

STEELDRUM

USW1998 NEWSMAGAZINE

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Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath (second from right), USW District 6 Director Marty Warren (fourth from right) and Steelworkers Toronto Area Council President Carolyn Egan (extreme left) march in the October 1st Rally for Decent Work in Toronto

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USW1998 Remembers

For the first time ever, on a mild and sunny mid-morning day on November 11th, Steelworkers Local 1998 participated in the Remembrance Day services on all three U of T campuses by paying tribute to the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Janet Blakely and Ludmila Elias represented the Local at the Scarborough campus and Art Birkenbergs and Windsor Chan acted on behalf of the members at Mississauga campus.

Margaret Bucknam and P.C. Choo were on hand for the St. George ceremony. In attendance were approximately 1,600 people who gathered at the 143-foot stone structure known as the Soldiers' Tower. The 45-minute ceremony began with a lone bagpiper marching in from The Toronto Scottish Regiment. The ceremony included a reading of the popular "In Flanders Fields" – a poem written by John McCrae, a University College alumnus. Traditional hymns were sung and there was a large contingent of close to 45 faculties, colleges and departments represented in the laying of the wreaths. No

service would be complete without the playing of The Last Post, Reveille and The Lament. The Royal and National Anthems were also sung. What I found most impactful was the sound of the bells – the ringing of the carillon. Up until this service, I had no idea that the bells I heard were actually the sweet sound of a 51-bell carillon. The organ-like instrument is played like a keyboard. The player, the carillonneur, strikes wooden levers with closed fists and uses their feet just as you would with an organ. The sound arises when the wires attached to the levers strike the bells. The downtown ceremony ended with a reception in the Great Hall at Hart House.

Although solemn at times, this is one of the nicest services I have been to. From the bagpipes to the choir to the bells – it is truly a beautiful way to remember and give thanks for the freedom we so aptly enjoy.

— **Margaret Bucknam**, Outreach & Communications Coordinator

Above: Art Birkenbergs (right) laying the wreath on behalf of USW Local 1998 at UTM. Beside him is UTM Interim Vice-President and UTM Principal Professor Ulrich Krull while Windsor Chan looks on. **Photo credit:** Alison Dias

STEELDRUM DIRECTORY

Newsletter Committee

Laura Amodio
Kristy Bard
Mary-Marta Briones-Bird
Margaret Bucknam (Co-Chair)
Colleen Burke

P.C. Choo (Co-Chair & Editor)
Tade Credgeur
David Eden
Nick Marchese
Kai-Lii Veer
Alyssa Warner

Production & Design

Kim Walker

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25 Cecil Street, Third Floor
Toronto, ON M5T1N1
info@usw1998.ca 416.506.9090
www.usw1998.ca

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your Union, Your Community

When most of us think of our union, we think of it as the vehicle for bargaining collective agreements and defending those agreements through grievances. These are certainly part of the fundamental role of a union, but the union is also a community for workers, one that provides opportunities for growth, networking and engagement.

Working at an institution like U of T, which is huge and very decentralized, can be an isolating experience, sometimes overwhelmingly so. We typically spend more of our waking hours at work than we do at home, and yet we often lack the feeling of a truly engaging workplace life.

Of course, the union can't fix all of this. But it can help, in ways you might not have considered.

For a start, the union is an excellent place for you to meet people with similar workplace experiences. You may be in a small department, or the only person in your job class in a large department, but there are likely many other union members working in similar jobs. Networking with them can help you to identify common challenges, share ideas, and identify strategies for improving your work life.

Networking in the union isn't just about work-related issues. The STEELwool project, an initiative of the Human Rights Committee, provided lots of members with a new connection to each other and the union, by combining a shared personal interest in knitting with the union's work on health and safety. Committees like SteelPride, Women of Steel and NextGen are other avenues for members to meet like-minded people and pursue political and social interests through the context of the union.

