

STEELDRUM



News for members of Steelworkers Local 1998

October 2004, volume 4, no 5

uswa1998.ca

Local 1998 elects new Negotiating Committee

■ New team a good mix of new and experienced members

Members of Steelworkers Local 1998 Staff-Appointed Unit went to the polls on Wednesday October 6, 2004 to elect a new Negotiating Committee. The new committee will negotiate a new collective agreement when the current one expires on June 30, 2005.

Article 8:01 of our Collective Agreement provides for "a Negotiating Committee of not more than twelve (12) bargaining unit employees, at least one of which shall be



Negotiating Team by Numbers: 1. Charles Kernerman 2. Linda Wilding 3. Ron Wener 4. Allan Revich 5. Allison Dubarry 6. Arthur Birkenbergs 7. Lynette Anderson 8. Marjorie Bhola-Swami 9. Christine Beckermann 10. Lee Jeffrey 11. Robin Breon. *Not in picture:* Iona Gocool & Jim Kennedy

selected by the employees working at the Mississauga campus and at least one of which shall be selected by the employees working at the Scarborough campus, who have completed their probationary period, selected by the union, along with the Local Union President, and the International Union Representative."

The new Negotiating Committee members for the St. George campus are (in alphabetical order): Lynette Anderson (Comparative Medicine), Christine Beckermann (Administrative Management Systems), Marjorie Bhola-Swami (Research Services), Robin Breon (Museum Studies), Lee Jeffrey (Woodsworth), Jim Kennedy (Medicine), Charles Kernerman (Office of Governing Council), Allan Revich (OISE/UT), Ron Wener (Career Centre) and Linda Wilding (Student

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Post-Secondary Campaign Underway

■ Survey coming your way

The United Steelworkers is about to launch a campaign that is aimed at boosting the profile of support staff in how the future of post-secondary education is shaped and developed.

Part of the campaign, based on the principles of quality, accessibility and accountability, is a workplace survey, containing questions about you and your employment, your schedule, workload, discrimination and participation in decision-making.

"Once we know where our members are at, we can move their issues forward on the post-secondary education agenda," said Local 1998 President, Allison Dubarry. "With the Rae Commission underway in Ontario, the timing is perfect to lobby for change that includes the role of our members in facilitating post-secondary education.



"I urge everybody to participate from the start."

The survey will be available on the front page of the Steelworkers' website (www.uswa.ca). It is scheduled to be up on the website by the week of Oct. 18. If you have problems accessing it, contact Lesley Stodart at the Steelworkers' National Office (Istodart@uswa.ca).

The campaign gains momentum with Steelworkers appearing before the Rae Commission in locations across Ontario. The schedule of those dates and locations should also be on the Steelworkers' website, together with more complete descriptions of the union's post-secondary principles.

■ Pat van Horne, United Steelworkers Communications, USWA National Office

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Our Work, Our Future, Their Education

■ It's all about Quality, Accessibility, Accountability

The first principle in the Steelworkers' National Campaign on post-secondary education is that quality education is a right for all Canadians.

Post-secondary education must be part of a continuum of learning opportunities for all Canadians, beginning with early-childhood through to different continuous initiatives for adult learners. It must be accessible and affordable for Canadians in every walk of life.

Proper funding should allow the full participation of all Canadians. Personal and family income and resources should not limit partici-

pation.

The second principle is that quality post-secondary education must receive adequate funding.

Adequate public funding, from both the provincial and federal governments, is critical to ensure high quality instruction. Unfortunately, the related issue of resources for support staff has not been given much attention.

All staff are a fundamental part of the delivery of quality education, from the gardener and security officer, to the librarian and nurse, to the faculty. Adequate staff levels must be maintained and all staff must be valued, well

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The University and long-term planning

Most faculties and departments have been completing long-term plans. These can take the form of extensive documents which encompass six-year plans (e.g. the plan for the Faculty of Engineering is approximately 110 pages). The reason that this type of planning is a priority is that the university budget is on a six year cycle. The Provost's Office is in the process of looking at a university-wide plan for 2004 to 2010.

These planning documents can have significant impact on all of our working lives. They often include plans for "streamlining" operations which can be a precursor to re-organization.

Rather than waiting for major changes to happen, we encourage all of our members to review these documents proactively and to specifically examine how these plans could affect your faculty/department. If you have not seen your faculty/department's plan, you can ask your department chair/manager for a copy. The union has met with members both on an individual and a group basis to discuss their concerns. If you have any concerns about these documents, please contact your steward or unit chair.

■ Ron Wener, Co-Chair, Grievance Committee

Victoria University report

A resolution has been reached with the university for grievance VC 2004-2 (Suspension Without Just Cause) that provides for the reversal of the member's one day suspension. Also as part of the settlement, the university will send to the managers, workers and lead hands of the grievor's department a memorandum outlining expectations for workplace relationships and specific procedures that are to be followed. This is a fair settlement that avoids having the grievance go to arbitration. It also promises to help improve the workplace relationships within the department in question. The settlement was made possible by a constructive dialogue between the union and the university.

