



APRIL 2009

Women's News

The Teamster Women's Newsletter

James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary-Treasurer • Cheryl Johnson, Human Rights Director

Human Rights Director Cheryl Johnson

Farewell, Fellow Teamsters

As a card-carrying Teamster member for 40 years, I can say with great pride that I have dedicated much of my life's work to standing up for what is right in the workplace. I've had many wonderful experiences in my various positions within the Teamsters, and that includes working with all of you. It has been truly gratifying to get to know and work with so many strong Teamster women who are making life better for all workers, and I am proud of the new generation of Teamsters, whom you will read about in this issue.



Therefore, it is bitter-sweet to announce that I will soon be retiring. While I am looking forward to moving into the next phase of my life, I will miss the daily work of our union. However, I know that I will keep in touch with the many friends I've made and I will always champion this great cause we work for.

I was proud to be a part of the groundbreaking Teamster past, and I am honored to be working for our union in the present. As you will read in this issue, we are at a turning point for the labor movement in our nation. We have the opportunity now to pass the Employee Free Choice Act and make forming a union easier for all Americans, as it should be.

I believe there are great things to come for our union. I look forward to the future, which includes the new generation to whom the torch is now being passed. Sue Mauren, President of Joint Council 32 and an experienced and dedicated Teamster, will be taking on the duties of the Women's Conference and I would like to be the first to welcome her. And I want to thank you personally for making my time with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters so memorable. It is something I will never forget and will always cherish.



Pressing for Justice



Teamster Reporters Call for Labor Law Reform

No matter how difficult life got, these Teamster women never backed down. They stood strong in the face of intimidation, legal action and illegal firings. For their resilience and determination, Dawn Hobbs and Melinda Burns recently received a standing ovation at the 2009 Teamsters Organizers Conference in Washington, D.C.

With their Teamster brothers and sisters standing beside them in their major battle to achieve justice in the workplace, Hobbs and Burns are hoping to prevent other workers from having to go through what they did.

"We refuse to back down—this fight is too important to worker's rights. No other hardworking American should have to go through the turmoil we've suffered," Hobbs said.

Standing Their Ground

Hobbs and Burns are both veteran reporters with the Santa Barbara News-Press in California. In 2006, five top editors at the newspaper resigned because they said the owner and co-publisher of the newspaper, Wendy McCaw, was interfering in news coverage. The newsroom employees knew they needed representation to protect the integrity of their profession, so they called the Teamsters.

Within eight days, 83 percent of the newsroom had signed cards to join the Graphic Communications Conference (GCC) of the Teamsters, but McCaw would not accept the cards; therefore, the workers went to an election, which they won by an overwhelming 85 percent. After the vote, McCaw

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Sue Mauren Named New Chair of Women's Conference



Sue Mauren has been named Chair of the Teamsters Women's Conference by General President Jim Hoffa.

Mauren takes on the duties upon the retirement of Cheryl Johnson, who has served the Women's Conference for 10 years.

Mauren first became a member of Local 320 in 1978 when she became employed at the University of Minnesota. She was soon elected union steward, a position she held during her 12 years of working at the

university. She was elected to serve on the first university negotiating committee in 1979, and every negotiating committee thereafter.

In 1990, Mauren was asked by the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 320 to take a leave of absence from her position at the university to

work on an organizing project in the local. She was soon offered a permanent position as an organizer. Mauren worked on organizing campaigns throughout Minnesota, as well as the Central Region. In 1991, she became a business agent for Local 320.

In 1995, Local 320 was placed in trusteeship, and Mauren was appointed assistant trustee of the local. When the trusteeship ended in 1996, she was elected to the principal officer position of Secretary-Treasurer, a position she has held ever since.

Mauren was appointed to fill a vacancy on Joint Council 32 in 1997, and currently serves as the Joint Council's President. She is the first woman ever to hold an office in Joint Council 32.

In 2001, Mauren was appointed by General President Jim Hoffa to the position of Central Region Public Services Director. She is also co-chair of the Teamsters Law Enforcement League.

Mauren is a member of the State of Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services Arbitration Advisory Committee and the State of Minnesota Workers Compensation Rehab Review Panel.

Strong Women, Strong Futures

Maria Williams Leads the Next Generation of Teamster Women

Maria Williams, and women like her, are the future of the Teamsters Union.

At 25, the labor activist is intelligent and strong, as well as very busy. A contract administrator for Local 117 in Seattle, she is also an education coordinator and was most recently appointed to the Teamsters Human Rights Commission.

Williams is one of five members on the newly formed "Teamsters for Tomorrow" committee, whose purpose is to mobilize and encourage active involvement of Teamster youth in their union.

Trailblazing Teamster

Williams has seen firsthand the benefits of being in a union. During high school and college, she worked a number of nonunion jobs where she was underpaid and not well respected. As Williams can attest, however, unionism is more than just working together for collective bargaining. The labor movement—and the Teamsters—are in her blood.

"I've been a Teamster my entire life. I'm a third-generation member," Williams said.

What makes Williams' membership with the Teamsters different from her father or her grandfather is the fact that she is the first woman in her family to hold a union card. And the



power of unionized women, Williams said, is not something to be taken lightly.

