

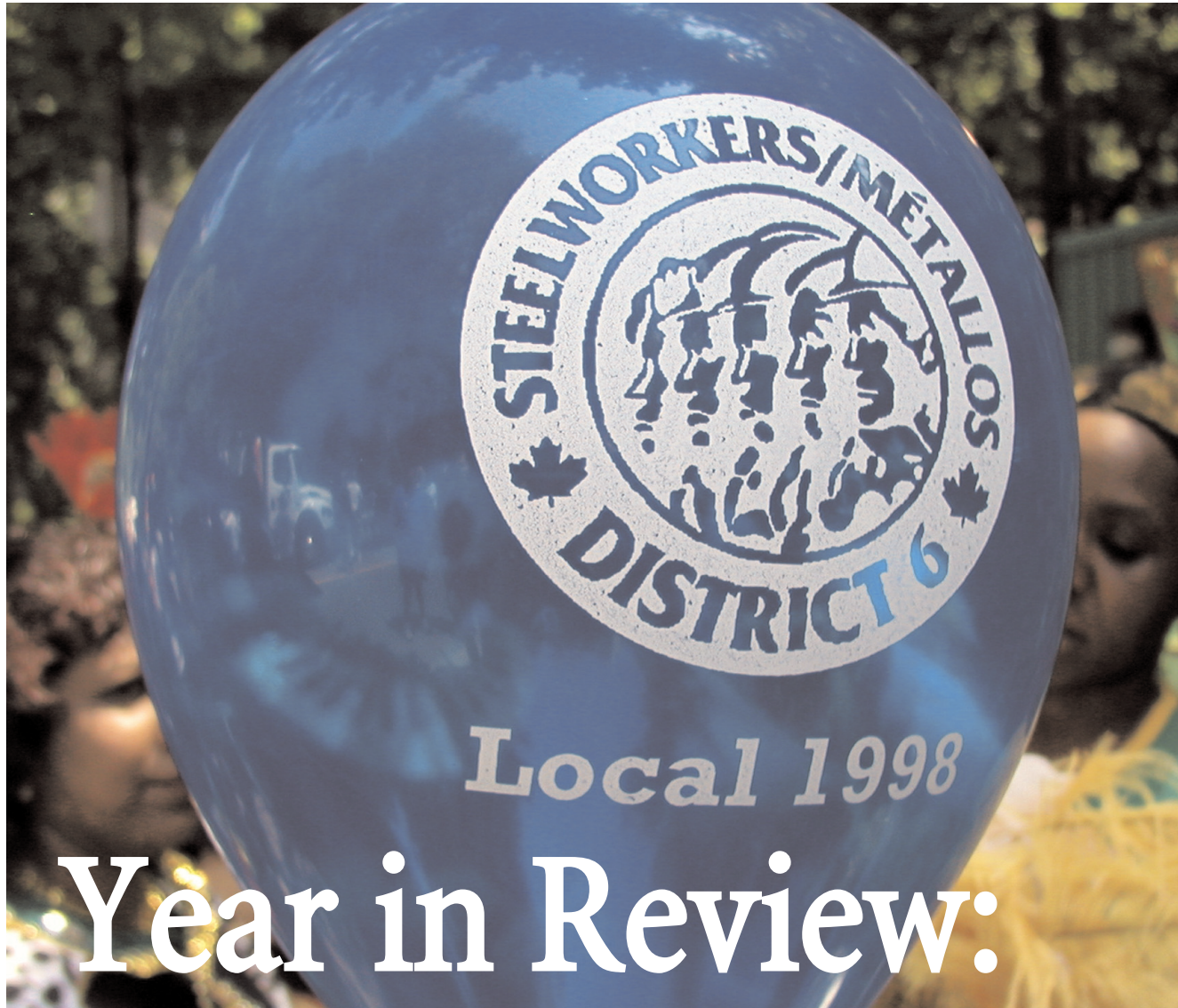
STEELDRUM



News for members of Steelworkers Local 1998

February 2006, volume 6, no 1

uswa1998.ca



2005 HAS BEEN ANYTHING but a "business as usual" year here at Steelworkers Local 1998. Our contract negotiations were tense and dramatic with the staff-appointed agreement being reached just under the wire at 5:30 a.m. on September 12, 2005 (the deadline).

We managed to exact improvements from management with wage increases (9.3% over the life of the contract), in benefits, grievance procedure, job evaluation, health and safety and more. All of this could not have been

accomplished without strong membership support. Our strike votes were unprecedented with over 2,200 members turning out to vote overwhelmingly in favour of strike mandates. Once again, I thank you for your continuing support. We could not have accomplished what we did without you.

This, our third collective agreement, reinforced three important lessons for achieving a good contract:

- **Planning and strategy leads to successful bargaining;**

The Steelworkers Union truly is "Everybody's Union" in the 21st Century.

- **Communication is essential;**
- **Membership involvement and support is critical.**

These learned lessons will continue to be priorities for all of our work in 2006. One of the first tasks for the new Executive will be to develop a long range plan for the next round of bargaining in 2008.

Our CAT (Communications Action Team) program was crucial through negotiations keeping the membership fully informed and providing critical input from members. We would like to continue to develop and expand the CAT during the next two years. As well, our standing committees hosted a number of fascinating and well attended lunchtime sessions for members.

Our newsletter **SteelDrum** continues to provide articles on important issues such as workplace bullying, sexual harassment, and progress reports on the Job Evaluation Committee, the 100K Club and more. Let us know if there is a story or an issue that you would like covered in **SteelDrum**.

A number of important issues were identified in last year's bargaining survey including air quality and improving the

...continued on page 7

index

- 2 Reports
- 3 Reports continued
- 4 On Other Fronts
- 5 School of Graduate Studies Reorganization Update
- 6 Year In Review
- 8 No 'McFood' at Arbor Room; Take Action Against RSIs
- 9 Lynn Williams named to the Order of Canada
- 10 Financially Speaking; Union dues Tax deductible
- 12 Job Evaluation Update

Asbestos Cleanup Raises Concern

Members who work in the Sidney Smith Building (St. George Campus) are raising a number of questions and concerns further to the discovery of asbestos containing materials in the building. On December 14, an "asbestos information session" was held for all faculty and staff. The meeting was organized by the university's department of Environmental Health and Safety and featured Dr. Don Pinchin, a leading management consultant on occupational health and safety.

Dr. Pinchin noted that the university "is doing everything that is appropriate to be vigilant in order to ensure that the work

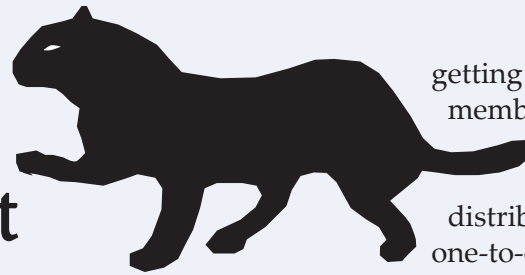


environment remains healthy and safe." Exposure to asbestos dust can result in a condition known as mesothelioma - a malignant tumor that can develop in the lining of the lungs, heart or abdomen. This form of carcinoma may take 20 to 30 years before it begins to metastasize.

"Friable asbestos, which is ...continued on page 11



Victoria University CAT report



As negotiations went down to the wire late last fall, the Communications Action Team at Victoria University, consisting of Nancy Wesson, Wanda Hughes, Vince Montori, Jerri Nogas, Valerie Ferrier, Halyna Kozar and me, stepped up their activities,

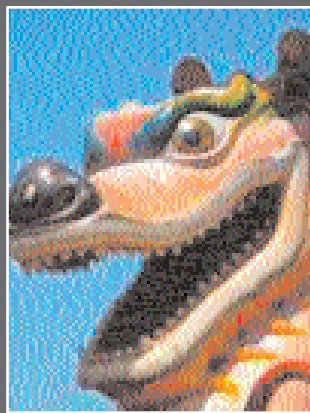
getting timely information out to the membership from the Negotiating Team. Having the team in place meant that information could be distributed to the membership on a one-to-one basis, allowing for personal contact and an engaged membership. Small wonder that when it came time for a strike vote, the membership was solidly behind the Negotiating Team!

