

# STEELDRUM



news for members of Steelworkers Local 1998

April 2004, volume 4, no 2 www.uswa1998.ca

## STOP the cuts at OISE/U of T!

*Lack of information and transparency major problems as layoffs loom*

USWA members at the Ontario Institute for Education have been under siege during the past several months since the announcement of a 15% budget cut to be implemented over the 2004-2005 academic year. The cut is severe and far exceeds budget cut projections for the rest of the University that average 2 - 3%. Claiming "an accelerating and unmanageable deficit", OISE/UT has announced that there will be administrative staff layoffs as part of the plan to manage the deficit.

Students, staff and faculty have joined with USWA members to condemn the cut-backs as bad policy that will ultimately harm the Institute's ability to deliver quality education.

"One of the biggest concerns I have is that not only was there very little transparency in the process, but there was very little accountability on the part of senior administration at OISE/UT. Though some decisions were targeted, most were left up to individual departments to decide where to cut, and information was not shared widely", said Philinda Masters, a Research Associate at the Women's Centre in Education and President of OPSEU Local 578.

Professor Peter Sawchuk from the



really improve transparency. I say release the budget numbers so that the stakeholders are able to see the situation for themselves."

Sawchuk believes that without this kind of transparency, rumours will run rampant. In terms of representation, he believes that a committee composed of representatives from USWA, UTFA, CUPE, OPSEU and the GSA should be able to meet with the Dean in order to gain the pertinent information and then report back to their constituencies. "In my view, it would give the conflicts inherent in these difficult processes the

best chance for an equitable, not to mention creative, resolution. This is work, but what isn't? My main point is that this isn't anything particularly radical. It's just based on the idea that more active participation of people rather than less makes for better solutions."

Department of Sociology & Equity Studies in Education agrees. Professor Sawchuk is also the representative for the Faculty Association at OISE/UT. He states: "From my perspective as a faculty member and UTFA representative, I see morale falling. In my view, transparency in decision-making and representativeness are the two areas that need most attention in terms of the planning process to date. A full description of the budget situation including a plausible explanation of the origins of its current status would

Packed attendance at noon hour meetings held at OISE/UT over the past month have shown that employees there are already feeling the brunt of past cuts and are fearful of what the future has in store.

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### Great Women, Great Omission *Birgeneau forgets female administrative staff*

As a few of the many female administrative staff at the University of Toronto, we arrived at President Robert Birgeneau's home in February to celebrate the greatness of past and present women at the University of Toronto. We handed off our coats and began mingling with other women in the sumptuous surroundings of President Birgeneau's home - of particular interest was the magnificent greenhouse. After a while, we were told to gather to be welcomed and congratulated in all our past and present greatness by President Birgeneau. We all listened and basked in the great glories won by our past sisters. We applauded the entry of women into the University of Toronto 120 years ago. We applauded the increasing number of women students entering and graduating from the University of Toronto. We applauded the increas-



ing number of women students graduating from graduate departments at the University of Toronto. We even applauded the increasing number of women faculty teaching at the University of Toronto. We applauded and wait-

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# who we are



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## Notice of Motions & Timely Motions

While we elect an Executive to carry on the business of our Local, we members also have a role to play in decisions about policies, expenditures and other matters. At monthly meetings, the Executive advances certain motions, circulated in advance. Motions deal with whether to send delegates to a conference, whether to send money to our fellow steelworkers on strike, etc. Members can also forward timely issues directly to the Executive or they can introduce motions from the floor, to be voted on at the next meeting. This is called giving notice of motion. The reason for this procedure is to give all members, not just those present at the meeting, an opportunity to vote. Some motions, called timely motions, are of an urgent nature. If they are not voted on right away there is no point in voting on them later. An example might be a motion of support for the bargaining committee during negotiations.

Sometimes members are not sure whether the motion is timely. The member moving the motion is often anxious to get it decided quickly rather than waiting for the next meeting. In such circumstances the chair of the meeting, normally the President, decides whether the motion is timely. The chair may ask those attending the meeting to show support or opposition to the chair's ruling.

Monthly Membership Meetings are our opportunity to make decisions. When the agenda is circulated, read over the recommendations, mark the date in your calendar and come out and have your say.

Mary Bird

## Job postings at U of T

*Are they working the way they are supposed to?*

Whenever U of T decides to fill a job vacancy within the staff appointed unit, the job is first posted for bargaining unit members only.

Article 12:04(a) of the contract states: "Qualified internal applicants will be interviewed first." That is clear, but the rest of the Article is not so unequivocal. "However," it continues, "after completing any internal interviews the hiring Department retains the discretion to post externally and consider external applicants in the selection process, along with internal employee applicants who have already received interviews, in order to determine who is the most qualified candidate."

