The St. Louis Post-Dispatch July 4, 1991

PHILIP DINE

ON LABOR

Lasting Images At Teamsters' Convention

One day last week at the Teamster convention in Florida, two men were getting on an elevator, one a sergeant-at-arms, the other a delegate. Big men. The delegate — the smaller of the two — was asked his size. Six-feet-six, 360 pounds, he replied.

The image of a Teamster is a burly truck driver or warehouseman. Rough and ready. And definitely all man.

Maybe not much longer.

Among the fastest-growing groups in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters are nurses, airline workers, food processors, secretaries.

Of the IBT's 1.6 million members, some 400,000 are women.

One of the most memorable convention snapshots was of Vicki Saporta, a California Teamster, giving her acceptance speech Friday after being nominated for vice president.

Saporta

In 88 years, no woman has held national office in the IBT.

Saporta, director of organizing for the union, said she was told when hired in 1974 that "it was an experiment — if I was successful, it would open doors for other women.

"Well, for the past 17 years, doors have been swinging open."

Saporta, running on the Shea slate, declared: "If we're paying more than lip service, if we're serious about including all our members, it is time we had a woman on the General Executive Board."

Men who booed as she rose listened as she spoke.

The Washing

Teamsters may get

Vicki Saporta has been truckin' for workers all her life

By Betsy Pisik
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Vicki Saporta shakes hands and passes out literature outside D.C. Jail where T

When Vicki Saporta's eighth grade class visited the plant of a nearby menswear manufacturer, the other middle school students learned how suits were put together. But Miss Saporta, the daughter of a Rochester, N.Y., tailor, discovered the roots of her lifelong commitment to organized labor, what she calls "my gut and a sense of justice."

"I basically walked through and took apart [the operation]. I asked a lot of questions," she recalls. "By the end of the field trip, they were like, 'Who is this kid?' "

Today, Miss Saporta is the highest-ranking female Teamsters member in North America. As the union's director of organizing since 1988, she's relied on that gut feeling and a laser-like determination to help bring an uncountable number of new members into the union, from accountants to zoo keepers.

Now she wants to lead them.

Miss Saporta, 39, is running for one of the five at-large vice presidential slots on the union's general executive board. And if she wins, it will be the first time in the Teamsters' 88-year history that a woman has helped guide this most unruly of labor unions.

To outsiders, the Teamsters' name is synonomous with burly, striking truckers or the missing Jimmy Hoffa, but that's not quite accurate anymore.

For starters, one-third of the 1.5 million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America is female, a group that is beginning to press its own specific concerns and issues.

For another, the union is cleaning house under the purview of the Justice Department, which is intent on routing generations of corruption and mob influence. In compliance with a Justice Department consent decree, the union is holding its first democratic elections of top officers with the participation of the rank-and-file members.

All of which makes Vicki A. Saporta — an Ivy League, charismatic and mediagenic woman — a highly palatable addition to the old-boy executive board.

"It's hard to look at her and dredge out the Jimmy Hoffa jokes," says Jane Danowitz, executive director of the bipartisan Women's Campaign Fund and a friend of Miss Saporta's since 1975. Electing her "would give them a remodeled image . . . an image only a woman could give them."

Which is precisely the point made by her biggest detractor, R.V. Durham, who is running for general president on another, all male, slate. In plain language, he calls her a token and says she was chosen because of her gender rather than for her accomplishments. Mr. Durham, 60, told reporters in June that Teamsters women are not ready for the big leagues, and should stay in "the farm teams."

"That token label doesn't stick to me," she says, detailing her accomplishments within the union. "He's offended every woman Teamster in North America, from the nurse in Newburg, N.Y., to the cannery workers in California who have stood up to harassment and threats and walked picket lines and organized their workplaces!" she steams.

"That we've never had a woman on the board isn't right," says the candidate, frankly feminine and trim in tailored suits and light make-up. "One-third of our membership needs better representation."

If she is elected, her priorities are a renewed emphasis on organizing and contract negotiations; the pressing of women's issues; and grass roots political organizing to back up DRIVE, the Teamsters' bipartisan $10 million PAC, the largest

see VICKI, page F-2

gton Times

a woman driver

Photo by Kevin Gilbert, The Washington Times

eamsters represent many corrections workers. She seeks an at-large vice presidency in the union.

VICKI

From page E1

in the country.

Miss Saporta is a savvy, deeply committed woman, capable of driving her arguments home with the same force and economy of a Teamsters carpenter. Collective bargaining, she says, is the only chance the worker has against corporations and multinationals "demanding concessions they don't really need."

She says, "This isn't about an extra 11 cents an hour, [but about] job security, self-respect and fair compensation."

She tells of a stalled contract negotiation in which management wanted union drivers to accept a $150 a week pay cut. Miss Saporta targeted the corporate officers' neighborhoods and churches, distributing fliers with the Teamsters' message.

"You bet we took this to a personal level," she says of the union's eventual victory. "When you threaten a livelihood, you're making it personal. We told their neighbors exactly what kind of people they lived next to."

Although trucking and warehousing is still the backbone of the union's membership, the union is making inroads into service industries, health care and high-tech workers, clerical and white-collar positions. Mickey Mouse is a Teamster. So are the corrections officers at the D.C. Jail and the flight attendants on numerous airlines.

Miss Saporta has been involved with the IBT all her adult life. After graduating from Cornell University's prestigious school of industrial and labor relations in 1974, she abandoned thoughts of a law career and badgered the union into creating a full-time position for her. They were skeptical about using a college graduate to organize, rather than lobby, but relented in the force of that soon-to-be-famous determination.

"They said this was an experiment," she says, smiling at the mem-

Photo by Kevin T. Gilbert The Washington Times

■ "It is possible that if I don't win, I won't be there. I took that risk. But I didn't do this to lose. I plan to win."

— Vicki Saporta

away from her Northwest Washing-

supposed to be relaxation.

"I'd be racing this boat in the distance, and it didn't know I was racing it, and well, I've stopped that now," she laughs. She says it's natural, having raced for Cornell's sailing team. Her friends speak of her cool head in squalls and intuitive skill on the water.

"She is just a good a sailor as she is an organizer," says Caroline Jacobson. "It's her major escape. I've seen this incredible difference in her before and after she sails. She's like a whole different person."

But the campaign schedule has gotten in the way. "This year I haven't even seen the boat," she says with a shrug. "It could be sunk."

Miss Saporta is pursuing the vice president's position — which pays $75,000 a year — at her old organizing pace: hitting a city for a day or two at a time, leafleting, speaking, pressing union flesh. It's taken a toll. Her voice is hoarse and she's on antibiotics for the cold that hangs on with Teamster-like temerity.

In the past, appointed delegates would vote every five years for a new general executive board, leaving the rank-and-file out of the electoral process completely. Candidates point out that the new system means campaigning in factories and job sites across America, Canada, Guam and Puerto Rico to a membership that makes this larger than 26 Senate races. So far, says Walter Shea, who is running with Miss Saporta for general president, the five-person slate has raised and spent some $300,000. He hopes to double that as the campaign swings into its final weeks.

Mr. Shea, who has served as top adviser to the last five Teamsters presidents, says Miss Saporta has an excellent chance of being elected, independent of the slate.

"There are over 300,000 women and she's the only female at-large vice president in the running," he says. Mr. Shea denies the tokenism charge, but couches his praise of Miss Suporta in terms of gender.

"She's the most qualified woman in this union," he says. "She's very

Miss Saporta was charged with organizing the concession and hotel workers at Yosemite National Park. She and her team worked day and night for 10 weeks, but it wasn't sufficient. Afterward, she says, people were fired — illegally — for their organizing efforts, losing their jobs and their park housing.

"It's not like you can just find another Yosemite to live in," she says, tearing up at the 17-year-old memory over lunch in a Capitol Hill restaurant. She says she still feels personally responsible.

She won the second battle, she recalls. And the third. "But the ones you win never make up for the ones you lost."

She says she cannot guess her track record, but offers, "I'm the director of organizing because I'm good. I've found my niche."

In 1985, Esquire magazine included her in its issue devoted to the 116 people under 40 who are changing the nation.

"I've watched her work and there are few people around who have her enthusiasm and electricity," says Carolyn Jacobson, director of public relations for the international Bakers Union. "It's amazing to see her in action. She has charisma. It's like — and I mean this in a positive way — she's a one-woman show."

"In person, she's not like that. It's something that happens to her in public," says Ron Seeber, associate dean of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell, who has known her professionally for a decade. "Vicki always has a purpose, and she can really turn herself on" at the pulpit.

Organizing is a calling for Miss Saporta, but work can be grueling.

"I was organizing in North Carolina when [the 1979 Sally Field movie] "Norma Rae" came out, and I'll tell you, we had much more exciting things going on. I've had people point guns at me at 4 o'clock in the morning. You get threatening phone calls. People try to run you over when you're leafleting.

"Organizing is like a war," says Miss Saporta, who for years was

have to wonder what kind of energy you're actually running on."

The organizer says her body is long-accustomed to getting less than five hours of sleep a night. She wears her silvering black hair in an attractive, low-maintanence style and has organized herself to live out of suitcases.

"You get this feeling in the pit of your stomach if you have to get on one more plane, check into one more hotel," she sighs. "But the work I enjoy doing is with the rank-and-file members. You can't be effective if you're not out there in the field."

Being home only two nights a week has strong-armed her love life.

"Most of the men that I have met in my life are initially attracted to me because I'm independent," she says carefully. "But then they want to get married and they say, 'You'll give this all up and stay home,' and of course I won't. As you get older and you get even more independent, it becomes harder and harder to make the compromises necessary to get married."

Her mother says this single-mindedness was always there.

"She was always good at what she did," homemaker Lea Saporta says of her oldest daughter. "If she was selling Girl Scout cookies, she sold the most cookies. Our temple, Light of Israel, would sell raffle tickets and they were amazed at how much she sold."

"I think I've always been an overachiever," Miss Saporta says. "I've always gone the extra . . . whatever. For me, that has always paid off. It's not lost on the rank-and-file, either."

Mrs. Saporta, who says she is proud of her daughter and no longer worries "too much" about her, says "she feels that she can make a difference for people by getting them a contract, medical care, whatever they deserve. She wants these people to have good things, I think that's what drives her."

It's clear that something does.

Even out on the Chesapeake in her 30-foot sloop, the "Sail Away," Miss Saporta says her competitive streak can get in the way of what is

Teamsters watchers give Miss Saporta a good chance of getting onto the board — gender notwithstanding. One union official, whose job forbids him from commenting on specific candidates, speculated that her organizing efforts have made her a virtual brand name to many of the rank-and-file members.

If Vicki Saporta is elected with more votes than the other four at-large vice presidents, she will be No. 3 in the Teamsters hierarchy, a position of clout and respect.

But if she doesn't win a seat, her organizing job of 17 years will be endangered. The other candidates for general president have made clear that they will probably appoint their own people to key positions.

"It is possible that if I don't win, I won't be there," she says. "I took that risk. But I didn't do this to lose. I plan to win."

Running against the odds

Woman faces uphill fight for Teamster vote

By SANDRA LIVINGSTON
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Vicki Saporta faces a daunting challenge: She is campaigning for an office that represents 1.6 million people in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and Guam. Yet her war chest is largely financed by sales of T-shirts and buttons.

She is seeking to break into a "club" that has never had a female member.

And she is running in a first election where voters have a tough time naming more than two of the 30 candidates.

Welcome to the campaign for the executive board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The election for 17 top union posts will be in December. Meanwhile, candidates are meeting with workers in union halls and outside plant gates.

Few seem to spend as much time on the road as Saporta, 39, the union's national organizing director. She once spent 250 days a year on the road and now thrives on 19-hour days short on food and long on visits to members. She is one of two women running for vice president. The other woman is Diana Kilmury from Vancouver, British Columbia.

"I love it," Saporta said during a recent campaign swing through Northeast Ohio. "I'm an organizer and I understand what it takes to get ballots back."

Yet predicting the turnout or outcome of this election is nearly impossible. Never before have rank-and-file Teamsters chosen their top leaders.

Many within the union believe 400,000 to 500,000 of the union's 1.6 million members will mail back their ballots. Until votes are

PD/CHRIS STEPHENS

Vicki Saporta, one of two women campaigning for vice president of the Teamsters, met workers in Solon recently.

counted, the outcome of this race is anyone's guess.

The election was mandated under a 1989 consent agreement between Teamster leaders and the federal government, which sought to rid the union of the influence of organized crime. Included in that agreement was the upcoming government-supervised secret-ballot election.

Not surprisingly, all candidates are calling for a new direction for the union — one that spends money on members rather than private jets.

Saporta is running with Walter Shea, an international vice president who served as executive assistant to four Teamster presidents. Shea is one of three presidential candidates voted onto the ballot at the union's convention in June.

Saporta is confident of a victory — for the slate and for herself.

An intense woman, Saporta ticks off a rapid-fire list of changes she wants to make at the nation's largest union:

- Hire 100 new organizers to fan out across the country.
- Develop a strong membership that is active at the grassroots.
- Use comprehensive campaigns that increase the points the union can push to pressure a company during contract talks.

For example: sending union members to distribute leaflets about contract problems in an executive's neighborhood.

"Only when you demonstrate you can hurt the employer, do you really end up getting respect and tipping the balance back in your favor," she said. "We have an $87 million annual budget. We are a match for any national or international corporation."

Saporta has spent more than 17 years as a Teamster organizer, the last eight as the union's organizing director. She was selected for the director's job by the late union president, Jackie Presser. Saporta said Presser initially hesitated about hiring a woman, fearing men wouldn't take her seriously.

But he changed his mind after getting strong praise for her work from other union officials, said Saporta, adding: "He liked my moxie, as he called it, and the fact that I spoke my mind."

She estimated about 30,000 Teamsters have been brought into the union under her direction, including flight attendants at Northwest Airlines who Saporta personally organized.

Her campaign for vice president focuses on the general changes she would make, the need to bring a woman into the union's top echelons, and the need to talk about such issues as day care, pay equity, and family leaves.

"Women have made a contribution to this union," Saporta recently told to a group of Teamsters working at American Consumer Products Inc. in Solon. "It's about time you had a voice on the executive board."

Several women workers said they hadn't heard of Saporta but would likely vote for her.

"I feel like women should be represented," said Minnie Brown, a plant worker. Then turning to Saporta, she added, "Good luck from one woman to another."

The Unsung Heroes of America's Labor Movement

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. 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 Craypo, a professor of labor affairs at Cornell University.

Here's a look at three of them.

Vicki Saporta

The New York Times/Fr[illegible] McCarthy

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.

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One of her colleagues, Barry Fe[illegible]stein, an organizing chief and N[illegible] York teamster leader, says her a[illegible]proach works. He calls her a dilig[illegible] organizer, as good an organizer as [illegible] has ever seen.

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5 Gov. Bob Graham: Why we must save the Everglades

Fort Lauderdale News / Sun-Sentinel

Outlook

Sunday, Sept. 4, 1983

Section H

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 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.

★ ★ ★

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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.

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

Union organizer Saporta brings new image to job

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

WASHINGTON — Vicki Saporta is a young, well-dressed, educated career woman — not the sterotype 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-

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."

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 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."

'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

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."

TEXT BY GILBERT T. SEWALL

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 Teamsters 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."

Sunday Democrat and Chronicle

DECEMBER 18, 1983 · ROCHESTER, N.Y., $1.00

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 Irondequoit 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 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.

Vicki Saporta

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Dynamic Trio

Three Labor Activists Lead a Growing Drive To Sign Up Women

Many Unions Link Survival To the Effort, as Women Outnumber Men Workers

Can Resistance Be Overcome?

By CATHY TROST
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

When Karen Nussbaum met a group of top union men for the first time, she told her fellow labor leaders to think of her organizing efforts "as a cross between George Meany and Dolly Parton."

It is an apt description. Ten years ago, trying to prod clerical workers to fight for better working conditions, Ms. Nussbaum was afraid to use the word "organize." Now she runs 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women—which inspired the movie "Nine to Five" with Dolly Parton as a harassed secretary—and is the president of a national union affiliated with the Service Employees International union.

In a labor movement dominated by male leadership, 34-year-old Ms. Nussbaum is part of a small but growing nucleus of women wielding real power. In addition to Ms. Nussbaum, this group includes Vicki Saporta, 31, the national organizing director for the Teamsters Union, and Linda Puchala, 36, the president of the Association of Flight Attendants, the only national union affiliated with the AFL-CIO that is headed by a woman.