As you can read in Kristy Bard's article in this issue,



becoming active in the union can also provide you with opportunities for professional growth in the form of training and education. Members can become workshop facilitators, health and safety inspectors and advocates, or conflict resolution mediators. You can develop your event organizing skills, communication techniques, or volunteer coordination experience. We all share the benefits from union involvement – there's a role for everyone in the union.

However, not everyone knows how to get involved. On top of this, people are often busy with long commutes and family responsibilities. One easy solution, which won't add to an already hectic day, is to become involved with the union on your lunch hour. Take a break, get away from your desk, learn something, meet new people. This issue of Steeldrum focuses on the work of our committees, which are open to any member in any unit. Going to a committee lunch and learn, event or meeting is a great entry point to getting involved. When I was a new employee at U of T, I got involved in the Women of Steel Committee because it was something that could fit in with my work day and not interfere with the all-important day care pick-up. From that starting point, I got more involved later as a steward and member of the Executive.

We all rely on a strong union to fight for good wages, pensions and benefits. But a union is only as strong as its members – an engaged, dynamic membership makes for a strong and united presence at the negotiating table. It's up to all of us to think about how we can get involved, for our own personal benefit and to strengthen our union.

It's our union. It's our community. Let's all build it, together.

— Colleen Burke, President, USW Local 1998

LOCAL HAPPENINGS



JOB ACTION CENTRE'S IMPENDING CLOSURE PROTESTED

Steelworkers from across the GTA converged in front of the Ministry of Labour on University Avenue on August 29 to protest the impending closure of Job Action Centres. These centres have been instrumental in helping workers who had been laid off to transition to other careers.



ON SEPTEMBER 13, USW LOCAL 1998 participated in the Street Festival on St. George Street. VIC Unit President John Ankenman is seen here handing out bags of free popcorn to students. Undergraduate students often become members of our Casual Unit so we want them to be aware of our Union.

USW LOCAL 1998 CASUAL UNIT

held a Social at the Harvest Noon Café on September 21, 2016.



THE USW LOCAL 1998 TEAM STAFFING THE REGISTRATION DESK PRIOR to the October 1st Rally for Decent Work. (L-R): Executive Committee members Christine Beckermann and Ludmila Elias, Vice-President P. C. Choo, Office Coordinator Nina Di Trapani, Outreach & Communications Coordinator Margaret Bucknam & Women of Steel Co-Chair, Mary-Marta Briones-Bird.



Unique Careers at U of T: Kathy Parks, Administrator of the Soldiers' Tower

It's a hot and humid afternoon in July. Kathy Parks is leading us up the narrow spiral staircase of Soldiers' Tower – at 143 feet the tallest memorial to Canada's war dead after the Peace Tower in Ottawa – to the dusty bell chamber.

She tells us there are 51 bells, the largest weighing more than four tonnes. I can almost see Quasimodo, the main protagonist in the 1930s classic *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, swinging from one bell top to another.

"As you can see, I don't work in a regular office environment. The tower is my workplace," says Parks, who has been the Tower's administrator since 2002.

Parks, a U of T graduate (Anthropology, 1981), says it is because her job is so unique that it's hard to categorize. Soldiers' Tower is not only a massive memorial, but also a museum, a link from U of T's present to its past and a centre for musical training of carillonneurs. There are tributes to some great U of T graduates, including Dr. Norman Bethune, Sir Frederick Banting and Col. John McCrae, author of the famous poem, *In Flanders Fields*.

The passion Parks has for her work comes out when asked what she enjoys most about the job.

"I like it when people's faces light up when they see what

they've been missing all the times they've passed by the tower. That's most rewarding."

Presently, the Soldiers' Tower is open only two or three times a week, depending upon the availability of Parks herself, Work Study students under her supervision or alumni volunteers who make up the Soldiers' Tower Committee.

Parks hopes to see the day when the tower will be open to the public on a regular schedule throughout the year. "But, we could really do with an air-conditioning system up here," says Parks half-jokingly. (The tower, originally built in 1924, is not able to accommodate such a modern luxury.)