Is the internal job posting system working the way it is supposed to? Unfortunately, there is no obligation on the University's part to report to the Local when it does in fact hire external applicants over internal applicants. The University is not obliged to justify how an external applicant came to be "the most qualified" for the job or to report for example whether it proved to be more economical for a department to hire an external over an internal applicant. Given the budget constraints in every department, this is a legitimate concern for the Local.

As of March 26, 524 bargaining unit jobs had been posted on the internal Job Opportunities Home page. Of those 524 jobs, 139 are to be found re-listed on the external postings page: 51 Secretarial/Clerical/Administrative Assistant positions; 46 Technical positions; and 42 Other positions.

That means 26.5% of these bargaining unit jobs are being advertised externally. Is that a real reflection of how frequently the University has to advertise outside our bargaining unit to find qualified personnel for job openings? Granted, the contract language allows staff appointed members to apply first. However, after complying with the internal job posting requirement and completing any internal interviews, the hiring department has the discretion to then consider external applicants to determine the most qualified candidate.

The question is: Are our staff appointed members losing out on bargaining unit job opportunities for the wrong reasons? It is important to consider tightening the language in the next round of collective bargaining. Membership support for our bargaining committee will be crucial to achieving this goal.

Steve Rutchinski, School of Graduate Studies

## Injured at work? *read this*

We hope that everyone works in a healthy and safe environment. If you are ever injured at work, please remember to:

1. **Report your injury** to your supervisor immediately and make sure that an Accident Report ([www.utoronto.ca/safety/ACCREP.PDF](http://www.utoronto.ca/safety/ACCREP.PDF)) for U of T staff appointed members is completed (this is your supervisor's responsibility).

2. **Does your injury require** you to obtain health care, and/or you to be absent from your regular work, or that you perform modified duties at less than regular pay, modified duties at regular pay for more than seven calendar days after the date of accident, or that you earn less than regular pay at regular work?

If any of the above conditions are met, the University is legally obligated to complete a WSIB Form 7 within three days and give you a copy of the form. Please make sure you do get that copy so that, if necessary, you will qualify for WSIB Compensation Benefits. Please to keep copies of all forms.

3. **Let your building Health and Safety Committee** know about any workplace hazards.

Questions?? Call the Local 1998 office at 416. 506. 9090



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



“The Budget” is a hot news item this spring at both the provincial and federal level. At U of T we are also on budget alert. There will be a new university budget brought out in May which will have a direct impact on all of us.

The federal budget is now out, and unfortunately for working families, it provides little promise of improving access to education. Lawrence McBrearty, the Canadian Steelworkers National Director said, “Not only do we represent workers whose children should expect to have access to post-secondary education, we also represent workers in the university sector,” he said. “The budget should have increased transfers to the provinces for post-secondary education and made them conditional on an immediate freeze on tuition levels and measures to lower fees over time. Instead we have a grant program that does not come anywhere close to addressing the fundamental issue of access to post-secondary education for the children of working people.” Grant programs like this turn the clock back on accessibility to education for working people.

Although we have a staff tuition waiver benefit at U of T, many of our members have dependents who attend other post-secondary institutions. Accessibility is a real issue for them as they cope with skyrocketing tuition hikes.

The Alternative Federal Budget (AFB) developed by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has developed concrete suggestions on budgetary strategies in the post-secondary education area:

- make post-secondary education (PSE) transfers conditional on the provinces immediately freezing tuition levels and initiating measures to lower fees over time;
- establish a separate stand-alone social

and post-secondary education transfer, governed by a Canada Post-Secondary Education Act, that outlines clear responsibilities and expectations for the federal and provincial governments, establishes national guidelines and principles, enacts enforcement mechanisms, and determines long-term and stable funding formulae;

- increase the PSE transfer by \$3.6 billion over three years; and
- convert the Canada Millennium Scholarship Fund and the Canada Education Savings Grant into a new needs-based National Student Grants Program, with a \$1.85 billion National Student Grants fund providing transitional funding while the new program is being established. ([www.policyalternatives.ca/](http://www.policyalternatives.ca/))

Although funding to universities has declined over the past few years, U of T is in a unique situation that sets it apart from other Ontario universities. The University just concluded a \$1 billion campaign - a first for Canadian universities. Growth is evident every time a new construction hoarding is set up (U of T is the second largest builder in the GTA). Millions are being spent on building “gates” to the University and on the “greening” of King’s College Circle, which indicates that the university must have a significant level of financial flexibility to engage in such beautification projects.

On March 17 a university press release announced, “U of T will take in more money in the new budget year, but it will also spend more, leading to a 2 per cent base budget reduction for 2004-05.”

Let us hope that in the upcoming university budget, reductions in spending will not target staff. The employees of the university contribute significantly to making U of T the most prestigious university in Canada. As well, the university has a new billion dollar nest egg that it can use to ensure that it continues to be a “great university”. After all, universities are more than bricks and mortar. What make them great are the people who contribute in a substantive way to sustaining and improving higher education. There is no doubt that U of T Steelworkers play a major role in ensuring that U of T continues to be one of the finest universities in the country. This should not be forgotten on budget day.

