

STEELDRUM



news for members of Steelworkers Local 1998

volume 3, no 3 www.uswa1998.ca

Local 1998 seniority list posted

Members urged to check for accuracy

First, the good news.

On August 29, 2003 the University posted an updated seniority list for the Staff-Appointed Bargaining Unit on their website:

www.utoronto.ca/hrhome

Your seniority affects you in many ways and you have only 60 days (until October 28, 2003) to inform the University of any errors in your seniority. There is a Seniority Correction Form available on the seniority page and on our website:

www.uswa1998.ca

What is Seniority? What does it Affect?

There are three different factors that are important: pensionable service, length of service, and seniority.

Pensionable Service

This refers to how long you have been paying into the pension plan. Any changes in the seniority list will not affect this number. At this point, we do not have a pension buy-back option so this date will not change. This is used to calculate your pension--while the calculation is complex, your pension is approximately 1.5 - 2% of your average salary of your best three years of service multiplied by the pensionable service.

Length of Service

This refers to how many consecutive years you have been working at U of T. This is used to calculate vacation and severance (please refer to Article 22:01 and Schedule J of the *Staff Appointed Collective Agreement*).

Seniority

This refers to how many years of full-time service you have been in the bargaining unit. This number may not be the same as Length of Service as, if you work part-time, your seniority is pro-rated (e.g. if

you work 50% for one year, you are credited with 1/2 year of service). You also do not receive credit for work outside the bargaining unit (e.g. if you worked at Trinity, Victoria or in a CUPE position).

Seniority is used in times of layoff and hiring (the person with the least seniority in the same position/classification in a department would be the first to be laid off and if two members have the same qualifications for a position, the applicant with the most seniority would get the job).

Common Seniority Errors

Unfortunately, there are a number of errors on the list. The errors on the list include:

Individuals noted with "zero" seniority.

This is due to some data entry problems, which the University is currently correcting;

"Sessional" employees not credited for seniority during their sessional layoff.

Our contract gives sessional employees one year of seniority credit for each year of employment (even if you are on a nine month

sessional). Most of these errors occur for members who have worked as sessional employees in the Faculty of Dentistry (the University is correcting these errors for you). If you have worked on a sessional appointment and are not in the Faculty of Dentistry, please check the seniority list to ensure that it is correct. If you have not been credited for your time on sessional layoff, please complete the Seniority Correction Form;

Persons who had casual service and who completed the Seniority Correction Form three years ago.

There are some data entry problems, which require manual data entry by the University;

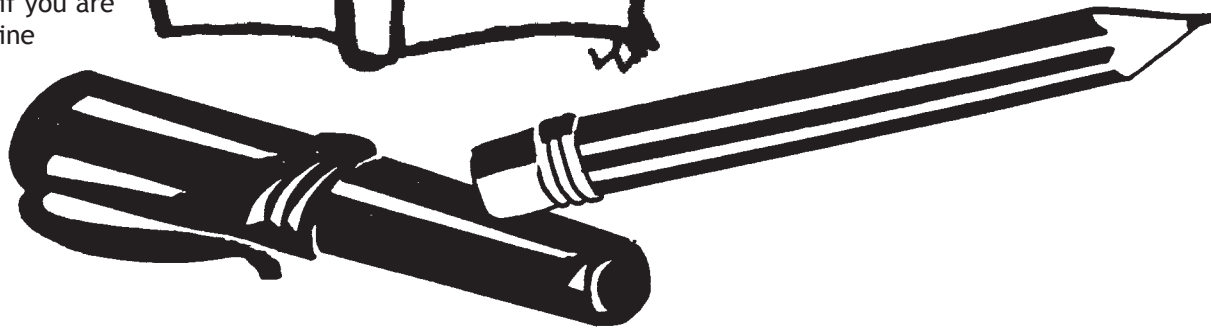
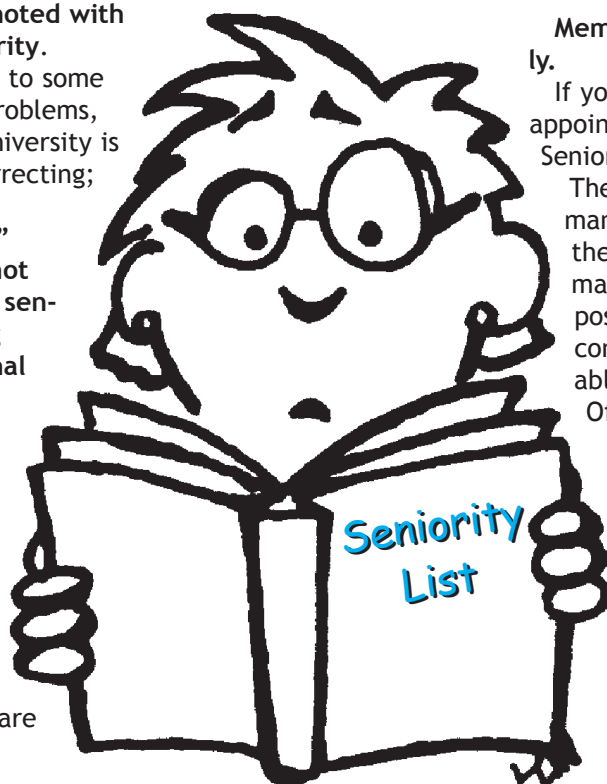
Members whose start date is entered incorrectly.

