and injustices, the real need for union representation."

And her gender is sometimes an advantage because, as a woman, she says, "you get taken for granted. Employers think a woman is not tough enough to be a good organizer," she says, and when they find out they are wrong, it is, she says, too late.

One of her colleagues, Barry Feinstein, an organizing chief and New York teamster leader, says her approach works. He calls her a diligent organizer, as good an organizer as he has ever seen.

Union organizer Saporta brings new image to job

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

WASHINGTON — Vicki Saporta is a young, well-dressed, educated career woman — not the stereotype expected of the person tapped to convince non-union workers to join the Teamsters union.

Teamsters president Jackie Presser, who has shaken up the hierarchy of the 1.8 million-member union since taking charge last April, picked the Cornell University graduate in late August to direct his drive to woo white-collar and high-tech workers into the union.

Her demeanor belies the image of the hard-nosed truckers union, the nation's largest, but her rhetoric is loyal,



even defensive, when she is reminded of the array of Teamsters officials who have been convicted

of an assortment of major crimes.

Saporta, 31, is charged with restoring the international union's organizing department, which has been dormant for the past three years.

"To best represent our members, we need to be as large as we possibly can in order to have the kind of clout you want in terms of organizing, in terms of negotiating agreements, ... in terms of political strength," she says.

Most of the organizing — a union term for getting non-union workers to select the union as its collective bargaining agent — is done by the 740 Teamsters locals, coordinated by regional conferences.

Saporta's job is to give the effort direction from the national headquarters in Washington.

Saporta, born and reared in Rochester, N.Y., received her training at Cornell, along with studies at the London School of Economics. Her first exposure to the Teamsters came between her sophomore and junior years, when she spent the summer in Europe studying retiree programs for the union.

"I was always going to be a lawyer," she said. "But by the time I graduated, all I wanted to do was to work for a union."

Following graduation she joined the Teamsters on the West Coast.

Her job as top organizer for the Teamsters will not be easy, since the union has lost more than 400,000 members in recent years from a high of 2.2 million in the late 1970s.

"Since the beginning of the year, we have picked up 65,000 new members," she said. "So we are back on the upswing once again, and they have been in our diversified areas of the union: public employees, a lot of industrial workers, some of the airline employees."

Trying to organize non-union workers to pick the Teamsters in the face of its corruption-filled past is a major obstacle, Saporta acknowledges. But in some cases, she said, it can be a plus instead of a minus.

"If they are going to go union, they want the biggest, the toughest, the strongest union that they can get," she said.

"I can't sit here and deny that we have never had our problems," she adds. "But I'd like to think our problems are behind us and the union is on a new direction and new track."

"I've been in places where they (employers) have shown people day-in, day-out pictures of women and kids getting their heads beat in on picket lines, blown-up pictures of kids crouching under cut glass because a bullet went through it, trying to portray us as a violent group. And outside, I'm out there holding a rally with kids and dogs, balloons, 'Go Teamsters' T-shirts, singing labor songs and whatever, and they get a different opinion of the union than they get inside."

At the first sign of violence, she said, the union leaves.

"You can't organize anyone by intimidating them," she said.

Unlike many unions that limit their organizing effort to a single or few industries, the Teamsters is branching out, seeking to pick up workers in diversified trades, large and small.

"We are the ones that will organize the groups of 10, 25, 35, that a lot of unions won't touch because it's not economically feasible for them," she said.

Once thought of only as a truck drivers union, the Teamsters today counts those covered by the National Master Freight Agreement at less than 9 percent of its membership.

Others members are in ware-

TEAMSTERS



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

Vicki Saporta with Teamsters insignia in background
... her job is to bring high-tech, white-collar workers into union.

housing, airlines, health care, and more and more are white-collar workers, an area to which the union is directing major organizing attention.

The Teamsters have about 300,000 women members, and Saporta said women in the union "are playing an ever increasing role."

She takes pride in the fact that the Teamsters is the nation's largest union.

"We're at 1.8 million, which still puts us the largest union in the country by a long shot," she said.

"We have a network throughout the country that no other organization can claim," she said.