**“U of T works because we do.”**

Allison Dubarry, President

## P.C. Choo elected to Governing Council

*Dedicates victory to administrative staff*

P. C. Choo has been elected as the new administrative staff representative on Governing Council. He secured 501 votes or 43% of the total votes cast. There were four other candidates in the running.

In a statement, Choo said he is dedicating his victory to all administrative staff and thanked voters for their confidence in him. He also thanked his supporters who had campaigned tirelessly for him.

Choo promised that he will ‘stand on guard’ for administrative staff on Governing Council. “Recently, the planning and budget committee has recommended a 2% budget cut in 2004-05. As well, it was also announced that as part of the long-range budget plan, previous investment losses will be amortized over three years, starting with the new budget. These cuts should not, and must not, be borne on the backs of administrative staff,” says Choo.

While he welcomed President Robert Birgeneau’s statement that “the big picture remains that of an institution focused on quality and accessibility”, Choo said that with repeated budget cuts, quality is bound to suffer.

Choo said that he will work with the elected student representatives, alumni, progressive faculty members as well as other appointees on Governing Council. He also promised to report regularly back to members.

Asked how he sees his role on Governing Council, Choo said, “You can be sure that I will not be a mere rubber-stamp. I will scrutinize everything that comes before Council. I will give credit where it is due but I will also criticize where necessary.”

Ana Sapp

## Ron Wener acclaimed as Treasurer of Local 1998

Ron Wener has been acclaimed as the new Treasurer of USWA Local 1998. He takes over from Mary Ann DeFrancis who had resigned.

Wener was the only candidate when nominations closed at a special nomination meeting held on February 24, 2004.

An elated Wener said, “I look forward to working with (Financial Secretary) Marjorie and the rest of the Executive to continue the Local’s commitment to fiscal responsibility and accountability to membership.”

Ana Sapp



## Great Women, Great Omission

*continued from page 1*

ed, but President Birgeneau concluded his welcome, it was apparent that there would be no mention of the greatness of women administrative staff - who make up 70% of administrative staff - at the University of Toronto.

What should we do? After some discussion, we decided to enlighten our President of his omission. We introduced ourselves and explained to President Birgeneau how he had failed to acknowledge a large portion of the university



community, that many of the great women at the University of Toronto are administrative staff, many of whom are also graduates of the University of Toronto. President Birgeneau smiled and recognized his omission. We felt somewhat vindicated. And so we waited with some anticipation that perhaps the President would once again step up to the microphone and explain his omission so that we could also applaud the many female administrative staff at the University of Toronto. We waited in vain. There were no further speeches from the President. For us female administrative staff, his omission remained a blight on our evening.

In retrospect, President Birgeneau’s attitude is typical of much of the University community. We

are often treated like the servants of an estate. We are to quietly serve and obey and are only recognized when discipline is necessary. Although administrative staff is occasionally recognized for outstanding service to the University, there is certainly no comparison to the recognition accorded to faculty or students.

Perhaps we have been a little harsh on President Birgeneau, but until he acknowledges the greatness of women administrative staff along with all the rest of the great women at the University of Toronto, the university’s claim of inclusiveness sounds a little hollow.

Lillian Lanca & Ana Sapp

# Death by work

*International Labour report largely ignored by mainstream press*

This winter the International Labour Organization (ILO) published a report, largely ignored in the press, claiming that every year 270 million employees are injured worldwide in accidents in the workplace and 160 million are affected by work-related illnesses. The report reveals more than 2 million workers die on the job each year - 5,000 people killed by their work every day. These statistics, the report makes clear, are an underestimate.

In France, according to the Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie (CNAM), 780 workers are killed annually in the workplace (that's more than two a day). These figures are also an underestimate; there are around 1,350,000 work accidents a year - 3,700 victims every eight-hour day, and eight injured every minute.

The defenders of workers' rights used to call this exaction in the name of economic growth and competition a blood tax. We should remember that phrase when we look at the current debate surrounding pensions and retirement and consider the lives of workers worn out and tossed on the scrap heap when they reach the end of their working lives. They are often deprived of the opportunity to enjoy their pensions at all because, although life expectancy has increased, there has also been (as an outcome of worsening workplace hazards) an explosion in illnesses that most afflict the older generation, including cancer, cardio-vascular disease, depression, stroke, loss of sensory perception, arthrosis, senile dementia, and Alzheimer's.

This makes the present attack on pensions all the worse; the attack has been coordinated and driven by forces of globalization, such as the G8, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), all of which have been attacking social security and the welfare state since the 1970s. The policy has been picked up by the European Union, where prime ministers and governments of both left and right (Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin in France) decided at the Barcelona Summit in March 2002 to push back the retirement age by five years. This is a serious step backwards and an abandonment of plans to build fairer and more balanced societies.