New Breed

These women labor leaders are part of a new generation, younger and more activist than most of the path-cutters who preceded them. They speak the language of the women workers whom unions increasingly are trying to recruit. "Ultimately," Ms. Nussbaum says, "the key to improving the conditions for women lies in organizing the private sector."

In a nation where white males lost their majority in the work force for the first time in 1983—and where more than 1.5 million women are entering the work force each year—many unions must actively seek out women members to survive. The problem is dispelling the notion that unions are ailing institutions run by and for men.

As United States Banker magazine put it: "How can unions—stevedores and skull busters of yore—make common cause with clerical workers, tellers, data processors—a generally young, female, nonmilitant lot?"

By changing, the magazine concluded. And, indeed, the labor movement is undergoing demographic convulsions. In 1980, 30% of union members were women, nearly double the number in the 1950s. But the majority of women workers still resist unions, and some blame it on the segregated-leadership image that organized labor projects. The new female labor leaders, while they also represent male workers, have special appeal to unorganized white-collar women workers in such industries as health care, banking and insurance that traditionally have kept unions at bay.

"Labor has to go where the work force is; it has to appeal to the female who's educated and for equal rights," says Jan Medina, a nurse in Newburgh, N.Y. If that is true, says a management consultant, then "the best hope unions have of getting them are the Karen Nussbaums and the Vicki Saportas."

Dynamic Trio: 3 Labor Activists Lead Drive for Woman Unionists

Vicki Saporta

When the nurses at St. Luke's Hospital in Newburgh, N.Y., went shopping for a union, they picked the Teamsters. That they did was testament to the Teamsters' organizing director, who has helped shape a new image for the troubled union.

"I've had people who've been disappointed that we don't live up to our image," says Vicki Saporta. "They say, 'Hey, I thought you were the Mafia.' I tell them straight out, the only party that's going to break the law in this campaign is your employer."

Vicki Saporta

Women and younger workers who feel estranged from the labor movement are drawn to her. "She makes you feel good about the process of organizing and collective bargaining; it doesn't seem so antiquated," says Ms. Medina, the nurse at St. Luke's who says she was originally "extremely anti-union." That Ms. Saporta is a woman also makes a difference, she says.

The daughter of a custom tailor from upstate New York, Ms. Saporta was educated at Cornell University's industrial and labor relations school and the London School of Economics. A Teamsters organizer for more than a decade, she has a five-line telephone, a video lending library of organizing films, and a computer packed with financial and bargaining profiles of potential target companies. Her home is outside San Francisco, but she hardly ever sees it. Since Teamsters President Jackie Presser appointed her organizing director in the fall of 1983, she has lived in a hotel room near the union's Washington headquarters or on the road.

Mr. Presser said he wanted her to put the trucking-based union "back on the fast track" by organizing clerical, service and high-technology industries. But critics view the move as more of a public-relations ploy. "She's a figurehead—she's being used," says an official of another union. Even an admirer wonders whether she can negotiate the political riptides at Teamsters headquarters. "Organizers are like missionaries, and missionary priests usually don't get to be archbishops," says Tony Zivalich, a longtime Teamsters organizer who now works for the city of Atlanta.

But after more than a year on the job, petite Ms. Saporta is changing some minds. "I was a little doubtful myself, being 31 years in the Teamsters and everything was men, men, men," says Elmore Schueler, the president of Teamsters Local 445 in Newburgh. "But she sold me the first shot out. For a little girl, she can put on a powerful show."

In the mid-1970s the powerful Teamsters had 2.2 million members. This year they edged back to 1.9 million after bottoming out at 1.8 million. No longer just truckers, Ms. Saporta says, "we're all over the lot." But a hard-fought campaign for 3,100 health-care workers at a Massachusetts hospital ended in a lopsided defeat for the union last summer, and there have been other big losses as well. Given the declining influence of labor unions generally, Ms. Saporta says, "it's not easy to organize anywhere today."

Nevertheless, she maintains an aggressive stance. "Workers," she says, "want someone to stand up to the company, to stand up to the cops when they say you can't pass out literature and you say, 'Yes we can. It's federal law.' " Once she was detained by authorities while passing out leaflets to workers in Yosemite National Park, and she told them: "I have a perfect right to do this. I'm not selling vacuum cleaners here."

METRO

BUSINESS NEWS/C 14-15 □

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SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE ■ THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1985

Tribune Photo/ DENNIS WHITE

Vicki Saporta, right, director of organizing for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, meets Wednesday with South Bend Community School Corp. secretaries, perhaps the next group to be organized by Local 364 of the Teamsters. From left are Marcia Samarich, Cindy Montgomery, Gayle Farrell, Barb Ferraro and Marcella Kovatch. Fran Lein, back to camera, sits on the table with Saporta.

Union official 'tells it straight'

By GAIL HINCHION
Tribune Staff Writer

No sweet talking for Vicki Saporta. The only woman organizing director of a major American union tells it straight, tells it fast, tells it like there is nothing to argue about.

"We are on the forefront of organizing clerical workers," Saporta said Wednesday at the start of a two-day visit to Local 364 of the Teamsters union. She is director of organizing for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

"Our contracts for secretaries are the best," she said with certainty. "We have practiced comparable worth. We have implemented it in the public sector."

She has been speaking about why the Teamsters are the right union for the South Bend Community School Corp. secretaries. She speaks with the authority of almost 10 years with the union in offices across the country.

A committee of secretaries who want to organize selected the Teamsters 18 months ago. "They came to us," Saporta pointed out.

"Organizing is a matter of education. Once the people understand what the union is about, they would choose ours," she said. Organizing usually is left to the local units. But Teamsters President Jackie Presser reactivated a national organizing assistance operation and sought Saporta, 33, to run it.

Some secretaries hesitate to organize, and some hesitate to organize with the Teamsters, in part because of the masculine image the union has. Some are concerned the Teamsters would not be right for clerical workers, or for workers in the public sector.

The secretaries are gentle people. Some have gotten teary-eyed when discussing organizations. Teamsters business agent Robert Schulz said the fact Saporta is a woman — and might better reach these women — was considered when local union leaders asked her to visit.

"This local doesn't need my help," Saporta countered, praising local leaders for the 18-month campaign they conducted for a referendum on whether secretaries should organize. The workers are to vote by mid-November.

Teamsters officials were to negotiate with Superintendent Robert A. Fallon today on whether

See SAPORTA /Page C3

Botha.

Saporta

from Page C1

the referendum ballot will bear the Teamsters name, Schulz said. He wants the secretaries to vote for or against the Teamsters instead of voting for or against organization in general.

"We're not even worried about winning an election. We're worried about putting together a contract that addresses the issues they're concerned about," Saporta said.

Meeting with secretaries Wednesday night, Saporta assured them that the union has a long history with clerical workers and with workers in the public sector.

"Most people don't really understand what we're about as a union. We are the most diversified union in the country," she said.

"We are on the forefront of organizing clerical workers," she said.

"We've represented clerical unions since 1950," she said. "We've been in public works since the 1940s."

In a series of contract negotiations in San Bruno, Calif., the union succeeded in upgrading half the clerical workers' jobs because they were found comparable to the jobs of more highly paid employees, she said.

Saporta's observations about why women organize should strike home with secretaries, whose efforts began with what they consider unfair assignment procedures.

Money usually isn't the biggest problem, she said.

"Most of the time, it's working conditions that make them place the phone call," she said.

"They want a way to deal with problems they have on the job, to make their jobs fair," she said. "They're looking for a grievance procedure. They are also looking to be treated with some dignity."

"They need a sense of security and a sense of recognition which nobody can have without a union contract," she said.

THE ESQUIRE 1985 Register

A Celebration of Man At His Best

This second annual edition of the best-selling Esquire Register is the result of an extensive, ongoing search to identify those American men and women under forty who compose a dynamic new leadership class. In selecting and profiling more than one hundred individuals, Esquire honors those whose talent and determination are the guiding forces of this changing society. And in an exclusive survey undertaken by the editors of Esquire, the values and opinions of the leadership class are revealed for the first time.

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Dave Okimoto
Van O'Steen
Sean Penn
Jayne Anne Phillips
Bob Pittman
Sharon Prator
Max Protetch
John Raimondi
Lewis Ranieri
Wade Rathke
Deborah Redding
Frank Rich
Jacques Robinson
Charlene Rollins
Bruce Rosendahl
Julie Rosenfeld
James Rothman
Gerald Rubin
Jesse Russell
Vicki Saporta
John Sayles
Andrew Schmookler
Eric Schrier
Peter Serkin
Peter Shire
Fred Smith
Molly Smith
Rick Smolan
David Soren
Bruce Springsteen
Kirk Stauss
Paul Steinhardt
Frank Swain
Mark Talbott
Nelson Strobe Talbott
Lawrence Taylor
Bob Telson
Jeanette Thomas
Bennie Thompson
Starley Thompson
Garry Trudeau
Sherry Turkle
Mike Turpen
Scott Walker
Jonathan Waxman
M. Jane Weaver
Ari Weiss
Jon Wellinghoff
Steven Wright

Business & Industry

BRASH INNOVATION, EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, SHREWD MOVES

THE ESQUIRE 1985 Register

HONOREES

William Howard Beasley III A man of steel
Janelle Bedke & Robert Metcalfe Heroes of Silicon Valley
Marilyn Adams Coleman Poultry's grade-A consultant
Rafael Collado Computerizing the Bronx
Esther Dyson Getting the word processed
David Gibson Making Kansas City a hot commodity
Sanford Grossman The economics of information
Dennis Hayes The man behind the modem
Larry Kopald From advertising with love
Ted Lemon American wine with a French accent
David Mueller A commuter airline takes off
Bob Pittman Igniting a cultural explosion
Lewis Ranieri Wall Street's roof raiser
Jacques Robinson Management as the mother of invention
Jesse Russell A breakthrough in telephone technology
Vicki Saporta Improving the state of the unions
Kirk Stauss One man's hunger project

Bob Metcalfe: *"I'm only comfortable working with Type-A, aggressive, supercompetitive people."*

Janelle Bedke: *"I don't work on weekends."*

Jesse Russell

Software designer
Whippany, New Jersey
Born April 26, 1948

Reinventing the telephone

Jesse Russell has a unique habit. He likes to grab hold of a napkin and a ball-point pen to sketch quick diagrams of complex processes like the transmission of the cellular-telephone. One of the first computer engineers in the United States to specialize in digital-systems design (he entered the field back in 1972), Russell now heads an innovative band of fifty engineers and scientists at AT&T's Bell Laboratories in Whippany, New Jersey. Last year the division designed the software for a new cellular mobile phone that will allow conference calls and call forwarding for motorists. That software system was named the best new product of 1984 by *New Product Development Newsletter*, which monitors emerging technologies.

When asked the secret of his success, Russell answers, laughingly, "Arrogance." An engineer, he maintains, "can't accept that a problem can't be solved." Certainly that's been his philosophy throughout his thirteen years with Bell, a period in which he has done everything from circuit and terminal design for digital telephone equipment to mathematical modeling and complex software design. But Russell is also conscious of his responsibility as a black professional. He devotes a large portion of his personal life to minority recruitment and counsels minority technical employees already at AT&T. In addition, he lectures at career programs in Tennessee and Ohio to encourage minority youths to pursue careers in science and engineering. A better role model would be hard to find: in 1980 this Stanford alumnus became the first black ever to win the Outstanding Young Engineer of the Year award from the Society of Electrical Engineers.

Vicki Saporta

Union organizer
Washington, D.C.
Born September 11, 1952

The capital's Norma Rae

She's been called Miss Dynamite, a Norma Rae–like firebrand. And with all that heat, it's not surprising that Vicki Saporta, thirty-three, has been hugely successful as director of organizing for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In her two years on the job, Saporta, the daughter of a Rochester, New York, tailor, has helped raise Teamster membership from 1.7 million to its current 1.9 million with her recruitment of factory and clerical workers and other nontruckers. More important, Saporta is helping dispel the union's image as a hidebound haven for gangsters. "You don't see any mobsters in the hall," she says. "The Teamsters are hardworking people who are at their jobs day and night, not out at the golf course or on the take."

Probably no one in the union, though, works harder than Saporta herself. Although she maintains an address in Washington, D.C., she spends about two hundred nights a year on the road. Often seething with the barely contained anger that was once a hallmark of the labor movement, Saporta drives home the point that

eternal vigilance is necessary to keep management from exploiting employees. "Some employers like to think of themselves as enlightened," Saporta says. "But the profit motive always gets the better of them, and the workers get it in the neck."

Kirk Stauss

Farmer
Spirit Lake, Iowa
Born June 28, 1947

Finding ways to feed the world

It always disturbed Iowa farmer Kirk Stauss that America's way of combating world hunger was to "feed grain to livestock so we could sell steak and pork chops to starving people." It seemed so much more practical just to stick with the basic grains, as did his family, which has been farming 1,200 acres of corn and soybeans for three generations in the northwest corner of Iowa. So about five years ago Stauss, who has an M.B.A. and was working as a bank examiner when he took over the family farm, set out to blend his crops into a kind of trail mix that would be highly nutritious, taste good, and wouldn't spoil. "We wanted a product that you could just open up and start eating," he says. After a series of failures he tried an extrusion method that quickly (about fifteen seconds) and relatively coolly (about 300 degrees) cooked the grain into an edible blend. Three hundred grams of his concoction, now called Nutrameal, provides 1,100 calories and the minimum nutritional requirements for an adult male.

Through food brokers Stauss sells Nutrameal to governments around the world, helping to feed the hungry in the Far East, Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean. "We're trying to sell this as a food supplement," Stauss says. "We try to give you everything you need, but we'd rather say it's not the only thing you have to eat all day." Even so, he's doing his best to make Nutrameal appetizing. The blend comes in a variety of flavors: curry, cocoa, cinnamon, chicken, and the original corn. And beginning in January you won't have to be indigent to crave Nutrameal: Stauss plans to market a line of snack chips in U.S. health-food stores under the Freedom Farms label.

BUSINESS
Democrat and Chronicle

ON THE MOVE

Read about job changes and promotions among area business people on **4F**.

SUNDAY
AUGUST 31, 1986
ROCHESTER
NEW YORK

THE ORGANIZER

Rochester native directs campaigns for the Teamsters

By John Campbell
Democrat and Chronicle

WASHINGTON — Vicki Saporta has a big office overlooking the U.S. Capitol, a house across town and an eager research staff to tap.

But Saporta, 33 years old, is not a corporate attorney or an investment banker.

Since 1983, she's been the director of organizing for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the nation's largest labor union and the only employer she's ever had since leaving her native Rochester to attend Cornell University in Ithaca.

IN HER DOZEN years with the Teamsters, Saporta, a trim, vivacious woman, has seen enough drama to fill several lifetimes.

"What really got me hooked was after I started," she said. "I sat and listened to these people's stories, and couldn't help feeling for them. Then it was, 'OK, how do we get going?' "

Early on, some employers spread false rumors of a sexual nature to try to discredit Saporta, recalled Rome Aloise, another Teamsters organizer in San Francisco.

They threatened to fire activist workers during her organizing campaigns. Police have arrested her for littering as she handed out union leaflets.

As her reputation for organizing has spread, more and more employers have retaliated by hiring expensive anti-union consultants.

"WHEN THEY find out Vicki's there, they bring in the howitzers," said Aloise. "Consultants have gotten very sophisticated in the past few years. They take the offensive much more."

On the theory that young workers today retain information better from television than from print, the recent breed of pinstriped consultants uses videotape "dramatizations" of workers coping with a union drive.

Consultants these days camp out for a month at their client's work place, rather than coming in just before a union election.

But Saporta can turn the enemy's tricks to her advantage. For instance, she coaches workers by showing them an anti-union videotape before their boss makes them watch it.

SAPORTA EVEN convinced one employer to appear in a videotape she produced. Len Martin, who owns an apparel-marking firm in Rome, Calif., talks in the film about his unsuccessful fight to defeat a Teamsters organizing drive in 1984.

"Business isn't democratic, it's autocratic," he says. When unions come in, he sums up, they make the work place more democratic.

That cameo demonstrates Saporta's charisma. "I charmed him," she said.

Abuse rolls off her back. When anti-union workers in North Carolina circulated cartoons mocking her as a savior on a white horse, Saporta appeared at a rally astride a real horse.

She has combined such touches of humor with fiery exhortations and careful spadework behind the scenes.