Nevertheless, she said all organized labor must work together. And she added that the Teamsters does engage in joint organizing, bargaining and strike action with some AFL-CIO unions.

"Most of the AFL-CIO unions were built on the backs of the Teamsters union," she said. Among the cooperative moves with the AFL-CIO unions, she

said, are "no-raid" agreements, whereby unions agree not to try to organize workers in each other's jurisdictions.

But the Teamsters, with Presser taking a personal role, played a major role in stopping merger plans between two AFL-CIO unions in August — The Newspaper Guild and the International Typographical Union.

A Newspaper Guild convention had given the go-ahead earlier in the summer for a rank-and-file merger vote this fall, when Presser spoke to the ITU in San Francisco, urging that union to scuttle its merger plans with the Guild and instead join the Teamsters.

ITU convention delegates subsequently voted down the TNG-ITU merger, and the efforts were scuttled.

"The Teamsters didn't just march into the ITU convention uninvited," Saporta said.

"The ITU leadership explored the possibility of a merger with the Teamsters. And we think we had a lot more to offer the ITU than The Newspaper Guild."

Outlook

Sunday, Sept. 4, 1983

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Getting organized

Union membership losses have followed the recession in major industries. But a small group of people is hard at work to keep the movement alive.

By William Serrin

Fifty years ago, the hot summer of 1933, was an exhilarating time for American labor.

On June 16, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act, which gave workers "the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing."

Almost immediately, aggressive labor leaders — John L. Lewis of the miners, David Dubinsky of the garment workers and Sidney Hillman of the textile workers — dispatched their best organizers across America. Thousands of workers in industry after industry were enrolled in unions. "I organized nine locals Tuesday," Garfield Lewis, a miners' organizer, wrote from Kentucky. Successes in rubber, autos, steel and other industries followed.

Today, much seems changed in the movement. It has been weakened seriously by membership losses that have accompanied erosion in industries like autos, steel and rubber. Failure to organize in such growth sectors as high technology, banking and insurance has compounded the problem. Unions now represent only about 20 percent of American workers, down from as much as 35 percent right after World War II, and their leaders have been criticized by many younger union people for seeming out of touch, overfed, unzealous and lacking in commitment.

But in many cases, aggressive labor people, often operating out of the limelight, are working to keep the union movement alive. These people exist at all levels — shop steward, grievance chairman, union officer — but the ones who seem to best typify unionism are the organizers. They are considered the key people attempting today — although not always successfully — to stem the decline in union membership in traditional industries, says Charles Craypo, a professor of labor affairs at Cornell University.

★ ★ ★

Dominic Ferri spent 30 years in southern Ohio coal mines before he was laid off two years ago. He is working again, but this time as a special rank-and-file organizer for the United Mine Workers of America. As one of a cadre of men fanning out around Appalachia, he is drumming up support for a union undergoing revitalization with its new president, Richard Trumka.

The union now is stressing rank-and-file involvement in all activities. According to union leaders, rank-and-file organizing, often using laid-off members, is a long-neglected labor tactic of the 1930s, and is successful in making active unionists of members who otherwise might not get involved. It has also allowed the union to cut costs because rank-and-file organizers mostly work in areas near home, saving travel expenses.

William Serrin is a Washington-based writer for The New York Times. He wrote this article for The New York Times Magazine.



Staff by illustration by GALE ENGELKE

Ferri, a 50-year-old man who speaks slowly and deliberately, works with nine other rank-and-file organizers out of a field office in Morristown, Ohio, and earns \$101.14 a day, a typical miner's wage. He is involved in two organizing drives in the soft coal surface mines of central Ohio, and the rank-and-file organizing technique dovetails with his own approach to union work.

For Ferri, a typical day might last 12 or 14 hours, as he and another organizer drive from house to house through the central Ohio hills, knocking on doors and asking miners if they are interested in joining the union. He is always armed with piles of literature on the union, including a history of the storied miners'

union. He stresses wages, health benefits and the fact that union miners, from Ferri's view, have more job security than other miners because of recall rights. He carries "authorization cards," and his goal is to get workers to sign them, calling for an election. Much of his work is done at night when many miners are home.