While employees are getting poorer, wealth is still concentrated at the top. 30 years ago an employer received about 40 times the average wage of a worker. Today, an employer earns a thousand times more and can look forward to their day of retirement



with equanimity. This is far from being the case for ordinary employees, especially teachers.

Hundreds of thousands of teachers in Italy, Spain, Germany, Greece, Austria and France have been striking to protest against the dismantling of the pension system. The system is clearly in need of reform. As the active working population shrinks the number of retired people is increasing. The economic weight of pensions - today equivalent to 11.5% of GDP in France - will rise to 13.5% in 2020 and 15.5% in 2040, to become a major expenditure for the state.

Despite the stock market crash, which has wiped out more than 20% of the value of pension funds, the option of financing pensions by savings has not been ruled out. All the more so because the full cost of reform of the contribution-based system will fall on employees, as if it were merely a technical problem of no consequence for society as a whole. All the variables - the amount and period of contributions, the age of retirement, the final amount of a pension - are systematically being changed to the detriment of employees and incomes. No alternative solutions have been considered, such as calling on society for a contribution, or taxing profits.

It is considered normal in France that two workers lose their lives at work every day, and eight others are injured or fall every minute in the cause of private enterprise. But it is not considered "normal" that companies and capital should be called upon to put more into the pensions of their employees. It is not surprising that workers are angry.

Martin Mittelstaedt, Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR)

## What does it take to be Dean at U of T?

*Choices guided by budget cuts*

What does it take to be chosen as a new dean at U of T? That is the question that we are beginning to ask ourselves in recent months.

Sure, you must have all the necessary academic qualifications and experience. That is a given. We have no qualms that U of T only hires the brightest and the best.

However, given the track record of some of the new deans hired by U of T, we can only come to one conclusion: the ability to wield the axe when it comes to budget cuts ranks high as one of the criteria for hiring.

Just ask Jim Barber who was hired from *Down Under* to be the new dean at Social Work. Since he took office, he has reduced the administrative work force at Social Work by 53%, from 17 to 8. Staff are overburdened and students are up in arms over the deterioration of service.

Or ask Jane Gaskell at OISE/UT. OISE is now poised to cut its budget by 15% for 2004-2005.

We are now told to expect a 2% budget cut across the board for 2004. There are many ways to achieve that goal. Unfortunately, at U of T, these



cuts tend to predominantly target administrative staff. Cutting staff is the easy way out. Other universities have coped with cuts by cutting back on travel expenses and other expenditures.

While cutting back on administrative staff, the Faculty of Social Work has launched a glossy, full-colour eight-page publication called *'Reach'*. The lead article, "Social Work Without Borders" boasts that "many of our researchers are constantly crossing national boundaries to compare methodologies, exchange ideas and come up with creative solutions."

May we suggest that they begin to "compare methodologies, exchange ideas and come up with creative solutions" when it comes to budget cuts.

Our Union is working with other U of T Locals to address the challenges of the University's budget cuts.

# special presentation at

## Stephen Lewis

*UN special envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa*

*general membership meeting*  
**April 13, 2004**

*"The situation of people living and dying with AIDS in parts of Africa is so desperate that even the most basic help will bring solace and hope.*

*We know how to defeat this pandemic. We have all the knowledge we need. But to do it, there must be a quantum leap in financial resources."*

*- Stephen Lewis*

His approach to lessening the pain of HIV/AIDS in Africa and ultimately conquering the disease is working.

Stephen Lewis' unique understanding of the everyday reality of HIV/AIDS is making the difference. Unlike past political diplomats who have often focused exclusively on preventative strategies, Lewis' initiative pairs prevention with the immediate need to help those whose lives are most affected by HIV/AIDS.

On the heels of his appointment in 2001 to the United Nations (UN) as the Secretary General's Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa, Lewis conceived of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Since then he has spent much of his time educating the world about the AIDS crisis in Africa. The foundation, which achieved charitable status in May 2003, provides much needed funding and support to front-line community-based AIDS organizations in Africa.

The primary objective of the foundation is to "ease the pain of HIV/AIDS at the grassroots level in Africa". Its purpose is threefold: one, to provide care for dying HIV positive women "so their last weeks, days, hours, are free from pain, humiliation and indignity"; two, to assist "orphans and other AIDS-affected children, in every possible way, from the payment of school fees to the provision of food"; and three, to "support associations of people living with HIV/AIDS" to encourage prevention, treatment and care initiatives whilst eradicating the social stigma associated with the disease.

In 2003 the foundation collaborated on eight different community projects, including support for "home-based care for the sick and dying in Kenya, a girl's empowerment school for orphans in Zambia, and a village for women who were raped and infected in the genocide in Rwanda". The foundation has eleven further collaborations with grassroots AIDS organizations planned for 2004.

The focus on women and children's welfare in the face of the AIDS pandemic in Africa is no mistake. His past political roles translate into decades of involvement in AIDS issues, children's welfare and race relations, and bring an impressive clarity to his analysis and strategy as UN Special Envoy. Lewis understands HIV/AIDS as a disease with a specific social context.