Many thanks to the members of the CAT for their work in securing a successful contract.

▪ Alex Thomson

Dragons for Charity

Onlookers cheered as unblinking fire-breathers raced the deep Kettle Lake of Seneca College (King Campus) on August 20, 2005. These dragon boats were part of a one-day regatta for ATI Technology Inc.'s second annual Dragon Boat Festival for the United Way of York Region. In Chinese tradition, the Dragon Boat Festival takes place on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar. One of three major Chinese holidays, it has the longest history, dating back well over 2000 years. A



day for warding off evil and disease while promoting peace in one's life, the day is celebrated by racing long, slender boats that are colorfully decorated to resemble dragons.

Jason Lee of Admissions and Awards, participated in this year's ATI Dragon Boat race and was one of six "pacers" in his amateur crew, the MGP Navigators. The crew of twenty-two included twenty paddlers, a drummer (who sets the pace) and a Steersperson. They took part in the 250-meter races that day after a mere six practices. While legend tells us that dragons rule the waters, ...continued on page 9



Victoria University Report

With the solid support of the membership behind them, the Victoria Unit's negotiating team reached a tentative agreement with the university for a new contract.

The new contract, ratified on November 2nd by a vote of 89%, includes significant gains in wages and pensions. Improvements were also made in short term disability, pregnancy leave, primary caregiver/adoption leave, health and safety, job evaluation, vision care, job postings, on-call provisions and in the terms of employment for temporary staff.

The membership as a whole is to be commended for the solidarity they showed throughout negotiations. The gains made would not have been possible without their 89% strike mandate and other displays of support.

Thanks are due to the Communication Action Team (Valerie Ferrier, Wanda Hughes, Halyna Kozar, Vince Montori, Jerry Nogas, Alex Thomson and Nancy Wesson) for working hard to keep members up to date on the progress of the negotiations and for facilitating communication from the membership to the negotiating team.

Thank you to Ann Black, Halyna Kozar, Alex Thomson and Nancy Wesson for acting as tellers for the strike mandate and ratification votes.

An "improper implementation of management rights" grievance has been filed on behalf of a member. Jerry Nogas presented the grievance at the first step meeting and the university has agreed in principle to the settlement requested.

In December the Events Coordinator position became vacant not long after the manager in charge of the position resigned. The administration decided that it would be best to hire a new supervisor and let them get some experience at Victoria before posting the Events Coordinator position. This would allow the new supervisor to take part in hiring the new Events Coordinator and to better know the requirements of the job.

In the meantime, the university decided to temporarily fill the Events Coordinator position (a bargaining unit position) with a manager, reasoning that there was a temporary vacancy covered by Article 12.04 of the new collective agreement and that the manager would be best able to immediately provide the coverage needed.

Members of our unit expressed concern about this situation to their union. Their main concern was that a manager was doing bargaining unit work and that this blocked a member from gaining valuable career

...continued on page 5

index

Newsletter Committee

John Ankenman
Marjorie Bhola-Swami
Mary Bird
Marcella Bollers
Robin Breon
P.C. Choo (Editor & Co-Chair)
Allison Dubarry
Jenny Fan
Glenda Gillis
Halyna Kozar
Lillian Lanca
Lidia Mestnik
Deborah Ohab
Tanya Patina
Steve Rutchinski (Co-Chair)
Ron Wener

Layout & Design

Kim Walker

Graphics

Canadian Association of
Labour Media (CALM)

Photography & Images

P.C. Choo
Kim Walker

The Steeldrum is published by USWA Local 1998 (UofT). The Newsletter is printed by Payette and Simms. The Steeldrum is a member of USPA and CALM.

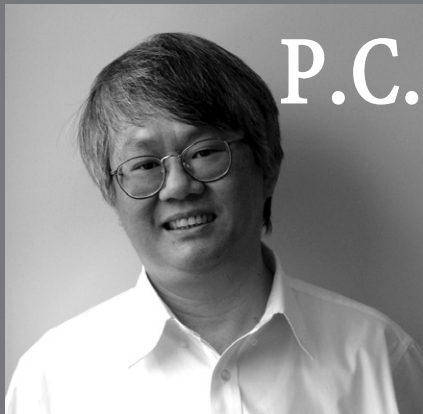
All inquiries and submissions are encouraged. Submissions by email are preferred.

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

STEELDRUM directory
t 416.506.9090 f 416.506.0640 info@uswa1998.ca

who
we
are





P.C. on G.C.

Governing Council Update

I am now exactly half-way through my three-year term on Governing Council. The past one and a half years has been a steep learning curve. For 2004-5, Brian Davis (my fellow Governor for administrative staff) graciously agreed to stay on the Executive Committee of Governing Council while I got my feet wet. This year, I assumed my position on the Executive Committee. I am also on the Planning and Budget committee as well as the Elections Committee.

Meetings with the President

In October 2005, Prof. David Naylor, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, was named the new President of U of T. Prof. Naylor hit the ground running. In quick succession, he met with the Governors of the various constituencies to listen to their concerns. Brian and I met with the President twice - once in October and again in November last year. While the proceedings of the meetings are confidential, we touched on a number of issues affecting administrative staff including staff layoff arising from the constant re-organizing/re-structuring of departments, job evaluation and pay-equity, the under-representation of administrative staff on Governing Council, and the need for adequate

funding for staff training and development.

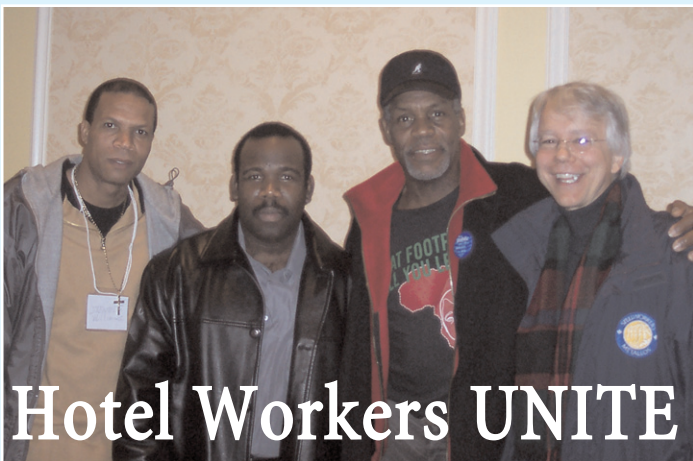
Disestablishment of the Departments of Botany and Zoology

The proposed disestablishment of the departments of biology and zoology and the creation of two new departments raised the prospect of potential job losses. I raised the question at Executive Committee and asked why administrative staff were not represented on the ad-hoc committee set up to facilitate the merger of the two departments.

Thank you

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President, Allison Dubarry, the Executive of Steelworkers Local 1998 and the general membership, for supporting the work that I do on Governing Council. It is deeply appreciated.

■ P. C. Choo, Governing Council



Hotel Workers UNITE

ACTOR AND ACTIVIST DANNY GLOVER was in town on December 3 to help kick off a campaign on behalf of hotel workers in the city of Toronto.

Appropriately held at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel where many of the employees who service the

hotel are members of Local 75 UNITE HERE union, the campaign will concentrate on improving collective agreements for over 6,000 hotel workers in the city whose contracts are up for re-negotiation this year. The goal is to extend the benefits of unionization in the hotel industry to workers throughout North America. Some hotel workers in Toronto, such as those at the Sutton Place are represented by the Steelworkers and, in the words of John Cartwright, President of Labour Council: "this event represents a visible display of unity and solidarity between every major union in the city. We intend to raise the standards of over one million workers in the Toronto region who make \$29,800 or less per year."