Free carillon recitals are performed at the Soldiers' Tower throughout the spring and summer. And there is the annual Remembrance Day event, which Parks notes attracts more than a thousand participants. To find out more about this event and about the tower in general, visit alumni.utoronto.ca/tower.

— Nick Marchese, Casual Unit Grievor

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Standing Committees at USW1998

After the new Executive took office in June 2015, one of its priorities was the revival of some of the Local's standing committees that had been inactive for several years. This issue highlights the various committees and the difference they are making.



Communications Committee

Co-Chairs P. C. Choo & Margaret Bucknam

Emerging from the now defunct Newsletter Committee, the Communications Committee came into existence in November 2015 and operates under the authority of the Executive Committee with delegated responsibility from the President.

The Communications Committee has the responsibility for the creation, design and implementation of communication strategies that are in alignment with USW's vision and mission statements. The primary goal of the committee is to build member awareness and foster active engagement of the Local's activities as well as providing timely information to members.

The Communications Committee provides an approach to outreach by leveraging various communications tools such as the website, e-newsletter, Steeldrum and social media. Outreach will be especially important with contract bargaining just around the corner.

In order to maximize our web presence, the current website will undergo a transformation to keep it fresh and informative for our members, more comprehensive material will be made available to members in a user-friendly manner. After a brief hiatus, the Steeldrum has returned, providing our members with fact-based information, announcements, letters from the President, survey results, personal spotlights and education and training. The weekly e-newsletter is an offering of timely information on various courses, announcements and upcoming *Continued on next page*

Making a Difference *cont'd...* events. The social media communication channels afford members brief snippets of the goings-on with the Local and updates at events.

The Communications Committee is always on the lookout for talented members who can write, edit or who are good at taking photos. If you would like to join us, please contact Margaret Bucknam at margaret.bucknam@usw1998.ca or P. C. Choo at pc.choo@usw1998.ca



Human Rights Committee

Human Rights Committee Co-Chairs Tade Credgeur (left) and Carrie Flood (right)

As a first step in reviving the Human Rights Committee, educational sessions and events focused on projects that help members gain personal awareness of their human rights at U of T and under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). With that in mind, the committee actively seeks activities that highlight human rights in the workplace.

An information session was held on May 20, 2016 at the St. George campus. This lunch and learn focused on the many grounds covered under the OHRC, and the processes involved in addressing any problems with violations at U of T.

STEELwool has been a major initiative across all three campuses to recognize Bill 132 and the inclusion of sexual harassment in the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Members are making and donating over 132 scarves with a one-day art installation on December 6, 2016. The scarves, labeled with the theme, 'Warming all people of any gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and ability across U of T', will be donated to homeless shelters across the city.

The committee is actively participating and supporting events and projects of all other committees, and hopes to coordinate activities with the human rights committees of the various Unions at U of T.

Join us! If you have an interest in promoting human rights at the U of T and learning more about the following grounds: race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ageism, family status, disability and more, join our committee. Contact Tade (Teddy) at tade@usw1998.ca or Carrie Flood at carrie.flood@utschools.ca



NextGen Committee

NextGen Committee Co-Chairs Tamara Vickery & Justin Holloway

The USW National Next Generation is a program to inspire and educate young members of the United Steelworkers, providing opportunities for mentoring and leadership development, along with union and community activism. The USW has a proud history of standing up for workers both inside the workplace and in the larger community and economy. Next Generation honours our strong past, protects our present and aims to make our union vibrant, viable and relevant for the future by sparking a lifetime of union and community activism.

At our local, our NextGen Committee is a great way for young workers to get involved and to inspire change through thoughtful discussion. Our committee is quite active and this past year, we organized three events.