"The role women have played in this organization is profound," Williams said. "I've really felt that the sisterhood created among the Teamsters has been a priority of this organization. The Teamsters have made the woman's perspective central to their core values."

Carrying on the Tradition

Williams has every intention of carrying on the tradition of the strong, dependable Teamster woman. Like the women who came before her, Williams is a strong advocate of women's rights and understands that while gains have been made, women haven't yet broken the glass ceiling.

"Women have to fight just as hard to get into key power positions now as they had to decades ago," she said. "We're still facing a lot of the prejudices that women before us faced, but we've also gained some power. Unity among women is what gives us our strength and I see women using that empowering strength to continue fighting for our rights."

Though she is young, Williams isn't afraid to stand up for herself or others. She encourages other women to reach for the stars and continue reaching throughout their entire lives.

"Women can do anything they set their minds to," Williams said. "Don't settle. Don't settle for anything."

Go to www.facebook.com and search for the keywords "Teamsters for Tomorrow" to join the group.

In Their Own Words

Here's what Teamsters from the 2008 Teamsters Women's Conference had to say about being Teamster women! We're looking forward to seeing everyone again at the 2009 Teamsters Women's Conference, to be held September 8–13 in Las Vegas!



"Everywhere I go, everything I talk about has to do with the union. Whether it's with my family, my friends or out socializing, I'm always letting people know how the union stands behind workers every day and how they support people's rights as hardworking citizens. And if their company's not union, I let them know the benefits of being in a union. We stand behind you."

—Angela Williams, Local 284, Columbus, Ohio

"It's amazing when we all get together (at the Women's Conference) because you don't see that often. Teamster women are strong, proud, exciting and powerful!"

—Sheilah Barr, Local 767, Forest Hill, Texas



"My goals are to educate the younger women coming up and help do this by being active. Education is an important thing because education gives you power. Once you understand what the union does for you and what you can contribute to the union, a lot of it is participation, having a voice and letting that voice be heard."

—Billye Thomas, Local 122, Boston



"I think it's important for Teamster women to read and know your contract, become active with your local, know your shop steward and business agent and offer to help in any way your local might need you. It's instrumental in growing our strength."

—Traci Place, Local 340, South Portland, Maine



Pressing for Justice

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began firing most of the union activists, including Hobbs, Burns and six others. Despite a court order for their reinstatement in 2007, Hobbs and Burns are still not back in the newsroom; their publisher has appealed the judge's ruling. In total, more than 70 News-Press journalists have quit or been fired since July 2006 and more than 10,000 readers have cancelled their subscriptions in what's been referred to locally as the "News-Press mess."

"If the Employee Free Choice Act had been in place, we could have begun negotiations in a couple of months," said Burns, who was an award-winning senior writer and had been at the paper for 21 years. "Instead, our publisher cranked up the anti-union campaign. Why should we be the ones to suffer when it's our boss who's breaking the law?"

On a Mission

Life has been hard for these women since their illegal firings. Burns moved out of her house and is renting it out to make ends meet. Hobbs cancelled her private health insurance when her mortgage ballooned last year. She and her son are surviving, in part, through the fundraising efforts of the GCC and the generous donations of individuals from Teamster locals nationwide. The GCC and Teamster attorneys are continuing the legal fight to hold McCaw and her representatives accountable.

Despite rising stacks of bills and the stress that accompanies it, these journalists are on a mission. For these women, whose livelihoods as reporters were based on uncovering the truth, there is no stopping until justice is served.

"We absolutely need the Employee Free Choice Act passed now so no worker has to endure what we have for engaging in our federally protected right to join a union," Hobbs said. "There is absolutely no way in hell we are going to back down."

A Message from General President James P. Hoffa



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

There are many ways for Teamsters to get involved and show support for the Employee Free Choice Act, the most important legislation affecting America's middle class in decades. Our communities, friends, neighbors and members of Congress need to hear from real people why unions are important, and the sooner the better. This bill has broad support, but billions of dollars are being thrown at a misinformation campaign run by anti-worker groups and people are starting to believe the lies about this legislation.

It's important to let your elected officials in D.C. know that you support the this bill. When calling or writing, it's helpful to include your story about how you have benefited from a union or about management intimidation during your union election. The web site for the Teamsters Union, at www.teamster.org, has a wealth of material on writing, e-mailing or talking to your elected representatives. If you want to get directly in touch with your congressional representative's office, you can call the Capitol switchboard at 800-828-0498 or e-mail them through www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml.

Teamsters can also help correct myths while at the same time helping our communities understand why the Employee Free Choice Act is necessary to fix a broken system. Newspapers welcome letters from readers and you can usually find out how to send a letter to the editor by looking on the newspaper's opinion page. Sample letters that you can adapt and responses to the most common arguments are on the Teamsters Union web page devoted to the Employee Free Choice Act.

I urge every Teamster who cares about America's middle class to get involved and make your voice heard on this issue.

DRIVE is a political committee that furthers labor-related goals, including making contributions to support candidates for local, state and federal offices. Individuals may refuse to join or contribute without fear of reprisal.

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