If a company official threatened (illegally) to close down a plant before succumbing to the union, Saporta made sure a group of employees presented him with a form guaranteeing the closing. Asked to sign the form, she said, the company official usually dropped the threat.

More important, according to many who know her, Saporta has a knack for understanding workers' problems and gaining their trust.

"She helps people get angry, to realize they can't depend on someone else for control in their life," said Ellen Gallant, an organizer with the Communications Workers of America Local 1170 in Rochester.

Gallant recalled Saporta's work in North Carolina: "As someone just entering the labor movement, it was real inspiring to watch her. Most of us were accustomed to seeing men in roles of authority — the 'stick with me kid' types."

In a field still dominated by graying men, Saporta and other young labor leaders are starting to reflect the diversity of their rank-and-file membership. More women and minority-group members have moved into the top ranks at local and regional levels.

Only a few have risen to top national staff positions, however, and Saporta is among the most prominent.

"Vicki is one of the brightest stars in the labor movement today," said James Medoff, a labor economist at Harvard University. "She has positively affected the image of labor and the Teamsters when their image overall is not very good."

Others in labor criticize Saporta for

TURN TO PAGE 6F

Gannett News Service

Vicki Saporta has worked for International Brotherhood of Teamsters for 12 years.

Rochester native top Teamsters organizer

FROM PAGE 1F

fiercely defending a union whose reputation has been tarnished by decades of connections to organized crime. Her 1983 appointment as organizing director by union President Jackie Presser, they contend, merely helped the union present a more respectable public face.

"Her main job is to talk to you in the media," said Kenneth Paff, an official with the dissident group Teamsters For a Democratic Union in Detroit. "She doesn't have a real power base. Our problem is with her boss."

A labor leader in Rochester, who asked not to be identified, said, "She's a figurehead. When the Teamsters leadership gets questioned about the Mafia, they bring her in to beat it back."

The union was expelled from the AFL-CIO in 1957 for corruption and has been dogged by its Mafia connections. Three of Presser's predecessors were indicted, and Presser has pleaded innocent to racketeering, embezzlement and other federal charges.

The President's Commission on Organized Crime early this year said four big labor unions, including the Teamsters, are controlled or influenced by organized crime.

These allegations have surfaced frequently, Saporta acknowledges. But she's impatient with questions about them, and prefers to discuss them in the context of her organizing drives.

"A lot of times people call us because they want the biggest, toughest union they can find," she said. "They might be unhappy when we don't live up to our image. But at the first sign of violence we're out of there. You cannot organize people by threatening them, or intimidating them. The only thing that works is education."

Others note that corruption in unions does not look as significant when compared with business crime. Medoff and Richard Freeman, another labor economist at Harvard, cited surveys of large U.S. corporations by *Fortune* magazine and American Management Associations. The surveys revealed a higher incidence of crime, including bribery, tax evasion and arson, than was found in similar surveys of union members.

"They've had problems at the top," Medoff said of the Teamsters, "but it's wrong to infer that means they have problems in the middle or the bottom."

The Teamsters' legal problems haven't detracted much from the main accomplishment of Saporta and her staff — bringing tens of thousands of workers into the union.

Teamsters membership fell from 1.9 million in 1980 to 1.6 million in 1983, as job losses, particularly in trucking and basic manufacturing industries, offset recruiting. But Presser has increased the union's political and lobbying staff since he became president, and Saporta said membership has climbed back to 1.9 million.

In the Rochester area, the Teamsters represents 6,000 workers, said Thomas Kenny, a local Teamsters official.

Organizing hasn't solved all the Teamsters' problems, however. Of the 10 plants Saporta organized in anti-union North Carolina, only one reached a contract. After her initial campaigns in those plants, she had to turn the members over to less sophisticated local union representatives.

Saporta has tried to improve that type of servicing by keeping organizers in a campaign through the first contract, said Nick Salvatore, a professor of labor history at Cornell and a former Teamster.

"She's working within a flawed structure. Everything focuses on the marble palace," he said, referring to the Teamsters headquarters. "You don't have the strong intervention by local leaders."

Saporta knows all the unionizing tricks.

The Teamsters has devoted much of its recent organizing efforts to service industries such as health care, insurance, government and other fields full of female and young workers. Teamsters organizers often take on small units that other unions ignore, observers say.

The Teamsters union has also made a point of raiding other unions for members, the TDU's Paff claims, pointing to the unsuccessful drive to merge with the International Typographical Union. "Raiding is easier and quicker," he said.

Saporta responded that the Teamsters union has a no-raiding agreement with many unions, and has faced outside raiding itself.

Last year, she said, the Teamsters union was involved in 1,600 elections supervised by the National Labor Relations Board, roughly half the number of 1980. But those figures don't count organizing drives among public employees and some others regulated by the government, such as the current effort to sign on 2,500 flight attendants at Republic Airlines.

Many of the 700 Teamsters locals do organizing on their own, with assistance from Saporta and her staff of five. When a local calls for help, the organizing and research departments can provide a financial and labor-relations analysis of most major companies. Saporta also trains local Teamsters officials, lectures at universities, produces videotapes to use in organizing drives and commands some of those drives by phone.

The work involves long days, although Saporta has more free time now than when she traveled nine months of the year as a field organizer, living out of suitcases and sometimes working around the clock during crucial moments of a campaign. Outisde of work, Saporta, who's single, likes to sail and play basketball or tennis.

"She's driven," said Carolyn Jacobson, a staff member of the Bakery, Confectionary and Tobacco Workers union in Washington and a close friend of Saporta's.

Vicki A. Saporta almost didn't come into the labor movement.

"She always wanted to be a lawyer," recalled her mother, Leah, a homemaker who lives at 235 Simpson Road, Irondequoit. While at West Irondequoit High School, Saporta excelled in her studies, played numerous sports and placed second in a regional level of the Miss Teenage America competition, said her father, Abe, a tailor.

Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations looked to Saporta like a good foundation for a career in criminal law. In the summer after sophomore year, she took a Teamsters-sponsored job as a counselor for a group of teen-agers touring Europe. Besides the usual tourist attractions, the group walked through factories and met with labor leaders.

After completing a year at the London School of Economics and graduating from Cornell, Saporta talked her way into a $12,500-a-year organizing job for the Teamsters Western Conference. (She wouldn't disclose her current salary, but TDU said she earns about $90,000 a year.)

Saporta's first assignment was to organize workers for the concessionaire at Yosemite National Park. She lost the election, but learned valuable techniques such as swapping information and staff with environmental groups.

Other assignments took Saporta to towns large and small, from Utah to Chicago to Sweden. The scenes may have changed, but she saw a common struggle among workers for a stronger voice in their lives.

She also met a common obstacle — the fear of being fired for supporting a union. Last year, the NLRB ruled that one in 25 workers who voted for a union was fired illegally, 10 times the rate reported 30 years ago, said Medoff of Harvard. The actual rate is much higher, he said, because many fired workers never complain to the NLRB.

Saporta's approach is to make a large group of workers the leaders of a campaign, to go public soon after and to bring in Teamsters retirees or rank-and-file members to talk about the union.

"If you've got one spark plug signing up 80 workers, the company can make a point by firing that one," she said.

"Once you build that committee, you can sign up hundreds, even thousands in a week or two. People will come in for that initial meeting with their heads down. Then they get mad, then they get scared to death. When they realize no one's being fired, they have a whole new attitude. They sense power for the first time."

Spotlight

Working Profile: Esther Peterson

Everyman's Advocate

By IRVIN MOLOTSKY
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 — Since the 1930's Esther Peterson has been enlisting young soldiers in her fights for women's rights, trade unionism and consumer protection. Now, at 80 years of age and with a battalion or two of her followers in the field, she is still seeking recruits.

The battle metaphor was suggested by one of those young followers, Ellen Haas, executive director of Public Voice, a consumer organization. "She has inspired a whole army of consumer activists," Ms. Haas said. "She has combined warmth with toughness to coax Presidents and members of Congress to oppose consumer abuse."

Two hundred people from all the varied parts of Mrs. Peterson's life gathered in Washington this weekend for a birthday party at the Woman's National Democratic Club.

Some were from Government, since Mrs. Peterson served in the White House as the consumer adviser and the Labor Department as head of the Women's Bureau. Some were from the consumer movement; her interests in that field extend to this day in her role as a consumer representative at the United Nations. Some were from the diplomatic corps, for Mrs. Peterson put her activism aside for a time to accompany her husband, Oliver, now deceased, on his Foreign Service assignments abroad.

Attack on Consumerism Seen

Mrs. Peterson herself professed to wonder what the fuss was about, asking what was so magical about an 80th birthday and suggesting that 85 was a rounder number.

She sipped coffee the other day in her house and discussed the state of various issues today, finding consumerism under attack. "It's gone down during this Administration," said Mrs. Peterson, who served three Democratic Presidents. "One problem is that it has people working on laws who don't believe in them. Scanlon is a good example."

Mrs. Peterson's reference was to Terrence M. Scanlon, whose elevation to the chairmanship of the Consumer Product Safety Commission she opposed. Mr. Scanlon, however, had praise for her: "While we have not always agreed on the best means of achieving goals, her energy and dedication have been an inspiration."

The New York Times/Ken Heinen

Public television recently carried a documentary film, "Women of Summer," about a 1930's project at Bryn Mawr College that gave working women a taste of education. One of the leaders was a dark-haired, forceful woman who taught physical education and drama. She was Esther Peterson, practically unchanged today except for the graying of her hair. The forcefulness remains, especially when she compares the influence of consumerism in government today with that of the Kennedy, Johnson and Carter Administrations she served.

"Carter approved an executive order I asked for banning the export of a list of things considered too hazardous to be used in the United States," Mrs. Peterson said. "Poorer countries liked the list because they couldn't afford the research for themselves. Reagan canceled that order."

To Ralph Nader, one of her greatest contributions was not in government but in linking two of her other interests, labor unions and consumerism. "She has stressed that workers are consumers," he said, "and she also said that we have to be concerned about third-world consumers."

And unlike many leaders in the consumer movement, Mrs. Peterson has also worked in business, as the consumer representative at the Giant supermarket chain from 1970 to 1977, when she became President Carter's consumer adviser. "Izzy Cohen is coming" to the birthday party, Mrs. Peterson noted with some happiness, referring to the chain's president. "He never comes to these things."

Odonna Mathews, who worked at Giant for Mrs. Peterson and succeeded her at Mrs. Peterson's suggestion, said, "Esther, in a sense, trained and sensitized Giant executives to listen to the consumers."

"She is an extremely young 80," Mrs. Mathews said. Perhaps this is due to the fact that she has such a rich past but is not rooted in it. Her attitude seems to be the same as it was at the Bryn Mawr sessions for working women, always learning, always making fresh discoveries.

Learning From a Teamster

Her latest discovery is Vicki Saporta, head of organizing for the teamsters. Mrs. Peterson is almost aghast that the teamsters, no longer dominated by trucking and warehousing, are doing a better job of organizing women than the traditional unions she had worked for. She comes from the old school of organizing — clothing and garment workers and teachers.

She appeared recently before the teamsters and was introduced to Ms. Saporta, "one of the most clear-headed people I've ever met."

Mrs. Peterson came away having learned something from a far younger person, saying, "We have to find new ways to organize."

Ms. Saporta was equally impressed by Mrs. Peterson, saying, "She was wonderful — she was everyone's favorite speaker."

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch July 4, 1991

PHILIP DINE

ON LABOR

Lasting Images At Teamsters' Convention

One day last week at the Teamster convention in Florida, two men were getting on an elevator, one a sergeant-at-arms, the other a delegate. Big men. The delegate — the smaller of the two — was asked his size. Six-feet-six, 360 pounds, he replied.

The image of a Teamster is a burly truck driver or warehouseman. Rough and ready. And definitely all man.

Maybe not much longer.

Among the fastest-growing groups in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters are nurses, airline workers, food processors, secretaries.

Of the IBT's 1.6 million members, some 400,000 are women.

One of the most memorable convention snapshots was of Vicki Saporta, a California Teamster, giving her acceptance speech Friday after being nominated for vice president.

Saporta

In 88 years, no woman has held national office in the IBT.

Saporta, director of organizing for the union, said she was told when hired in 1974 that "it was an experiment — if I was successful, it would open doors for other women.

"Well, for the past 17 years, doors have been swinging open."

Saporta, running on the Shea slate, declared: "If we're paying more than lip service, if we're serious about including all our members, it is time we had a woman on the General Executive Board."

Men who booed as she rose listened as she spoke.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1991

The Washington Times

Teamsters may get a woman driver

Vicki Saporta has been truckin' for workers all her life

By Betsy Pisik
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Vicki Saporta shakes hands and passes out literature outside D.C. Jail where

Photo by Kevin Lubker/The Washington Times

Teamsters represent many corrections workers. She seeks an at-large vice presidency in the union.

When Vicki Saporta's eighth grade class visited the plant of a nearby menswear manufacturer, the other middle school students learned how suits were put together. But Miss Saporta, the daughter of a Rochester, N.Y., tailor, discovered the roots of her lifelong commitment to organized labor, what she calls "my gut and a sense of justice."

"I basically walked through and took apart [the operation]. I asked a lot of questions," she recalls. "By the end of the field trip, they were like, 'Who is this kid?'"

Today, Miss Saporta is the highest-ranking female Teamsters member in North America. As the union's director of organizing since 1984, she's relied on that gut feeling and a laser-like determination to help bring an uncountable number of new members into the union, from accountants to zoo keepers.

Now she wants to lead them.

Miss Saporta, 39, is running for one of the five at-large vice presidential slots on the union's general executive board. And if she wins, it will be the first time in the Teamsters' 91-year history that a woman has helped guide this most unruly of labor unions.

To outsiders, the Teamsters' name is synonymous with burly, striking truckers or the missing Jimmy Hoffa, but that's not quite accurate anymore.

For starters, one-third of the 1.5 million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America is female, a group that is beginning to press its own specific concerns and issues.

For another, the union is cleaning house under the purview of the Justice Department, which is intent on routing generations of corruption and mob influence. In compliance with a Justice Department consent decree, the union is holding its first democratic elections of top officers with the participation of the rank-and-file members.

All of which makes Vicki A. Saporta — an Ivy League, charismatic and mediagenic woman — a highly palatable addition to the old-boy executive board.

"It's hard to look at her and dredge out the Jimmy Hoffa jokes," says Jane Danowitz, executive director of the bipartisan Women's Campaign Fund and a friend of Miss Saporta's since 1975. Electing her "would give them a remodeled image . . . an image only a woman could give them."

Which is precisely the point made by her biggest detractor, R.V. Durham, who is running for general president on another, all male, slate. In plain language, he calls her a token and says she was chosen because of her gender rather than for her accomplishments. Mr. Durham, 60, told reporters in June that Teamsters women are not ready for the big leagues, and should stay in "the farm teams."

"That token label doesn't stick to me," she says, detailing her accomplishments within the union. "He's offended every woman Teamster in North America, from the nurse in Newburg, N.Y., to the cannery workers in California who have stood up to harassment and threats and walked picket lines and organized their workplaces!" she steams.

"That we've never had a woman on the board isn't right," says the candidate, frankly feminine and trim in tailored suits and light makeup. "One third of our membership needs better representation."

If she is elected, her priorities are a renewed emphasis on organizing and contract negotiations; the pressing of women's issues; and grass-roots political organizing to back up DRIVE, the Teamsters' bipartisan $10 million PAC, the largest

see **VICKI**, *page E-2*

Running against the odds

Woman faces uphill fight for Teamster vote

By SANDRA LIVINGSTON
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Vicki Saporta faces a daunting challenge: She is campaigning for an office that represents 1.6 million people in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and Guam. Yet her war chest is largely financed by sales of T-shirts and buttons.

She is seeking to break into a "club" that has never had a female member.

And she is running in a first election where voters have a tough time naming more than two of the 30 candidates.

Welcome to the campaign for the executive board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The election for 17 top union posts will be in December. Meanwhile, candidates are meeting with workers in union halls and outside plant gates.

Few seem to spend as much time on the road as Saporta, 39, the union's national organizing director. She once spent 250 days a year on the road and now thrives on 19-hour days short on food and long on visits to members. She is one of two women running for vice president. The other woman is Diana Kilmury from Vancouver, British Columbia.

"I love it," Saporta said during a recent campaign swing through Northeast Ohio. "I'm an organizer and I understand what it takes to get ballots back."