Our unit's Communication Action Team (CAT) will meet in October to continue preparations for the upcoming round of collective bargaining. The CAT will work with the union's Negotiating Committee to keep members up to date on the progress of collective agreement negotiations with the university. It will also act as a conduit for communication from the members to the committee. Alex Thomson (Archives) will be the lead contact between the Negotiating Committee and the CAT.

There will also be CATs in the Local's U of T units and in the St. Mike's unit. The CAT program is an initiative of our local's Executive and is part of a broader strategy being developed to win the best possible collective agreements.

The next Victoria unit meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 20th in the Burwash Private Dining Room. All members are welcome to attend during their lunch break. Julia Holland, co-chair of the VIC Health and Safety Committee, will report on the committee's work and Alex Thomson will report on the CAT. Nominations will be accepted at the meeting for the salaried members' representative on the Negotiating Committee. Hope to see you on the 20th.

■ John Ankenman, Victoria University Unit Chairperson

Casual members report

■ With the influx of students in the fall, the number of casuals working at the university increases.

These casual positions (aside from Work Study) are covered by our Casual Bargaining Unit collective agreement. Also, remember that casual positions have a minimum wage of \$10/hour and that all casual members have the right to union assistance/representation. Please take the time to talk to your casual colleagues and let them know that the union is here to assist them.

Migration to the Staff-Appointed Unit

There are a number of casual positions that are full-time in nature. If the university creates a brand new, short-term position, they often hire a casual. Positions that are a 60% or more appointments automatically migrate into the staff-appointed bargaining unit after 18 months (Article 2:02 of the Staff-Appointed Collective Agreement). Positions that are 40-59% appointments automatically migrate into the staff-appointed unit after 24 months.

One of our main concerns is that the university has not been automatically migrating casual unit members at the appropriate time. Often, the university starts to develop the job description after the migration date. In one recent case, we found out about a member whose migration was one year overdue (she has since migrated). The union's position is that our casual members have waited long enough and the migration date is the migration date and not the date to "start working on it". These delays mean that the member is not enrolled in benefits/pension until they

officially migrate and we do not believe there should be any reason for this delay.

We have also been made aware of circumstances where casuals have been terminated just weeks before their scheduled migration date where the work still exists. In one case, the department removed the casual member from the university payroll and put the casual on a hospital payroll a few months prior to the migration date (effectively removing the casual from our bargaining unit). We have filed a grievance on this matter.

Casuals Replacing Staff-Appointed Work

A number of departments have been attempting to use casual staff to replace staff-appointed members to save money. Article 13 of our Casual Bargaining Unit Collective Agreement states "where the employee is assigned by the university to perform a significant portion of the duties of a staff appointed position, the [employee shall be paid at the] minimum rate on the salary grid for that position". In other words, even if the university is using a casual to fill in on a short-term basis for a staff-appointed member, the casual unit member must be paid at the staff-appointed rate.

If you have questions regarding the casual bargaining unit contact the Casual Bargaining Unit Chair, Charles Kernerman, at charles.kernerman@utoronto.ca or the Local Union Office at (416) 506-9090.

■ Charles Kernerman, Unit Chair, Casuals
Ron Wener, Co-Chair, Grievance Committee

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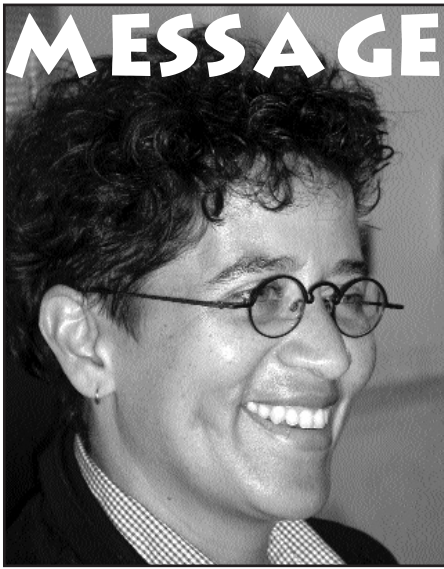
Non-email submissions should be on a 3.5" disk or CD accompanied by a hard copy.

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who
we
are



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Preparing for negotiations

Negotiations for third contracts in all of Local 1998's units will begin next spring, and the Executive has been busy planning for the next round of negotiations. We have been involved in strategic discussions with research staff from the union, and building a communication network with members. In the last month, we also met with Mary Ann Chambers, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, informing her of the role that Local 1998 members have in ensuring that the mission of the university is successful. We also stressed the need for increased funding for universities and colleges. As well, the Inclusions/Exclusions Committee, stewards, and unit chairs have been vigilant on issues regarding the composition of the bargaining units which the university seems to want to erode.

On October 6, members of the staff-appointed unit elected their negotiating committee. As President, I look forward to beginning work on negotiations. Nearly six months ago, the Executive began to plan to strategize for this set of negotiations resulting in the development of a good grassroots communications network and research into specific areas such as the university budget.