Ferri has been working in coal mines since he got out of high school. Like most of his friends, he got married right after graduation, and his new father-in-law, a miner, provided his ticket into the mines in 1953.

During his years in the mines, co-workers knew him as a strong union man and he was well-liked. In fact, he was picked for the job because he could talk to

miners on their own level and would work hard.

Ferri has never veered from his dedication to the miners' union and unionism. "With non-union people, the companies control lives as well as livelihoods," he says. "With unions, you have power, and the companies can't move people around, manipulate their lives."

For him, the gradual decline in union membership and influence in the 1970s was like a death in the family. The union has always meant more than just a union for the miners: It was a way to define themselves because for many mountain people, a miner is either a union man or a scab. Its disintegration was a

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Organized

Continued from Page 1H

grave blow, scholars of the union say.

The union started losing members after World War II, and in recent years its organizing efforts have stalled, despite expenditures of large sums of money.

The Miners for Democracy movement, which resulted in the election of reformer Arnold Miller in 1972, collapsed as Miller fired many people whom he opposed. His years in office were characterized by fights and confusion. His successor, Sam Church Jr., was a tough-minded, likable man but lacked administrative and leadership skills. Under him, critics say, the union continued to disintegrate.

In the last 20 years, the union has lost perhaps 200,000 members, with the membership now at 230,000. But much of this is not the result of labor disarray. Companies have turned to automated processes and much coal production moved from the deep mines of the Appalachians to the surface mines of the Great Plains, where coal is cheaper to mine and the union has little representation.

But since Trumka's election in an insurgent campaign last fall, Ferri says the union has a new

Labor union membership

United Press International

WASHINGTON — How membership in the 10 largest unions has changed between 1970 and today:

Union	1983	1980	1970
1. Teamsters	1,700,000	1,891,000	1,829,000
2. NEA	1,640,000	1,684,000	1,100,000
3. Auto Workers	1,030,000	1,357,000	1,486,000
4. Food & Commercial	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,199,000
5. Steelworkers	725,000	1,238,000	1,200,000
6. AFSCME	1,000,000	1,098,000	444,000
7. Electrical Workers	1,012,000	1,041,000	922,000
8. Carpenters	671,000	784,000	820,000
9. Machinists	560,000	754,000	865,000
10. Service Employees	750,000	650,000	435,000

sense of energy and commitment. Trumka is aggressive and energetic, and is seen by many as the new kind of leader that unions need. But given the disarray that has characterized the miners for years and the difficulty of organizing, Trumka faces exceedingly difficult tasks.

But Ferri remains a believer. "We're going to do something with this union," he says.

★ ★ ★

Vicki Saporta lists her residence as Foster City, Calif., but mostly

she lives out of suitcases and motel rooms. As an organizer on the West Coast with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, she spends more than 200 days a year on the road.

She organizes throughout much of the West, in small towns and large, and often must set off with little notice when the union calls. She says she has almost no social life, with almost no ability to plan to go to a concert or a play. The union can call any time, Miss Saporta says, and she must be on

the road again, to another motel.

But she does the work, she says, because she fiercely believes in trade unionism. Without unions, she says, workers often get a raw deal. "Unless there are unions, unless there is contract pressure to keep employers on their toes," she says, "the profit motive gets the better of employers and workers get it in the neck."

Miss Saporta, 30, like some other union organizers or staff members, has more academic training than factory experience. Such credentials sometimes are rare in the labor movement, but they are a throwback to many organizers of the '30s, who went first to college and then into factories and mines. Intelligent and hard-working, contemporary union staff members have chosen what, in a way, are jobs in which it is generally impossible to rise to top positions because those go to professional union politicians. But people like Miss Saporta chose union careers anyway, because they are devoted to unionism.

Raised in Rochester, N.Y., the daughter of a tailor and his wife, she studied at the London School of Economics for a semester after earning a bachelor of science de-

gree in industrial relations from Cornell University. She had originally intended to be an attorney, but Cornell's labor and industrial relations school so impressed her that she enrolled. At Cornell, she worked one semester for the Teamsters, and by graduation, she says, "the only thing I wanted to do was work with the Teamsters."