Yet predicting the turnout or outcome of this election is nearly impossible. Never before have rank-and-file Teamsters chosen their top leaders.

Many within the union believe 400,000 to 500,000 of the union's 1.6 million members will mail back their ballots. Until votes are

PD/CHRIS STEPHENS

Vicki Saporta, one of two women campaigning for vice president of the Teamsters, met workers in Solon recently.

counted, the outcome of this race is anyone's guess.

The election was mandated under a 1989 consent agreement between Teamster leaders and the federal government, which sought to rid the union of the influence of organized crime. Included in that agreement was the upcoming government-supervised secret-ballot election.

Not surprisingly, all candidates are calling for a new direction for the union — one that spends money on members rather than private jets.

Saporta is running with Walter Shea, an international vice president who served as executive assistant to four Teamster presidents. Shea is one of three presidential candidates voted onto the ballot at the union's convention in June.

Saporta is confident of a victory — for the slate and for herself.

An intense woman, Saporta ticks off a rapid-fire list of changes she wants to make at the nation's largest union:

- Hire 100 new organizers to fan out across the country.
- Develop a strong membership that is active at the grassroots.
- Use comprehensive campaigns that increase the points the union can push to pressure a company during contract talks.

For example: sending union members to distribute leaflets about contract problems in an executive's neighborhood.

"Only when you demonstrate you can hurt the employer, do you really end up getting respect and tipping the balance back in your favor," she said. "We have an $87 million annual budget. We are a match for any national or international corporation."

Saporta has spent more than 17 years as a Teamster organizer, the last eight as the union's organizing director. She was selected for the director's job by the late union president, Jackie Presser. Saporta said Presser initially hesitated about hiring a woman, fearing men wouldn't take her seriously.

But he changed his mind after getting strong praise for her work from other union officials, said Saporta, adding: "He liked my moxie, as he called it, and the fact that I spoke my mind."

She estimated about 30,000 Teamsters have been brought into the union under her direction, including flight attendants at Northwest Airlines who Saporta personally organized.

Her campaign for vice president focuses on the general changes she would make, the need to bring a woman into the union's top echelons, and the need to talk about such issues as day care, pay equity, and family leaves.

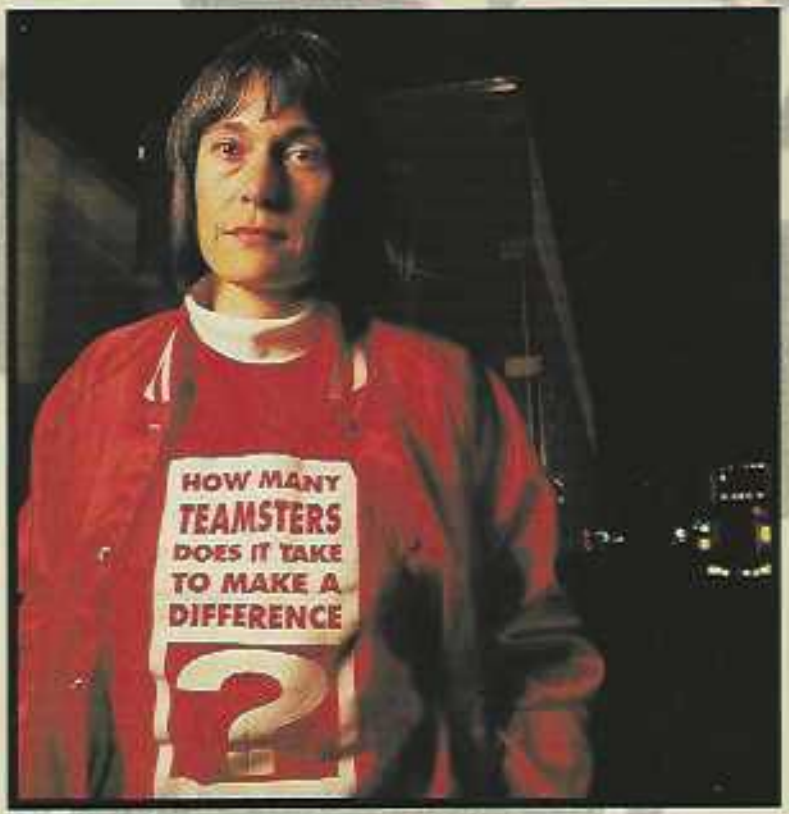
"Women have made a contribution to this union," Saporta recently told to a group of Teamsters working at American Consumer Products Inc. in Solon. "It's about time you had a voice on the executive board."

Several women workers said they hadn't heard of Saporta but would likely vote for her.

"I feel like women should be represented," said Minnie Brown, a plant worker. Then turning to Saporta, she added, "Good luck from one woman to another."

The Washington Post
DECEMBER 8, 1991
Magazine

POLITICALLY CORRECT TEAMSTERS



DEMOCRACY COMES TO JIMMY HOFFA'S UNION

By Peter Carlson

Teamsters VP candidate Vicki Saporta

The City of Our Dreams · Great Holiday Gifts

TEAMSTER GLASNOST

The largest, richest and historically most corrupt labor union in America is counting the ballots from its first free election this week–and Jimmy Hoffa is probably spinning in his grave

IN THE COOL SHADE OF A SPREADING OAK TREE, TEAMSTERS' sons tossed Hula-Hoops over a plastic elephant's nose while Teamsters' wives painted butterflies and hearts on the faces of Teamsters' daughters. A few yards away, UPS drivers were barbecueing a huge quantity of pork while a Teamster drove a horse-drawn cart full of giggling kids out across the sun-dappled meadow.

Doug Mims, a truck driver from Atlanta, watched all this and smiled. "Four years ago," he said, "you wouldn't have been able to hold a rally like this without lining the place with armed guards."

Back then, and for decades before that, Teamsters dissidents didn't meet without wondering if they'd be attacked by union goons. Mims began fighting the leadership of his Atlanta local more than a decade ago and, he says, "they brushed me off like a horsefly." But now, a kind of government-enforced democracy has come to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In 1988, the Justice Department hit the union with a racketeering suit charging that it had made a "devil's pact with La Cosa Nostra." Fearful of a trial, the Teamsters' leaders agreed to permit a court-appointed administrator to run the first free election of high officials in the 88-year history of the largest, richest—and historically most corrupt—labor union in America.

Now, Mims is running for vice president of the union on a reform slate headed by dissident leader Ron Carey. Standing in this sunny farmyard outside Memphis, he gazed out over a cheerful crowd of several hundred Teamsters, most of them wearing bright red T-shirts that said "Vote for Teamster Pride and Honesty: Ron Carey for General President."

And then a woman strolled by, walking a little white potbellied pig named Ghost, who wore a coat that read "Vote Carey."

An emcee summoned the crowd to the makeshift bandstand for the afternoon's entertainment. First, a couple of local sheriffs led out three police dogs, who demonstrated their ability to sniff out cardboard boxes that smelled like dope. Then Miss Memphis and two other local beauties—all three clad in red

BY PETER CARLSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES McGOON

OPPOSITE PAGE: RON CAREY, A LONGTIME TEAMSTER DISSIDENT LEADER IN NEW YORK, TAKES HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN TO A UNION RALLY OUTSIDE MEMPHIS FEATURING FAMILY FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT. RIGHT: THE LATE PRESIDENT JIMMY HOFFA IS WELCOMED BY MOBSTER ANTHONY PROVENZANO, AT HIS LEFT, TO A 1959 CONVENTION IN NEW JERSEY.

JIMMY HOFFA PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

mini-dresses, red high heels and long red gloves—sang "Your Love is Lifting Me Higher." A country band played "Memphis, Tennessee" while Teamsters' wives and children did a cakewalk. And then it was time for the campaign speeches.

As the crowd chanted "Car-ey! Car-ey! Car-ey!," Ron Carey bounded onto the bandstand. President of a Long Island Teamsters local for 23 years, Carey has been a symbol of reform in the union since 1978, when he was portrayed in Steven Brill's book *The Teamsters* as an honest, hard-working man in a union dominated by crooks and hacks. A bulldog of an orator, Carey, who earns less than $60,000 a year, immediately ripped into the union leadership's bloated salaries and private jets.

"They haven't served your needs!" he bellowed in his high-pitched New York accent. "They've only served the needs of the top leadership. Look at their salaries! Our top leaders—who are now saying they're reformers—they're the very same people who brought this union to the position it's in today!"

"Amen!" somebody said.

"The members are entitled to a clean union! An honest union! That's what this campaign's about. It's about getting your union back! And don't let anybody kid you, they're holding on to this like you wouldn't believe! They won't let go of the cookie jar!"

The Teamsters stood and cheered. "Car-ey! Car-ey! Car-ey!"

THIS ISN'T THE WAY TEAMSTERS TRADITIONALLY CHOOSE their presidents. Historically, a few members of the Mafia have had more say in the matter than the 1.6 million union members.

Jimmy Hoffa, the legendary Teamster boss, rose to power with the help of mobsters, who provided him the muscle needed to battle company goons in return for a piece of the action. In 1967, when Hoffa went to jail for jury tampering and mail fraud, he handpicked a successor—Frank Fitzsimmons, his former errand boy, a man he once described as "a guy I took off a truck." In 1981, when Fitzsimmons died, Cleveland mobsters Milton "Maishe" Rockman and John "Peanuts" Tronolone traveled to New York to persuade Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno, boss of the Genovese crime family, to support Roy Williams, a mob-controlled Teamster vice president, for the union's top job. Fat Tony put out the word, and the union's executive board dutifully complied. In 1983, when Williams was sentenced to prison for attempting to bribe Democratic Sen. Howard Cannon of Nevada, Maishe and Peanuts again went to see Fat Tony. This time, they picked Jackie Presser, and the executive board again concurred.

We know these things, and many more, because Presser, who died under indictment in 1988, was not only a mob-connected Teamster boss, he was also an FBI informant. And Williams, facing 10 years behind bars, turned stool pigeon, testifying from prison about three decades of mob control of the union.

In 1988, the Justice Department used the Presser and Williams revelations—plus evidence from many other sources—to file a RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) suit against the union's 18-man executive board and two dozen mobsters with such nicknames as "The Snake," "The Nutcracker," "Matty the Horse," "Jackie the Lackey" and, of course, Maishe, Peanuts and Fat Tony. The 112-page racketeering suit detailed 30 years of Teamsters corruption: the theft of union funds, the "sweetheart contracts" with mob businesses, the casinos financed by union loans to the mob, the "grossly excessive

The Justice Department refused to back off. Soon, panic was spreadin

PRESIDENTS PAST: FROM LEFT, TEAMSTERS BOSS DAVE BECK LEAVES U.S. DISTRICT COURT IN WASHINGTON AFTER SURRENDERING ON CHARGES OF INCOME-TAX EVASION IN 1959; AN AILING ROY WILLIAMS, CONVICTED IN 1982 OF CONSPIRING TO BRIBE A U.S. SENATOR, IS WHEELED INTO A CHICAGO COURT, WHERE HE RECEIVED A 10-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE; JACKIE PRESSER, WHO WAS FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR UNION-RELATED CORRUPTION AND WAS SECRETLY TALKING TO THE FBI ABOUT HIS MOBSTER TIES, IS CARRIED ON A GILDED SEDAN CHAIR INTO A 1986 TEAMSTERS CONVENTION EXTRAVAGANZA AT A LAS VEGAS HOTEL.

salaries" given to the Teamsters' top brass and their relatives. For 10 gruesome pages, the suit recounted how union members who fought corruption were beaten, shot, bombed and, in one case, stuffed dead into the trunk of a car.

The union was, the lawsuit concluded, "a captive labor organization, which has been infiltrated, dominated, exploited and controlled by La Cosa Nostra figures." The lawsuit demanded that the Teamsters be placed under federal trusteeship.

The union leaders fought the lawsuit with their enormous powers of wealth and political influence. They hired Hill and Knowlton, the giant PR firm, to rally opposition to the lawsuit, and they denounced the government in full-page ads in 15 major newspapers. Backed by the clout of their political action committee fund—by far the largest in America—they persuaded 246 members of the House of Representatives to sign a letter to Edwin Meese, who was then attorney general, protesting the lawsuit. They also persuaded four presidential candidates—Jesse Jackson, Jack Kemp, Al Haig and Paul Simon—to address a union-sponsored rally against the RICO suit.

But the Justice Department refused to back off. Soon, panic was spreading in the "Marble Palace"—the union's huge, ornate headquarters on Capitol Hill—as various Teamster bosses, looking to protect themselves, started trying to cut deals with the feds.

Finally, at 1 o'clock on the morning of March 14, 1989—the day the trial was scheduled to begin—the union leadership capitulated, signing what is known legally as a "consent decree" but could more aptly be described as an unconditional surrender. Under the decree, three court-appointed officials, led by former federal judge Frederick B. Lacey, were given unprecedented powers over the union: They could oust corrupt Teamster officers, audit union books, veto improper expenditures and oversee two direct secret ballot elections of top union officers, one in 1991 and another in 1996.

Not only that, but the union had to pay for it all.

Since then, the court-appointed overseers have charged 135 Teamster officials—including five vice presidents—with offenses ranging from embezzlement to threatening union members to associating with mobsters. The union fought mightily to defend itself, spending more than $12 million of its members' money to appeal various cases all the way to the Supreme Court. But it lost and lost and lost. By the fall of 1991, 20 officials had been permanently barred from the union, 32 had resigned, and 24 had been suspended. Many others—including 11 vice presidents and William McCarthy, who had succeeded Presser as president—had announced their intentions to retire at the end of this year.

The party was over. The Teamsters' old, autocratic system had crumbled as quickly and unexpectedly as the Soviet empire. In its place arose a raucous, contentious, colorful and vividly American variety of glasnost.

WHEN OUTGOING PRESIDENT BILLY McCARTHY STEPPED TO the podium at the Teamsters convention in Orlando last June, the hall erupted in a cacophony of boos and catcalls.

"I don't know why the hell you all boo," McCarthy grumbled when the din finally receded. "I'm getting out anyway."

It was nothing personal. The delegates also booed the rest of

the 'Marble Palace,' the union's huge, ornate headquarters on Capitol Hill.

'For the first time in the history of this union,' Saporta said, holding o

the union leaders as well as the court-appointed administrators. They even booted down a videotaped greeting from President Bush, who had been endorsed, like Reagan and Nixon before him, by the Teamsters' resolutely Republican top brass.

It was a feisty crowd, a far cry from previous Teamsters conventions, which were about as democratic and spontaneous as the famous Nazi rally at Nuremberg. At the 1986 convention, for example, Jackie Presser, who had been indicted for embezzling union funds a week earlier, was carried in a gilded sedan chair into a $648,000 party in his honor by four muscle-bound men dressed as Roman centurions.

But there was one big difference this year: The 1,935 delegates were not handpicked local leaders; they were members chosen by secret ballots in federally monitored elections. Gleefully, they passed proposals that had been booted out of previous conventions. They voted to cap the salaries of the top leaders—some of whom make more than $500,000 a year—at a slightly more proletarian $225,000. They voted to sell off the "Teamster Air Force"—the fleet of four jets used as airborne limousines by the union leadership. Then they took up the issue of strike benefits, which had been set at a measly $45 a week by Teamster bosses who preferred collecting dues to paying benefits. First, one delegate proposed raising the benefits to $100. Another arose to suggest $150, and a third saw that bet and raised it to $200. "Tell the members we're going to pay you $200 to win the goddam strike!" bellowed John Morris, the Philadelphia Teamsters boss. Amid raucous cheering, the delegates did just that.

At previous conventions, the union's executive board, acting like the old Politburo, would present its candidates for president, secretary-treasurer and the 17 vice presidents, and then the delegates would dutifully anoint them. But this year, there were six announced candidates for president, and three of them received enough delegate votes to appear on the members' ballots this fall. The biggest vote-getter was R.V. Durham, 60, currently a vice president and McCarthy's personal choice for the office. Finishing second was Walter Shea, 63, who was also a vice president until McCarthy fired him after Shea announced that he would run against Durham. The third was Carey, 55, the "outsider" candidate backed by the dissident group Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

In mid-November, the court-appointed election officials mailed out ballots to nearly 1.6 million Teamsters—more eligible voters than in each of 23 states. This Tuesday, December 10, the ballots are due back in Washington and the vote count will begin.