Members at Victoria and St. Michael's will elect their negotiating committees soon and the next step will be developing a membership survey on bargaining issues and priorities. We will also be holding lunchtime meetings with members across all three campuses. It will be important that the negotiating committees hear from as many members as possible to reflect your needs. I would like to encourage members to participate in the survey and meetings. The issues and priorities identified through the survey and meetings are important to the negotiating committees when determining which issues

are key for members. We will also be scheduling lunchtime sessions with experts from the Steelworkers Research Department on the budget, pensions and benefits so that members have an opportunity to become more knowledgeable about these issues, and be able to tease apart the fact from the fiction that often surrounds them.

As I mentioned, a few weeks ago, Marjorie Bhola-Swami, Robin Breon, P.C. Choo and I met with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Mary Ann Chambers. George Nakitas, Executive Assistant to Ken Neumann (Steelworkers Canadian National Director) joined us as well. The meeting was quite instruc-

tive and Marjorie has a full report in this newsletter. Our main message to the Minister was that U of T is more than bricks and mortar, and that staff play a vital role in ensuring that U of T continues to be a great university. As a former Governor of the university, the Minister is very appreciative of the role of U of T staff.

Our local has a number of labour/management committees and one of the first of these committees formed has been quite busy over the summer. The Inclusions/Exclusions Committee is working to retain a number of jobs that the university removed from the bargaining unit, and the cases have now gone to arbitration. The committee was the first labour/management committee formed after certification and its purpose was to examine positions that that been created after the certification vote in May and before the certification vote count in December. The current members of the committee are Christine Beckermann, Robin Breon, Lee Jeffrey and myself. Our Staff Representative, Omero Landi works very closely with us, and we are hopeful that our efforts will be successful.

A number of grievances filed in the summer concerned bargaining unit positions that the union believes were originally in the union or

were new positions that should be in the union. We want to ensure that members have opportunities to both advance in their careers and have the protection of being a union member.

Access to confidential materials is one of the reasons that people are excluded from bargaining units and this is often misunderstood. The access to confidential information clause is misinterpreted to mean any confidential information. However, the Ontario Labour Relations Act is quite specific and states that this applies to only those, "employed in a confidential capacity in matters relating to labour relations." In reality, this clause applies to a very small portion of any workforce.

"With your input and support, we will go into negotiations with a strong hand."

If you are unsure about whether a posting should be excluded from the union, first check Appendix A of the collective agreement. Appendix A lists all of the jobs excluded from the bargaining unit. If it does not appear there, then contact your steward or unit chair. A number of members have been contacting us about jobs that were once in the union that are now being posted as excluded. If this occurs in your department, please let us know and we will investigate the situation. This seems to be affecting more and more of our members.

Our local has retained Elizabeth Shilton, a partner in one of Canada's top labour law firms, Cavalluzzo, Hayes, Shilton, McIntyre and Cornish to work with us on the cases referred to arbitration. This is a significant issue for our union as one of the strengths of our local is its diversity of jobs. We will keep you up to date on this important issue in upcoming newsletters.

We are confident that with your input and support we will go into negotiations with a strong hand. The Steelworkers are providing us with many resources and research which will be invaluable in the negotiation process.

■ Allison Dubarry, *President*

Report of Election Committee

The following have been elected to the Negotiating Committee: Lynette Anderson, Christine Beckerman, Marjorie Bhola-Swami, Robin Breon, Lee Jeffrey, Jim Kennedy, Charles Kernerman, Allan Revich, Ron Wener and Linda Wilding.

Bob Chernecky is the first alternate and Susan Bartkiw is the second alternate.

Iona Gocool was acclaimed as the UTSC representative and Art Birkenbergs was acclaimed as the UTM representative.

A total of 601 out of 3,050 staff-appointed members (or 19.7%) voted in the election.

I would like to thank all the candidates for putting their names forward in this election. I would also like to thank members of the Election Committee for all their hard work and dedication in helping to ensure that the election run smoothly. All credit must go to them; all errors - of omission and commission - are my responsibility and mine alone.

P. C. Choo, Chair, Election Committee



Union discusses post-secondary funding with Minister Mary Anne Chambers

On September 9, 2004, a delegation led by Local 1998 President, Allison Dubarry, met with Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities at her office to discuss funding for post-secondary education. Other members of the delegation include Vice-President Robin Breon, Financial Secretary Marjorie Bhola-Swami, Governing Council member and Steeldrum Editor P. C. Choo, CUPE Local 3261 President Mehdi Kouhestaninejad, and the Executive Assistant to the National Director of USWA Canada, George Nakitsas.

The meeting with the Minister is part of the

Steelworkers' national campaign to ensure accessibility to quality post-secondary education for all Canadians. The campaign is premised on three basic principles:

- quality education is a right for all Canadians;
- quality post-secondary education must receive adequate funding;
- post-secondary institutions must be accountable for all the resources, public and private, that they receive.

The union felt that it was important that these concerns be conveyed to the Minister. The delegation stressed the importance of increased funding since any decreases become a bread and butter

issue for our members. Cuts to the operating budget translate into job losses for our bargaining unit.