In 9½ years, Miss Saporta says she has brought thousands of workers into the union. She organized workers in North Carolina and Florida before moving West and recently has been organizing at a hospital in Livermore, Calif. In four days, she says, enough cards were signed for the union to request an election.

The Teamsters union, she says, organizes vigorously, puts money behind its efforts, and is, in her view, "the best union in the country." In it, she says, "you find hard-working people who are at their jobs day and night, not at the golf course and not on the take. You don't see mobsters in the hall."

Federal prosecutors have not been so flattering. Three of the predecessors of Jackie Presser, current union president — David Beck, James R. Hoffa and Roy L.

Williams — were convicted of crimes and ordered to prison. Hoffa disappeared in 1975, and is presumed to have been murdered. Numerous other local union officers have been sent to jail over the years. Presser remains under investigation by the government on charges of payroll padding, although he vigorously denies wrongdoing.

"I wasn't born with a Teamster spoon in my mouth, and people can't understand how I can be so enthusiastic and zealous without that being in my background," she says. "I developed my enthusiasm in the field, seeing problems and injustices, the real need for union representation."

Her gender is sometimes an advantage because, as a woman, she says, "you get taken for granted." Employers think a woman is not tough enough to be a good organizer, she says, and when they find out they are wrong, it is, she says, too late.

One of her colleagues, Barry Feinstein, an organizing chief and New York teamster leader, says her approach works. He calls her a diligent organizer, as good an organizer as he has ever seen.

AIN wild where

MEET THE TEAMSTERS' NEW 'MISS DYNAMITE'

Over the years, top officials of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters have tended to be clones of one another: staid, old, male, unimaginative truckers. But the appointment of 30-year-old Vicki Saporta as the Teamsters' director of organizing symbolizes an attempt by the nation's largest union to change gears. A Cornell University graduate and the only woman organizing director of a major union, Saporta is likely to add respectability to the Teamsters' often-tarnished image and help the union attract women and young workers as it turns its sights toward white-collar and service industries. And the intense, demonstrative, sometimes domineering New Yorker may also lend a new aggressiveness to the Teamsters' organizing effort. "Vicki is Miss Dynamite," says Rita Devaney, a nurse at a California hospital that Saporta is trying to organize.

The choice of Saporta reflects the determination of union President Jackie Presser to replace a decade of organizing rhetoric from Teamsters presidents with action. In nine years of signing up new members—including 10 victories in 10 months in anti-union North Carolina—Saporta has proved to be "a damn good organizer," says R. V. Durham, the union's safety and health director. Saporta has also come up with ideas for spending what Presser has promised will be a flexible budget. She plans to increase the number of full-time national organizers and to funnel new money and advice to the union's 740 locals, which initiate about 2,000 organizing elections a year. She intends to spread her successful recipe for attracting workers to the far reaches of the 1.8 million-member union. "She's a missionary," says Norman Goldstein, director before the organizing department was temporarily closed in 1981. "She conveys the belief to workers that they can move mountains."

AD HOC APPROACH. In addition to a change in style, the ascendance in late August of the tailor's daughter from Rochester, N. Y., solidifies a trend, already well under way in the union, of diversification away from trucking. She says that Presser "does not see the future of the union" in trucking (page 43), which accounts for only about 10% of its members. Rather, he wants to gain members in its industrial, warehouse, and public employee divisions and in the



"Once you give people some power, for the first time in their lives, they think they can win"

VICKI SAPORTA
The Teamsters' new organizing director

fast-growing clerical, high tech, and service occupations. Says Saporta: "If we only responded to requests [from workers wanting to be organized], we'd be kept busy for the next three years."