From left to right (picture): Dennis Williams and Ray Grant (representing Steelworkers Toronto Area Council), Danny Glover, and Robin Breon (Vice President, Local 1998).

Seniority List Posted

THE NEW SENIORITY LIST has been posted at www.utoronto.ca/myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/hrhome/labour.htm

Please check your entry to make sure it is correct. Even if your entry was correct on the previous posting, do check to make sure there has been no data entry error. If there is an error in your entry, you will notice there is a link to USW Seniority Correction Form (Word Document). Click on the link and follow the instructions.

If you have any questions, please contact Lillian Lanca at **416. 506. 9090 ext.228** or at lanca@uswa1998.ca

NOTE: Challenges must be received no later than March 31, 2006.



IN MEMORY: John Valant

John Valant's sudden passing on October 24, 2005 came as a shock to his family and friends. John served the university as an employee for over twenty-five years and at the time of his death was working as a Bio-safety Officer in the department of

Environmental Health and Safety.

John began working for the university in technical services within the Faculty of Medicine until his area of responsibility was placed under the umbrella of Environmental Health and Safety in the mid-90s. This brought with it a wider scope of responsibility that included both the UTSC and UTM campuses.

Margaret Fung, Manager for Occupational Hygiene and Safety, worked closely with John for a number of years.

"He was just a wealth of knowledge", Fung told Steeldrum. "He was literally a walking encyclopaedia in the area of bio-safety. I could always go to John for information that I needed. He played a crucial role with regard to biological agents and working with the bio-safety committee who had to approve all operating certificates."

Gail Bryant is executive assistant to the Institute of Population and Public Health in the Banting Building and remembers the time that John responded to a call from employees there who were bothered by a strong odour.

"I was co-chair of the Faculty of Medicine Joint Health and Safety Committee and I remember calling John to come in and see what he could do. He was very professional and soon traced the problem to an old autoclave that wasn't functioning correctly and wasn't vented properly. John suggested that the aging piece of equipment be shut down and thrown out and that was the end of the pollution that was seeping into our working environment."

Everyone remembers John's sense of responsibility and commitment to his work as well as his great sense of humour. We extend our sympathy to John's family and those who were dear to him.

■ Robin Breon



relevant news
for steelworkers

other
on fronts

Nice work - If you can get it

STEPHEN CRAWFORD, AN EXECUTIVE with the big U.S. investment firm Morgan Stanley, recently received a \$32 million package after his promotion to co-president. His compensation is equal to \$10,416 an hour or \$2.89 every second - even while he is asleep.

Crawford's excessively large bonus has made him a contender for the Executive Excess Hall of Shame. Inductees were announced in this year's Executive Excess Report, a joint publication of United for a Fair Economy (UFE) and the Institute for Policy Studies.

Someone else's pain is my gain

The top layoff leader in terms of layoff numbers

is Carly S. Fiorina at Hewlett-Packard. She fired 25,700 workers in 2001, and saw her pay jump 231 percent, from \$1.2 million in 2001 to \$4.1 million in 2002.

The top layoff leader by percentage pay increase is AOL Time Warner's Gerald M. Levin, who presided over 4,380 layoffs in 2001. Levin's pay increased a staggering 1,612 percent, from \$1.2 million in 2001 to \$21.2 million in 2002.

The highest paid layoff leader was Tyco's Dennis Kozlowski, who took home over \$71 million in 2002, a \$34.7 million raise, even though he was forced out in disgrace mid-year. In 2001, Tyco laid off 11,300 workers. The top 50 layoff leaders cut a total of 465,252 jobs in 2001.

Guess who is an associate Steel member?

WOULD YOU believe that actor and activist Martin Sheen and writer, actor and producer Al Franken have joined the ranks of the Steelworkers (USW) in fighting to advance the causes of ordinary people?

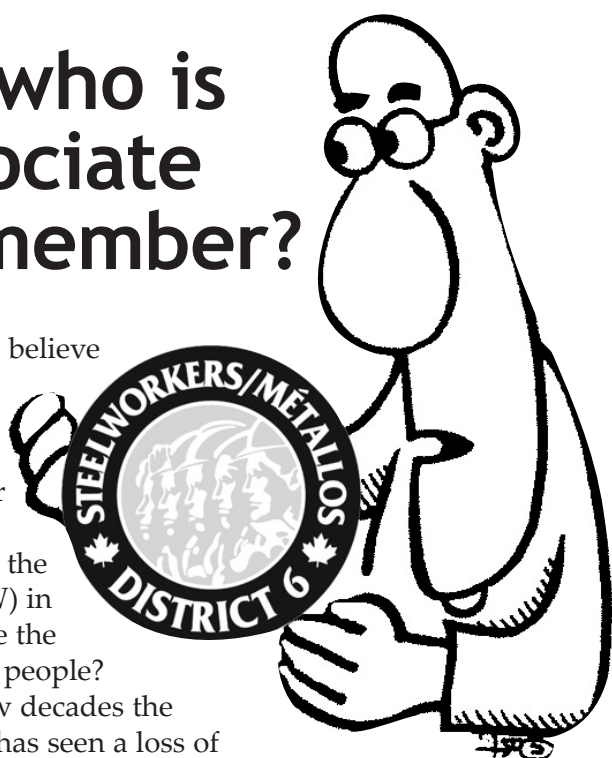
Over the past few decades the labour movement has seen a loss of membership in the workforce lead to a decline in political and collective bargaining strength. The labour movement began to look for new models of representation and to think "outside the box" - and outside the workplace.

As a result, USW membership is no longer limited to the workplace. Ordinary people can now join as Associate Members even if they are students and/or unemployed. Their voices can be heard through membership and, by doing so, they become eligible for benefits including health savings, college scholarships, distance education courses, online job skills development, legal resources and more.

Also, this greater membership enables the union to represent the ordinary person not only in the workplace but in the political arena. Grassroots concerns and possibly solutions can be brought to the attention of those with the power to initiate positive change. Support can be increased through coalitions with other groups to promote change in the workplace, on environmental issues, in the areas of healthcare, human rights, help for the unemployed, aid to developing countries and much more.

This new category of membership offers individuals strength in numbers. For more information visit their website at www.uswa.org/am

■ Glenda Gillis, Admissions and Awards



What Great Minds thought of Labour

THANK GOD WE HAVE A system of labor where there can be a strike. Whatever the pressure, there is a point where the working man may stop.

- President Abraham Lincoln (Republican)

JOIN THE UNION, GIRLS, and together say "Equal Pay for Equal Work."

- Susan B. Anthony

ONLY A FOOL WOULD TRY to deprive working men and women of the right to join a union of their choice.

- President Dwight David Eisenhower (Republican)

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF union organizations must be admitted: their object is the representation of the various categories of workers, their lawful collaboration in the economic advance.

- Pope Paul VI



WHEN WORKERS MAKE concessions to keep companies afloat, it is wrong for companies to use bankruptcy laws to bust unions.

- Vice-President Walter Mondale (Democrat)

IT IS ONE OF THE characteristics of a free and democratic nation that it has free and independent labour unions.

- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Democrat)

School of Graduate Studies Reorganization Update

Graduate education administration and governance reorganization at the U of T continues according to plan. **Steeldrum** reported on the University Task force and Discussion Paper on the reorganization in our summer edition. We engaged administrative staff at SGS and in the units for their input on this paper. The administrative staff views were reflected in the summer issue of **Steeldrum** and were submitted to the Task Force.