The Minister listened intently to the union's concerns and being an alumni of UTSC as well as the former Vice-Chair of Governing Council, she understood the issues involved. She emphasized that the provincial government sees education as being central to the advancement of the province and encouraged the union to participate fully in the Rae Review.

The meeting was highly productive and concluded with both sides promising to meet again in the near future.

■ *Marjorie Bhola-Swami, Financial Secretary*

Bollers new Co-Chair

On September 27, a founding member of the Local 1998 Women's Committee was elected to the position of Co-Chair.

Marcella Bollers is the new Co-Chair for the Local 1998 Women's Committee. We look forward to continuing to work with you, Marcella!



Contingent work study

Local 1998 workers participated in a study that showed the more "flexible" the work arrangement, the more likely workers were to experience stress and poor health. Alice de Wolff, an independent researcher, and Andy King, Health and Safety Department Leader for the Steelworkers National Office, will report the study results on the St. George campus on October 19.

The meeting will take place in room 2165 at the Bahen Ctr at 40 St. George Street from noon to 2pm.



reports

Grievance Report

■ **In the six weeks since the last newsletter, the Local has filed a total of 39 grievances.**

In the six weeks since the last newsletter, the Local has filed a total of 39 grievances. While this is an unusually large amount of grievances, each of these grievances represents cornerstone issues for our members. The primary issues in these grievances concern job security, unjust discipline and how the university approaches the grievance process itself.

Almost half of these grievances were regarding removing duties from the bargaining unit. There is currently a major disagreement

between the union and the university regarding which positions and duties should be included (please see the President's report).

We have also filed a number of grievances surrounding organizational changes/reorganizations where our members have been laid off. In a number of these situations, our members have been laid off and duties have been transferred to faculty or other non-USWA staff. Our position is that our members should not be laid off if their work still exists.

Unfortunately, one of our members was terminated three days prior to meeting probation and was not given union representation at the termination meeting. As there were no performance issues, we regard this as bad faith and have filed grievances both on the unjust

termination and the failure to provide union representation.

Another area of concern for the Local is how the university is handling the grievance process. Our collective agreement (Article 9:01) states that grievances must be heard within five working days of being filed. In many instances, the university has not provided the Local with hearing dates within that timeframe and we have filed a policy grievance on this matter. We need to ensure that our members do not experience any undue delays in having their issues addressed.

■ *Ron Wener
Co-Chair, Grievance Committee*

"Empowering" Women of Steel Course

I'm not a political activist. I'm not a staunch feminist. I'm not a leader. But I am a Woman and I am a Steelworker. After spending five days with ten other women Steelworkers at the "Women of Steel" course at the beginning of this month, I'm certain that all of us felt as empowered as Rosie the Riveter or Canada's own Bren Gun Girl, Veronica Foster.

Although we all came from different backgrounds and work environments, the cuts to Canada's social safety net and job sphere have affected all of us - whether it is in our homes, communities, workplaces or locals. Our classroom of quiet and shy women managed to give the hall a makeover with flowcharts, activity

sheets and presentation notes. One of the most important things we discussed was where power comes from and how to be empowered. These topics and many others were presented by skillful instructors Trudy Morris and Dianne Walker and were supplemented by short videos and guest speakers, including Carolyn Egan (President of Local 8300 and Toronto Area Council), Marie Kelly (Assistant Director of District 6), Nancy Hutchinson (Health & Safety Coordinator, District 6), Sue Milling and Marlene Gow (both from the Education, Equality and Political Action Department at the National Office). Perhaps the most poignant and heartbreaking visit was from Rose Letwaba, a psychiatric nurse at a children's

hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa. Her firsthand accounts put a face to the staggering statistics of HIV/AIDS deaths on the African continent and she stressed the importance of our donations to the Humanity Fund.

We participated in this course to become aware, to be better informed, to meet and interact with other women and hopefully to become active in our respective locals. We learned that we all have dreams and aspirations, whether it is to start a women's committee in a local or simply to become more active and participate in the sessions sponsored by our union. We can be political activists. We can be strong feminists. We can be leaders. We are Women of Steel.

■ *Halyna Kozar, Victoria University*

Negotiating Committee

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Information Systems). Arthur Birkenbergs was acclaimed at the Mississauga campus while Iona Gocool was acclaimed at the Scarborough campus. Bob Chernecky (Dentistry) is the first alternate and Susan Bartkiw (Arts & Science) is the second alternate. As President, Allison Dubarry is an ex-officio member of the negotiating team.

The new committee is a good mix of new and experienced members. Among the experienced members who will provide a guiding hand to the newer members are Allison Dubarry, Marjorie Bhola-Swami and Ron Wener.

Asked why she chose to run for the new Negotiating Committee, Marjorie Bhola-Swami said that as members of a workforce comprising over 70% women, her greatest concern revolves around protecting our health and work environment. "Women are faced with the onerous task of balancing work, family and union responsibilities. We therefore need to implement measures in the workplace through stronger contract language to address issues of discrimination, bullying, harassment and workplace safety and design."