Our first event of 2016 was held on June 1 and featured a panel of three leading activists in the fight for climate justice and sustainable economies: Suhail Barot from UofT350, Carolyn Egan from Steelworkers Toronto Area Council who participated in drafting the Leap Manifesto, and Jamie Kirkpatrick from Blue Green Alliance. This event was open to staff, students and faculty at the University and was meant to encourage discussion. The idea behind this event was to encourage discussions around what the U of T community could do to support the fight for climate justice and sustainable economies.

The other two events NextGen held this year were lunch-and-learn information sessions. One was on the Leap Manifesto and the other was on the U of T Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign: Clean Pensions, Leap Manifesto, Divestment and Green Workplaces. Both events were held to spread awareness on the topic of Climate Justice to help better inform Steelworker members on these critical and topical subjects. At the Local's general membership meeting on November 16, 2016 there was a motion from the NextGen Committee, supported by the USW1998 Executive Committee, for our local to endorse the Leap Manifesto. We are very pleased that this motion passed unanimously, which we believe will help to propel our Local progressively and boldly into the future.

The NextGen Committee is actively participating and supporting the events and projects of all other committees. Many of our members also serve on multiple other committees. Through cross-participation and inclusivity we hope to increasingly coordinate

our activities with other U of T union committees to build a stronger union network on campus for all, and especially for young workers saddled with an increasingly challenging and uphill socio-economic future.

Join us if you have an interest in getting involved. We are calling on the next generation of bold union activists to step forward and help fight for social justice within our U of T community. If this is you, then please contact the NextGen Co-Chairs: Justin at justin.holloway@usw1998.ca and/or Tamara at tamara.vickery@usw1998.ca

SteelPride Committee



SteelPride Committee Co-Chairs Natasja VanderBerg & Nik Redman

Proud to represent gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered workers, SteelPride works to ensure equality in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in our communities. Steelworkers are helping to raise understanding and respect for the diversity and differences that make us strong. By joining this committee you can help mobilize members and the community around LGBTQ issues.

A few months ago, we might have asked: "It is 2016. Do we still need a SteelPride Committee?" Unfortunately, 2016 has demonstrated to us that it is as important as ever to work to protect LGBTQ safety and rights. We mourned the loss of lives of racialized, Latinx, LGBTQ people in Orlando in June. On our own campus, we have seen debates about gender pronouns that have caused many trans and gender queer people to feel unsafe in their own work and academic environments. In the recent American election, enough people voted for hate and fear to elect Donald Trump as president.

It is 2016, and unfortunately SteelPride is more than necessary. This year, we will continue to meet to talk about how we can positively contribute to a safe and celebratory working environment. Going into collective bargaining, we will discuss whether the collective agreements sufficiently protect our rights in the workplace. We will look at the gains made by other unions in their collective agreements and ask ourselves: what more can be done here at U of T to protect queer families, bodies and lives?

Join us! We have a lot to talk about and, of course, because we are queer and queer allies, we will not forget to celebrate,

while continuing to fight for equal rights for all members of the LGBTQ community. Meetings in 2017 will be at lunch time on the second Wednesday of each month. To get involved, please contact Natasja VanderBerg at natasja.vanderberg@utoronto.ca or Nik Redman at nik.redman@usw1998.ca

Women of Steel Committee



Women of Steel Co-Chairs Mary-Marta Briones-Bird (left) and Kristy Bard (right) take a break from work and union activism to enjoy some delicious cider.

The USW1998 Women of Steel Committee aims to empower women, build solidarity and foster leadership development skills. We do this by holding events and initiating campaigns meant to promote and educate members about issues affecting women. In the past year, our committee has taken a hands-on approach to self-empowerment by offering Wen-Do Self Defence courses in partnership with the U of T Community Safety Office. We also held lunch-time workshops on pay equity and parental leave benefit options. In May 2015, we teamed up with the Human Rights and Steel Pride Committees to throw a Pride Film Screening and Dance Party at the union hall. In December 2015 we co-sponsored a Detoxify Your Workplace event with the NextGen Committee that focused on how to effectively stand up to bullying and harassment.