We circulated the reply we received from Provost Vivek Goel and Vice-Provost and Dean of SGS Susan Pfeiffer. The reply missed the point. Staff concerns about job security and workloads, for example, were addressed as follows:

"Concern that the (1996) restructuring would be repeated was raised by different individuals. We have made it clear that this is not the intent of the exercise. We are keenly aware of the anxieties that were created in that context and we must all guard against

processes that might re-create such an environment. Staff concerns on this matter, however, should be allayed by the message of the Final Report...(that) administrative arrangements for graduate education will not change until appropriate new arrangements are in place. ... Any resource implications of proposed changes will need to be addressed during the preparatory phase."

Despite this assurance, the concerns of the graduate administrative staff are not ungrounded. In September 2003, reviewing the work of SGS under his tenure, Dean Michael Marrus wrote to the Provost, *"The 1996 Task Force ... insisted, and the Provost undertook to reinvest any savings realized through downsizing... Nevertheless costs have been cut and the budget of SGS has been reduced ... The SGS coat was already a bit too tight that year, we think; notwithstanding, the coat has been taken in annually ever since."*

Dean Marrus concluded, *"There is a consensus, at SGS and I think in some graduate units as well, that decentralization may have gone a bit too far in 1996, and it may be time to examine how the balance*

can be brought back to greater capacity by SGS to exercise quality control and maintain the administrative processes that assure it. There may be economies of scale to be realized as well."

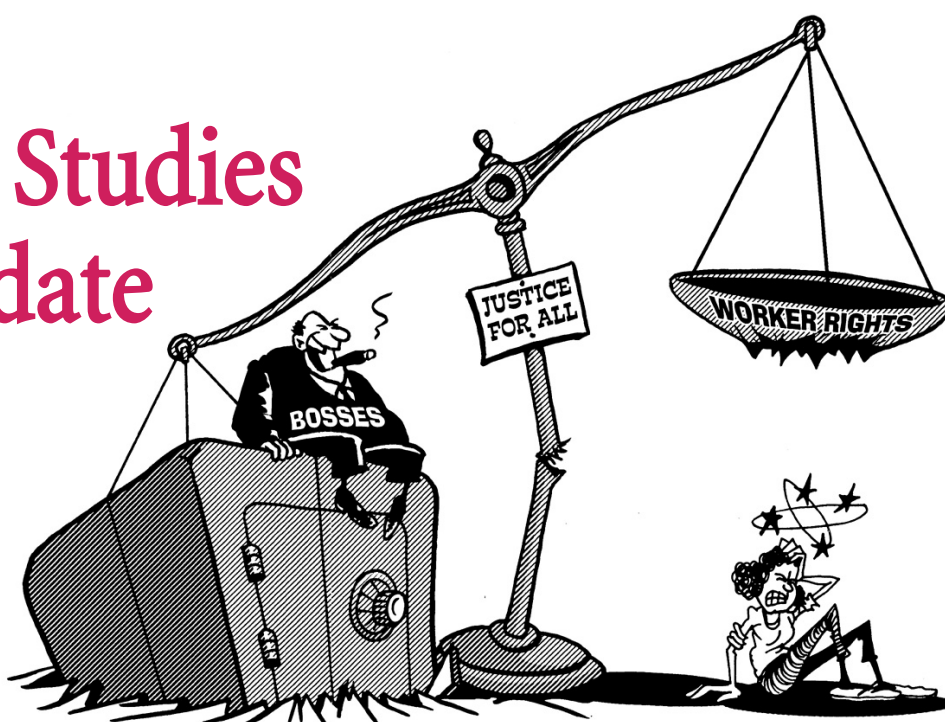
These arguments were echoed, independently, by the graduate administrative staff in response to the current reorganization Discussion Paper. The staff concerns are grounded in staff experience since the Sedra/Cohen exercise.

Since the summer, the reorganization Discussion Paper implementation has moved forward. As of July 1, 2005 the authority of the Dean of SGS was enhanced by the addition of the duties and title of

'Vice-Provost, Graduate Education'. A Graduate Education Coordinating Committee has been established. This includes the SGS Dean and Vice-Dean as well as Deans from faculties that have graduate responsibilities and two graduate students. An

expanded version of this group, including two staff and another Vice-Provost, is working on governance structures. Governance related changes are to be expedited, with the main thrust being the involvement of the faculties in proposed changes to existing programs and new initiatives on the one hand and an SGS-managed website for consultation prior to approval on the other. A new decanal structure for SGS is also being considered. One Associate Dean would be responsible for student matters and the other for program matters, across all divisions.

A Working Group to plan restructuring of graduate administrative functions has been



formed, chaired by the SGS Vice-Dean. This group includes two staff from large faculties and two graduate students, and the focus is on IT matters.

Graduate administrators, many already concerned about workload, are about to see graduate enrolment grow tremendously. The government of Ontario plans to double graduate enrolment in the province over a ten-year period. The U of T's graduate enrolment plan will be developed based on the plans of all graduate units. The units are directed to include proposed increases in student intake in their planning; also to assess the unit's graduate enrolment plan in light of supervisory capacity, research funding needs, space requirements, and initiatives to enhance the student experience - part of the focus of the Discussion Paper. Of interest is that the Discussion Paper fails to make mention of appropriate levels of administrative staff in the planning.

To say the lack of mention of administrative staff is incompetence or disrespect side-steps the issue. Who will do the work? How? That is the issue. Perhaps the university expects technology can take on some of the load, and this may be so. However, technology has a way of increasing existing workloads. Administrative staff have their job descriptions, and we must live up to them and also know when to draw the line. What cannot be accomplished by a person during the day, week, and month is the responsibility of management to solve. The impact of the reorganization has an impact on our physical and mental health and the safety and working conditions of the graduate administrative staff.

■ Edith Fraser & Steve Rutchinski, SGS

Victoria University Report

...continued from page 2

experience by being temporarily transferred into the position.

The union met with the Human Resources Department to make its case that the vacancy is a permanent vacancy that needs to be filled temporarily; it is not a temporary vacancy, as defined by Article 12.04, which can be filled at the discretion of the university. If the university wants to temporarily fill the position before it is posted, one of our members needs to be temporarily transferred into it. The university will soon give us their formal response.

At the recent unit meeting, members reported that the housekeeping schedule has been regularly posted less than one week in advance as required by the collective agreement. The union has met with management about this issue and the schedule is now being posted on time.

Vince Montori and Jerry Nogas have been working with a member who received an unpaid suspension. After much deliberation, the member decided not to file a grievance.

Valerie Ferrier is currently assisting a member who received a written warning. She has filed an unjust discipline grievance on behalf of the member and scheduled a step one grievance meeting with management.

In her health and safety report at the January unit meeting, Julia Holland talked about the proper procedures for the handling of garbage and recycling material in consideration of the safety of the grounds crew. She also spoke about the work the union members of the Health and Safety Committee have been doing to prevent cigarette smoke from entering the ventilation systems of campus buildings, and about the new composition of the committee.

■ John Ankenman, Unit Chairperson



local
1998
year.in
review



2005 Year in Review ...continued from page 1

working environment. In fact members ranked improving the working environment (bullying and harassment) as high up on the list of priorities. We are not going to wait for the next round of bargaining to address these issues. Work has already begun and will continue leading up to the next round of bargaining.

Our bargaining survey was an important communication tool that allowed you to let the union know which issues were important and needed to be addressed with the university. Survey results allow the union to key identify issues, prioritize and develop a strategy to deal with them. The air quality campaign was a direct result of the responses from the bargaining survey. We will be developing another survey in the upcoming months so that we can identify further issues that need to be addressed on the members' behalf.

Employment equity is a topic that has been the subject of many discussions at U of T in the last few weeks, especially amongst Steelworkers. This is not surprising when one considers the demographics of our local (70% women) and also the fact that we are engaged in a massive job evaluation project with the university. Recently, we examined the gender distribution by job type and found that many women are still clustered in traditionally female jobs. We do hope that one of the results of the employment equity census will be the development of specific plans for administrative and technical staff that will improve the representation of women and other groups in a variety of jobs.