For Allan Revich, a new member of the negotiating team, it was the haunting image of the university decimating the jobs and lives of his colleagues that prompted him to run. OISE/UT laid off 24 administrative staff this year in order to meet a 15% budget cut. "As a steward, I have done everything within the terms of our collective agreement to fight against these abuses of power," said Allan. "I did not always succeed. The only way we can truly achieve job security is to negotiate it into the next collective agreement and I would like to be on the team that will negotiate this."

It is also the first time on the negotiating committee for Local 1998 Recording Secretary, Christine Beckermann. "There is a lot at stake for members in the upcoming negotiations including job evaluation, fair wage increases, and improvements in benefits and pensions," says Christine. "The removal of chiropractic and other services from OHIP has adversely impacted many of us and we need to negotiate for these services to be covered by our health benefits."

Art Birkenbergs from UTM - another new member of the team - firmly believes that being on the Negotiating Committee, he would have a direct input into the bargaining process that ultimately determines the terms and conditions of our employment. He also believes that he can bring a fresh perspective on behalf of the staff at the suburban Mississauga campus.

The committee will be surveying the general membership on their priorities before going to management with proposals.

■ P. C. Choo

'Mr. Pension' Retires

"John can you please, once again, explain to me the meaning of YMPE; defined benefits; defined contributions; the pension formula; et cetera, et cetera..."

And, of course, he always could. Now that he will see first hand the reality of taking a pension, John at least, will not be as shocked as some of us were when we received our monthly payments for the first time.

I've known John Malcolm for almost 20 years.

We first met when we shared a table at the lunch put on by University of Toronto Staff Association (UTSA) to encourage members to become involved in developing language for what was supposed to be our first contract negotiations as a new CUPE local (which alas, was not to be). We both decided to work on the Health and Safety Committee. The UTSA executive at the time were a particularly sneaky lot and before we knew what had happened, we were sucked into the UTSA vortex - something from which we had no escape until a decade later. We did this "you run for President and I'll run for Vice-President Salary and Benefits" dance for a few years and took turns doing both. The times were difficult. First we lost the CUPE union drive and were soon faced with the firing of 80 members at Medicine. We and the other good people who made up the UTSA Executive (the Local 1998 current Vice President, Robin Breon, being one) pulled together and made it through that dreadful day (they were re-hired) and then pushed on through the Framework Agreement, Social Contract, Pay Equity, salary cuts, etc., etc.

I'll never forget one night during the Social Contract negotiations. Somewhere around 1:00 in the morning Michael Finlayson (then VP of HR) got up to go to the washroom. John followed him down the hall and into the washroom and we'll never know what John said to him in private but Michael gave in on a crucial issue when they got back.

In 1995 I ran for Governing Council and twisted John's arm (so he says) to join me there soon afterwards. My favourite memory of our time on G.C. took place at a partic-

ularly frustrating meeting of the Planning and Budget Committee. John became so irate that half way through the meeting he got up and left - slamming the door of the Council Chamber so hard it shook the glasses on the table - something I'd never had the courage to do.

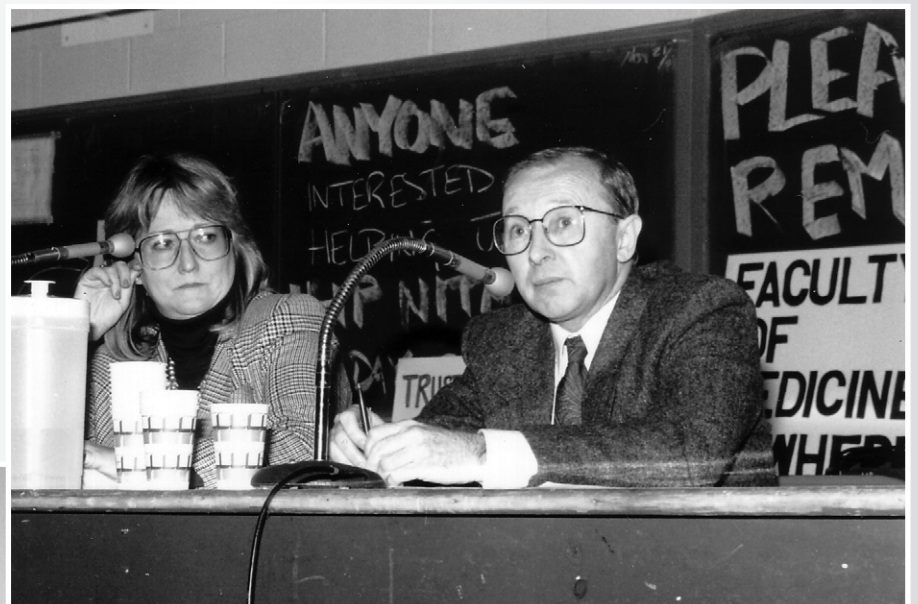
Being die-hard trade unionists, of course, we gave up all the luxurious dinners at the U. of T. President's house on Highland Crescent and the intellectually stimulating debates at Business Board to help with the Steelworkers drive.

I'm sure John would agree with me that it is most appropriate that we have/will retire just at the time when Local 1998 has hit its stride. The current executive are a bright, honourable group who work extremely hard for our members. Our pensions are in good hands.