In an interview with *African Recovery*, Lewis stressed that the nature of the AIDS crisis is inextricably linked to gender oppression. "Finally the world seems to understand that [in Africa] this is a gender-based pandemic. Unless there is recognition that women are most vulnerable... and you do something about social and cultural equality for women, you're never going to defeat this pandemic. This is the fundamental centrepiece of the whole blessed crisis!"

The foundation's website echoes this statement, greeting its visitors with the following powerful statements on the gendered reality of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

*"In sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS has a woman's face: There are 30 million people between the ages of 15 and 49 living with HIV/AIDS in AFRICA; 58 percent of them are women.*

*When mothers die, they leave their children behind: Over 25 million children will be without one or both parents in sub-Saharan Africa by the year 2010."*

Since Lewis went public with the idea of a foundation in January of 2003, public response has been more than positive. Shortly following its creation, individuals who heard about the foundation through local newspapers and Lewis' own publicity efforts began seeking out Lewis and his wife, Toronto Star columnist Michele Landsberg, asking how they could donate to the cause. A couple of days after the *Globe and Mail* ran a story on Lewis' conception of such a foundation in January 2003, the Lewis' found their home mailbox stuffed with cheques and "handwritten notes from pen-

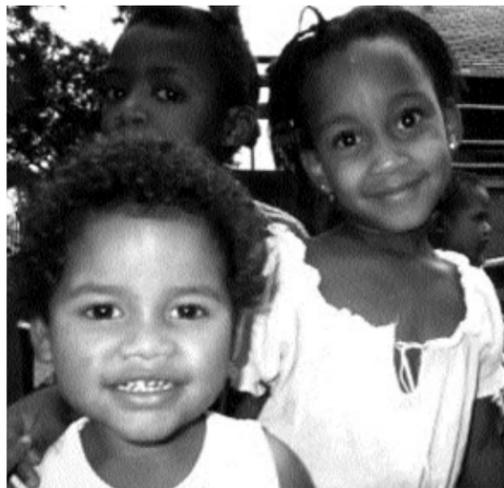
sioners apologizing because they could send only \$20" and his wife found her Toronto Star email account "crammed with messages from people asking how to get money to Mr. Lewis." Stephen Lewis' idea had become reality.

Lewis, who was awarded the Pearson Peace Medal by the United Nations Association in Canada during a ceremony in Ottawa on March 26 2004, is increasingly optimistic about the battle against AIDS in Africa. "There will be no peace on this planet until AIDS is routed," he said, dedicating the award to "those, at home and afar, who struggle valiantly for that peace."

Stephen Lewis will speak at Local 1998's upcoming April 13 General Membership Meeting. All are welcome.

To make a donation to the foundation visit [www.stephenlewisfoundation.org](http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org), call 416. 533. 9292, fax 416. 533. 8866 or mail a cheque, payable to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, to 9 Manchester Avenue, Toronto, ON, M6G 1V4.

*Story by Kim Walker with files from the Web, Africa Recovery and the Globe and Mail*



*"We know how to beat this pandemic. We have the knowledge we need. But to do it, there must be a quantum leap in financial resources."*

**Stephen Lewis**  
*UN Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa*

## general membership meeting

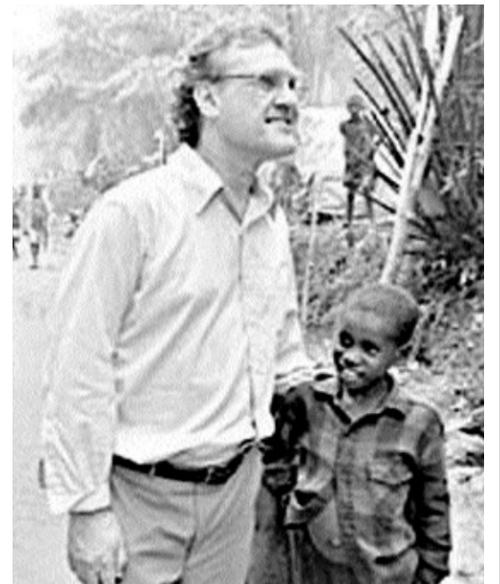
**for Steelworkers Local 1998**

**Tuesday April 13, 2004 @3:30 pm**  
**Medical Sciences Auditorium**  
**Rm 2158 MSB**  
**University of Toronto**

**Featuring a Special Presentation**  
**by Stephen Lewis, Founder of**  
**the Stephen Lewis Foundation**  
**and UN Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa**

**Erindale campus location:**  
**Rm 3138 South Building**

**Scarborough campus location:**  
**Rm 505 the Bladen Wing (B-Wing)**



This is a release time meeting for staff-appointed members. Light refreshments will be served. Check our website on April 7th for the full Agenda and financial statement.