Meanwhile, the candidates have hit the road, wooing Teamsters scattered in more than 600 locals from Guam to Newfoundland, from the Yukon to Puerto Rico. It's a full-blown, media-age political campaign, complete with handshaking, promise-making, wonderfully nasty personal invective and attack ads that would make even Roger Ailes blush.

"YOU CAN'T DO THAT," THE GUARD SAID.

"Yes, I can," Vicki Saporta replied, and she continued handing her campaign leaflets to truck drivers in the parking lot of a UPS depot outside Cleveland.

"Hi, Vicki Saporta," she told them as they hustled into work. "I'm running for vice president of the international union. Appreciate your support."

The guard watched this, then walked inside and picked up a

THE TEAMSTERS CAMPAIGN: RIGHT, PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL R.V. DURHAM, FOURTH FROM LEFT, THE SILVER-HAIRED UNION VICE PRESIDENT FROM NORTH CAROLINA, JOINS A GATHERING OF TEAMSTER SHOP STEWARDS AND OFFICIALS AT A NEW YORK HOTEL; UPPER MIDDLE, VICKI SAPORTA BRINGS HER CAMPAIGN TO BECOME THE TEAMSTERS' FIRST FEMALE VICE PRESIDENT TO A PHILADELPHIA UNION LOCAL; LOWER MIDDLE, WALTER SHEA, A FORMER UNION VICE PRESIDENT, CAMPAIGNS FOR THE PRESIDENCY AT A PHILADELPHIA UNION HALL WHERE MEMBERS OF TEAMSTERS LOCAL 107, FAR RIGHT, BLOW WHISTLES IN SUPPORT OF HIS CANDIDACY.

a leaflet, 'we have an opportunity to elect a woman to a top position.'

phone. A few minutes later, a guy in a suit emerged and told Saporta she'd have to leave.

"I do this at UPS barns all over the country," she said. Then she walked away to hand out another leaflet. "Hi, Vicki Saporta . . ."

The guy in the suit watched for a while, then walked inside.

"Hey, I do this for a living," Saporta said with a shrug. Small and slender, she doesn't look like a Teamster organizer, but she's been one since 1974, when she graduated from the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Now the union's director of organizing, she's among the top women in the labor movement. During her 17 years of recruiting nurses, flight attendants and factory workers to join the Teamsters, she's had countless confrontations with guards and guys in suits, and they don't scare her. "You seize the ground and they call the cops," she said. "By the time the cops arrive, you've talked to 200 more people."

The guy in the suit returned with several other guys in suits. They politely suggested that Saporta leaflet off company property. She politely declined and kept leafleting.

Half an hour later, a cop drove up. "One, you leave the property," he said brusquely. "Or, two, you get arrested."

"But . . ."

The cop didn't want to hear any buts. "You're gonna leave *now!*"

So she did. Slowly. Leafleting all the way.

"Sometimes it's good to get thrown out—it makes you the underdog," she said as she stood on the sidewalk, waving to the truck drivers as they drove past.

A few minutes later, she was riding to her next campaign stop. "You know, there's a certain personality type that becomes a cop," she said. Then she stopped abruptly. "Don't write that—we represent policemen."

It's true. Today, the Teamsters represent police officers, prison guards, teachers, nurses, flight attendants, zookeepers, high school principals, even the man inside the Mickey Mouse suit at Disney World. These days, barely 10 percent of the members are truck drivers, and the union's demographics have changed: Nearly a third of the members—more than 400,000—are women. Saporta, who is running on Walter Shea's slate, is one of two female vice-presidential candidates hoping to become the first women ever to sit on the Teamsters' executive board. The other is Diana Kilmury, a Vancouver truck driver running on the Carey slate.

"For the first time in the history of this union," Saporta said, holding out one of her leaflets, "we have an opportunity to elect a woman to a top position."

She was standing in the warehouse of a book and magazine distributor in Cleveland, talking to a woman who was carrying a huge bundle of magazines. The woman charged past her, trying to catch up to a spot on a fast-moving conveyor belt. She finally reached the spot, piled the magazines on it, then grabbed another bundle and did it again. "You can talk," she said to Saporta as she kept working. "I'm listening."

"It's the first time we have an opportunity to elect a woman," Saporta repeated. "I'd appreciate your support."

"I will, I will," the woman said, still hustling down the line. "What's your name again?"

It was a grim, noisy place piled with boxes full of paperback

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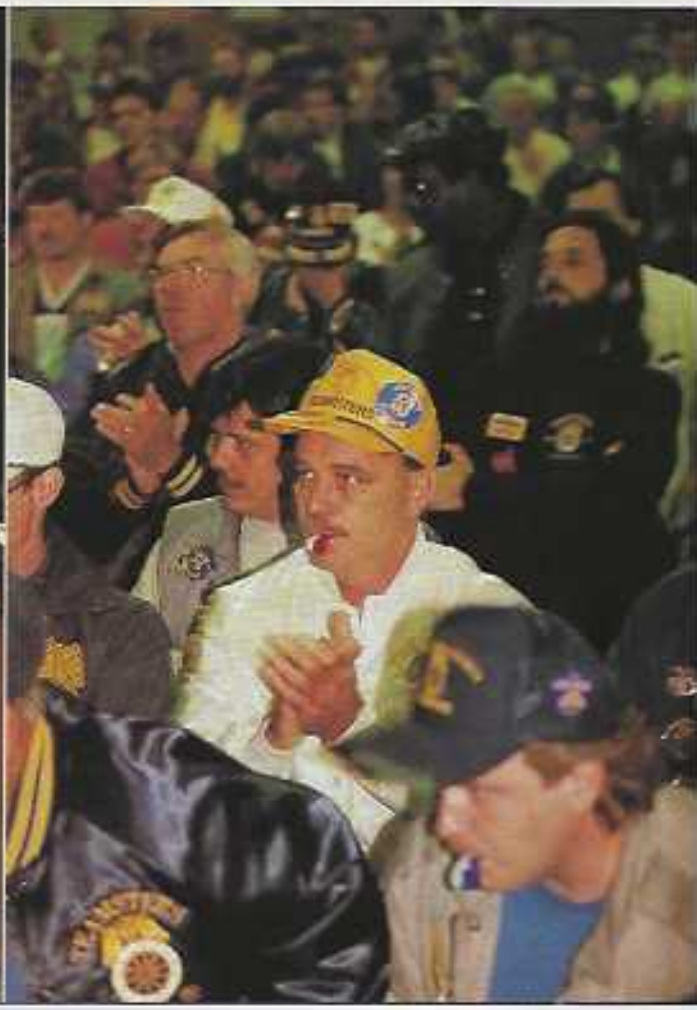

TEAMSTERS

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books and magazines—Reader's Digest, People, Family Circle, Hustler. And all around the room, workers—most of them women, many of them single mothers—were making a living piling bundles on a conveyor belt that kept them constantly running. To these people, the Teamsters union is not a symbol of corruption, it's the organization whose bargaining clout keeps them above the poverty line. "We're up to $10 an hour," said one. "If the union wasn't here, we'd be getting five."

Escorted by a business agent from the local union, Saporta went downstairs to a smoky little lunchroom decorated with posters advertising the paperbacks the company distributes. One poster contained a smiling photo of Jackie Presser, the late Teamster boss. It was an ad for James Neff's book *Mobbed Up: Jackie Presser's High-Wire Life in the Teamsters, the Mafia and the FBI.* Across the room, four Teamster women were taking their morning break, sipping sodas and smoking cigarettes.

Saporta introduced herself and started campaigning. "This is the first chance we have to elect our top leaders—and the first chance to elect a woman. There are 400,000 women in this union, and it's long overdue that we had some representation."

The women nodded in agreement.

"It's 1991," Saporta continued. "It's time we put our issues on the front burner of this union—child care, pay equity, family and medical leave . . ."

When she finished her speech, Saporta asked if there were any questions.

"Where are the other candidates?" one woman asked. "Don't the others plan on winning?"

"I'm a member of Local 507, and there are no women business agents," another woman said. "I know back in the old days, you needed muscle. But we need brains now. And women have brains."

Up on the wall, Jackie Presser was still smiling. But his union was changing right before his eyes.

VICKI SAPORTA DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK about it—especially not to Teamster voters or newspaper reporters—but Walter Shea, the man at the top of her ticket, is not exactly a fresh new face of reform for the Teamsters.

Shea served as chief aide to every Teamster president since Hoffa. That résumé is both his qualification and his curse. After all, two of those presidents, Hoffa and Williams, went to prison, and a third, Presser, died while under indictment. Where was Shea all that time?

"I was doing all the work they should have been doing," he said, sounding a little peeved at the question. He was sitting in the back room of a Philadelphia Teamsters hall, the scene of a raucous rally in support of his candidacy. "I wasn't involved with their troubles—Presser's troubles, Roy's troubles, Hoffa's troubles. I worked. I did the things they should have been doing. I had the two phones in my ear every day, talking to people, meeting with people, settling trade union business. I talked to those guys who went to jail. I said, 'Hey, what happened, Jimmy? What's all this stuff about jury tampering? What's all this stuff about mail fraud?' 'Roy, what's all this shit with bribery?' He said, 'It's not true, I'm gonna be exonerated.' Same thing with Presser. All right, fine. So I went back to work . . ."

When Shea talks about his old bosses, you wonder why he worked for them. "Fitzsimmons was lazy and played golf," he said. "Roy Williams hated and was ill-equipped for the job . . . Presser was not the guy for the job. He was a bad and evil person . . ."

His conclusion: "We've had some problems topside, but I'm not one of those people. I've got no excess baggage. I don't have any problems with me criminally or I wouldn't be here, believe me."

He does, however, have some problems with some of his running mates. One of his candidates for vice president—Joseph "Joe T" Trerotola, the 82-year-old boss of the New York City Teamsters—withdrew from the race (and from the union) rather than contest the allegation of "deliberately failing to investigate" mobsters in his union. Meanwhile, last August, Shea's candidate for secretary-treasurer, Danny Ligurotis, the $442,000-a-year Chicago Teamster boss, shot and killed his 36-year-old son, who was on the union payroll for $110,000, in the basement of the Teamster City building. Ligurotis, who told police that he was acting in self-defense, has not been charged with any crime, and he remains the No. 2 man on the Shea ticket.

To Shea, the Teamsters' gangster image is wildly exaggerated. "We've been tinted and stained with the same thing we've been tinted and stained with for 30 years—that we're a corrupt organization," he said. "Well, we have people who are corrupt in this union, as we have people corrupt in every walk of life. So what? What the hell did they do to Boesky's firm? Did they put them under a civil RICO suit? We get it. We're the ones who get the stigma."

Plenty of Teamsters would agree with Shea on that, and nearly 500 of them—shop stewards from Philadelphia—were packed into a smoke-filled auditorium a few yards away. Most of them wore Teamsters windbreakers, and many also wore Teamsters caps and shirts and buttons and belt buckles. They were cheering, stomping their feet and blowing little whistles. The place sounded like a World Series game after a home team home run.

"We need a hard-nose, hard-hittin' union," John Morris bellowed.

"Yeah!" the crowd yelled back.

"We need a union that'll stand tall and support $200 strike benefits!"

"Give 'em hell, John!"

A burly, bald-headed man whose right hand was mangled in a childhood accident outside a coal mine, Morris, 65, the much-loved Pennsylvania Teamster leader, is a union orator in the pound-the-podium-and-bellow style of such legendary labor leaders as Big Bill Haywood and John L. Lewis. Running for vice president on the Shea slate—which is dominated by Northern big-city Teamster bosses—he ripped into Shea's opponent, R.V. Durham, who comes out of a rural local in North Carolina.

"The big cities are different than the Southern right-to-work states," he yelled. "We give 'em their strength! It's us that puts the power into 'em! It's us that puts the fear of God into the employers!"

"Awright, John!" The crowd screamed and blew their whistles.

"You can't have a ridge runner or a stump jumper or a pissant or a peckerwood runnin' this union!"

"John-ny! John-ny! John-ny!"

Morris introduced the man he called "your next president," and Walter Shea found himself in the unenviable position of trying to follow the Mount Vesuvius of labor oratory. Shea opted to go for nostalgia, evoking the glories of the golden age of Teamster history, back in the days before the indictments and the RICO suit, before the concessionary contracts of the '80s, before trucking deregulation decimated the union, back when the Teamsters had 2.2 million members and organized labor represented more than 30 percent of the country's work force, instead of the current 15 percent.

"We have to get ourselves in a position where we are the force we once were with the employers," Shea said. "And you can't do that with broken-down leaders . . ."

AMONG THE MORE UNEXPECTED AND entertaining byproducts of the RICO suit and the Teamster election is the transformation of the union's monthly magazine from a predictably dull house organ into one of America's most bizarre and schizophrenic publications.

Before the RICO suit, the International Teamster, like most labor magazines, was filled with self-congratulatory stories illustrated by photos of union bigwigs shaking hands with each other or giving

plaques to each other or delivering speeches to each other. Today, the first half of the magazine remains much the same—President McCarthy's basset-like countenance appears about half a dozen times in each issue—but the second half is, well, different. There, Lacey, the court-appointed administrator, reports on his activities in drily legal but nonetheless fascinating prose:

". . . The Investigations Officer has charged Michael L. Boano, the Vice President of Local Union 377 in Youngstown, Ohio, with . . . violating Article XIX, section 6(b)(6); to wit, On September 12, 1990, he displayed a handgun and pointed it at a fellow member at a meeting of his local . . ."

". . .[William] Lickert, Sr., President of Local 205, was charged with: making 'bomb threats' to an old age home in an effort to settle a labor dispute; embezzling from his Local; causing improper loans to himself . . ."

". . . Mr. [Robert J.] Feeney was charged with taking part in a scheme, while president of Local 11, to extort money from lunch truck caterers in New Jersey through violence, threats of violence and claims of police corruption . . ."

"Mr. [Charles 'Chuckie'] O'Brien is charged as follows . . . To wit, on or about August 15, 1987, you knowingly incurred unauthorized charges on the American Express card account of Teamsters Local 769 in the amount of approximately $12,187 to charter a private Lear jet . . ."

Lacey even used the pages of the magazine to reveal how McCarthy had hired Windsor Graphics, a company owned by his son-in-law, to print the magazine at a cost of $300,000 a month. "I concluded that in actuality, Windsor really was not the lowest bidder," Lacey wrote. "Given all this, I decided to veto future expenditures to Windsor . . ."

Not surprisingly, Lacey's reports drove the Teamster leaders up the wall, and they fought mightily against them. They asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the section of the consent decree that authorized Lacey's articles, but the court declined. They refused to print the names of union officials charged by the court-appointed investigator, but a federal judge overruled them. They announced that they would turn the monthly magazine into a quarterly, but the judge vetoed that too. Finally, they were reduced to leaving Lacey's reports off the magazine's table of contents, presumably in the hopes that the members wouldn't find them.

When the Teamsters' presidential race began, the magazine was further enlivened by page after page of campaign ads, some of them wonderfully vicious. An ad for Carey portrayed Durham arm in arm with a convict in prison garb and a mobster holding an Uzi. An ad for Durham portrayed Carey with the word "Scab" scrawled across his face. An ad for Shea portrayed Durham with the word "Management" stamped across his face. An ad for Durham claimed Shea hadn't paid his union dues, and a Shea ad responded, "Durham Lied!" And Jack Cox, running for vice president on the Shea slate, used his ad to attack the current president: "Billy McCarthy is a liar, a traitor and a heartless son of a bitch . . ."

But the ad that really amused rank-and-file Teamsters—particularly those who'd been reading Lacey's reports—didn't attack anybody. At least not anybody in particular. An ad for Carey, it was a photograph of three pigs with their snouts buried deep in a trough full of greenbacks. The copy read: "They're Feasting On Your Dues!"

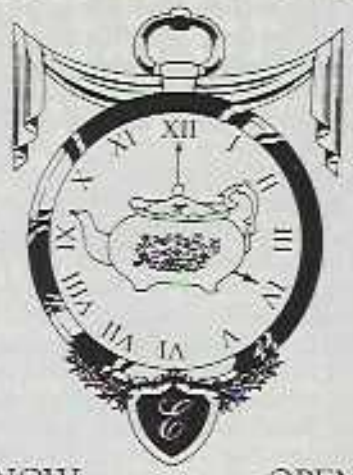
R.V. DURHAM HATES THAT AD. HE absolutely detests it. Although it didn't mention him, he takes it as a personal attack and denounces it at every campaign stop. "Unfortunately, we're involved in a very negative campaign, a despicable campaign in which the opposition has portrayed me and my family as hogs at the trough . . ."