On the theory that local unionists have a better chance to sign up other workers in the community than organizers brought in from the outside have, Teamsters locals bear the primary responsibility for organizing. The locals can ask union headquarters for money or help from national organizers who travel around the country. In a normal year, the Teamsters, which represents about 20% of union workers nationally, organizes nearly 25% of all new union members. But its ad hoc approach is inefficient. The union organizes only about

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25 workers per election victory, compared with 45 for AFL-CIO unions. And there is little communication among locals, so that organizing sometimes goes on at different divisions of the same company without one local knowing of another's involvement. Saporta's goal is to improve this traditional system in four major ways:

□ **Staffing.** "Presser says I'm supposed to find 50 of me" to staff the new department, says Saporta. This would be a fourfold increase from the current number of full-time national organizers. Since the work involves heavy travel and 18-hour days, Saporta emphasizes youth. "You need a well-schooled, well-trained bunch of young organizers," she says. It may take years to recruit them. But eventually she wants 10 new staffers assigned to each of the union's five conferences, helping locals in a defined geographical area, such as the Midwest, instead of constantly crisscrossing the country. "To be most effective, you have to know the people and the community," says Saporta. She adds that the regional approach will mean "less wear and tear on organizers."

□ **Service.** "Every time I go to an area, they're hungry for training and assistance," says Saporta, who plans to survey all 740 Teamsters locals soon to see how active they are in organizing and what type of help they want. Out of this will come a plan for more coordination among locals, conferences, and industrial divisions in dealing with employers. The goal would be to achieve a higher level of organization, and perhaps companywide contracts, at companies such as Frito-Lay Inc., where the union already has several facilities signed up.

□ **Follow-up.** Especially after bitter organizing campaigns, it may take months for a union to win an initial contract—and much of its support can slip away as workers become frustrated or disillusioned. Indeed, of the 10 plants Saporta organized in North Carolina, only one still has a contract, Durham says. Saporta wants to stop this by keeping organizers at a plant to motivate workers until a contract is reached. This, she says, would "raise our percentage" in winning initial contracts.

□ **Better strategies.** "All too often, a union will get a call [from workers wanting to be organized] and they'll go pass out handbills," thus giving an employer time to build a strong defense, says Saporta. Her approach, which she hopes to make routine for the union, is first to analyze an employer's financial health to ensure that it can afford the workers' demands. She then moves quickly to "educate" employees so that the company cannot frighten them away from the union. And she makes workers the leaders of the campaign. "There is no substitute for

worker involvement," asserts Saporta.

At a current campaign involving 400 employees of Valley Memorial Hospital in Livermore, Calif., for example, Saporta and Rome Aloise, another Teamsters organizer, recruited a "core committee" of 40 workers. Then, after three lengthy meetings in which they briefed workers on their rights under federal labor law and the tactics they could expect from anti-union consultants, the organizers sent a letter to the hospital's administrator naming the members of the committee. Often during drives, employers fire workers because of their involvement with the union—even though it is illegal to do so. But going public early makes it harder to get away with this, says Saporta. At Valley Memorial, the core committee collected signatures in front of the administrator's office the day his letter was sent and in two days had more than the 30% required under federal law for an election. "People saw that we weren't getting fired," says nurse Devaney. "They were surprised it was legal."

LAYING IT ON THE LINE. The education in federal labor law also paid off when, in a meeting of employees called by management, Devaney contested the hospital's assertion that bargaining starts from "zero" after an election. She pointed out that the law requires bargaining to start from the "status quo" in wages and benefits. With the election likely to be held in early November, Aloise expects the hospital to begin campaigning in earnest against the union. At that point, Saporta will resort to the charismatic exhortations that endear her to many workers but alienate others. Says Devaney: "She'll yell and scream and wave her arms and she'll say, 'You don't have to take this crap anymore.'" Says Saporta: "Once you give people some power in dealing with employers, you see a change in them. They feel power for the first time in their lives, and they think they can win."