One makes many friends in life - some closer than others. Over the years John and I have argued, laughed and shared mutual frustrations with the administration of the university. I can still rely on him to forward me particularly trenchant articles from "The Guardian" by e-mail although I now live 5000 kilometres away.

John, I can honestly say it has been a delight and a privilege to be your friend. All the best in your well deserved retirement - hope to see you and Carol soon out here on the "Left Coast".

■ Judith Wilson
former UTSA President & GC member



Above: Judith Wilson and John Malcolm speak at the UTSA meeting that fought to reverse the firing of 80 of our colleagues at the Faculty of Medicine.

Left: The full panel of speakers at the meeting.

JEC Update

Employees within the Steelworkers' staff-appointed unit at U of T are seeing the impact of job evaluation as the union and the university move to implement the new SES(U) job evaluation system. To date, over 700 revised and updated job descriptions have been forwarded to the union and (concurrently) the member by the university as the new system begins to take shape.

Of these positions, 62 have been earmarked as "benchmark jobs" which represent a variety of jobs across the university system. They include laboratory technicians, secretaries, administrative assistants, business officers, dental assistants, nurses, university registrars, information technology analysts, student service officers, craftspeople, research officers, glass-blowers and clerical staff (just to name a few!) Work site visits by members of the job evaluation committee to all of the benchmark incumbents had been completed and initial scoring of the jobs is now at the stage that is called "sore thumbing" (see www.uswa1998.ca - **Job Evaluation Committee** for more details).

"Sore thumbing" refers to the process of cross-checking and comparing job rating scores within the various factors and across a variety of benchmark jobs to ensure that the process is consistent and has been applied evenly and fairly across the board. Sore thumbing is done at joint meetings between the university and the union's Job Evaluation Committee (JEC).

The sore thumbing exercise is time and

labour intensive and requires additional fact checking to ensure that the information gathered by way of the union's job analysis questionnaire and the on-site visit with the employee is accurate. The goal is to provide the JEC with benchmark job characteristics so detailed that other classifications can be related as being above, below, or comparable to it.

To assist and document this phase of job evaluation, we jointly prepare a "rationale sheet" (or rating notes) for each position that clearly and concisely outlines why a particular factor was assigned a particular score. This rationale is important to the process because it assists and documents the work of the joint Union/University JEC and eventually it will also be shared with the incumbent so that the union member is able to see - in a very transparent way - how the ratings were determined.

Keeping the process on track and on time continues to be a major challenge for the JEC as we move toward collective bargaining in the spring. In an effort to keep the membership informed and updated on the work of the JEC, a series of lunch time meetings has been held on all three campuses throughout the summer and fall. Two of the most frequently asked questions deal with: 1) changes in the job description from the old format to the new SES(U) format and 2) questions regarding reclassification of jobs before the new system comes into effect.

The first question often has to do with the "Qualifications" section of the job description under "Formal Education" and "Experience." Some employees have noticed that while their old job description requires a university degree under the education requirement, the new and

revised job description requires only a high school education. You will note that the SES(U) system rates university degree at a higher point score than a high school diploma. It is also important for the employee to know that this rating has nothing to do with the level of education that the present incumbent has attained. "Experience" should consider the number of years that a person needs to assume the responsibilities of the job.

The second question deals with reclassification of jobs under the current system that the university has in place. There are a number of cases where discussions on reclassifying jobs or formal requests to Human Resources to reclassify a particular position have been ongoing for some months - even years in some cases. The union advises that members pursue these issues with their own particular supervisors, managers, directors, chairs or deans (whichever the case may be). The union's Job Evaluation Committee remains available to members to offer advice and counsel on how to proceed under the confines of the old system until the new SES(U) system is implemented.

The complete overhaul of a job evaluation system at an institution the size of the University of Toronto is a gigantic task and one that will not be undertaken again with such thoroughness anytime soon. This is our opportunity to try and get it right. A fair, equitable and transparent system of job evaluation is the cornerstone of an employee's relationship with the employer. We deserve nothing less.

■ *Mary Bird, Robin Breon, P.C. Choo, Marisa Freire, Shelley Glazer, Kristina Smith*
Job Evaluation Committee

Stelco workers say 'NO to Concessions! NO to Pension Roll Backs!'

On Friday September 24, Stelco, Canada's largest steel producer, was in court arguing for an extension of its bankruptcy protection under the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA). Stelco has been trying to use the CCAA to force concessions in wages and pension benefits from its workers. Stelco's application for an extension was granted, but its credibility, and that of the CCAA system itself, suffered in the process.

Outside the Ontario Superior Court on University Avenue, Steelworkers rallied in a show of support for the workers represented by the three USWA locals: Local 5328, Local 8782 and Local 1005. The livelihood and pensions of these members rest on the outcome. About a dozen members of Local 1998 participated in the picket.

Stelco workers were unequivocal that concessions are not up for discussion. "We're not prepared to grant concessions to Stelco," said David Jacobs, a lawyer representing the three Steelworker locals. Jacobs also said the three USWA Locals would not participate in multilateral talks with Stelco's creditors. "The union," he said, "has a bargaining relationship with Stelco. We don't have relationships with anybody else."