The Steelworkers union recently experienced a massive expansion to 850,000 members in 2005 when 350,000 members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy International Union (PACE) voted to join the Steelworkers. In Canada, 23,000 cultural workers from the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) entered into a strategic alliance with the Steelworkers.

Steelworkers and actors from ACTRA went to Ottawa in November to lobby in support of Canadian culture. One of the lobbyists, actor R.H. Thompson (Road to Avonlea, The Tommy Douglas Story) said, "It's time for politicians to take a stand and recognize that working people - regardless of what they do for a living - are the backbone of our nation. Let's see politicians make some key commitments on culture and trade and show us they're listening."

The Steelworkers union in the 21st century is certainly "Everybody's union". Today it is one of the most diverse unions in Canada with members in educational institutions, health care, banks, retail, hotels, manufacturing, chemical and steel, to name a few. As well, it is the only union that has preserved the "one member, one vote" process



year.in review

in the elections of our leadership. Diversity and democracy are two important principles that inform how we operate daily and make us strong as a union, nationally, internationally and in Local 1998.

Just as steel beams build a strong structure, Steelworker members build a strong local. Your ongoing involvement is critical. I look forward to working with you in 2006.

■ *Allison Dubarry, President*

1: Member Olga Williams celebrates her retirement; 2. Holiday Choir performs at Year End Party; 3. Melba Remedios thanks Legendary Activist Sophia Williams De Bruyn for her talk on the South African Liberation Struggle; 4. Celebrating Pride Day; 5. Labour Day; 6. Toronto Star Columnist Ellen Roseman (L) with Marcella Bollers following her 'Money 101' talk; 7. Linda Oliver with her colourful chariot at Labour Day; 8. Local 1998 Executive gives the 'Thumbs Up' to the new Staff-Appointed Collective Agreement.





No to 'McFood' at Arbor Room

DESPITE THE COLD, staff, students and like-minded supporters gathered outside Hart House on February 9, 2006 in an effort to persuade the Board of Stewards to reverse the decision to close down the Arbor Room and contract out its operation.

The Arbor Room has been in operation for 51 years and has never made a profit. However, it is a popular hangout and is often frequented by students, staff, faculty and members of the public. The decision to close down the Arbor Room was made after five years of steep financial losses. A few years ago, a consultant was commissioned to conduct a feasibility study to build up business. The recommendations include increased advertising and signage, and expanding the entertainment, given that it is always packed at lunch time but almost deserted at night. However, none of the recommendations were implemented - a move described by one patron as "mysterious and probably setting up [the Arbor Room] for failure." The Arbor Room lost \$11,000 in the year of the study - a drop in the ocean considering the university's overall one billion dollar budget.

In an interview with **Steeldrum**, Arbor Room manager, Inara Strauss described the closing as 'devastating.' Strauss

appeared more concerned about her staff and the students. "There are seven full-time and one part-time staff and some casuals. They are going to be losing their jobs. I have three women staff with young families," she said. At the same time, "students will be losing a very student-friendly place for which they pay for through their student fees." Although Strauss and her staff are protected under their collective agreements against contracting out, there are not many food-service jobs on campus. The only alternative is to take jobs in maintenance or groundskeeping.

"It is something that has been a trend in many universities," said Allison Dubarry, President of Steelworkers Local 1998. "It is about eroding good paying jobs through contracting out. It is totally unacceptable."

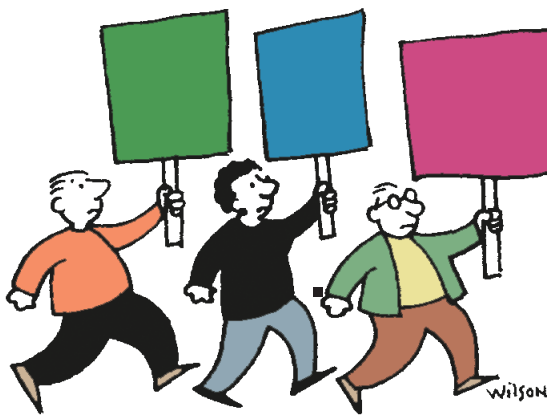
The Students' Administrative Council (SAC), Steelworkers Local 1998 and CUPE Local 3261 have all launched petitions calling on Hart House officials to reverse their decision.

February 28th: Take Action Against RSIs

On February 28th, we will observe Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day, and there is no better time to get the word out about the painful, often debilitating injuries that can result from improper work design and overuse or misuse, usually of the upper body. Common symptoms include tenderness, aching, swelling, tingling and numbness, loss of strength, loss of movement and decreased coordination in the injured area.

RSIs can affect anyone, even children and students who are exposed to one or more of the risk factors, which include repetition (such as keying or mousing for long periods), static posture (holding the same position for a long time), improper workstation set-up, use of excessive force, vibration, working in a cold environment, or working at a rapid pace without breaks. The 2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey reported more than 2 million Canadian adults with RSIs serious enough to limit their normal activities. And the costs associated with these injuries are staggering...estimated at more than 26 billion dollars a year for health care and income assistance. The greatest cost, of course, is to the individual, who may lose ability to perform daily tasks and cherished activities.

What can we do to prevent RSIs? Job design is important. Wherever possible, repetitive tasks should be reduced or eliminated. Enriching our job tasks is an important way of avoiding overuse of one part of the body, and increased autonomy can significantly reduce the stress and strain of many jobs. And who knows, perhaps some of us will experience the upside of job redesign. For most of us here at U of T, it is a simple and unavoidable fact that we will spend hours working at our computers, or performing other repetitive tasks, such as pipeting at the lab bench. Given that, it is crucial to remember that frequent breaks from the repetitive work are important. While we do not have an enforceable Ergonomics Regulation in this province, the Ontario Ministry of Labour



encourages taking a 5-minute break away from intensive computer operation each hour (www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/guidelines/gl_comp_rest.html) It notes that at management's discretion, the 5-minute break can mean either a period of other work not involving a computer, or a full break. It is important for each of us to remember that those rest breaks can be what stands between us and a life-altering injury!

We need to use ergonomic approaches to both the job design and the workplace. Our work areas should be appropriate to our individual body size

and shape, and our tools should be properly designed and maintained to reduce or eliminate muscular effort and force needed for a task.

Where do we find help with making our jobs safe from RSIs? The Occupational Health & Safety Act requires that employers "take every precaution reasonable in the circumstance for the protection of a worker" (S.25(2)(h)), and that includes protecting us from RSIs. If you think your job or workstation could cause or contribute to an RSI, please speak to your supervisor ...and let your worker Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) members know (ergonomics should be a part of every workplace inspection!). If you do not get the help you need, please contact the Local 1998 Health & Safety Committee. We can work with your JHSC to address the problem. And if you do develop a work-related RSI and require medical attention, miss work, or require modified duties for more than a week, please be sure to submit an incident form, available at: www.utoronto.ca/safety/wcbproc.htm. If you require assistance with accommodation issues or with a WSIB claim, please contact the union office at 416. 506. 9090.

You will find excellent information on RSI's on the Workers Health & Safety Centre (WHSC) website at: www.whsc.on.ca. The Office of Environmental Health & Safety also has a large amount of useful ergonomics information and "troubleshooting" help on their website (www.utoronto.ca/safety), and you can request that ...continued on next page

Lynn Williams named to the Order of Canada

Members of USW Local 1998 are proud to join the chorus congratulating former USW International President, Lynn Williams, upon his appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada.