In the coming months we will be working more with the Human Rights Committee and its STEELwool initiative to promote the USW National Women's Committee Initiative to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Although we strongly believe that women must learn how to effectively defend themselves – hence our commitment to offering Wen-Do Self Defence courses on campus – we also recognize the importance of this campaign, which focuses on the actions men must take to end a culture of violence against women. Check out the powerful Dear Daddy video on YouTube for a better sense of what we mean. Please also visit www.usw.ca/anti-violence.

As our local heads into bargaining, our committee will also be campaigning to ensure we get new language in our collective agreement so victims of domestic violence may have access to paid leave. If you are interested in joining our committee, please get in touch with the Co-Chairs, Kristy Bard at kbard@usw1998.ca and Mary-Marta Briones-Bird at marymarta@usw1998.ca

Negotiating Committees Elected in all USW Local 1998 Units

LOCAL RAMPS UP FOR BARGAINING NEXT YEAR

Negotiating Committees have been elected in all Steelworkers Local 1998 Units as the Local looks ahead to negotiating our new Collective Agreements in 2017. In the **Staff Appointed Unit**, twelve members were elected or acclaimed on October 25, 2016. **They are:**



Mary-Marta Briones-Bird,
Information



Ludmila Elias, UTSC*



Windsor Chan, UTM



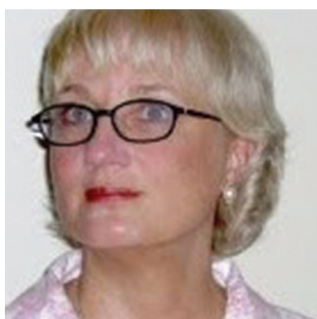
Tade Credgeur, KPHE



Toni Eyre, Slavic Languages



Justin Holloway, OISE



Lillian Lança, Astronomy



Nik Redman, Student Life



Zack Sholdra, KPHE



Victoria Simpson, *Medicine*



John Thomas, *Graduate House*



Sam Xu, *Advancement*



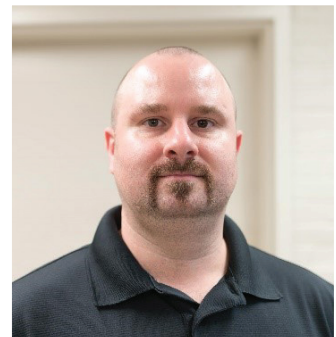
Colleen Burke, *President*.
As President, Colleen Burke is an ex-officio member of the Staff-Appointed Negotiating Committee.

**Janet Blakely was originally elected as the UTSC rep, but she stepped down. Ludmila Elias is replacing her.*

For the Casual Unit, the following were acclaimed:



Matt Edmunds



Marc Therrien

& Chauncey Zhang (no photo available)

At Victoria University, the following were acclaimed to the Negotiating Committee:



John Ankenman



Valerie Ferrier



Alykhan Johnny Rupani

Continued on page 13

Local 1998 Endorses Leap Manifesto

At the November 16 General Membership Meeting, USW Local 1998 voted to endorse the Leap Manifesto, “a call for a Canada based on caring for the Earth and one another.” Leap acknowledges the complex relationship between climate, the economy, racial and gender equity, and social justice.

The motion to endorse the Leap first came to the membership in September. A request for an opportunity to learn more prior to a vote led to two lunch-and-learn sessions. These sessions focused on Leap's most powerful message: that by taking climate justice as a guiding principle, we will create multiple “wins” across the social and economic spectrum.

The first session was led by Carolyn Egan, President of the Steelworkers Toronto Area Council (STAC). Egan helped craft the Leap Manifesto, bringing her lifetime of experience with labour and women's rights to the group of over 60 representatives from environmental, labour, and social justice organizations that collaborated to develop the document. Noting that “there are no jobs on a dead planet,” Egan emphasized that the move to a green economy is an opportunity to create new, good jobs, and that the labour movement should be a leader in shaping the coming green economy.