Attacking that ad is about as passionate as Durham gets out on the stump. He is not a firebrand or a spellbinding orator. A gray-haired grandfather in bifocals and a blue blazer, he speaks in a soft, low-key monotone that leaves no room for applause. He is—as his old colleague and new opponent Walter Shea says—"a very bland person."

His presidential campaign is a bit bland too, at least when compared with his rivals'. While Carey's Nashville barbecue was a folksy carnival and Shea's Philadelphia speech a boisterous pep rally, Durham's recent meeting with shop stewards in Manhattan was sedate, almost bureaucratic. It was held in a ballroom in the Roosevelt Hotel, a room with ornate columns and crystal chandeliers. A couple hundred shop stewards and local Teamster officials lined up for steam table roast beef and then sat down for some lukewarm oratory.

"We have to elect people that not only have the ability to lead this union but who have the desire to work with and through the leadership," Durham said. Then, alluding to Carey, he continued, "Unfortunately, one of the opponents is attempting to work around the leadership and go straight to the members, and I wonder, if he's successful, how he would run this union not having the rapport with the leadership . . ."

Durham has carefully maintained his



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own "rapport with the leadership." A former long-distance truck driver, he was elected president of his North Carolina local—and reelected 10 times—and then he slowly, cautiously, worked his way up through the byzantine bureaucracy of the international union, first as a trustee, then a vice president. Last year, when McCarthy decided not to run for president, he endorsed Durham for the post.

That endorsement set off a vicious internecine battle in the Marble Palace. Shea announced his candidacy, McCarthy promptly fired him, and the executive board divided into two rival camps, amid much name-calling. Durham promptly billed himself as a reformer, but he also studded his slate with old guard Teamster plutocrats, including Arnie Weinmeister, the West Coast boss, who pocketed more than $600,000 a year in union salaries, and Weldon Mathis, the secretary-treasurer, who made $275,000 and had three sons on the union payroll, one of them at $137,000. After Carey, who was already out campaigning, ripped into those salaries, Weinmeister and Mathis decided to withdraw from the race and retire from the union.

But Durham's slate, like Shea's, still has some problems: Three of his vice-presidential running mates have been charged with acts of corruption by the court-appointed investigator, and a fourth, William Hogan Jr., is one-quarter of a family that pulls in more than $580,000 in Teamster salaries.

Meanwhile, Durham, like Shea, denies that the union is corrupt. "It's a good union," he told the crowd in New York. "I certainly disagree with the opposition that it is corrupt and needs to be dismantled. We don't need to dismantle this union. We simply need to go ahead and to build on the unity and the strength that we currently have. We have good, strong leadership . . ."

"THE AVERAGE GUY HAS NO IDEA WHO'S running," said Dale Fisher, "and most of them don't care."

Fisher had just shaken Vicki Saporta's hand as she came campaigning through the Stanley Air Tools plant in Cleveland. At 41, he's the shop steward in the plant, where he's worked for 14 years. He's also a part-time city councilman in the Cleveland suburb of Lyndhurst. So he knows a few things about Teamsters and about politics. The problem, he says, is that Teamsters aren't used to democracy.

"I'd compare it to the communist countries: Suddenly they have democracy, and they're not sure what to do with it," he said. "We always figured that the union guys picked their own, just like management picked their own—without any say from us. It never crossed our minds."

For years, guys in the plant would come by his workbench, grinning cynically and pointing to yet another newspaper headline about yet another Teamster boss. "Hey, another one got indicted," they'd say, and then they'd go back to work and forget about it. "They figured the top people were corrupt," Fisher said, "but they were getting their pay and their pensions and the health and welfare benefits. That's what they were concerned with. A lot of good comes out of the union. And a lot of people say any union is better than no union because management will always take advantage of the workers."

The problem in the Teamster presidential election, he says, is the same problem you find in the American presidential elections: apathy. "How do you awaken their sleeping interest?" he asked. "How do you get them interested?"

In all three Teamster campaign headquarters, people are asking similar questions. Their polls tell them the same thing that Fisher's instincts tell him: Although each candidate has thousands of ardent supporters, most Teamsters don't know who's running and don't much care. Nobody expects even half of the 1.6 million members to vote, and most are predicting that only a quarter or a third will mail their ballots back to the federal election office.

"Apathy is what concerns us more than anything," said Durham. "If you only get 20 to 30 percent of the people voting in a three-way race, anything can happen."

That's about the only prediction that anyone involved in the campaign will make: *Anything can happen.* There has never been a Teamster presidential election before, and consequently there is no yardstick to use in predicting this one. All three candidates are trying to identify their supporters and get them to vote. For the "insider" candidates—Durham and Shea—the strategy has been to woo local union officials and hope they can pull out their members' votes. Carey, the outsider running against the entrenched officials, is relying on his own relentless grass-roots campaigning and the small but influential dissident group Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

Both strategies raise unanswered questions: Are local bosses popular enough to influence the votes of their members? Will alienated and angry Teamsters vote for Carey, or will they simply ignore the election? Will the split among the insiders throw the election to Carey? Nobody knows.

But no matter who wins the election, the Teamsters have already been changed forever, observers of the union agree. After the consent decree, the expulsion of scores of corrupt officials and the election campaign, the Teamsters will never again be the brutal, autocratic and mob-controlled union it was only four years ago.

"It's going to be very, very difficult to turn back the clock," said Lacey. "I don't think you're ever going to see the old ways return."

"Once there's an expansion of these sort of rights, it's very hard to retract or turn back," said Michael Holland, the court-appointed election monitor. "I don't think it's institutionalized all the way through, but all the candidates support rank-and-file voting, and that *is* institutionalized."

"They've already changed the Teamsters dramatically: They've infused the rank and file with the hope that they can change their union," said James Neff, author of *Mobbed Up*. "It will never go back to the old days because there are democratic election procedures and they get a choice now. They can throw the rascals out."

STANDING ATOP THE MAKESHIFT BANDstand at his Memphis rally, Ron Carey looked out over a field full of UPS drivers, long-distance truckers, car haulers, factory workers and their wives, husbands and kids, most of them clad in red Ron Carey T-shirts and many of them sunburned from a long Indian summer day of carnival games, cakewalks, barbecue eating and beer drinking.

"We have something they don't know how to address!" Carey hollered to the crowd. "They don't know how to figure it out. You know what's out here! I feel it! There's a spirit! There's a heart! It's beating! And they can't understand that. They don't know how to deal with it! They're throwing money at it!"

"Yeah!" the crowd cheered.

"They're throwing the leadership at it!" Carey continued. "They tell the leadership in the local unions: 'You must go out there and bring votes in, because if you don't, you'll never be able to work with Ron Carey.' And they're right! Because lots of 'em won't work with me, that's for sure!"

Carey is not in John Morris's class as a labor orator, but he's getting there. He's been doing it for two years now. During the week he's home, running his local in Queens, and on weekends he's on the road campaigning. In 1990, he hit 46 states in 44 weekends, and he's going at the same pace this year. A second-generation UPS driver, Carey is obsessed with cleaning up the Teamsters. In 1968, he won the presidency of his local union by campaigning against corruption. Now, he's hoping to become president of the international union the same way.

He finished his speech and stepped off the stage to another chant of "Car-ey! Car-ey!" Then an auctioneer started rais-

ing campaign funds by hawking items made by Teamster wives—big, gooey cakes, a Christmas centerpiece, hand-painted sweatshirts and a photo album with a homemade cloth cover bordered with fluffy blue ruffles and topped with a hand-sewn Teamsters logo. There was even an oil painting—an autumn landscape by Aaron Belk, a Memphis loading dock worker who's running for vice president on Carey's slate.

Painter, Teamster and chairman of the board of his Methodist church, Belk is also an amateur student of T-shirt sociology. He stood in the field, explaining how you can tell a Teamster's job by the size of his Ron Carey T-shirt: The big guys with potbellies and extra-large shirts are long-distance drivers; the skinny guys are UPS loading dock workers, who are whittled thin by the company's frenzied work pace. "They can get into the medium shirts," he said, "because they run 'em so fast."

Diana Kilmury agreed, but she put it a bit differently: Truck loaders are thin and muscular, and truck drivers are big and burly. "As you can see," she said with a laugh, "I'm a truck driver."

She's also a vice-presidential candidate and a pretty good raconteur. She stood there, entertaining a small crowd with the story of the incident that made her semi-famous among Teamsters. It happened at the 1981 Teamster convention, when Kilmury, a low-level local official from Vancouver, Canada, dared to stand up and propose that the union form an ethics committee to investigate corruption. "I stood there with a goon on either side of me—and I do mean a goon—while 2,000 of them screamed for my blood."

As Kilmury told her story, a Teamster who'd obviously contributed generously to the campaign via the beer vendor, came over to say goodbye to her and stayed long enough to explain that the message on his cap—"Keep the South Beautiful, Put a Yankee on a Bus"—didn't apply to her because Canadians were not, technically, Yankees. Kilmury laughed and shook his hand.

Meanwhile, the auctioneer was still up on the bandstand, trying to raise money. "All this is going to the Ron Carey campaign, don't forget that," he said. "Halloween is coming, and you see a lot of skeletons around. They represent a Teamster trying to live on his pension."

Then he opened up the bidding on an electric can opener.

It was getting late now, the trees casting long, cold shadows across the sunny field. A woman came over to Kilmury, hugged her and wished her luck. Then she asked shyly, "What will you do if you lose?"

"We'll run again in '96," Kilmury said. She had a big smile on her face. ■

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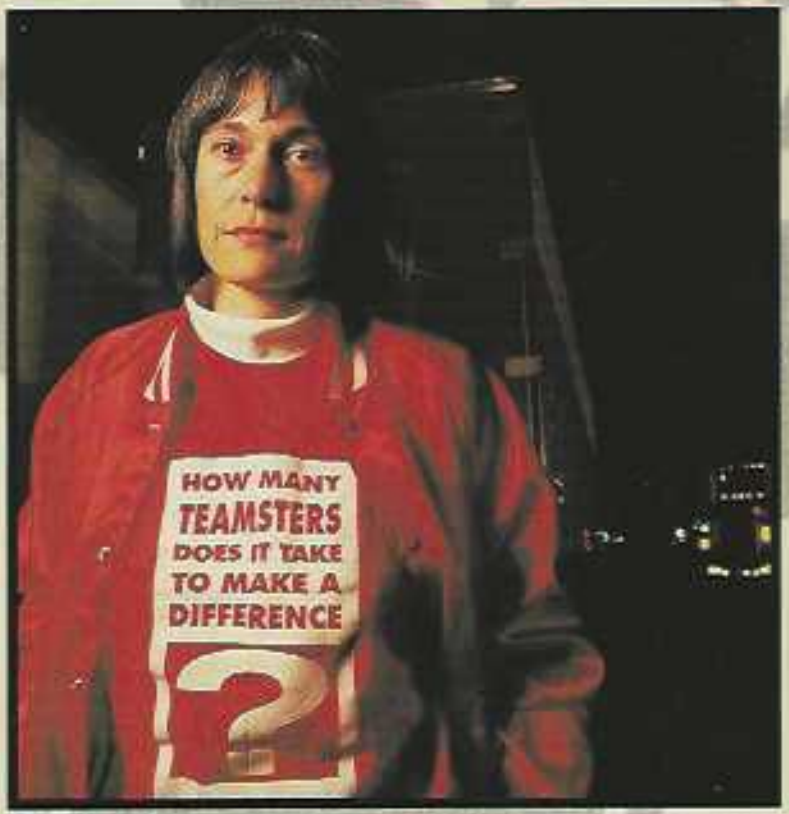
POLITICALLY CORRECT TEAMSTERS



DEMOCRACY COMES TO JIMMY HOFFA'S UNION

By Peter Carlson

Teamsters VP candidate Vicki Saporta

The City of Our Dreams · Great Holiday Gifts

TEAMSTER GLASNOST

The largest, richest and historically most corrupt labor union in America is counting the ballots from its first free election this week–and Jimmy Hoffa is probably spinning in his grave

IN THE COOL SHADE OF A SPREADING OAK TREE, TEAMSTERS' sons tossed Hula-Hoops over a plastic elephant's nose while Teamsters' wives painted butterflies and hearts on the faces of Teamsters' daughters. A few yards away, UPS drivers were barbecueing a huge quantity of pork while a Teamster drove a horse-drawn cart full of giggling kids out across the sun-dappled meadow.

Doug Mims, a truck driver from Atlanta, watched all this and smiled. "Four years ago," he said, "you wouldn't have been able to hold a rally like this without lining the place with armed guards."

Back then, and for decades before that, Teamsters dissidents didn't meet without wondering if they'd be attacked by union goons. Mims began fighting the leadership of his Atlanta local more than a decade ago and, he says, "they brushed me off like a horsefly." But now, a kind of government-enforced democracy has come to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In 1988, the Justice Department hit the union with a racketeering suit charging that it had made a "devil's pact with La Cosa Nostra." Fearful of a trial, the Teamsters' leaders agreed to permit a court-appointed administrator to run the first free election of high officials in the 88-year history of the largest, richest—and historically most corrupt—labor union in America.

Now, Mims is running for vice president of the union on a reform slate headed by dissident leader Ron Carey. Standing in this sunny farmyard outside Memphis, he gazed out over a cheerful crowd of several hundred Teamsters, most of them wearing bright red T-shirts that said "Vote for Teamster Pride and Honesty: Ron Carey for General President."

And then a woman strolled by, walking a little white potbellied pig named Ghost, who wore a coat that read "Vote Carey."

An emcee summoned the crowd to the makeshift bandstand for the afternoon's entertainment. First, a couple of local sheriffs led out three police dogs, who demonstrated their ability to sniff out cardboard boxes that smelled like dope. Then Miss Memphis and two other local beauties—all three clad in red

BY PETER CARLSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES McGOON

OPPOSITE PAGE: RON CAREY, A LONGTIME TEAMSTER DISSIDENT LEADER IN NEW YORK, TAKES HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN TO A UNION RALLY OUTSIDE MEMPHIS FEATURING FAMILY FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT. RIGHT: THE LATE PRESIDENT JIMMY HOFFA IS WELCOMED BY MOBSTER ANTHONY PROVENZANO, AT HIS LEFT, TO A 1959 CONVENTION IN NEW JERSEY.

JIMMY HOFFA PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

mini-dresses, red high heels and long red gloves—sang "Your Love is Lifting Me Higher." A country band played "Memphis, Tennessee" while Teamsters' wives and children did a cakewalk. And then it was time for the campaign speeches.

As the crowd chanted "Car-ey! Car-ey! Car-ey!," Ron Carey bounded onto the bandstand. President of a Long Island Teamsters local for 23 years, Carey has been a symbol of reform in the union since 1978, when he was portrayed in Steven Brill's book *The Teamsters* as an honest, hard-working man in a union dominated by crooks and hacks. A bulldog of an orator, Carey, who earns less than $60,000 a year, immediately ripped into the union leadership's bloated salaries and private jets.

"They haven't served your needs!" he bellowed in his high-pitched New York accent. "They've only served the needs of the top leadership. Look at their salaries! Our top leaders—who are now saying they're reformers—they're the very same people who brought this union to the position it's in today!"

"Amen!" somebody said.

"The members are entitled to a clean union! An honest union! That's what this campaign's about. It's about getting your union back! And don't let anybody kid you, they're holding on to this like you wouldn't believe! They won't let go of the cookie jar!"

The Teamsters stood and cheered. "Car-ey! Car-ey! Car-ey!"

THIS ISN'T THE WAY TEAMSTERS TRADITIONALLY CHOOSE their presidents. Historically, a few members of the Mafia have had more say in the matter than the 1.6 million union members.

Jimmy Hoffa, the legendary Teamster boss, rose to power with the help of mobsters, who provided him the muscle needed to battle company goons in return for a piece of the action. In 1967, when Hoffa went to jail for jury tampering and mail fraud, he handpicked a successor—Frank Fitzsimmons, his former errand boy, a man he once described as "a guy I took off a truck." In 1981, when Fitzsimmons died, Cleveland mobsters Milton "Maishe" Rockman and John "Peanuts" Tronolone traveled to New York to persuade Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno, boss of the Genovese crime family, to support Roy Williams, a mob-controlled Teamster vice president, for the union's top job. Fat Tony put out the word, and the union's executive board dutifully complied. In 1983, when Williams was sentenced to prison for attempting to bribe Democratic Sen. Howard Cannon of Nevada, Maishe and Peanuts again went to see Fat Tony. This time, they picked Jackie Presser, and the executive board again concurred.