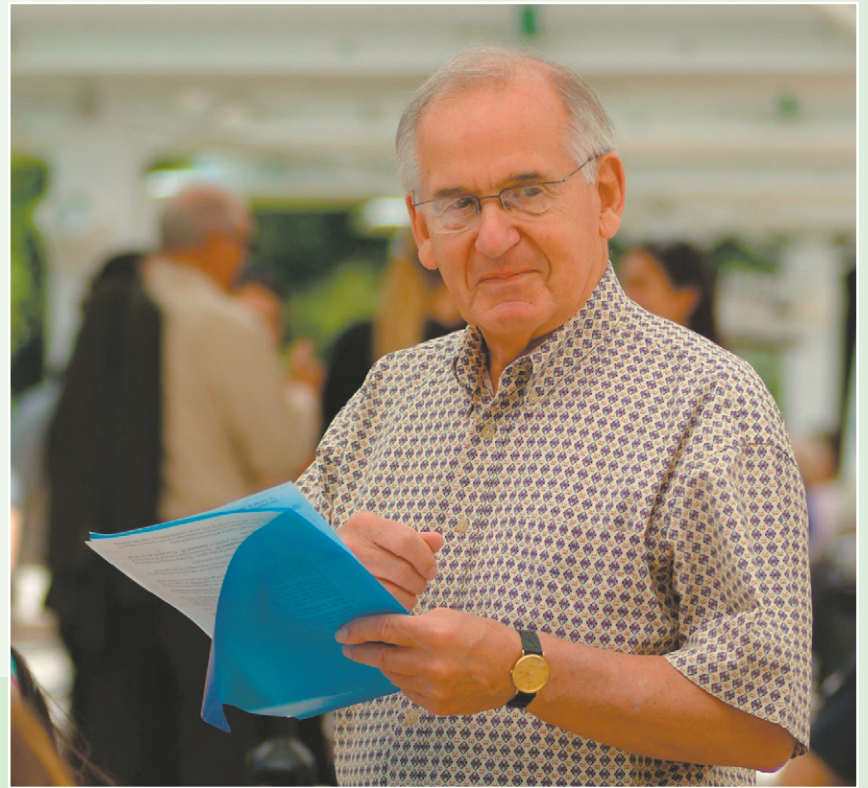
The Order of Canada is our country's highest honour for lifetime achievement. Established on the centennial of Confederation, it recognizes and celebrates outstanding achievement and service in various fields of human endeavor, including the arts, sciences, education, social service, and, in Lynn Williams' case, labour relations. There are three levels of membership - Companion, Officer and Member - which honour people whose accomplishments vary in degree and scope.

A graduate of McMaster University, Williams was a graduate student at the University of Toronto in 1947, when he abandoned his study of economics and industrial relations to take a job on the assembly line at the John Inglis plant in Toronto. There, he joined the United Steelworkers of America, Local 2900. He left a year later to work for the Canadian Labour Congress. In 1956, Williams joined the Steelworkers' staff and worked in Regina, the Niagara Peninsula and Toronto.

He was elected District Director in 1973, International Secretary in 1977 and President, the first Canadian ever to hold that position, in 1984. He twice was reelected.

As well, Williams was the first person to serve, although not simultaneously, on both the executive of the Canadian Labour Congress

"His election to the Order calls attention to his exceptional and extraordinary service to the Steelworkers and the broader labour movement."



and on the executive of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Unions (A.F.L.- C.I.O.)

He retired on March 1, 1994, and moved back to Toronto. He has remained engaged with the USW and is the President of SOAR, the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees, dedicated to political and legislative action to safeguard and enhance the economic security and well being of its members and older and retired persons.

"His election to the Order calls attention to his exceptional and extraordinary service to the Steelworkers and the broader labour movement; his dedication and commitment has enriched the lives of others and made a difference to life in Canada," said Allison Dubarry, President of USW Local 1998. "It is a fitting tribute to a remarkable career." Congratulations, Lynn!

■ Carolellen Norskey

Take Action Against RSIs

...continued from last page

an EH&S hygienist schedule an assessment of your workstation. But, please... Do not wait months for an assessment...or necessary changes! If work hurts, see your doctor and make sure to tell you doctor that the pain is job-related.

Remember, if you think you may be at risk for developing an RSI, take a break, tell your supervisor and your union Health & Safety rep, and see your doctor. Please do not try to "work through it" - you could be risking a life-altering injury!

■ MaryAnn DeFrancis, Co-Chair, Health & Safety Committee

Want to do more?

Join us on **FEBRUARY 28, 2006** at noon, for a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Labour offices at 400 University Avenue to support the introduction of ergonomic regulations to help prevent Repetitive Strain Injuries!

RSI Workshop

What: Awareness + Action = PREVENTION

When: February 27, 2006 12 to 2 pm

Where: Room 2172 Medical Sciences Bldg

Dragons for Charity

...continued from page 2

the Navigators did not expect to rule the lake that day. Instead, they decided to aim for the best costume award and donned festive, grass hula skirts. Much to their surprise, they completed the qualifying race in a mere one minute and nine seconds, placing them paddle-to-paddle with the professionals in Division A.

Although this made them nervous in the final race, they had a newfound determination and focus. Upon reaching the finish line, they watched in silence as the times were listed on the scoreboard. At 1 minute, 8:53 seconds, they had beaten the other dragon boats. The crew erupted in celebratory cheers. They had won the gold medal in the highly competitive and coveted Division A, Group 2. (Overall, there were four divisions, with three groups in each.)



Jason in white t-shirt (centre) with members of his winning team.

A glowing Jason remembers the day of the race, stating that "the win was all about teamwork, but raising the funds for a good cause made [them] happy regardless".

The entire event raised over \$78,000 for the United Way. Congratulations, Jason! What a way to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival!

■ Lidia Mestnik, Admissions & Awards

Financially Speaking...

NOW THAT THE RRSP CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE IS LOOMING (March 1, 2006), a large number of Canadians will rush out to invest in an RRSP so that they can reduce their income taxes payable. Many of us are guilty of this form of procrastination, despite the fact that personal financial planning should be a year-round event. Kudos to those of you who are already following an investment plan! Either way, I am glad to see that people are investing for their retirement.

While our retirement goals are extremely important, we must also plan for money we will need during the course of our lives. Short term objectives can include the purchase of a home/cottage or car, or we may foot the bill for our child's wedding. Of course, let us not forget the necessary 'emergency fund' that is set up as a cushion against crises such as a job loss or an essential home repair. The general consensus among experts is that at least three to six months worth of salary should be saved up in a liquid investment. We do not want to cash in our RRSPs for these situations because of the tax implications and the reduction in our retirement fund. Therefore, it is good practice to keep these investments in non-registered (open) accounts.