INFO t 416. 506. 9090 e [info@uswa1998.ca](mailto:info@uswa1998.ca) [www.uswa1998.ca](http://www.uswa1998.ca)

# local 1998 news & committee reports

## EPUS confers award on Dianne Robertson

The Erindale Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students (EPUS) has conferred an award on administrative staff member Dianne Robertson of the University of Toronto, Mississauga.

Dianne is the Undergraduate Assistant in the Departments of English and Drama, and History and Classics.

In a ceremony held on March 25, 2004 and attended by the Principal of UTM, Ian Orchard, and the Director of Student Services, Mark Overton, Dianne was recognized for her efforts in "promoting student development."

According to EPUS President, Shaila Kibria, it was a committee who made the final decision from nominations submitted by students. "It was hard to decide from so many worthwhile candidates but Dianne was eventually selected to receive the award," says Kibria. "She is very helpful with organizing and in dealing with students outside the classroom. She has a beautiful smile and no matter what the problem is, she is always very encouraging."

Principal Ian Orchard is delighted that Dianne has been recognized by EPUS. "This recognition brings credit to both Dianne and to UTM, and UTM is proud of her efforts on behalf of students," he added.

A proud parent of a teenage daughter, Dianne still finds time to volunteer at the Peel Distress Centre, a twenty-four hour help phone line for people in distress.

Congratulations, Dianne and well done!

## Victoria University report

At our unit meeting on March 24th the three vacant union positions on the Victoria Health and Safety Committee were filled. Julia Holland (Archives), Richard Doede (Plant Services) and Lilla Hui (Bursar's Office) were acclaimed.

On behalf of the members of the our unit, I'd like to thank Milly Weidhaas, Jerry Nogas and Rose Barnes for their work on the Health and Safety Committee over the past three years. Congratulations to the three new members of the committee. I know they will meet and build on the excellent standards that have been set by Milly, Jerry and Rose.

The most recent Union/Management Committee meeting also took place on March 24th. The Union's agenda items included: management's cancelling of summer flex days in the Archives; the installation of air conditioning in the Burwash dish room and possibly in the cooking area; incidents when members have not been advised they could have union representation in disciplinary meetings with management; and the possibility of part time Food Services workers moving to full time status. I'm pleased to report that a few days after hearing the Union's arguments on why flex days should be reinstated for Archive employees, the Administration reversed their position: our members will enjoy flex days this summer.

Following the recent adoption by the Victoria University Board of Regents of a five percent budget cut in the coming fiscal year, the Union has arranged to meet with university administrators in order to better understand the budget and its implications for our members. In attendance will be myself, Linda Oliver, Local 1998 President Allison Dubarry, Steelworker research staff Sheila Block, and our staff representative, Omero Landi.

John Ankenman  
Unit Chairperson, Victoria University

## A Tribute to Karen Robinson

Friend and mentor to many at U of T

Long time U of T staff member Karen Robinson passed away after a lengthy illness on Valentine's Day 2004.

Karen's death was a shock to those of us who know her. She was so full of life and energy that somehow she seemed indestructible. Her death was sudden and most of her friends (and they were legion) did not have a chance to say goodbye.

*Steeldrum* spoke to some of Karen's friends and colleagues and asked them to share their thoughts.

"She made everything fun," says Wendy Loat, Senior Admissions Policy Advisor at Admissions and Awards. "Karen has a very good heart. She lightened up everyone's mood. Her positive outlook on life helped keep things in perspective."

Colleague Elizabeth Horvath concurred. "She loved life. Her joy and happiness touched everyone around her."

"She always listened to your problems and was there for you if you need a shoulder to cry on," says another colleague, Alex Ataide. "She has wonderful 'managerial' skills and for many of us, there were days we came solely to work because of Karen."

Ellen Dubelt, a senior counsellor at Admissions and Awards, remembers fondly how Karen would stand in the corridor on Fridays and announced in a loud voice for all to hear, "It is Friday!"

To Ana Sapp, a Principal of the Job Evaluation Committee, Karen was a mentor who took great pains to make her feel comfortable when she was new to Canada. Ana, who is from Argentina, remembered how Karen would patiently teach and guide her



Dearly missed friend and colleague, Karen Robinson  
June 30, 1943 - February 14, 2004

along when she was doing her practical in Admissions and Awards as a student from Humber College. Ana would later become a full time staff member at the Faculty of Social Work, thanks to Karen's glowing reference. They became life-long friends.

"Karen will be terribly missed," says Audrey Glasbergen, a colleague from the University of Toronto at Scarborough where Karen worked after she left Admissions and Awards. "She was a fabulous person, and yes, she was so sweet."

As we mourned the loss of a dear friend and colleague, we are reminded of the words of William Wordsworth in his *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*:

*"What though the radiance which  
was once so bright,  
Be now for ever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass,  
of glory in the flower;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind."*

So, we will find strength in what remains behind: Karen's legacy of unbounded joy, unrestrained happiness, and a life lived to the fullest.