Stelco's argument for extending CCAA protec-

tion rings hollow even to the *Globe & Mail* which reported that soaring steel prices led to a \$42 million profit last quarter and projections for even higher profits next quarter. Stelco's order books are full for at least a year to come.

The three Steelworkers Locals have all along challenged the legitimacy of Stelco's claim of insolvency. It is the first time in the history of the CCAA that any union has challenged a company's motion for protection and concessions from its employees.

But it was apparent to the union that Stelco in particular asked for protection, not because it fears bankruptcy, but because it wants to alter the contracts with its unions, to force concessions in wages and pension payments. By challenging the CCAA, the union not only confronted the company's assumption of bankruptcy, but also challenged the law itself, forcing the judge to define what is the threshold for declaring bankruptcy protection.

"Through the court-ordered CCAA, Stelco



Above: Stelco workers and other Steelworkers outside the Ontario Superior Court on September 24, 2004.

insisted that restructuring talks begin outside the legal authority of the collective agreements," said Rolf Gerstenberger, President of Local 1005 at Stelco's Hilton Works. "To the great credit of the three locals, we refused to engage in discussions outside the legally existing collective agreements and Ontario labour law. Our relationship is with Stelco, which has legal obligations. We're the ones that create the wealth" he said. "From that logic, why do we have to give concessions?"

■ *Steve Rutchinski, School of Graduate Studies*

Ehrenreich challenges the rhetoric surrounding the welfare reform in America that promised a job - even a minimum wage job - could lead to a better life.



book
review

nickle & dimed

Nickle and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America
by Barbara Ehrenreich
Owl Trade Paperback, April 2002
ISBN: 0805063897

As a scientist by training and a writer and social activist by choice, Barbara Ehrenreich has written a book about her experiences as one of the working poor in America. In 1998, rhetoric surrounding welfare reform promised a job, even a minimum wage job, could lead to a better life. Working "undercover" herself, she wanted to see if the unskilled worker could survive working at minimum wage jobs and the result of her findings are in this book.

She worked at four different minimum wage jobs, (U.S.\$6-7.00 perhour), in three different states. She laid out rules and parameters for herself so that if she were in truly dire straits, she would simply quit. (Pity the working poor who do not have this option!) She admits she was not able to manage her income with costs let alone improve her situation. Working one and sometimes two jobs at a time, all her rules were eventually bent or broken.

However, she does give us a clear picture of the lifestyle of the working poor. Her many anecdotes

describe a world most upper and middle-class Americans almost never see and, she suggests, choose not to see. She also provides some insightful observations which she freely admits have affected her profoundly. She vows she will never again take for granted these "invisible" workers who make her life so much easier with the work they do day in and day out.

In terms of format, the author supplemented the anecdotal evidence in the body of her book with footnotes, filled with facts and statistics to support her observations. For example, "according to a 1997 report ...nearly one-fifth of all homeless people (in twenty-nine cities across the nation) are employed in full or part-time jobs." Or "(A)ccording to the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, employers are not required to pay "tipped employees" such as restaurant servers, more than \$2.13 an hour in direct wages. However, if the sum of tips plus \$2.13 an hour falls below the minimum wage, or \$5.15 an hour, the employer is required to make up the difference."

She notes that "this fact was not mentioned by managers or otherwise publicized at either of the restaurants where I worked."

In spite of the subject matter, this book is witty and sometimes laugh-out-loud funny. Her descriptions of situations surrounding hiring practices (such as drug testing for marijuana, but not for harder drugs like heroin and cocaine) and on-the-job expectations (a Wal-Mart job orientation, in Minnesota anyway, takes eight hours) are hilarious. Her stint sharing temporary living space with a very assertive cockatiel is worth the cost of the book!

On a more serious note, in her conclusion she asks "Are we supposed to feel guilt?", then adds "guilt doesn't go anywhere near far enough; the appropriate emotion is shame - shame at our own dependency...on the underpaid labor of others." Clearly, she was touched by what she experienced and hopes her "fieldwork" will educate those who read her book.

■ Glenda Gillis, *Admissions & Awards*

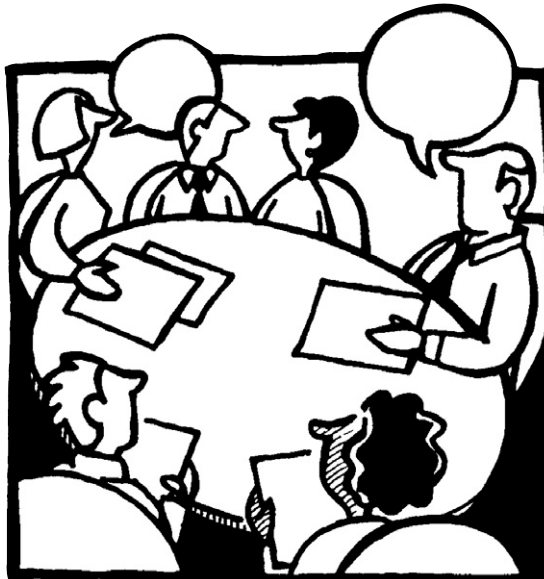
CUPE 3261 negotiates with University

Contract negotiations are currently underway between CUPE Local 3261 and the University of Toronto. There are three bargaining units, representing roughly 930 workers, involved in the negotiations, all represented by Local 3261.