If you notice that your start date in the staff appointed unit is incorrect, please fill out a Seniority Correction Form on the website.

The University is in the process of correcting many of these errors and has promised to update the list by early October. We will send out an e-mail to members once the new list has been posted. If your information is incorrect, please complete the Seniority Correction Form (available on our website) and fax it to the Local 1998 Office at 416.506.0640

If you have any questions, please speak with your Steward or call the Local 1998 Office at 416.506.9090

Ron Wener
Co-Chair, Grievance Committee



If your seniority listing is incorrect, please complete the *Seniority Correction Form* available at www.uswa1998.ca and fax it to the Local 1998 Office at 416.506.0640 by October 28th, 2003

union dates

General membership meetings (fall schedule)

October 14th @3:30pm

November 12th @5:15pm

December 11th @3:30pm



return address:

to:

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Toronto, Ontario
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t 416.506.9090 f 416.506.0604 info@uswa1998.ca

H Healthcare Workers Deserve Street Names Too!

I recently drove down Todd Bayliss Boulevard. It was a nice curving street, not unlike hundreds of others in Toronto. The difference, of course, was in the name. This boulevard was named after a brave man who happened to serve the public as a police officer, whose violent death was occurred while he was on the job. This street got me thinking about other equally important public servants who have died recently but whose memory has for the most part faded quickly. Nelia Laroza, Tecla Lin, and Nestor Yanga are three healthcare workers who would still be alive today had they not been on the job doing their brave work and had they not come into contact with a microscopic virus associated with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The death of these three healthcare workers, along with 41 other Toronto area residents, clearly demonstrates the devastation that SARS has inflicted. That these healthcare workers died along with the dozens that became sick from SARS should be reason enough to honour them in the same way as police officers, firefighters and soldiers are honoured when they do not return home from their workplace. Unfortunately, equal treatment after death seems to be lacking for these healthcare workers.

My best friend is a police officer here in Toronto. I often ask him in an observational way, why it is that each time a police officer fails to return home from his or her workplace, a huge funeral is held in their honour. Why are hundreds of fellow officers flown in from all over the continent, a colour guard formed with a marching band and the streets lined with those saying goodbye to a fallen comrade? Compare this to the sedate goodbyes that other public servants receive upon passing while performing their jobs-jobs that are equally important to their families, whose salaries are also supported by the taxpayer and for whom replacement of their skills is no less difficult to fill. My police friend usually says it is because of their union contract that such large funerals are held. I think it is because people respect the work that police officers do. Regardless, the fact of the matter is that some public servants receive appropriate and justly honourable goodbyes while others are left to be mourned at a different level.

I hope one day we have a Nelia Laroza Boulevard., a Tecla Lin Drive, and a Nestor Yanga Court. Maybe then we can appreciate the sacrifice these healthcare workers made to our society and the lessons their deaths taught us can forever be honoured in a respectful and visible way.

Jim Hartley, Department of Medicine

On election day, commit a random act of democracy - vote.

The right to vote seems such a mundane ritual that it is taken for granted by many. But if the last Presidential elections in the U.S. proved anything, it is that each vote is precious when it comes to the final count.

The Steelworkers union makes no apologies for supporting the NDP and encouraging their members to vote for NDP candidates in their respective ridings. Although this relationship has deep historic roots, it takes on a real urgency at election time, especially in the upcoming provincial election.

Doubtless there will be aspects of each party's platform that many USWA members could support on election day. It's probably also true that few people support each and every item in any particular party's platform. However, for employees working in a unionized university working environment, it is important to recognize the significant differences among the parties as to their approach toward a unionized workforce in general and support for post-secondary education in particular - two areas which collectively affect USWA members.

The NDP supports unionized employees and has made it clear that they would, if elected, pass legislation making it illegal for employers to hire replacement workers during a strike. Such legislation was passed by the NDP when they formed the government in 1990, but the Conservatives eliminated it soon after they took office in 1995. We need this legislation back again. With it we would be placed in a much stronger bargaining position when we enter negotiations with the University in the next round of collective bargaining.

The Tories have made no secret of the fact that they despise unions in the secondary and post-secondary educational sector and since coming to power they have altered labour law eight times-all to the detriment of working people.

The Liberals, in our view, have sat on the fence and have not been in the forefront in the fight for workplace rights.

Today, Ontario sits in last place among all the provinces when it comes to investing in higher education. In order to meet increasing workloads and maintain services to students, the U of T needs to hire more administrative staff and dedicate the appropriate resources to properly recognize and reward the contributions of their current employees. In order to continue to provide quality education, smaller class sizes and meet the demands of the double cohort, the University also needs to hire more academic staff. Most important, in order to secure the future of post-secondary education in this province, the people of Ontario need to FIRE Ernie Eves! The choice is yours.