I also led a session, focusing on the special role for universities in supporting climate justice, and on the ways that the Leap Manifesto, fossil fuel divestment, and other actions for climate justice reflect priorities shared by universities, their workers, and the environmental movement. Those priorities include using research and education to prepare for a green future, and increasing public support for sectors that are already green, including education.

Endorsing Leap is just an early step: as a vision statement, Leap sets the terms for a conversation that we will need to continue within our unions and institution, and with our politicians, about how to build a green future.

Some initial steps towards that green future were reflected in other motions passed at our November meeting: a motion to join other University of Toronto groups in opposing U of T President Meric Gertler's

refusal to adopt targeted fossil fuel divestment, and a motion to support the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation in challenging the approval of Enbridge's Line 9 pipeline before Canada's Supreme Court.

What else would bring us closer to a society built around caring for the Earth and one another? Review the 15 points of the Leap Manifesto, get involved with our NextGen Committee, and let us know what should come next!

— Emily Greenleaf, Arts & Science

The Leap Manifesto's 15 demands:

1. The leap must begin by respecting the inherent rights and title of the original caretakers of this land, starting by fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

2. The latest research shows we could get 100% of our electricity from renewable resources within two decades; by 2050 we could have a 100% clean economy. We demand that this shift begin now.

3. No new infrastructure projects that lock us into increased extraction decades into the future. The new iron law of energy development must be: if you wouldn't want it in your backyard, then it doesn't belong in anyone's backyard.

4. The time for energy democracy has come: wherever possible, communities should collectively control new clean energy systems. Indigenous Peoples and others on the frontlines of polluting industrial activity should be first to receive public support for their own clean energy projects.

5. We want a universal program to build and retrofit energy efficient housing, ensuring that the lowest income communities will benefit first.

6. We want high-speed rail powered by

At University of St. Michael's College, the following were elected:



Manda Vrkljan



Douglas Rothschild

For the University of Toronto Schools, the following were acclaimed:



Martin Aiello



Jane Rimmer

New Chief Stewards Acclaimed

Five new Chief Stewards were acclaimed for their respective divisions in the Staff Appointed Unit at the November 2016 General Membership Meeting.

They are:

- OISE – Justin Holloway
- Medicine – Court Van Beek
- University Operations – John Thomas
- UTM – Windsor Chan
- UTSC – Colin Harris

The Executive has appointed Tade Credgeur as Chief Steward for Kinesiology and Physical Education.

just renewables and affordable public transit to unite every community in this country – in place of more cars, pipelines and exploding trains that endanger and divide us.

7. We want training and resources for workers in carbon-intensive jobs, ensuring they are fully able to participate in the clean energy economy.

8. We need to invest in our decaying public infrastructure so that it can withstand increasingly frequent extreme weather events.

9. We must develop a more localized and ecologically-based agricultural system to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, absorb shocks in the global supply – and produce healthier and more affordable food for everyone.

10. We call for an end to all trade deals that interfere with our attempts to rebuild local economies, regulate corporations and stop damaging extractive projects.

11. We demand immigration status and full protection for all workers. Canadians can begin to rebalance the scales of climate justice by welcoming refugees and migrants seeking safety and a better life.

12. We must expand those sectors that are already low-carbon: caregiving, teaching, social work, the arts and public-

interest media. A national childcare program is long past due.

13. Since so much of the labour of caretaking – whether of people or the planet – is currently unpaid and often performed by women, we call for a vigorous debate about the introduction of a universal basic annual income.

14. We declare that “austerity” is a fossilized form of thinking that has become a threat to life on earth. The money we need to pay for this great transformation is available – we just need the right policies to release it. An end to fossil fuel subsidies. Financial transaction taxes. Increased resource royalties. Higher income taxes on corporations and wealthy people. A progressive carbon tax. Cuts to military spending.