Saporta dreams of some day organizing "hundreds of thousands" of workers in a year, compared with the Teamsters' usual total of 70,000 to 80,000. But she concedes that it will not be easy. Her strategies will take months to implement. And even her strongest supporters say that in the past her intensity and ability to attract headlines have alienated other organizers. Says Durham: "She'll have to make some compromises, personality-wise. She's used to taking charge of a campaign and leading it." As organizing director, "you've got to delegate authority... to motivate people." Saporta concedes that "if it takes 18 or 20 hours a day, I expect you to be out there, because you owe it to the workers." But she adds: "It's nothing I haven't given or wouldn't do myself." ■

RISING UNION LEADERS: SOBERED BUT SCRAPPY

Times are scarcely propitious for those on the U.S. labor movement's fast track. The loss of jobs to Asia and automation, as well as the recession, has decimated many blue collar trades where unions were strongest. Organized labor's share of the U.S. work force now stands at about 20%, compared with 25% as recently as 1970. In the last few years worker givebacks, not gains, have dominated the bargaining news.

Anyone who thinks unions are exhausted, however, hasn't met the up-and-coming leaders who appear on the following pages. All are younger than 50 in a movement dominated by sexagenarians, and several have a chance to make it to the top of their national organizations. For some time they've all been helping to set the bargaining, organizing, and lobbying course in industries where the union grip remains generally secure. Though prepared to make unusual concessions, they are no push-overs. One of them led the United Auto Workers in a 205-day strike against Caterpillar Tractor that ended last April with victory for neither side.

On bargaining issues the emerging leaders display much the same stridency as labor's ruling elite. These days they're also as eager as their superiors to tout proposed government "industrial policy" schemes that would prop up ailing industries. But when confronted with unpleasant facts, they're less likely to retreat behind slogans or put all the blame on management. "High tech and robotics are here to stay," says Leon Lynch of the United Steelworkers.

On the other hand, business should expect few bargaining table love-ins with this bunch. Now that profits are climbing, they make clear, attempts to roll back wages and benefits—particularly medical benefits—will provoke rank-and-file fury. Declares Tom Baker of the Machinists: "Givebacks are acceptable only when a company is in financial straits, needs them to survive, and can prove this through its books."





VICKI A. SAPORTA

TEAMSTERS

Declining employment in old-line industries hasn't hurt the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Since 1975 (the nation's largest union has held its membership at around 1.8 million by aggressively signing up workers in state and local government, service industries, small factories, and warehouses. Less than a tenth of today's Team-

sters are long-distance truck drivers. The union's new international director of organizing, Vicki Saporta, 31, who oversees 60 field assistants from her Washington headquarters, aims to go right on signing up the non-unionized.

A Norma Rae-like firebrand, Saporta is a graduate of the school of industrial and labor relations at Cornell, where she played on the women's varsity basketball team. Since then this self-confessed workaholic, on the road over 200 days a year, has devoted almost all her time to organizing. In 1978 and 1979, she won ten straight elections on union representation in North Carolina, three of them in factories with over 1,000 employees.

Low wages and exploitation by employers are twin evils of the service trades, says Saporta. "People think they're lucky not to be

working in a factory. But just because a place is clean doesn't mask what is going on. Some employers like to think of themselves as enlightened. But the profit motive always gets the better of them."

For any union organizer, Saporta believes, the relentless automation of semiskilled jobs poses the greatest future threat. "Most managers would like to do without workers entirely," she says, flaring with resentment. "The trouble is, robots don't buy cars and cereal at the supermarket."

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NAMEDROPPING



OUR OWN 'NORMA RAE' ... The Dec. 26 issue of *Fortune* magazine profiles Irondequoit native **Vicki A. Saporta** as one of the six most important labor union organizers in the United States today. Under a general headline *Rising Union Leaders: Sobered But Scrappy*, Saporta is cited for aggressive signing of workers into the union. The magazine calls the 31-year-old Ironde-



quoit High School graduate "a Norma Rae-like firebrand" and "a self-confessed workaholic," and points out the 10 straight victories she won for union representation in North Carolina in 1978 and 1979. *Fortune* says Saporta's chief concern is relentless automation of semiskilled jobs. "Most managers

Vicki Saporta

would like to do without workers entirely," she says. "The trouble is, robots don't buy cars and cereal at the supermarket." Saporta is a graduate of Cornell University and the daughter of **Abe and Leah Saporta** of 235 Simpson Road, Irondequoit. She lives in Washington but logs more than 200 days a year on the road. She is, after all, a Teamster.