Allison Dubarry (Pres), Robin Breon (Vice Pres), Christine Beckermann (Rec Sec), Marjorie Bhola-Swami (Fin Sec), Linda Oliver (Guide), Lee Jeffrey, Marcella Bollers (Guards), Ana Sapp, Robert Chernecky, Lillian Lanca (Trustees), David Johnson (Unit Chair: St. Michael's), John Ankenman (Unit Chair: Vic U), Charles Kernerman (Unit Chair: Casuals)

mail
from
YOU

I would like to bring to your attention an issue that could potentially affect many of you.

In the spring, the University of Toronto at Scarborough threw out 280 boxes of artifacts that were in a storage area without the knowledge of the professor who curated them. This was material that I had just inventoried a few months before in preparation for moving it to the downtown campus. It was to come under my curation due to the upcoming retirement of the professor who was caring for it at the Scarborough campus. This material represented 35 years of research of this professor, myself, and many other people.

One of the many effects of this action is to show the need for policies and procedures around the disposal of material. With the rapid expansion going on at the University now and the need for space, a policy regarding the disposal of material is essential so that nothing like this happens again. The policy could include the specific steps that must be taken to find the owner of material before its disposal (i.e. finding out who has keys to the room, checking through the material for any identification, sending e-mails to the departments in the building, posting signs on the material for a certain amount of time before it is thrown out, etc.). I have heard that Scarborough Campus is currently developing a policy as a result of what happened, and I hope that it will be adopted on all 3 campuses. In the meantime, I would encourage any staff member who has equipment or collections in store rooms that you do not access every day to clearly mark your material and include a contact number and department so that this does not happen to you!

Pat Reed

Curator/Lab Tech, Department of Anthropology, St. George Campus

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The summer has been quite busy implementing many of the priorities that members have helped to identify. I committed to doing a needs assessment for the local. The results were presented and unanimously approved at a recent membership meeting. We have also initiated regular lunchtime meetings on a variety of issues so that more members could become actively involved in the union. Reorganization and budget cuts have been raised as real concerns and we have been developing strategies to deal with them.

Needs assessment

Throughout the summer, I've met with many of our members to discuss the role of our local and the issues that are the most pressing priorities for staff. The Needs Assessment outlines the results, and at our last local meeting the recommendations were adopted. The full report is on our website in case you haven't yet had the opportunity to read it.

According to the assessment, over the past four months the number of staff in the local office has been able to provide a good level of service to our members. Staff was reduced from 7.8 (prior to May 2003) to 4.7 with many volunteers working to serve your needs in the workplace. The report recommended that this level remain and that additional resources could be applied to other priorities such as job evaluation. The Needs Assessment contains job descriptions for all the positions in the Local Union office.

Job evaluation is one of the top priorities of the local and is one that will affect all staff-appointed members. This process must be finished before the end of the collective agreement in June 2005. Increasing staffing in this area will allow us to do the job properly and to finish it on schedule so that our members will see the benefits as soon as possible. Victoria University is in the initial stages of developing a plan around Job Evaluation and members there will benefit from the increased expertise in this area.

Lunchtime meetings

We've had a number of lunchtime unit meetings in the past month and more are scheduled for the fall. Attendance is quite good at the unit meetings and members have an opportunity to meet their union representatives and get their questions answered. There have also been meetings on job evaluation, pension, and topics such as coping with e-mail overload. Because of the broad interest we've arranged more pension

seminars with Sheila Block from the Steelworkers Research Department to take place on October 8 at OISE, October 9 at Dentistry and October 15 at UTM. Later in the year, Sheila will be presenting seminars on *You and Your Benefits*.

Media Campaign

Our local has been working with other locals on campus on developing a coordinated strategy on budget, funding and job cuts. We have been researching the University's budget and will present a report to members. Our first joint ad appeared on September 25th in both *eye* and *NOW*. The ad targeted funding cuts and service cuts and how they negatively impact on the quality of education and access. Interestingly, the University had a quarter page ad in the September 20th edition of the *Globe and Mail* that urged voters to press politicians on the issue of government under funding for post-secondary education. Ontario is at the bottom in the funding of post secondary education of all the provinces and this has a direct impact on our members.

Steelworkers Dental Clinic

I wanted to bring to the attention of our members that the Steelworkers operate a dental clinic at 33 Cecil Street next to the union office. Highly qualified dentists and hygienists are available to our members and their families at a very convenient location to the St. George Campus. There is also a clinic in Mississauga. Members can make bookings during the day or after work with lower rates than private dentists. I have been using it myself for three years and have been more than satisfied with the service. You can call for an appointment at 416.343.0086 in Toronto or 905.238.1414 in Mississauga.

Allison Dubarry, President

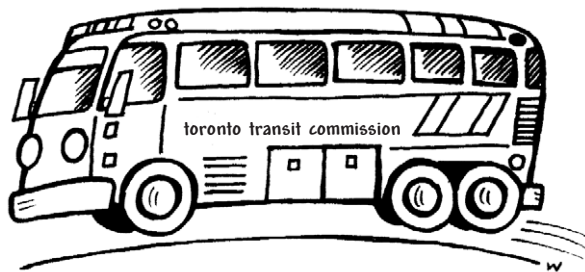
Discount Metropass Available to U of T Staff

This first year of the double cohort is the best of times for the University of Toronto Students' Administrative Council (SAC) to be awarded the right to sell discounted TTC Metropasses to U of T students and staff. On August 29, *News@UofT* reported the university expected 13,800 first-year students to its three campuses this year—a 17 per cent increase over last year.