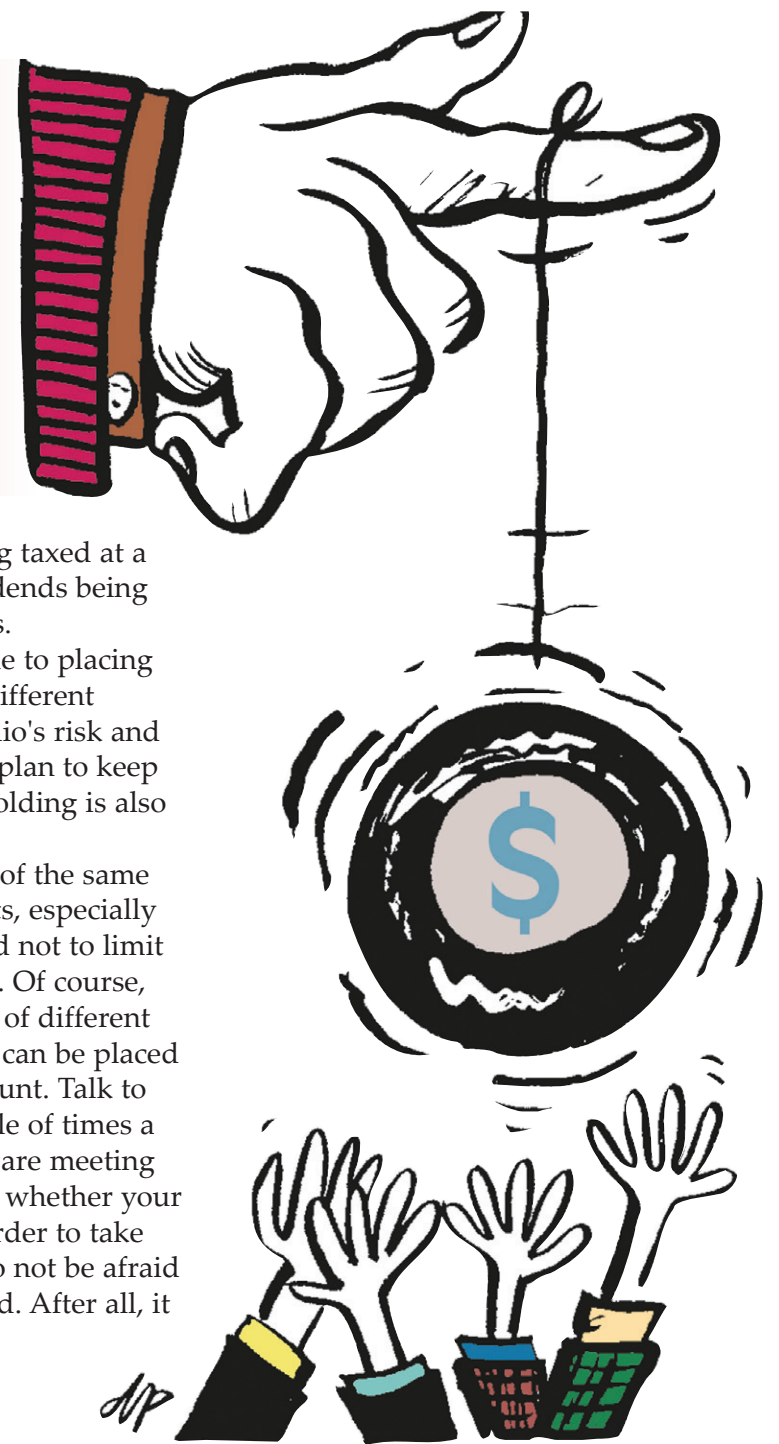
In creating our investment strategies, we should consider the effects that taxes will have on our investments. The three main tax categories are: interest income tax, dividend tax and capital gains tax. Interest income is usually earned on GICs or Treasury Bills. A dividend is a part of a company's earnings that is granted to shareholders of some companies. A capital gain is the profit made on an investment when it is sold for more than it was purchased. These various holdings are taxed

differently, with interest income being taxed at a higher rate than dividends, and dividends being taxed more heavily than capital gains.

Tax rates must not be the only guide to placing investments. Every one of us has a different comfort level or tolerance to a portfolio's risk and volatility. The length of time that we plan to keep our money invested in a particular holding is also an extremely important factor.

Registered accounts can hold most of the same types of investments as open accounts, especially now that the government has decided not to limit the foreign content in RRSP holdings. Of course, there are thousands-upon-thousands of different mutual funds, GICs, bonds, etc., that can be placed in either an open or a registered account. Talk to your financial advisor at least a couple of times a year to ensure that your investments are meeting your various goals, and to determine whether your portfolio needs to be rebalanced in order to take advantage of better opportunities. Do not be afraid to pick up the phone and get involved. After all, it is your money!

■ Lidia Mestnik, Admissions & Awards



Union dues tax deductible

YOU ALREADY HEAR A LOT from the Steelworkers about the benefits you receive from your monthly dues, but here's a special twist: along with those benefits comes a unique tax break.

The calculations can be a bit complicated, but the result could be described this way: the federal and provincial governments combined rebate almost a third of the dues paid by most USW members at the University of Toronto.

Let's take a close look at a couple of hypothetical examples, both for the month of October 2004 (the numbers change ever so slightly each month and each year, but the basic story stays the same). A Local 1998 member we'll call Mary paid at the annual rate of \$51,697 would have had a monthly salary of \$4,308.08 and paid union dues amounting to \$59.05 (made up of \$56.00 from 1.3% of the monthly salary plus \$3.05 from an extra two cents per hour on 152.25 hours in a 21-working-day month).

Someone earning that amount and not paying union dues would have \$935.49 deducted for federal and provincial income taxes. Because Mary's union dues are tax-deductible, her income tax deduction would be only \$917.10 for the month. The savings of \$18.39 covers 31 percent of the cost of her dues.

Looking at another example, let's say Sam's annual salary was \$43,994, for a monthly salary of \$3,666.17. His union dues for October would have been \$50.71. A non-union member at that rate of pay would have \$723.04 deducted for income taxes, but because Sam pays dues his deduction for income taxes is \$707.24, for a difference of \$15.80. Once again, almost a third of his union dues are covered by the tax savings.



Together, the federal and provincial governments rebate almost one third of dues paid by USW members at U of T



One last item of accounting cheer: while your Steelworker dues are slightly more than 1.3 percent of your wages, the tax savings is closer to 2 percent of your income tax. This is because the deduction applies to your marginal tax rate (in most cases a little over 30 percent), rather than your average tax rate, which could vary quite a bit but will certainly be lower.

When you pay union dues, you not only invest in yourself and your family with increased job security, a good pension and improved health benefits, but you have the satisfaction of knowing the income tax system is sharing the burden with you.

■ Charles Campbell
Research Department, Canadian National Steelworkers Office

Asbestos cleanup ...continued from page 1

the worst kind, was identified in our offices," said Marika Maslej, a business officer in the Department of Geography located on the fifth floor of Sydney Smith. "We continued to ask questions on the clean up process and demanded several air and fibre tests. We would have liked to have seen these tests in every office."

Added Carla Vitoria, another admin staff in Geography: "What the university kept telling us is that they were going far beyond the provincial Ministry of Labour requirements in dealing with the problem and that we should be satisfied with that."

Ministry of Labour regulations on asbestos abatement were upgraded this year after having been in place unchanged since 1985.

When administrative staff in Geography began to ring the alarm bells they were soon joined by concerned members of the faculty. Initially, people were notified in November that the clean-up was to begin in early December and that faculty and staff should begin removing and packing all shelved books, magazines and filed materials. When administrative staff balked at this directive, they were told that professional cleaners would be brought in to do the job of packing and moving.

"I had real concerns regarding the timing of the moving and the packing", said Deborah Leslie, an associate professor in the department of Geography. "In my office the clean-up happened in two waves. First, they checked behind the bookshelf and discovered fallen asbestos. They then came back on December 23 for the second stage of the clean up to

remove loose asbestos around the pipes in seven other offices. It remains a concern as to how it got behind the bookshelves".

Professor Scott Prudham (also of Geography), echoes the concerns of his colleagues. Says Prudham: "There was a real lack of consultation, communication and transparency to the process on the part of the university administration. Faculty, staff and students felt completely

disenfranchised. When we began to ask pertinent questions, we were told to consult the 1984 Royal Commission Report on Asbestos. That hardly calmed fears of people who spend many hours working in this building. I believe bungled is not too strong a word to describe the process."