Rest in peace, dear friend.

P. C. Choo

## Human Rights Committee report

### Black History Month Celebration

Steelworkers Local 1998 celebrated the annual Black History Month on February 26th, 2004. The guest speaker was Dr. Yvonne Bobb-Smith, lecturer in Caribbean Studies at the University of Toronto and Ryerson University. Her lecture was entitled *Independence: A Vehicle of Resistance*. It is based on her book, *"I Know Who I Am: A Caribbean Women's Identity in Canada"*.

According to Dr. Bobb-Smith, independence is not a character trait but rather an ethic. This concept of independence contains a value that drives an individual Caribbean woman to be conscious of the dominance and control that threatens knowledge of herself. She explained that as an ethic, independence is not a permanent feature, but is derived from levels of self-empowerment and informed through experience.

Dr. Bobb-Smith's lecture was very interesting



Executive member Marcella Bollers  
with Lecturer Yvonne Bobb-Smith

and enlightening. Refreshments with a Caribbean theme were served, and a good time was had by all.

Linda Oliver & Marcella Bollers  
Co-Chairs, Human Rights Committee

# 20th International Day of Mourning

## "Mourn for the dead, fight for the living!"

Each year on April 28th we stop in the course of our daily tasks and stand together to remember those who have lost their lives or forfeited their health just trying to make a living. Sometimes, when I mention this commemoration to people, they seem surprised, as though I am talking about events from some distant past, about something that does not affect our lives anymore...sure, people used to die...when work was dangerous....and maybe some still do...workers in heavy industry, maybe...but not workers like us...not anymore, right?

Unfortunately, no, that is not right. Each year some two million workers die on the job worldwide. That is a pretty alarming figure. In Ontario, in 2003, the provincial Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) reported 552 fatalities, and another 359,353 who were injured or developed occupational diseases. Among those who died or got sick last year, please count the health care workers exposed to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Not very far away, not work that we are used to considering as deadly dangerous...in fact, their situations are pretty close to our own Local 1998 members who work in health care settings or who provide primary support for those who do.

A number of our members were affected by SARS at work, some were even asked to self-quarantine, and many of us learned about changes to our environment that were instituted to cope with what was described as "the new normal". And through the outbreaks, we struggled with this acknowledgement of new meaning for the importance of a safe and healthy workplace, and those fundamental rights we use to protect ourselves at work...the right to know and understand hazards in our workplace, the right to participate in making our workplaces

healthy and safe through our Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs), and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Our members faced other health & safety issues this year as well, and each affected member, each group of JHSC workers with unresolved issues, came into direct contact with our continuing struggle for hazard-free workplaces. Not all our health and safety problems are fixed quickly and easily....many require research, training and...most of all, persistence. On April 28, when we stand side by side with other workers to commemorate those we have lost...from the many Chinese immigrant workers who died working on the railways, to the 26 miners killed in the 1992 explosion at Westray, to the scores of workers and community members who've died or been made ill from exposure to asbestos in Sarnia, we also recommit ourselves to the struggle to make our workplaces hazard-free.

This year, on April 28, the Toronto commemoration for workers killed or injured on the job will be held very close to our downtown campus, at the head office of the Ontario Nurses' Association, at 85 Grenville Avenue (just east of University Avenue, just north of College Street). This location was chosen specifically to honour the health care workers who died or became ill through exposure to SARS. Please, if you can, take time to attend this ceremony. Let us stand together to honour and remember those workers, and to remind ourselves that there is still much to be done in the struggle to make sure that no one dies from work...and let's resolve to continue to fight for safe and healthy workplaces, and for work that promotes dignity and health. Hope to see you there!

MaryAnn DeFrancis  
Co-Chair, Health & Safety Committee

## Stop OISE's 15% budget cuts

*continued from page 1*

Olga Williams is an administrative staff member in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies where there is presently an administrative staff complement of four. "When I take early retirement next year, my job will not be filled because of the 15% budget cut. My main concern is for the three remaining staff members who already have enough to contend with in their own jobs without having my duties downloaded onto them. My job cut will also negatively impact faculty, as they will no longer have a designated faculty support person. Students, too, will have fewer bodies present in the department to help them with their problems."

Lack of adequate support and service to students is a major concern for Karsten Mundel, President of the Graduate Students Association. Says Mundel: "These cuts will have a very negative affect on the overall educational experience at OISE/UT. With less administrative staff, it will be much harder for students to navigate through the system. Less staff would also mean that faculty would do more administrative tasks which would further decrease the time they can commit to teaching, research and supervision."

Ann Kristine Pearson works as a Departmental Graduate Studies Liaison Officer. She notes that

OISE has already experienced drastic job cuts in 1996 as a result of the merger with U of T. She says that those who were left went through "job intensification."