When the Metropasses went on sale on August 26, SAC Vice President of Operations, Alexandra Artful-Dodger, reported that sales exceeded 1800 in the first three days.

Artful-Dodger said that student unions across Toronto have been lobbying for a discounted metro pass for decades. Finally, after joint efforts involving the U of T community plus groups from Ryerson, York and George Brown, Toronto city officials agreed to try out a VIP or Volume Incentive Pass, a trial program that requires the sale of at least 50 passes per month.

"We are proud that we did this by working together with the other student unions *continued on page 6*



Hart House theatre night

USWA Local 1998 is organizing a special theatre night for members on Friday, November 14, to see the Toronto premiere of *Angélique* by Montreal playwright Lorena Gale. This engaging drama, which won the 1995 duMaurier National Playwriting Competition, is the story of Marie Joseph Angélique, a black slave accused of arson and facing execution in 1730s Montreal. Gale beautifully weaves Angélique's tale through dialogue, poetry, music, African drumming and dance to create a powerful testament to black slavery in Canada. *Angélique* is a compelling and vivid portrayal of how one woman's struggle to be free can set an entire city ablaze.

Tickets are available from the USWA office at a discounted price of \$12. To reserve a seat, email: kim.walker@uswa1998.ca

Little known contract gems for staff appointed unit

All internal applicants can get copies of their job descriptions. *Article 12:04*

Upon request, the University will meet with any employee who is not the successful candidate for an internal job. *Article 12:04*

If you are asked to work overtime beyond 9:00 p.m., you will be provided with a taxi chit or be reimbursed for campus parking. *Article 24:07*

If you work authorized overtime for two consecutive hours beyond your regular workday, you are entitled to a meal allowance of ten dollars. If you work authorized overtime for four or more hours on a day outside your regular workweek, you are entitled to a meal allowance of ten dollars. *Article 24:09*

Call for Local 1998 Players

Local 1998 proudly announces a call for the formation of a new cultural ensemble named The Local 1998 Players. We need some singer/actors, musicians and dancers who would be willing to get together on a semi-irregular basis with a view toward mounting a short entertainment for the Local's holiday party in December. Any interested members are invited to respond to kim.walker@uswa1998.ca

local
1998
@a glance

Surveying the wreckage

Union organizing & certification in Ontario, 1994-2003

The Progressive Conservatives swept to power in Ontario in 1995 on the promises of the Common Sense Revolution. Upon assuming power, the Tories embarked on a series of measures that drastically altered the political landscape of Ontario.

In labour relations, the Tories took to the *Labour Relations Act* with a vengeance—all in the name of providing a more balanced playing field. Since 1995, the Tories have amended the *Labour Relations Act* eight times, each time stripping away more and more rights that have been enjoyed by workers and employees for the past quarter of a century.

In this article, we will survey the wreckage wrought by the provincial government by taking a look at union organizing and certification in the province from 1994 to the present. The numbers tell a scary story but what is even scarier is the vastly diminished role of the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) and the long term implications for union organizing and certification in this province.

History

The Ontario Labour Court came into existence in 1943 when the *Collective Bargaining Act* was passed in the Ontario legislature. It was replaced by the Ontario Labour Relations Board when the *Labour Relations Board Act* was passed in 1944. The *Labour Relations Board Act* was, in turn, replaced by the *Labour Relations Act*, 1950.

A major function of the Board was, and still is, certifying trade unions as bargaining agents. Apart from granting certifications and de-certifications, the Board's power was quite limited. Over the years, however, the Board's powers and jurisdiction gradually expanded. During the 1950s, the Board was given the power to grant a trade union "successor" status. In 1960, the Board was granted the authority to order reinstatement, with or without compensation. It can also designate a field officer to investigate complaints. The Board's reinstatement and compensation orders could be filed in the Supreme Court of Ontario and were enforceable as orders of that Court. In 1962, the Board was empowered to provide for the preservation of bargaining rights in the case of "successor employers" and this was later expanded so as to preserve existing collective agreements.

In the 1970s, the Board received a significant extension of its authority. A settlement reached by the parties and put into writing was binding on the parties, and a breach of such settlement is tantamount to a breach of a provision of the Act. The Board's remedial powers were extended to all violations of the Act, and orders of the Board were enforceable as an order of the

Supreme Court. The Board also received authority to make "cease and desist" orders with respect to any unlawful strike or lockout. In June 1980, compulsory check-off of union dues was introduced. First contract arbitration was introduced in May 1986. Where negotiations had been unsuccessful, either party could apply to the Board to direct the settlement of a first collective agreement by arbitration. In December 1986, the *Labour Relations Act* was brought into line with the *Human Rights Code*, 1981 and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

In February 1994, the Board was given jurisdiction over collective bargaining in the public service through the enactment of the *Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act*, 1993. It provided Crown employees with the right to strike, along with provisions to ensure that essential services would be maintained during a strike or lockout. The *Public Service Act* was amended to allow Crown employees to engage in political activities.