The Downsview bargaining unit represents about 30 part time workers. The other bargaining units represent about 600 full time and 300 part time employees each. These are the campus service workers, elevator repair people, drivers and the cleaning staff who come in after we have gone home, and clean up before we return to work the next day.

The CUPE 3261 members have been without a contract since the end of June, 2004. UofT has not made its bargaining position public as yet. According to Mehdi Kouhestaninejad, President of CUPE Local 3261, CUPE workers have identified four major concerns they want their bargaining committee to address: job security, protection from contracting out, improved benefits, and better wages.

CUPE 3261 members typically make from \$14 - \$16 an hour. The caretaker/service workers who clean your office for example, make roughly \$14.00



CUPE 3261 members have been without a contract since the end of June.

- \$15.50 an hour. Landscape workers who maintain the grounds make \$14.00 - \$15.75 an hour.

More information on the negotiations will be forthcoming following the next general membership meetings of CUPE 3261 scheduled for October 6 and October 12.

■ Steve Rutchinski

Our Work, Our Future

...continued from page 1

trained, fairly compensated and properly treated.

The third principle is that post-secondary institutions must be accountable to Canadians for all the resources, public and private, that they receive.

Canadians have the right to know how their resources are spent by post-secondary institutions. They also have the right to know that private funding is in no way dictating educational and research programs.

The Steelworkers believes private investment in post-secondary institutions should be properly monitored to ensure it would benefit society the most.

Governments, educational institutions, students, faculty and staff, and the public should be actively engaged in the setting up and monitoring of standards and programs.

■ Pat van Horne, *United Steelworkers Communications, USWA National Office*

Steeldrum wins five USPA awards

Steeldrum won five awards at the 20th Biennial United Steelworkers Press Association (USPA) Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee, from August 28 to September 1, 2004.

Steeldrum won the prestigious *Raymond W. Pasnick Award for Editorial Excellence for publications whose circulation exceeds 2000*, the *Michael R. Enos Award for Best Website Design*, the *Best Feature Story Merit Award*, the *Best Local Union Coverage Merit Award*, and the *Civil Rights Departmental Award*.

It was the first time that **Steeldrum** has participated in an USPA conference. Local 1998 was represented by P. C. Choo, Ana Sapp, Marjorie Bhola-Swami and Kim Walker.

P. C. Choo was also elected USPA Vice President for District 6.



Kim Walker, P. C. Choo and Ana Sapp received the "Raymond W. Pasnick Award for Editorial Excellence for circulation above 2000" from **Steelabor** Editor, Gerald Dickey

Read Before You Eat

■ **Friday October 29, 2004**
12 noon - 2 pm, Rm 4049, Robarts Library

In conjunction with Canada's Healthy Workplace Week, the Library's Staff Development Committee is organizing a lunch-time seminar for Friday October 29, 2004. Dr. Sandra Romano Anthony of the University's Department of Nutritional Sciences will speak on the topic *Read Before You Eat: Interpreting Nutrition Labels*.

Her talk will include information on how to use *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* to manage personal diets; how to calculate the number of calories that an individual should consume in order to maintain, gain or lose weight; as well as how to interpret nutritional information on food labels. She will debunk a number of food and nutrition myths in a question and answer session at the end of her presentation.

Dr. Romano Anthony graduated from the Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Toronto, and OISE/UT. An activist for social justice, she serves as both a steward and an instructor for USWA Local 1998. Her presentation on interpreting nutrition labels has been offered previously to members of Steelworkers Local 1998 and has proved to be extremely popular.

Dr. Romano Anthony's presentation is the first in a series of monthly health-related events that are being scheduled over the next six months, culminating in a two-day Workplace Health Fair at the Library on April 20-21, 2005. We look forward to seeing you on October 29th and at other events in the series.

Calling, Calling...

"...Volunteering is good for your well-being. In a study, people who engaged in the most volunteer hours each week also reported the highest levels of well-being."

- *RealAge Tip*

We invite all Steelworkers Local 1998 members to become active in the local. You can be a steward, unit chair or a member of our various committees. Feel free to review the following list and send your selection(s) to info@uswa1998.ca. Alternately, you can always call (416) 506. 9090 to inquire about volunteering.

Volunteer Opportunities with USWA Local 1998

- Become a Steward!
- Become a Unit Chair!

...OR...

JOIN one or more of the following committee(s)!

- Women of Steel
- Political Action
- Newsletter
- Human Rights
- Health & Safety
- Pension
- By-laws
- Web

■ *Marcella Bollers, Co-Chair, Women's Cttee.*

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The Steeldrum is a member of the United Steelworkers' Press Association (USPA) & the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).