15. We must work swiftly towards a system in which every vote counts and corporate money is removed from political campaigns.

This transformation is our sacred duty to those this country harmed in the past, to those suffering needlessly in the present, and to all who have a right to a bright and safe future. Now is the time for boldness. Now is the time to leap.



District 6 Fall School Returns

After an eight-year hiatus, the **USW District 6 Fall School** returned to Bayview Wildwood in Port Stanton October 23-28, 2016. Our Local sent Mark Austin and Tamara Vickery to the Stewards 3 course, and John Ankenman and Nik Redman attended the Arbitration course. Meanwhile, I was invited by the USW National Education & Equality Office to co-facilitate the Bargaining in a Borderless World course.

Of all the things I cherish about what our union has done for me, these opportunities to serve as a member-facilitator probably tops the list. Since taking the USW Equality Instructor training in March 2015, I have taught Stewards II a couple times, co-facilitated the new Women of Steel course, and co-facilitated a workshop at the 2015 National Women's Conference on *The Gender Equality Activist: Understanding and Supporting Gender Identity and Gender Expression*.

One of the reasons the D6 Fall School has not happened in a while is due to the cost. Locals facing hard times have difficulty justifying the expense of sending members to a week-long retreat so members can learn about globalization and international solidarity. The course was nearly cancelled due to low enrollment. At the beginning, participants were unsure of what to expect. But by the end, it was hugs all around and glowing commendations of how great the course was and how all members should take it.

We learned more about the USW Humanity Fund and talked about France's attempted ban on the burkini to demonstrate how women's bodies are used as sites of contestation to solicit fear of the other and build divisions among the working class. To be able to take some of the concepts I have learned at university and share it with Steelworkers from auto manufacturing and nuclear plants is an awesome feeling. And they get it. One of the participants stated, "I never knew any of this." Not only is he now better informed about the impacts of globalization, but he has the tools he needs to confront racism and sexism when he encounters it in his workplace. And he understands the international networks USW has put in place in order to counter the strength of multi-national corporations threatening to move our jobs overseas.

One point that hit home for me was during a video we showed in class called *The Price of Admission*. This video was made by a USW9346 member after he went on a Humanity Fund trip to Mozambique (it's on YouTube!) Part of the video discusses how we need to understand just how fragile our working standards are. The Humanity Fund works to improve working standards all over the globe not only because we care about workers no

matter where they live – but because we know if we can level the playing field in terms of environmental and health and safety standards, companies will be less incentivized to move our jobs overseas in the first place. But when those jobs do go, it is incumbent on us to do whatever we can to ensure those workers abroad are able to fight for their rights and improve standards for themselves.

We had two international guests at the D6 Fall School, from Chile and Guatemala. The Guatemalan works the exact same job at a Frito Lay plant as one of my class participants. Thanks to a translator, they exchanged information on working conditions and pay rates at their respective plants. They exchanged messages of solidarity to bring back to their workplaces, and started discussion on a worker exchange.

These international alliances and types of solidarity building are so essential if we are going to be effective in countering global corporate power. If we fail in this, if we allow the bosses to sow division among us, we have no hope of holding on to the gains achieved through decades of hard labour struggle.

Here is why I hope the D6 Fall School will once again become an annual USW tradition. Retreats are important because the socialization that happens after class is an important part of solidarity building. District 6 Director Marty Warren referenced this when he welcomed us to the school. It was after attending a similar school in Port Elgin that he decided becoming a union activist was something to which he was willing to commit his life to. It is what you learn from other members in different locals during the non-class time that can end up being useful to you later on. I now have connections with USW members in locals all over. Some of those connections were built in class, but others were built singing *I Love Rock and Roll* and *Bohemian Rhapsody* on the karaoke stage. It is the development of these sorts of personal bonds that give our union the strength and character it needs to thrive.

So I thank the Local for sending me to the D6 School. It was an experience I will cherish for a long time.