In June 1994, collective bargaining in the agricultural and horticultural industries was introduced, but they were repealed the following year when the Tories swept to power.

Bill 7

Almost immediately upon assuming power, the Tories began their assault on organized labour. *Bill 7* was the first of much anti-labour legislation. Under the provisions of *Bill 7*, the traditional card-based certification system was done away with and replaced by a 'representa-

tion vote' - to automatically certify a trade union in the face of blatant unfair labour practices by employers during an organizing drive. Under *Bill 31*, the OLRB can only order a second vote and do everything in its power to ensure that the second vote reflects the wishes of the employees.

Not content with clipping its wings, the Tories sought to undermine the OLRB as an independent body. In 1996, four Vice-Chairs of the OLRB had their appointments revoked half-way through their term of office. In addition, the government refused to renew the appointment of 7 other Vice-Chairs. Today, the OLRB has 8 fewer Vice-Chairs than it did fifteen years ago.

Impact

All of these changes have had a negative

Since 1995, the Tories have amended the *Labour Relations Act* 8 times, each time stripping away more rights that have been enjoyed by workers for the past quarter of a century.

On October 2, 2003...



fire ernie eyes.

tion vote'. The OLRB is no longer required to hear complaints about unfair labour practices in relations to the employer's efforts to undermine union organizing within fifteen days of the complaint. The Board's power to order interim reinstatement of employees who had been fired during an organizing drive was also removed.

Bill 31 (The Wal-Mart Amendment)

The Tories followed up with *Bill 31* three years later. *Bill 31* was in response to union organizing at Wal-Mart and it became known as the 'Wal-Mart Amendment'. *Bill 31* stripped the OLRB of its power - which it had for more than

impact on union organizing and certification. The OLRB's own statistics tell a dismal story. In 1994-95, the OLRB received 1,077 applications for certification. Since *Bill 7*, the number of applications for certification has fallen by an average of 30%. In 2001-02, the OLRB received just 625 applications - a decline of 42%.

The 'success rate' of applications filed also tell a similar story. Out of 1,077 applications filed in 1994-95, 762 were granted certificates—a success rate of 71%. In 2001-02, out of 624 applications, only 307 were successful—a success rate of 49%. Needless to say, the number of employees who were successfully organized also fell. In 1994-95,

32,116 employees were organized into new bargaining units. By 2001-02, that number has fallen to 16,255—a decline of 49%.

With all these changes, it should come as no surprise that the work of the OLRB is adversely affected. While the number of unfair labour practice complaints has fallen from 1,216 in 1994-95 to 842 in 2001-02—a 31% decrease—the timelines for their disposition had increased. Whereas in 1994-95, 33% of such complaints were resolved within three weeks, only 14% were resolved within that time frame in 2001-02.

continued on next page

Witness to the public power kickoff

Union organizing & certification in Ontario, 1994-2003

Rumours were flying fast and furious on the morning of September 2, 2003 that a provincial election was (finally) going to be called. The rumours were confirmed at around 11:30 am when the *CBC* reported that Premier Ernie Eves had made the short trip to the office of Lieutenant-Governor, James Bartleman, advising him to dissolve the Provincial Parliament and to call an election for October 2, 2003.

Upon hearing the news, a group of Local 1998 members rushed down to Queen's Park where NDP leader, Howard Hampton, was scheduled to give a press conference and kickoff the public power election campaign. In our haste to get there, we forgot to bring our camera or Steelworker banners but we managed to borrow a few bright orange placards from some NDP supporters.

When Hampton came out of the legislative building with his wife, Shelley Martel (also an NDP MPP), and some aides, we formed behind them, waving our placards and shouting, "**Public Power! Public Power!**"

To kick off the campaign, the NDP chose what Hampton described as "the birthplace of public power". In front of a statue of Sir James Whitney, the Conservative Premier (1905 -1914) who created the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, Hampton praised Whitney as a Premier "who had the guts to bring in public power ... at cost ... so that all can benefit. He had to fight tooth and nail for it against wealthy and powerful business

interests ... the same fight we face today."

Saying that "it is time to unplug the Conservatives," Hampton criticized the Tory record on public education, health care, privatization, water and auto insurance. The Liberals were not spared either. Accusing them of being wishy-washy, Hampton said that the "Liberals aren't sure where they stand on these issues. On too many of them, they've flipped and they've flopped ... Have Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals not seen the light through the blackout?"

Hampton ended his speech by declaring that "Public power built this province. And public power is going to win it back!"

As we were leaving Queen's Park, the Liberal buses pulled in. They were late.

Marjorie Bhola-Swami was at the campaign kickoff together with other Local 1998 members. P.C. Choo was there to cover the event.