"I think that the administration should be made aware that not only do human beings suffer in this kind of process, but also the processes of the Institute will be damaged, with the chance of administrative error increasing. There is a certain point in staff cuts where an irrevocable damage to the professional reputation of the Institute occurs. In a place like OISE/UT - whose reputation relies not only on the research work of the faculty, but also on the close attentive work of administrative staff - this deterioration can quickly escalate beyond repair. I do not think that sufficient study has been done on the implications of severe budget cuts to actual administrative work flow at OISE/UT."

In a letter addressed to Professor Jane Gaskel, the new Dean of OISE/UT and President Robert Birgeneau, signed by Allison Dubarry, President, Steelworkers Local 1998; Philinda Master, President, OPSEU Local 578; Stephan Dobson, CUPE Local 3907; Kevin Reynolds, Liaison Officer, CUPE Local 3902; Karsten Mundel, President, Graduate Students Association; Ilka I. DeDiego, President, CUPE Local 1230; and Mehdi Kouhestaninejad,

Saturday May 1st is...

**WE'RE ON THE MOVE AGAIN:  
STEELWORKERS  
TORONTO AREA  
COUNCIL DEMO IN  
HAMILTON**

Join the Steelworkers in a  
Solidarity Rally at Copps Coliseum,  
Hamilton for a demonstration in  
support of our Brothers and Sisters  
at Stelco and Slater Steel!

Buses leave 25 Cecil Street and the  
Jane-Finch Mall carpark (NW corner)  
at 10:30am SHARP!

**STOP THE DESTRUCTION OF  
CANADA'S STEEL INDUSTRY!  
SAVE JOBS!  
PROTECT HARD-WON  
PENSIONS!  
STOP MINDLESS  
GLOBALIZATION!**

To book your seat on the bus:  
Tell your union chairperson or call  
John Humphrey at 416. 727.8583

Return:  
Expected by 4pm.

**FOOD AND REFRESHMENT WILL BE  
PROVIDED. BRING YOUR FAMILY,  
FRIENDS.**

**HOP ON THE BUS TO  
STEELTOWN!!**

President, CUPE Local 3261, the request was made for OISE/UT to come forward with a transparent budget projection that will outline clearly how the 15% budget cut over the next year is to be applied. Specifically, the letter requests answers to the following questions:

- How many staff positions are expected to be cut by attrition and how many by layoff?
- Of the staff positions currently being identified for elimination, how many are unionized positions and how many are being identified from the professional managers group?
- Why is the deficit at OISE/UT not being managed like the pension deficit at U of T over a longer period of time, in which case it would not have such a high cost to staff, faculty and students?
- Can we be guaranteed that the increased number of Graduate Assistants coming online at OISE this fall will not be downloaded non-academic duties previously handled by administrative staff?
- What pro-active strategies are currently being put in place at OISE/UT to ameliorate the budget crisis and eliminate the need for staff cuts altogether?

We believe these are questions that need to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

Robin Breon

On 1st January, 2003, Health Canada published new regulations making nutritional labelling mandatory on most pre-packaged food labels. These regulations update requirements for nutrient content claims and permit, for the first time in Canada, diet-related health claims for foods.

In conjunction with National Nutrition Month, the Women's Committee and the Human Rights Committee of USWA Local 1998 jointly hosted a lunch-time seminar "Read Before You Eat: Interpreting Nutrition Labels" on March 25, 2004. Dr. Sandra Anthony, a nutritionist who is also a steward in the Faculty of Medicine, was the presenter. Sandra's presentation covered three main areas: (i) how to use "Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating" to manage personal diets; (ii) how to calculate the number of calories that an individual should consume in order to maintain, gain or lose weight; and (iii) how to interpret nutritional information on food labels.

Nutritional information can be found in three areas of food labelling: from the Nutrition Facts panel, the list of ingredients and the nutritional claims section. Under Health Canada's new regulations, manufacturers must declare the number of calories and the amount of fat, including saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sodium,

carbohydrates, fibre, sugars, protein, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron in a specified serving of the food. The % Daily Value on the Nutrition Facts panel also allows consumers to compare similar products and assess the nutritional value of foods more easily.

The new nutritional labelling system and health claims are intended to provide consumers with information to help them choose healthy diets. The aim is to reduce the risk of premature illness and death due to nutrition-related chronic diseases. Health Canada believes that, with effective public education, the widespread availability of nutritional information on food labels offers a significant oppor-

tunity to improve our nutritional health and well-being.

The turnout was overwhelming, with standing room only. Due to popular demand, Sandra has kindly agreed to offer this presentation again, probably sometime in May.

It was Hippocrates, the father of medicine, who said, "Leave the drugs in the chemist's pot and let food be thy medicine" circa 435 BC.

After all these years we find out that good ol' Hippo knew what he was talking about.

Linda Oliver  
Co-Chair, Women's Committee



# Read before you eat

## Interpreting Nutrition labels

## LOCAL 1998

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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION  
**CALM**  
OF LABOUR MEDIA