We know these things, and many more, because Presser, who died under indictment in 1988, was not only a mob-connected Teamster boss, he was also an FBI informant. And Williams, facing 10 years behind bars, turned stool pigeon, testifying from prison about three decades of mob control of the union.

In 1988, the Justice Department used the Presser and Williams revelations—plus evidence from many other sources—to file a RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) suit against the union's 18-man executive board and two dozen mobsters with such nicknames as "The Snake," "The Nutcracker," "Matty the Horse," "Jackie the Lackey" and, of course, Maishe, Peanuts and Fat Tony. The 112-page racketeering suit detailed 30 years of Teamsters corruption: the theft of union funds, the "sweetheart contracts" with mob businesses, the casinos financed by union loans to the mob, the "grossly excessive

The Justice Department refused to back off. Soon, panic was spreadin

PRESIDENTS PAST: FROM LEFT, TEAMSTERS BOSS DAVE BECK LEAVES U.S. DISTRICT COURT IN WASHINGTON AFTER SURRENDERING ON CHARGES OF INCOME-TAX EVASION IN 1959; AN AILING ROY WILLIAMS, CONVICTED IN 1982 OF CONSPIRING TO BRIBE A U.S. SENATOR, IS WHEELED INTO A CHICAGO COURT, WHERE HE RECEIVED A 10-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE; JACKIE PRESSER, WHO WAS FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR UNION-RELATED CORRUPTION AND WAS SECRETLY TALKING TO THE FBI ABOUT HIS MOBSTER TIES, IS CARRIED ON A GILDED SEDAN CHAIR INTO A 1986 TEAMSTERS CONVENTION EXTRAVAGANZA AT A LAS VEGAS HOTEL.

salaries" given to the Teamsters' top brass and their relatives. For 10 gruesome pages, the suit recounted how union members who fought corruption were beaten, shot, bombed and, in one case, stuffed dead into the trunk of a car.

The union was, the lawsuit concluded, "a captive labor organization, which has been infiltrated, dominated, exploited and controlled by La Cosa Nostra figures." The lawsuit demanded that the Teamsters be placed under federal trusteeship.

The union leaders fought the lawsuit with their enormous powers of wealth and political influence. They hired Hill and Knowlton, the giant PR firm, to rally opposition to the lawsuit, and they denounced the government in full-page ads in 15 major newspapers. Backed by the clout of their political action committee fund—by far the largest in America—they persuaded 246 members of the House of Representatives to sign a letter to Edwin Meese, who was then attorney general, protesting the lawsuit. They also persuaded four presidential candidates—Jesse Jackson, Jack Kemp, Al Haig and Paul Simon—to address a union-sponsored rally against the RICO suit.

But the Justice Department refused to back off. Soon, panic was spreading in the "Marble Palace"—the union's huge, ornate headquarters on Capitol Hill—as various Teamster bosses, looking to protect themselves, started trying to cut deals with the feds.

Finally, at 1 o'clock on the morning of March 14, 1989—the day the trial was scheduled to begin—the union leadership capitulated, signing what is known legally as a "consent decree" but could more aptly be described as an unconditional surrender. Under the decree, three court-appointed officials, led by former federal judge Frederick B. Lacey, were given unprecedented powers over the union: They could oust corrupt Teamster officers, audit union books, veto improper expenditures and oversee two direct secret ballot elections of top union officers, one in 1991 and another in 1996.

Not only that, but the union had to pay for it all.

Since then, the court-appointed overseers have charged 135 Teamster officials—including five vice presidents—with offenses ranging from embezzlement to threatening union members to associating with mobsters. The union fought mightily to defend itself, spending more than $12 million of its members' money to appeal various cases all the way to the Supreme Court. But it lost and lost and lost. By the fall of 1991, 20 officials had been permanently barred from the union, 32 had resigned, and 24 had been suspended. Many others—including 11 vice presidents and William McCarthy, who had succeeded Presser as president—had announced their intentions to retire at the end of this year.

The party was over. The Teamsters' old, autocratic system had crumbled as quickly and unexpectedly as the Soviet empire. In its place arose a raucous, contentious, colorful and vividly American variety of glasnost.

WHEN OUTGOING PRESIDENT BILLY McCARTHY STEPPED TO the podium at the Teamsters convention in Orlando last June, the hall erupted in a cacophony of boos and catcalls.

"I don't know why the hell you all boo," McCarthy grumbled when the din finally receded. "I'm getting out anyway."

It was nothing personal. The delegates also booed the rest of

the 'Marble Palace,' the union's huge, ornate headquarters on Capitol Hill.

'For the first time in the history of this union,' Saporta said, holding o

the union leaders as well as the court-appointed administrators. They even booted down a videotaped greeting from President Bush, who had been endorsed, like Reagan and Nixon before him, by the Teamsters' resolutely Republican top brass.

It was a feisty crowd, a far cry from previous Teamsters conventions, which were about as democratic and spontaneous as the famous Nazi rally at Nuremberg. At the 1986 convention, for example, Jackie Presser, who had been indicted for embezzling union funds a week earlier, was carried in a gilded sedan chair into a $648,000 party in his honor by four muscle-bound men dressed as Roman centurions.

But there was one big difference this year: The 1,935 delegates were not handpicked local leaders; they were members chosen by secret ballots in federally monitored elections. Gleefully, they passed proposals that had been booted out of previous conventions. They voted to cap the salaries of the top leaders—some of whom make more than $500,000 a year—at a slightly more proletarian $225,000. They voted to sell off the "Teamster Air Force"—the fleet of four jets used as airborne limousines by the union leadership. Then they took up the issue of strike benefits, which had been set at a measly $45 a week by Teamster bosses who preferred collecting dues to paying benefits. First, one delegate proposed raising the benefits to $100. Another arose to suggest $150, and a third saw that bet and raised it to $200. "Tell the members we're going to pay you $200 to win the goddam strike!" bellowed John Morris, the Philadelphia Teamsters boss. Amid raucous cheering, the delegates did just that.

At previous conventions, the union's executive board, acting like the old Politburo, would present its candidates for president, secretary-treasurer and the 17 vice presidents, and then the delegates would dutifully anoint them. But this year, there were six announced candidates for president, and three of them received enough delegate votes to appear on the members' ballots this fall. The biggest vote-getter was R.V. Durham, 60, currently a vice president and McCarthy's personal choice for the office. Finishing second was Walter Shea, 63, who was also a vice president until McCarthy fired him after Shea announced that he would run against Durham. The third was Carey, 55, the "outsider" candidate backed by the dissident group Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

In mid-November, the court-appointed election officials mailed out ballots to nearly 1.6 million Teamsters—more eligible voters than in each of 23 states. This Tuesday, December 10, the ballots are due back in Washington and the vote count will begin.

Meanwhile, the candidates have hit the road, wooing Teamsters scattered in more than 600 locals from Guam to Newfoundland, from the Yukon to Puerto Rico. It's a full-blown, media-age political campaign, complete with handshaking, promise-making, wonderfully nasty personal invective and attack ads that would make even Roger Ailes blush.

"YOU CAN'T DO THAT," THE GUARD SAID.

"Yes, I can," Vicki Saporta replied, and she continued handing her campaign leaflets to truck drivers in the parking lot of a UPS depot outside Cleveland.

"Hi, Vicki Saporta," she told them as they hustled into work. "I'm running for vice president of the international union. Appreciate your support."

The guard watched this, then walked inside and picked up a

THE TEAMSTERS CAMPAIGN: RIGHT, PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL R.V. DURHAM, FOURTH FROM LEFT, THE SILVER-HAIRED UNION VICE PRESIDENT FROM NORTH CAROLINA, JOINS A GATHERING OF TEAMSTER SHOP STEWARDS AND OFFICIALS AT A NEW YORK HOTEL; UPPER MIDDLE, VICKI SAPORTA BRINGS HER CAMPAIGN TO BECOME THE TEAMSTERS' FIRST FEMALE VICE PRESIDENT TO A PHILADELPHIA UNION LOCAL; LOWER MIDDLE, WALTER SHEA, A FORMER UNION VICE PRESIDENT, CAMPAIGNS FOR THE PRESIDENCY AT A PHILADELPHIA UNION HALL WHERE MEMBERS OF TEAMSTERS LOCAL 107, FAR RIGHT, BLOW WHISTLES IN SUPPORT OF HIS CANDIDACY.

a leaflet, 'we have an opportunity to elect a woman to a top position.'

phone. A few minutes later, a guy in a suit emerged and told Saporta she'd have to leave.

"I do this at UPS barns all over the country," she said. Then she walked away to hand out another leaflet. "Hi, Vicki Saporta . . ."

The guy in the suit watched for a while, then walked inside.

"Hey, I do this for a living," Saporta said with a shrug. Small and slender, she doesn't look like a Teamster organizer, but she's been one since 1974, when she graduated from the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Now the union's director of organizing, she's among the top women in the labor movement. During her 17 years of recruiting nurses, flight attendants and factory workers to join the Teamsters, she's had countless confrontations with guards and guys in suits, and they don't scare her. "You seize the ground and they call the cops," she said. "By the time the cops arrive, you've talked to 200 more people."

The guy in the suit returned with several other guys in suits. They politely suggested that Saporta leaflet off company property. She politely declined and kept leafleting.

Half an hour later, a cop drove up. "One, you leave the property," he said brusquely. "Or, two, you get arrested."

"But . . ."

The cop didn't want to hear any buts. "You're gonna leave *now!*"

So she did. Slowly. Leafleting all the way.

"Sometimes it's good to get thrown out—it makes you the underdog," she said as she stood on the sidewalk, waving to the truck drivers as they drove past.

A few minutes later, she was riding to her next campaign stop. "You know, there's a certain personality type that becomes a cop," she said. Then she stopped abruptly. "Don't write that—we represent policemen."

It's true. Today, the Teamsters represent police officers, prison guards, teachers, nurses, flight attendants, zookeepers, high school principals, even the man inside the Mickey Mouse suit at Disney World. These days, barely 10 percent of the members are truck drivers, and the union's demographics have changed: Nearly a third of the members—more than 400,000—are women. Saporta, who is running on Walter Shea's slate, is one of two female vice-presidential candidates hoping to become the first women ever to sit on the Teamsters' executive board. The other is Diana Kilmury, a Vancouver truck driver running on the Carey slate.

"For the first time in the history of this union," Saporta said, holding out one of her leaflets, "we have an opportunity to elect a woman to a top position."

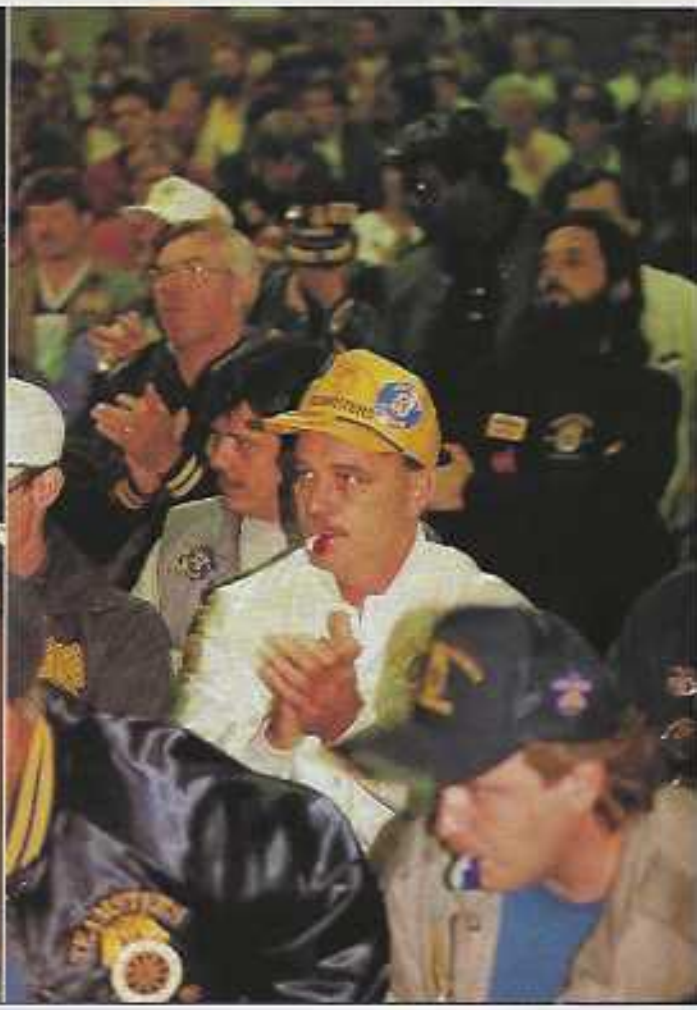
She was standing in the warehouse of a book and magazine distributor in Cleveland, talking to a woman who was carrying a huge bundle of magazines. The woman charged past her, trying to catch up to a spot on a fast-moving conveyor belt. She finally reached the spot, piled the magazines on it, then grabbed another bundle and did it again. "You can talk," she said to Saporta as she kept working. "I'm listening."

"It's the first time we have an opportunity to elect a woman," Saporta repeated. "I'd appreciate your support."

"I will, I will," the woman said, still hustling down the line. "What's your name again?"

It was a grim, noisy place piled with boxes full of paperback

continued on page 32



TEAMSTERS

continued from page 19

books and magazines—Reader's Digest, People, Family Circle, Hustler. And all around the room, workers—most of them women, many of them single mothers—were making a living piling bundles on a conveyor belt that kept them constantly running. To these people, the Teamsters union is not a symbol of corruption, it's the organization whose bargaining clout keeps them above the poverty line. "We're up to $10 an hour," said one. "If the union wasn't here, we'd be getting five."

Escorted by a business agent from the local union, Saporta went downstairs to a smoky little lunchroom decorated with posters advertising the paperbacks the company distributes. One poster contained a smiling photo of Jackie Presser, the late Teamster boss. It was an ad for James Neff's book *Mobbed Up: Jackie Presser's High-Wire Life in the Teamsters, the Mafia and the FBI.* Across the room, four Teamster women were taking their morning break, sipping sodas and smoking cigarettes.

Saporta introduced herself and started campaigning. "This is the first chance we have to elect our top leaders—and the first chance to elect a woman. There are 400,000 women in this union, and it's long overdue that we had some representation."

The women nodded in agreement.

"It's 1991," Saporta continued. "It's time we put our issues on the front burner of this union—child care, pay equity, family and medical leave . . ."

When she finished her speech, Saporta asked if there were any questions.

"Where are the other candidates?" one woman asked. "Don't the others plan on winning?"

"I'm a member of Local 507, and there are no women business agents," another woman said. "I know back in the old days, you needed muscle. But we need brains now. And women have brains."

Up on the wall, Jackie Presser was still smiling. But his union was changing right before his eyes.

VICKI SAPORTA DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK about it—especially not to Teamster voters or newspaper reporters—but Walter Shea, the man at the top of her ticket, is not exactly a fresh new face of reform for the Teamsters.

Shea served as chief aide to every Teamster president since Hoffa. That résumé is both his qualification and his curse. After all, two of those presidents, Hoffa and Williams, went to prison, and a third, Presser, died while under indictment. Where was Shea all that time?

"I was doing all the work they should have been doing," he said, sounding a little peeved at the question. He was sitting in the back room of a Philadelphia Teamsters hall, the scene of a raucous rally in support of his candidacy. "I wasn't involved with their troubles—Presser's troubles, Roy's troubles, Hoffa's troubles. I worked. I did the things they should have been doing. I had the two phones in my ear every day, talking to people, meeting with people, settling trade union business. I talked to those guys who went to jail. I said, 'Hey, what happened, Jimmy? What's all this stuff about jury tampering? What's all this stuff about mail fraud?' 'Roy, what's all this shit with bribery?' He said, 'It's not true, I'm gonna be exonerated.' Same thing with Presser. All right, fine. So I went back to work . . ."

When Shea talks about his old bosses, you wonder why he worked for them. "Fitzsimmons was lazy and played golf," he said. "Roy Williams hated and was ill-equipped for the job . . . Presser was not the guy for the job. He was a bad and evil person . . ."

His conclusion: "We've had some problems topside, but I'm not one of those people. I've got no excess baggage. I don't have any problems with me criminally or I wouldn't be here, believe me."