Wreckage continued from page 5

Conclusion

Perhaps the most serious setback to union organizing efforts was the introduction of *Bill 31* in 1998. For more than a quarter of a century, the OLRB had, under *Section 11* of the *Labour Relations Act*, the power to remedy unfair labour practices on the part of employers by automatically certifying a trade union without regard to the actual level of support from the employees. This power was rarely exercised but it had the effect of putting employers on notice that they should refrain from unfair labour practices because unlawful conduct might result in the automatic certification of a trade union. This provision was important because employer threats to job security seriously undermine employees' ability to exercise their democratic rights in a certification vote. *Bill 31* removed this power. Instead, the Board is now authorized to "do anything" to ensure that a second vote reflects the "true wishes" of the employees. The one powerful remedy that could act as a check on employers' errant behaviour and unfair labour practices was effectively removed from the statute book. *Bill 31* did not level the playing field as the provincial government would have us believe. It tilted the balance of power to

The power of the OLRB must be restored... the OLRB must be funded & staffed adequately & its members must be free to decide the merits of each case without fear or favour.

the employers and gave them free reign to engage in egregious and unfair labour practices.

In order to protect organizational rights, the power of the OLRB to grant remedial certification must be restored. The OLRB must be funded and staffed adequately and its members must be free to decide the merits of each case without fear or favour.

- P.C. Choo

Compiled with notes from "The Decline in Trade Union Certification in Ontario: From Bad to Worse" by Elizabeth Mitchell and Ron Lebi.

Victoria University Report

In August the University terminated a member who is currently on LTD benefits. A grievance for discharge without just cause was filed. After being denied at the second step meeting, this grievance has been furthered to the third step and a meeting has been scheduled for September 25th.

Grievances VC 2003-4 (improper scheduling of vacation), VC 2003-5 (unjust discipline - suspension) and VC 2003-6 (unjust discipline - suspension) were all approved for arbitration by our local's Executive. Subsequently, the Union approached the University about the possibility of using a mediation process for all three of these grievances in order to avoid arbitration. As this issue of the *Steeldrum* goes to press, the University has not given their response.

Third step meetings were recently held for grievances VC 2003-9 and VC 2003-10, both filed when management denied members' sick benefits. Official responses from the University are pending for both of these grievances.

In another case where a member was denied sick benefits, our Unit Grievor, Vince Montori was able to negotiate a settlement without having to file a grievance.

On September 2, the ten laid off Food Services workers were recalled one to two weeks earlier than originally scheduled, bringing to an end a summer of contentious workforce reductions at Victoria. The solidarity of Victoria Unit members and the dedication to workers' rights shown by our Local's Executive, staff representative and unit officers Vince Montori, Ken Wilson and Jerry Nogas were high points during these difficult months.

John Ankenman

Unit Chairperson, Victoria University

Occasional employment opportunities

Members of Local 1998 are invited to submit their names if they would like to be considered for occasional work in the Local's office to prepare mailings. The hours of work would generally fall between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The hourly rate paid would be \$15.00. If you are interested, please submit your name and contact information to info@uswa1998.ca or by fax 416.506.0640

vote
October 2, 2003...

"IT IS TIME TO UNPLUG THE CONSERVATIVES!"



Focusing and you:

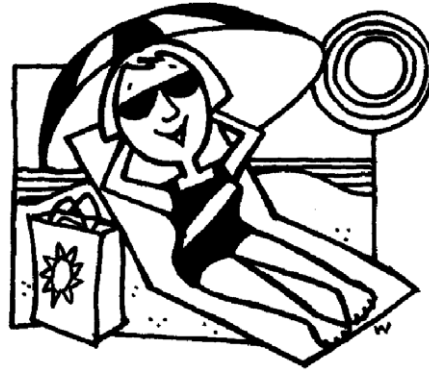
Developing an oasis of calm in turbulent settings

A recent television commercial begs the question, "What are you doing after work?" Well, in addition to working as a Business Officer in Health Services at U of T, Mary Bird teaches a form of meditation called "focusing". Formerly a teacher in the public and high school systems, Mary developed a liking for teaching adults in informal settings. She discovered that she took right away to the powerful experience of meditation. Mostly training in Toronto, she embarked on a series of workshops and classes in meditation. The final stages culminated in a visit to Chicago to complete her study of focusing, a specific kind of meditation, developed there by Eugene T. Gendlin, Ph.D.

Many of us have used breathing,

visualization and physical movement to achieve a state of well-being. I asked Mary how focusing differs from other types of meditation. Focusing is a much more mental process, in which you let your thoughts go. It can be done sitting or standing, always paying attention to whichever way the body wants to move (similar to Tai Chi).

I wonder why some people have so much difficulty meditating, while for others it comes as second nature. Mary explains that since meditation encourages contact with the part of us that trusts our decisions, many find it safer to remain "in their heads" where scary feelings can be avoided and painful memories are kept suppressed. This can be overcome by focusing.



When I asked Mary how meditation benefits us, her enthusiasm was clear: "It helps people cope better with almost anything!" Focusing is attractive to anyone interested in understanding themselves, whether humming along in their busy day-to-day lives, or dealing with a cancer diagnosis. By bringing about greater mental clarity, focusing enables us to really connect with our needs and desires. Mary provides an example from her own life: A few years ago she was faced with the challenging option of switching from a 5-day to a 4-day work week. She could not

"logically" have arrived at the decision to work a 4-day week; it seemed initially not to be in her best interest. However, it was something that just felt right every time she looked at it. She trusted this feeling, and it has worked out very well for her.