Steeldrum also spoke with Andy King, Steelworkers National Health and Safety representative, who said he was "astonished" that this problem had not been eliminated years ago. "We knew in the early 80's there was going to be a problem with this. There was a Royal Commission on Asbestos at the time. Management and government said then that it was better not to disturb it, that it was safer. But you cannot keep this stuff contained forever. We grossly underestimate the problem if we merely think that there is little risk. Wives and children of asbestos workers contracted asbestos related disease from exposure to only the fibres left on their husband/father's clothes. Caretakers and teachers in schools have contracted the same

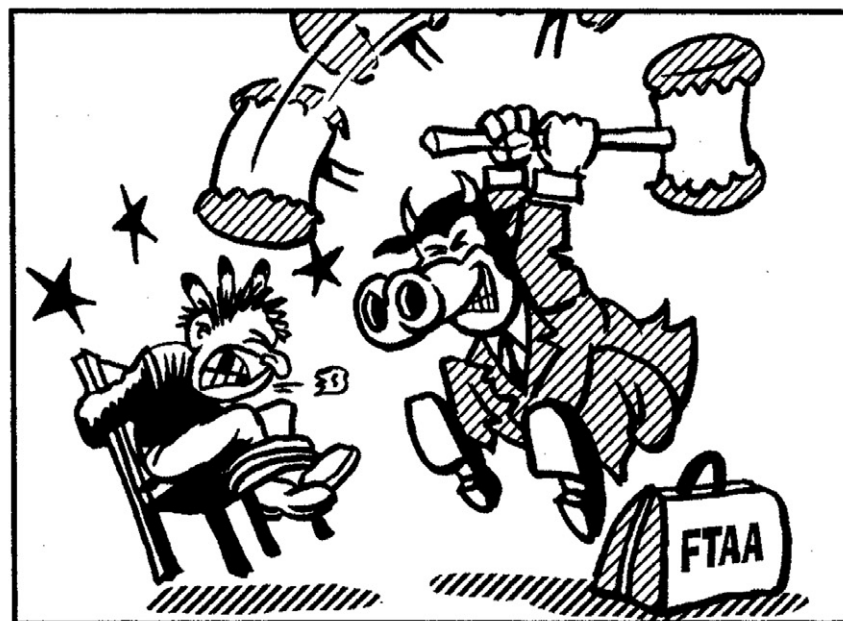


From left: Susan Calanza, Marika Maslej and Carla Vitoria have raised concerns regarding the discovery and subsequent clean up of asbestos containing materials in the Department of Geography on the fifth floor of the Sydney Smith Building.

deadly cancer - mesothelioma - merely from the fall out from insulation in the walls and ceilings. An electrician was diagnosed with pleural plaques after exposure only from having to work with wires and cables embedded in "encapsulated" areas. This is not simply an "inconvenience" or "historical" problem. Along with other complaints about air quality in this building, they need to be acted upon," King said.

Susan Calanza works as Undergraduate Counsellor in Geography and feels that the clean up was a "band-aid solution to a bigger problem" and would like to see the building entirely cleaned up. "They're telling us now that everything is fine and I hope they are right. But there is still a lot of stress and residual anxiety. Right now I am not sick and I hope that will be the case twenty years from now for all of us."

■ Robin Breon





Our next round of collective bargaining will include the negotiation of the economic impact of the results of the job evaluation project.

We have made progress in reaching agreement on the factor language (the factors that determine how a job will be rated). Currently, only one out of the seventeen factors remains outstanding while the remaining sixteen factors have been agreed upon and signed off by both the union and the university.

The university has now supplied the union with the majority of the job descriptions. The receipt of these is essential to the team who are conducting interviews with members in the field. There are currently about 200 job descriptions outstanding. As significant, however, our members have notified us that many of the job descriptions that were sent out in a late December flurry from Human Resources are incomplete or out of date.

The job evaluation process must be completed six months prior to the end of the term of the collective agreement in June 2008. This means that between now and then, we must complete the interviewing of the more than 3,200 members of the U of T staff-appointed bargaining unit and the agreement on the rating of all of the positions by the university and the union.

Interviews reveal members' concerns

The members of the committee working in the field to collect information about the work lives of our members welcome these occasions to answer members' questions about their union and to invite them to become more involved in advancing their and their coworkers' interests.

Further, as we document the work our members actually do, the conditions under which they work and how the university relies upon them, we have uncovered a series of recurring issues which will be explored in future columns. These include the downloading of responsibilities from other services, increased volume of work, reduction in staff servicing a department and reduction in terms of qualifications and experience without a corresponding change in duties.

■ *Carolellen Norskey, Job Evaluation Committee*

L to R, B to F: Mary Bird, Shelley Glazer, Robin Breon, Carolellen Norskey, Monique McNaughton, P.C. Choo, Jan Eichmanis, Martha Young, Melba Remedios. Not in picture: Mohan Doss.

THE NEW STAFF-APPOINTED COLLECTIVE agreement authorizes the continuance of the job evaluation process through the life of the contract. The university and your union have recognized the enormity, complexity and importance of the task and will allow it time to be completed properly. This means that our next round of collective bargaining in 2008 will include the negotiation of the economic impact of the results of the job evaluation project and any salary adjustments that are its corollaries.

Therefore, the local's job evaluation team will continue to negotiate with the university's job evaluation team and to interview our members as we pursue secure, fair and complete accounts of and compensation for the work you do. Current Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) members are Mary Bird, Robin Breon, P. C. Choo, Shelley Glazer, Monique McNaughton, Carolellen Norskey and Melba Remedios, all of whom have committed to remaining with the project through its completion. They are recently joined by Martha Young from Teaching and Learning Services at UTSC and Mohan Doss from Engineering.

LOCAL 1998

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Allison Dubarry, President
416.506.9090 x224
allison.dubarry@uswa1998.ca

Robin Breon, Vice President
416.506.9090 x230
rbreon@uswa1998.ca

Christine Beckermann, Recording Secretary
416.978.0220
c.beckermann@uswa1998.ca

Marjorie Bhola-Swami, Financial Secretary
416.506.9090 x229
marjorie@uswa1998.ca

Ron Wener, Treasurer
416.506.9090 x223
rwener@uswa1998.ca

Linda Oliver, Guide
416.585.4517
linda.oliver@utoronto.ca

Lee Jeffrey, Guard
416.978.5340
lee.jeffrey@utoronto.ca

Marcella Bollers, Guard
416.978.2422
mbollers@uswa1998.ca

Ana Sapp, Trustee
416.978.3262 x222
ana.sapp@utoronto.ca

Robert Chernecky, Trustee
416.979.4903 x4387, 4355
b.chernecky@utoronto.ca

Lillian Lanca, Trustee
416.506.9090 x228
lanca@uswa1998.ca

David Johnson, Unit Chairperson
St. Michael's College
416.926.1300
david.johnson@utoronto.ca

John Ankenman, Unit Chairperson
Victoria University
416.506.9090 x227
john.ankenman@uswa1998.ca

Charles Kernerman, Unit Chairperson Casuals
416.978.4997
charles.kernerman@utoronto.ca

David Chew, Unit Chairperson UTS
416.946.7990
dchew@uts.utoronto.ca

STANDING COMMITTEES

Bylaws
P.C. Choo
(pcchoo@uswa1998.ca)
David Johnson
david.johnson@utoronto.ca

Grievance
Lillian Lanca
(lanca@uswa1998.ca)
Ron Wener
(rwener@uswa1998.ca)

Health and Safety
Mary Ann DeFrancis
(maryann.defrancis@utoronto.ca)
Sean Kearns (sean.kearns@utoronto.ca)

Human Rights
Ruby Barker
(ruby.barker@utoronto.ca)

Job Evaluation
Mary Bird, Robin Breon, P.C. Choo, Mohan Doss,
Shelley Glazer, Monique McNaughton, Carolellen
Norskey, Melba Remedios, Martha Young
(jec@uswa1998.ca)

Newsletter
P.C. Choo
(pcchoo@uswa1998.ca)

Steve Rutchinski
(Sgs.pplgeneral@utoronto.ca)

Pension

Political Action
John Ankenman
(john.ankenman@uswa1998.ca)
Milly Weidhaas
(w_milly@hotmail.com)

Women of Steel
Allison Dubarry
(allison.dubarry@uswa1998.ca)
Marcella Bollers
(mbollers@uswa1998.ca)

GENERAL INFO

info@uswa1998.ca
416.506.9090
www.uswa1998.ca

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