He does, however, have some problems with some of his running mates. One of his candidates for vice president—Joseph "Joe T" Trerotola, the 82-year-old boss of the New York City Teamsters—withdrew from the race (and from the union) rather than contest the allegation of "deliberately failing to investigate" mobsters in his union. Meanwhile, last August, Shea's candidate for secretary-treasurer, Danny Ligurotis, the $442,000-a-year Chicago Teamster boss, shot and killed his 36-year-old son, who was on the union payroll for $110,000, in the basement of the Teamster City building. Ligurotis, who told police that he was acting in self-defense, has not been charged with any crime, and he remains the No. 2 man on the Shea ticket.

To Shea, the Teamsters' gangster image is wildly exaggerated. "We've been tinted and stained with the same thing we've been tinted and stained with for 30 years—that we're a corrupt organization," he said. "Well, we have people who are corrupt in this union, as we have people corrupt in every walk of life. So what? What the hell did they do to Boesky's firm? Did they put them under a civil RICO suit? We get it. We're the ones who get the stigma."

Plenty of Teamsters would agree with Shea on that, and nearly 500 of them—shop stewards from Philadelphia—were packed into a smoke-filled auditorium a few yards away. Most of them wore Teamsters windbreakers, and many also wore Teamsters caps and shirts and buttons and belt buckles. They were cheering, stomping their feet and blowing little whistles. The place sounded like a World Series game after a home team home run.

"We need a hard-nose, hard-hittin' union," John Morris bellowed.

"Yeah!" the crowd yelled back.

"We need a union that'll stand tall and support $200 strike benefits!"

"Give 'em hell, John!"

A burly, bald-headed man whose right hand was mangled in a childhood accident outside a coal mine, Morris, 65, the much-loved Pennsylvania Teamster leader, is a union orator in the pound-the-podium-and-bellow style of such legendary labor leaders as Big Bill Haywood and John L. Lewis. Running for vice president on the Shea slate—which is dominated by Northern big-city Teamster bosses—he ripped into Shea's opponent, R.V. Durham, who comes out of a rural local in North Carolina.

"The big cities are different than the Southern right-to-work states," he yelled. "We give 'em their strength! It's us that puts the power into 'em! It's us that puts the fear of God into the employers!"

"Awright, John!" The crowd screamed and blew their whistles.

"You can't have a ridge runner or a stump jumper or a pissant or a peckerwood runnin' this union!"

"John-ny! John-ny! John-ny!"

Morris introduced the man he called "your next president," and Walter Shea found himself in the unenviable position of trying to follow the Mount Vesuvius of labor oratory. Shea opted to go for nostalgia, evoking the glories of the golden age of Teamster history, back in the days before the indictments and the RICO suit, before the concessionary contracts of the '80s, before trucking deregulation decimated the union, back when the Teamsters had 2.2 million members and organized labor represented more than 30 percent of the country's work force, instead of the current 15 percent.

"We have to get ourselves in a position where we are the force we once were with the employers," Shea said. "And you can't do that with broken-down leaders . . ."

AMONG THE MORE UNEXPECTED AND entertaining byproducts of the RICO suit and the Teamster election is the transformation of the union's monthly magazine from a predictably dull house organ into one of America's most bizarre and schizophrenic publications.

Before the RICO suit, the International Teamster, like most labor magazines, was filled with self-congratulatory stories illustrated by photos of union bigwigs shaking hands with each other or giving

plaques to each other or delivering speeches to each other. Today, the first half of the magazine remains much the same—President McCarthy's basset-like countenance appears about half a dozen times in each issue—but the second half is, well, different. There, Lacey, the court-appointed administrator, reports on his activities in drily legal but nonetheless fascinating prose:

". . . The Investigations Officer has charged Michael L. Boano, the Vice President of Local Union 377 in Youngstown, Ohio, with . . . violating Article XIX, section 6(b)(6); to wit, On September 12, 1990, he displayed a handgun and pointed it at a fellow member at a meeting of his local . . ."

". . .[William] Lickert, Sr., President of Local 205, was charged with: making 'bomb threats' to an old age home in an effort to settle a labor dispute; embezzling from his Local; causing improper loans to himself . . ."

". . . Mr. [Robert J.] Feeney was charged with taking part in a scheme, while president of Local 11, to extort money from lunch truck caterers in New Jersey through violence, threats of violence and claims of police corruption . . ."

"Mr. [Charles 'Chuckie'] O'Brien is charged as follows . . . To wit, on or about August 15, 1987, you knowingly incurred unauthorized charges on the American Express card account of Teamsters Local 769 in the amount of approximately $12,187 to charter a private Lear jet . . ."

Lacey even used the pages of the magazine to reveal how McCarthy had hired Windsor Graphics, a company owned by his son-in-law, to print the magazine at a cost of $300,000 a month. "I concluded that in actuality, Windsor really was not the lowest bidder," Lacey wrote. "Given all this, I decided to veto future expenditures to Windsor . . ."

Not surprisingly, Lacey's reports drove the Teamster leaders up the wall, and they fought mightily against them. They asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the section of the consent decree that authorized Lacey's articles, but the court declined. They refused to print the names of union officials charged by the court-appointed investigator, but a federal judge overruled them. They announced that they would turn the monthly magazine into a quarterly, but the judge vetoed that too. Finally, they were reduced to leaving Lacey's reports off the magazine's table of contents, presumably in the hopes that the members wouldn't find them.

When the Teamsters' presidential race began, the magazine was further enlivened by page after page of campaign ads, some of them wonderfully vicious. An ad for Carey portrayed Durham arm in arm with a convict in prison garb and a mobster holding an Uzi. An ad for Durham portrayed Carey with the word "Scab" scrawled across his face. An ad for Shea portrayed Durham with the word "Management" stamped across his face. An ad for Durham claimed Shea hadn't paid his union dues, and a Shea ad responded, "Durham Lied!" And Jack Cox, running for vice president on the Shea slate, used his ad to attack the current president: "Billy McCarthy is a liar, a traitor and a heartless son of a bitch . . ."

But the ad that really amused rank-and-file Teamsters—particularly those who'd been reading Lacey's reports—didn't attack anybody. At least not anybody in particular. An ad for Carey, it was a photograph of three pigs with their snouts buried deep in a trough full of greenbacks. The copy read: "They're Feasting On Your Dues!"

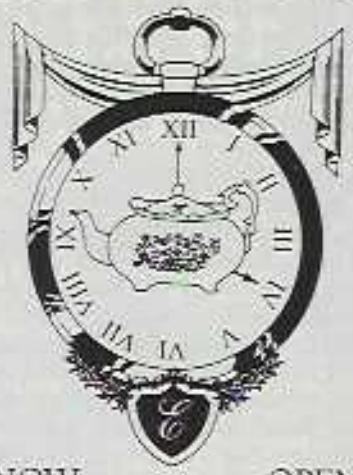
R.V. DURHAM HATES THAT AD. HE absolutely detests it. Although it didn't mention him, he takes it as a personal attack and denounces it at every campaign stop. "Unfortunately, we're involved in a very negative campaign, a despicable campaign in which the opposition has portrayed me and my family as hogs at the trough . . ."

Attacking that ad is about as passionate as Durham gets out on the stump. He is not a firebrand or a spellbinding orator. A gray-haired grandfather in bifocals and a blue blazer, he speaks in a soft, low-key monotone that leaves no room for applause. He is—as his old colleague and new opponent Walter Shea says—"a very bland person."

His presidential campaign is a bit bland too, at least when compared with his rivals'. While Carey's Nashville barbecue was a folksy carnival and Shea's Philadelphia speech a boisterous pep rally, Durham's recent meeting with shop stewards in Manhattan was sedate, almost bureaucratic. It was held in a ballroom in the Roosevelt Hotel, a room with ornate columns and crystal chandeliers. A couple hundred shop stewards and local Teamster officials lined up for steam table roast beef and then sat down for some lukewarm oratory.

"We have to elect people that not only have the ability to lead this union but who have the desire to work with and through the leadership," Durham said. Then, alluding to Carey, he continued, "Unfortunately, one of the opponents is attempting to work around the leadership and go straight to the members, and I wonder, if he's successful, how he would run this union not having the rapport with the leadership . . ."

Durham has carefully maintained his



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own "rapport with the leadership." A former long-distance truck driver, he was elected president of his North Carolina local—and reelected 10 times—and then he slowly, cautiously, worked his way up through the byzantine bureaucracy of the international union, first as a trustee, then a vice president. Last year, when McCarthy decided not to run for president, he endorsed Durham for the post.

That endorsement set off a vicious internecine battle in the Marble Palace. Shea announced his candidacy, McCarthy promptly fired him, and the executive board divided into two rival camps, amid much name-calling. Durham promptly billed himself as a reformer, but he also studded his slate with old guard Teamster plutocrats, including Arnie Weinmeister, the West Coast boss, who pocketed more than $600,000 a year in union salaries, and Weldon Mathis, the secretary-treasurer, who made $275,000 and had three sons on the union payroll, one of them at $137,000. After Carey, who was already out campaigning, ripped into those salaries, Weinmeister and Mathis decided to withdraw from the race and retire from the union.

But Durham's slate, like Shea's, still has some problems: Three of his vice-presidential running mates have been charged with acts of corruption by the court-appointed investigator, and a fourth, William Hogan Jr., is one-quarter of a family that pulls in more than $580,000 in Teamster salaries.

Meanwhile, Durham, like Shea, denies that the union is corrupt. "It's a good union," he told the crowd in New York. "I certainly disagree with the opposition that it is corrupt and needs to be dismantled. We don't need to dismantle this union. We simply need to go ahead and to build on the unity and the strength that we currently have. We have good, strong leadership . . ."

"THE AVERAGE GUY HAS NO IDEA WHO'S running," said Dale Fisher, "and most of them don't care."

Fisher had just shaken Vicki Saporta's hand as she came campaigning through the Stanley Air Tools plant in Cleveland. At 41, he's the shop steward in the plant, where he's worked for 14 years. He's also a part-time city councilman in the Cleveland suburb of Lyndhurst. So he knows a few things about Teamsters and about politics. The problem, he says, is that Teamsters aren't used to democracy.

"I'd compare it to the communist countries: Suddenly they have democracy, and they're not sure what to do with it," he said. "We always figured that the union guys picked their own, just like management picked their own—without any say from us. It never crossed our minds."

For years, guys in the plant would come by his workbench, grinning cynically and pointing to yet another newspaper headline about yet another Teamster boss. "Hey, another one got indicted," they'd say, and then they'd go back to work and forget about it. "They figured the top people were corrupt," Fisher said, "but they were getting their pay and their pensions and the health and welfare benefits. That's what they were concerned with. A lot of good comes out of the union. And a lot of people say any union is better than no union because management will always take advantage of the workers."

The problem in the Teamster presidential election, he says, is the same problem you find in the American presidential elections: apathy. "How do you awaken their sleeping interest?" he asked. "How do you get them interested?"

In all three Teamster campaign headquarters, people are asking similar questions. Their polls tell them the same thing that Fisher's instincts tell him: Although each candidate has thousands of ardent supporters, most Teamsters don't know who's running and don't much care. Nobody expects even half of the 1.6 million members to vote, and most are predicting that only a quarter or a third will mail their ballots back to the federal election office.

"Apathy is what concerns us more than anything," said Durham. "If you only get 20 to 30 percent of the people voting in a three-way race, anything can happen."

That's about the only prediction that anyone involved in the campaign will make: *Anything can happen.* There has never been a Teamster presidential election before, and consequently there is no yardstick to use in predicting this one. All three candidates are trying to identify their supporters and get them to vote. For the "insider" candidates—Durham and Shea—the strategy has been to woo local union officials and hope they can pull out their members' votes. Carey, the outsider running against the entrenched officials, is relying on his own relentless grass-roots campaigning and the small but influential dissident group Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

Both strategies raise unanswered questions: Are local bosses popular enough to influence the votes of their members? Will alienated and angry Teamsters vote for Carey, or will they simply ignore the election? Will the split among the insiders throw the election to Carey? Nobody knows.

But no matter who wins the election, the Teamsters have already been changed forever, observers of the union agree. After the consent decree, the expulsion of scores of corrupt officials and the election campaign, the Teamsters will never again be the brutal, autocratic and mob-controlled union it was only four years ago.

"It's going to be very, very difficult to turn back the clock," said Lacey. "I don't think you're ever going to see the old ways return."

"Once there's an expansion of these sort of rights, it's very hard to retract or turn back," said Michael Holland, the court-appointed election monitor. "I don't think it's institutionalized all the way through, but all the candidates support rank-and-file voting, and that *is* institutionalized."

"They've already changed the Teamsters dramatically: They've infused the rank and file with the hope that they can change their union," said James Neff, author of *Mobbed Up*. "It will never go back to the old days because there are democratic election procedures and they get a choice now. They can throw the rascals out."

STANDING ATOP THE MAKESHIFT BANDstand at his Memphis rally, Ron Carey looked out over a field full of UPS drivers, long-distance truckers, car haulers, factory workers and their wives, husbands and kids, most of them clad in red Ron Carey T-shirts and many of them sunburned from a long Indian summer day of carnival games, cakewalks, barbecue eating and beer drinking.

"We have something they don't know how to address!" Carey hollered to the crowd. "They don't know how to figure it out. You know what's out here! I feel it! There's a spirit! There's a heart! It's beating! And they can't understand that. They don't know how to deal with it! They're throwing money at it!"

"Yeah!" the crowd cheered.

"They're throwing the leadership at it!" Carey continued. "They tell the leadership in the local unions: 'You must go out there and bring votes in, because if you don't, you'll never be able to work with Ron Carey.' And they're right! Because lots of 'em won't work with me, that's for sure!"

Carey is not in John Morris's class as a labor orator, but he's getting there. He's been doing it for two years now. During the week he's home, running his local in Queens, and on weekends he's on the road campaigning. In 1990, he hit 46 states in 44 weekends, and he's going at the same pace this year. A second-generation UPS driver, Carey is obsessed with cleaning up the Teamsters. In 1968, he won the presidency of his local union by campaigning against corruption. Now, he's hoping to become president of the international union the same way.

He finished his speech and stepped off the stage to another chant of "Car-ey! Car-ey!" Then an auctioneer started rais-

ing campaign funds by hawking items made by Teamster wives—big, gooey cakes, a Christmas centerpiece, hand-painted sweatshirts and a photo album with a homemade cloth cover bordered with fluffy blue ruffles and topped with a hand-sewn Teamsters logo. There was even an oil painting—an autumn landscape by Aaron Belk, a Memphis loading dock worker who's running for vice president on Carey's slate.

Painter, Teamster and chairman of the board of his Methodist church, Belk is also an amateur student of T-shirt sociology. He stood in the field, explaining how you can tell a Teamster's job by the size of his Ron Carey T-shirt: The big guys with potbellies and extra-large shirts are long-distance drivers; the skinny guys are UPS loading dock workers, who are whittled thin by the company's frenzied work pace. "They can get into the medium shirts," he said, "because they run 'em so fast."

Diana Kilmury agreed, but she put it a bit differently: Truck loaders are thin and muscular, and truck drivers are big and burly. "As you can see," she said with a laugh, "I'm a truck driver."

She's also a vice-presidential candidate and a pretty good raconteur. She stood there, entertaining a small crowd with the story of the incident that made her semi-famous among Teamsters. It happened at the 1981 Teamster convention, when Kilmury, a low-level local official from Vancouver, Canada, dared to stand up and propose that the union form an ethics committee to investigate corruption. "I stood there with a goon on either side of me—and I do mean a goon—while 2,000 of them screamed for my blood."

As Kilmury told her story, a Teamster who'd obviously contributed generously to the campaign via the beer vendor, came over to say goodbye to her and stayed long enough to explain that the message on his cap—"Keep the South Beautiful, Put a Yankee on a Bus"—didn't apply to her because Canadians were not, technically, Yankees. Kilmury laughed and shook his hand.

Meanwhile, the auctioneer was still up on the bandstand, trying to raise money. "All this is going to the Ron Carey campaign, don't forget that," he said. "Halloween is coming, and you see a lot of skeletons around. They represent a Teamster trying to live on his pension."

Then he opened up the bidding on an electric can opener.

It was getting late now, the trees casting long, cold shadows across the sunny field. A woman came over to Kilmury, hugged her and wished her luck. Then she asked shyly, "What will you do if you lose?"

"We'll run again in '96," Kilmury said. She had a big smile on her face. ■

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