Listening to Mary, it became clear to me that focusing is no quick fix. It does not promise easy answers to life's problems. What it will do is enable you to feel, think and act as a person with your own voice, trusting your instincts, feeling good about yourself and whatever decisions you may make. It begets a quiet inner confidence and self-acceptance that needs no explanation. Focusing results in a growing security that places you closer to your authentic self. What more do we all need?

To learn more about focusing, email mary.bird@utoronto.ca

Linda L. Gardiner, Sociology Dept.

Metropass continued from page 3

from across the GTA," said Artful-Dodger.

The University of Toronto Steelworkers Union, Local 1998, was also working behind the scenes for its members. Local President Allison Dubarry said that in the last round of bargaining both the union and U of T administration agreed they would jointly approach the TTC regarding a volume discount for U of T employees.

Dubarry said, "Many of our members use public transit and transit costs to and from work can represent a significant amount of one's income. Our local is promoting the program and will be working with the Toronto and York Region Labour Council to expand the volume discount to more unionized work places which will benefit non-unionized workers as well."

Passes can be purchased on the St. George campus from 9am to 5pm at the SAC office in the old Stewart Observatory building across from Hart House. The office will be open one evening. Check the SAC site, with links to Scarborough and Erindale, for sale dates and times. www.sac.utoronto.ca/sac_website/html/main

The regular cost of an adult Metropass is \$98.50. The discounted pass will sell for \$87, a yearly savings of \$138, or one free pass per year plus. Photo identification, such as your library card, is required. Only one pass is available per staff or student, payment is cash only and the purchase must be made in person.

U of T administration is funding the cost of the extra staff SAC needs to sell the monthly passes to the university community.

Judy MacLeod, AMS

Bad bosses and high blood pressure

"Difficult" bosses are bad for your health

Is a demanding and over-bearing boss bad for your health? Have you gone home at the end of a day feeling poorly because of your work environment? It turns out that a "bad boss" can have a negative impact on your health. A recent British study in the July issue of *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* found that blood pressure levels tended to increase when workers had to deal with a difficult and unfair boss.

Nadia Wager from Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, UK worked with 28 nursing assistants who wore blood pressure monitors for three days. Blood pressure readings were automatically recorded every half an hour for 12 hour periods. The control group of 15 worked only with either supervisors who were perceived positively or only those who were perceived as being difficult. Thirteen of the participants worked with both a supervisor who was considered to be fair and one who was not. Not surprisingly, blood pressure levels increased when the subjects worked with difficult supervisors and decreased when working with supervisors who were perceived as being fair.

"Fair" bosses were respectful, demonstrated trust in employees, provided praise when warranted, were open, listened to employees and were consistent and unbiased. However, "unfair" bosses were more dictatorial, not open to

input from employees and didn't treat employees fairly. The study concluded that difficult supervisors can have a detrimental impact on an employee's cardiovascular health. Dr. Wager said that "she hopes the findings encourage supervisors to reflect on their role and 'people management' skills." (*"Bad bosses bring blood pressure to boil: study"*, CBC, June 25th, 2003)

It is in the interest of management to provide a positive work environment for employees, certainly because of our health needs, but also because workers are more productive in a fair and respectful workplace.

Allison Dubarry

Not surprisingly, blood pressure levels increased when the subjects worked with difficult supervisors and decreased when working with supervisors who were perceived as being fair.



"No problem... we'll just give you comp time and you can finish the job at home."

In solidarity with Local 6500

INCO Miners, Sudbury

For three months the 3,300 Steelworkers of Local 6500 at INCO in Sudbury have been on strike. I come from that area and while visiting home in August, I spoke with the President of Local 6500, John Fera, as well as some of the men on the picket line at the Stobe Mine, one of the fourteen mine and smelter sites that comprise INCO's operations in the Sudbury area.

Nobody goes on strike without good reason. Strikes-especially lengthy ones like this one-cost union members. INCO forced the members of Local 6500 out on strike because the company is demanding concessions that are unacceptable to the membership of the local. The INCO workers, and pensioners, voted 95% to reject the company demands for concessions, with 97% of the membership turning out to vote.

On the picket at the Stobe site, the workers said INCO had two demands for concessions that were unacceptable: 1) reduced health benefits for members and pensioners and 2) limiting seniority and transfer rights to within the production unit at which each employee works. The men on the picket line said INCO workers had fought hard for every nickel in health benefits they had negotiated over the years. Nothing was ever given to them on a silver platter. The health benefit plan INCO workers have was paid for with sweat and blood and sacrifice, like the sacrifice they are all making in this strike just to keep what benefits they have negotiated in the past. As for seniority and transfer rights, INCO's demand would be to condemn a hard rock miner to toil lifelong underground, without the prospect of getting a surface job as they get on in years. The men on the picket line said they would not make such a concession.

At the Union Hall, President John Fera said the company has refused to enter into serious negotiations. INCO, he said, wants to designate health care and service providers that can be used by members and pensioners. He said Local 6500 has worked with INCO and has saved the company millions in health benefit expenses. At contract time, INCO put another 11 or 12 proposals for health benefit concessions on the table including reduced vision care benefits; designated health care providers; restrictions on the type and frequency of medications currently available under the benefit plan as well as limits on transfer and seniority rights of the members. The term "company town" was not coined without reason.