— **Kristy Bard**, Co-Chair, Women of Steel Committee

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY UNIT REPORT

Election for the Alternate USW Representative on the Vic Joint Health & Safety Committee

On November 22nd, members cast a ballot in the by-election for the alternate USW representative on the Vic Joint Health & Safety Committee. Evan May and Brenda Velazquez were the two candidates who stood for election. The results of the election are as follows:

- Evan May 51 votes (Elected)
- Brenda Velazquez 18 votes
- Total number of ballots cast 69

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Evan and Brenda for stepping up and accepting their nominations for this important role. Congratulations to Evan on his successful candidacy.

I also want to thank the election tellers,

Halyna Kozar, Candace Zinkweg and Alex Thomson, for running an orderly and efficient election.

Collective Bargaining in 2017

The negotiating team for collective bargaining in 2017 is now set. Joining Omero Landi (our staff representative) and me will be Valerie Ferrier and Johnny Rupani. Valerie was acclaimed as the representative of our salaried members. No one was nominated to be the representative of the part-time members so, after consultation with all the Vic Unit Officers and Stewards, Johnny Rupani was appointed to the position.

Your negotiating team has begun preparing for 2017. In the third week of November, Johnny and I,

along with members of the U of T Staff Appointed Unit's negotiating team, attended a Building Power course. The course focused on strategies for building bargaining power through effective communication, strong support structures, strategic action and maximum membership solidarity. Valerie was on vacation during the week the course was held, but fortunately she has taken it before.

I am excited about having Valerie and Johnny on the team and having the opportunity to work with all members of the Vic unit as we move together towards negotiating a new collective agreement.

— John Ankenman

USW Local 1998

Victoria University Unit President



Nina Di Trapani is the New USW 1998 Office Coordinator

Effective November 1, Nina Di Trapani is our new Office Coordinator. She brings 4

years of experience at the Department of Italian Studies, University of Toronto, as the Departmental Assistant and

another 15 years of previous experience in office support and coordination.

Nina has always been a strong supporter of the Union and she is dedicated to family and charitable causes. Welcome aboard, Nina!



Steelworkers Join the White Ribbon Campaign

The United Steelworkers is speaking out against sexual assault and domestic violence.

The statistics are sobering. Canada-wide studies show that 1 in 3 women over the age of 16 has experienced sexual assault and 1 in 3 workers has experienced domestic violence. Of those who have experienced domestic violence, 53% also experienced abuse at or near their workplace.

How does domestic violence impact workers? Over 80% of domestic violence victims report that their work performance was negatively affected. Absenteeism and poor work performance can leave victims vulnerable to discipline. Almost 10% said they had lost a job because of domestic violence. This adds even more precariousness to these workers' future as they are now coping with the violence itself and the lack of economic security from their loss of employment, putting them and their children at further risk.

The good news is that there are many ways we can join together in helping to end domestic violence and sexual assault. Here are some of the ways we can take action:

- Ensuring our union continues to provide training on human rights and ending bullying and harassment;
- Asking our union to support the creation of a network of trained domestic violence first responders;
- Sign the petition in support of Bill 26, Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act, 2016 (<http://usw.to/vgl>);
- Wearing the white ribbon to show a commitment to ending violence;
- Attending events annually on October 4, the National Day to Commemorate Missing and

Murdered Indigenous Women, and December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women;

- Bargaining collective agreement language relating to equity and assistance for those experiencing domestic violence;
- Supporting local women's shelters;
- Committing to making anti-violence part of our culture, whether at work, home or in union activities; and
- Believing survivors.

Article references:

usw.ca/act/campaigns/anti-violence-campaign-2016

Additional Resources:

usw.ca/act/activism/women-of-steel/resources/sheltersafe-ca-a-lifeline-to-safety-for-abused-women-and-their-children

torontocentralhealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10669

torontocentralhealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10669

—Mary-Marta Briones-Bird, Co-Chair, Women of Steel Committee