Sudbury is a mining town. When the INCO workers are without a livelihood, the entire community is hurting. You cannot go anywhere without running into someone who works at INCO or has an opinion on the situation. I ran



into some miners at a local community centre and one of them asked, "What are you going to write about the strike?"

"Good question." I said. "What is the main thing you would want the members of Local 1998 to hear?"

"Stick together!" That was his answer. Plain and simple. Stick together!

Steve Rutchinski

Postscript: At the time of going to press, we received news that INCO has reached a settlement with Steelworkers Local 6500.

Pensions double for employees as Yale strike ends

*Yale U,
Connecticut*

As this issue of *Steeldrum* goes to press, the *New York Times* is reporting a big gain for administrative staff at Yale University. "Ending a three-week strike, Yale and its two main unions reached a tentative eight-year contract yesterday that will give many workers raises of more than 40 percent over the life of the pact and provide the embattled university with years of labor peace", writes Steven Greenhouse of the *Times*.

The 2,900 workers in Yale's clerical union and the 1,100 dining hall, janitorial and repair workers in its other main union reached an agreement on September 19. The agreement came after the unions began picketing the offices of Yale board members in various cities over the past few weeks. Public attention was also called to the strike when two Democratic presidential candidates, Howard Dean and Joseph I. Lieberman, criticized Yale's bargaining stance.

The agreement comes in the wake of a hard fought struggle that saw the arrest of 122 people on September 13 after a demonstration numbering 5,000 administrative staff, students and professors was held on New Haven Green. Included with those arrested was George

Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO and other top ranking national labor leaders.

The *Times* article goes on to state that under the tentative accord monthly pensions will nearly double, when the 30 percent increase in the pension formula is tied to the sizable wage increases. Throughout the strike, the unions asserted that pensions were too low, saying that the pension for the average worker who retired last year after 20 years or more was just \$621 a month.

Under the new agreement, the clerical workers are to receive raises of 4 percent the first year, 5 percent the second, 4 percent in years three and four, then 5 percent in each of the next four years, with 2.5 percent given each January and each July. With their annual pay now averaging \$33,000, this will increase their pay by 44 percent.

"I'm very pleased with it," said John W. Wilhelm, president of the hotel employees' union. "The fulcrum of the agreement is the union agreeing to an unusually long-term contract, which enabled the university to significantly improve some of the terms, particularly the pensions. That's a good exchange."

Labour Day 2003

For more information on Local 1998's participation in the Labour Day Parade, go to our website at www.uswa1998.ca



Job Evaluation Committee begins evaluations

Union wants acceleration of evaluation process with tight deadline looming

The Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) has concluded negotiations with the University on factor language and both sides have signed off on the final language. We will be posting the full text of the SES/U job evaluation factors on our website (www.uswa1998.ca) in the very near future.

The JEC has also reached agreement with the university on a list of jobs that will be used as benchmarks for the job evaluation exercise. There are a total of 72 jobs on the list and they cover a wide variety of jobs on campus. The list was compiled to reflect the diversity of jobs of our members, geographical diversity (UTM, UTS and St. George) as well as a cross section of the various departments, divisions, faculties and colleges.

Great care is required in evaluating a benchmark job as the benchmark jobs will set the 'standard' for evaluating the remaining jobs at U of T. A benchmark job is defined as one that is representative of a range of jobs against which other jobs can be assessed as being above, below or at the same level as the benchmark job.

The JEC has begun evaluating the benchmark jobs. In terms of process, it begins with management giving us an updated job description. The JEC would then go over the job description in a meeting with the incumbent at the work-site in order to ensure that the job description accurately reflects the duties, responsibilities and requirements of the job. This part of the process is called "validation".

If the job description does not reflect the

work that is done by the incumbent, then it will be referred back to the Joint Job Evaluation Committee (made up of HR representatives and our JEC Principals) for further discussion to see if agreement can be reached.



"Your review shows that you are a hard worker. Now we know you can handle the work left by four layoffs."

Bear in mind however that management has the final say in what goes into a job description and the writing of the job description remains the prerogative of management. If management insists that a certain task is part of the job, then it is the responsibility of the JEC to ensure

that our members' jobs are fairly and consistently evaluated and that our members are adequately compensated for the work that is being done.

The JEC hopes to complete evaluation of the benchmark jobs before the December break. In view of the tight deadline, the JEC believes the evaluation process needs to be accelerated.

There are a total of 3,096 full-time positions that must be evaluated before the expiry of our current Collective Agreement in June 2005. In view of the tight deadline, the JEC has submitted a request to the Executive as part of the overall Needs Assessment to add four full-time equivalents (FTEs) to support the work of the Committee. The Needs Assessment was approved at the membership meeting held on September 15, 2003.

Subsequently, a call was sent out to the membership on September 17 to invite applications for these positions with a deadline set for 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 24.

The JEC will review the applications and interview the short-listed candidates. Their recommendation will then be forwarded to the Local Executive for approval.

As is the case with all union release time positions, the compensation for these positions remains the same as the members' current salary subject to the yearly increases negotiated in the Collective Agreement.

*Ana Sapp, Robin Breon & P.C. Choo
Principals, Job Evaluation Committee*

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